

REDCAR & CLEVELAND SCHOOLS' FORUM

MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2024 AT 3:00PM THROUGH MICROSOFT TEAMS

MEMBERS PRESENT:

SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVES	
Pupil Referral Unit Representative	Mr L Beaumont, Archway (in part)
Maintained School Governors' Representative	Mr M Bloomfield (in part)
ACADEMY REPRESENTATIVES	
Ironstone Academy Trust	Mrs A O'Gara, Nunthorpe Primary Academy/Zetland Primary School
Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust	Miss S Williams
Saltburn Primary School	Mrs C Chadwick
Skelton Primary School	Ms S Walker
Special Academies: Mo Mowlam Academy	Miss R Glover, Meeting Chair (Vice Chair)
Tees Valley Collaborative Trust	Mr C Glover
TRADE UNIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS REPRESENTATIVE	
NEU	Mr J Myers
NON-SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVES	
PVI Sector (Early Years)	Dr J Hawthorne
NON-MEMBERS/OFFICERS	
Assistant Director for Education and Skills	Ms C Mahoney
Directorate Accountant	Mrs E Laird
Accountant	Mr A Robson
Lead for Achievement	Mrs J Ratcliffe
Lead for Inclusion	Mr G Smith
ALSO PRESENT:	
Clerk to Schools' Forum	Mrs A Douglas, Governance Support Service
Secretary, Redcar and Cleveland NASUWT	Mr H Leighton

The meeting started at 3:00pm. The required quorum was met at all times.

		ACTION
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
1.1	In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair took the role of Chair on this occasion.	

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1.2	Apologies had been submitted in advance of the meeting from Mr P McLean (KHS) and Mr J Faulkner (Redcar College). Mr M Bloomfield had advised he would be late to join the meeting.	Clerk
1.3	RESOLVED to consent to the absence of the above-named members.	
2.	NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
	No items were declared for consideration under Any Other Business.	
3.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
3.1	Schools' Forum members were given the opportunity to declare any pecuniary interests or other conflicts of interest relating to items on the agenda for the current meeting.	
3.2	No such declarations were made on this occasion.	
4.	MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING	
4.1	Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 1 October 2024 had been circulated prior to the meeting. Having given members an opportunity to highlight any inaccuracies, the minutes were accepted as a true record of proceedings. All action points were confirmed as having been completed.	Clerk
4.2	Outcome The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 1 October 2024 were approved as a true record of proceedings.	
5.	CHILDREN AND FAMILIES' STRATEGY	
5.1	Purpose To present the overarching Children and Families' Strategy to Schools' Forum for information.	
5.2	Discussion/Challenge	
5.2.1	The strategy aligned with the Council's overarching priorities, which had been agreed upon earlier in the present year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Start life well. - Live and age well. - Prosper and flourish. - Clean and tidy. 	

		ACTION
5.2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A strong and sustainable council. <p>The Local Authority's (LA) Director for Children and Families, Ms D Swainston, had emphasised a collective and relentless focus on two 'obsessions': ensuring children were safely cared for at home with their families, and ensuring that children attended school and engaged meaningfully in their education. Five key priorities were outlined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children grow up safe, loved, and happy. - Children have a healthy childhood. - Children achieve well. - Children are ready and ambitious for their future. - Children are listened to, and people care about what they say. <p><i>Mr. L Beaumont joined the meeting.</i></p> <p><u>Financial Context and Strategic Planning</u></p>	
5.2.3	<p>The Council was in a challenging financial position, and all non-statutory provisions had been reviewed carefully. The strategy considered:</p> <p>Years 1–2: Survival – how to make savings while maintaining services.</p> <p>Years 3–5: Striving – improving services.</p> <p>Years 6–10: Thriving – achieving long-term sustainability.</p>	
5.2.4	<p>Specific initial actions included implementing a relationship-based practice model, and conducting research during the first year to identify effective practices in other areas and better understand how Child in Need (CIN) and Child Protection (CP) served local communities.</p> <p><u>Key Strategic Actions</u></p>	
5.2.5	<p>The SEN/Inclusion Strategy would implement findings from the Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme. A Task and Finish Group would be established by the Strategic Education Board (SEB) and would include members from Schools' Forum. Relationships with school leaders and partners would be strengthened, to develop shared system leadership, building on existing networks while ensuring wider representation. Recommendations from the child in our care (CIOC) sufficiency assessment would be implemented to identify necessary incentives for placing children and young people in the most appropriate settings. The alternative provision strategy would be developed, and aligned with the Department for Education's (DfE) three-tier framework. The participation strategy would seek to engage with stakeholders at the appropriate times to shape services.</p>	

		ACTION
5.2.6	<p><u>Performance and Monitoring</u></p> <p>Performance indicators had been included to support Councillors in tracking progress and assessing the impact on outcomes.</p>	
5.3	<p>Outcome</p> <p>The Children and Families' Strategy was noted, with Schools' Forum members acknowledging its alignment with council priorities and its structured approach to delivering impactful outcomes within financial limitations.</p>	
6.	TRADE UNIONS' UPDATE	
6.1	<p>Purpose</p> <p>To provide feedback on the Trade Unions (TU) Facilities Time Service Level Agreement (SLA), and to propose additional facilities time.</p>	
6.2	Discussion/Challenge	
6.2.1	Thanks were extended to schools that currently bought into the LA SLA for facilities time. While not all schools participated, many did. An outline of TU duties was provided, highlighting that while some issues were resolved quickly, others required significant input or legal advice, which demanded considerable time.	
6.2.2	<p>The SLA operated on a pooled resources system. Without this, each school would need to release a representative for up to ten working days per academic year. The rate per pupil had been set many years ago by the Schools' Forum and had not increased since. In the first three months of the current academic year, 290 hours of TU duties (equivalent to 45 days) had been recorded. The National Education Union (NEU) reported a 30% increase in membership since 2019, contributing to the rising demand for facilities time.</p> <p><i>Mr M Bloomfield joined the meeting.</i></p>	
6.2.3	<p>A surplus of approximately £32,500 had been identified in the SLA fund.</p> <p><u>Proposal</u></p>	
6.2.4	A request was made to increase the available facilities time from four days to five days per week (half a day per trade union) at no additional cost to schools. Mrs Laird confirmed that the SLA cost had not increased for several years and that the	

		ACTION
	<p>proposed increase was affordable within the current surplus. It was suggested to review the SLA's value in a years' time. The NASUWT representative confirmed that he supported the proposal, citing the surplus as sufficient to cover the extra half day for the next two years.</p> <p><u>Financial and Operational Considerations</u></p>	
6.2.5	<p>Schools' Forum raised concerns about whether schools could release additional representatives. Mr Myers assured colleagues that arrangements were manageable in the short term and confirmed there were willing participants. Schools' Forum also noted potential implications for teaching and learning quality when staff were released. Mr Myers emphasised the importance of working collaboratively with school leaders to ensure no undue burden was placed on schools.</p>	
6.2.6	<p>Mrs Laird confirmed that increasing facilities time would have no cost implications and recommended approval of the proposal. If funds became depleted in the future, a small, timely increase in the SLA fee could be required.</p>	
6.3	<p>Outcomes</p>	
6.3.1	<p>The proposal to increase facilities time from four to five days per week was endorsed, with a recommendation to review the SLA arrangement in a year or two.</p>	
6.3.2	<p>Mr Myers expressed gratitude for the feedback and support.</p>	
7.	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p>	
7.1	<p><u>National Funding Formula</u></p> <p>Mrs Laird informed Schools' Forum that no official announcements had been made regarding changes to the National Funding Formula (NFF). Next year's NFF would include the value of three additional grants received by schools in the present academic year – the Teachers' Pay Grant, the Teachers' Pay and Pension Grant, and the Core Schools Budget Grant. These grants would be rolled into next year's funding factors without any additional increases.</p>	
7.2	<p><u>Membership Update</u></p> <p>A Schools' Forum member highlighted the absence of Elected Member representation on the group. It was confirmed that Councillor Bill Suthers would be added to the group with immediate effect.</p>	Clerk

		ACTION
8.	ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS	
	No matters had been identified for future meetings.	
9.	DATE OF THE FUTURE MEETING	
	The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 4 February 2025 at 3:00pm. The meeting would be held virtually.	

Meeting closed at 3:40pm.