

**REDCAR & CLEVELAND SCHOOLS' FORUM**

**MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 2 OCTOBER 2023 AT 3:00PM THROUGH MICROSOFT TEAMS**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

<b>SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVES</b>	
Pupil Referral Unit	Mr L Beaumont, Archway
<b>ACADEMY REPRESENTATIVES</b>	
Tees Valley Collaborative Trust	Mr S Glover
Northern Education Trust	Mr M Robson (Chair) (in part)
Skelton Primary School	Ms S Walker
Saltburn Primary School	Mrs C Chadwick
Ironstone Academy Trust	Mrs A O'Gara
Special Academy Mo Mowlam Academy and KTS Academy	Miss R Glover (Vice Chair) and Mrs S Gunn
<b>TRADE UNIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS REPRESENTATIVE</b>	
NEU	Mr J Myers
<b>NON-SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVES</b>	
16 – 19 Representative	Mr J Faulkner, Redcar College
PVI Sector (Early Years)	Dr J Hawthorne (in part)
<b>NON-MEMBERS/OFFICERS</b>	
Assistant Director for Education and Skills	Ms C Mahoney
Directorate Accountant	Mrs E Laird
<b>ALSO PRESENT:</b>	
Lead for Achievement	Mrs J Ratcliffe
	Mrs R Leonard
Clerk to Schools' Forum	Mrs A Douglas, Governance Support Service

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

		<b>ACTION</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	
1.1	Apologies had been submitted in advance of the meeting from Mr M Bloomfield, Ms A Hill, Mr P McLean and Councillor L Myer. Mr M Robson, Chair, had advised that he would be late to join the meeting. Miss R Glover took the role of Chair.	
1.2	RESOLVED to consent to the absence of the above-named members.	Clerk

		<b>ACTION</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>	
	No items were declared for consideration under Any Other Business (AOB).	
<b>3.</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>	
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.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING</b>	
4.1	Minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2023 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.	
4.2	<b>Decision:</b> The minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2023 were approved as a true record of proceedings.	
<b>5.</b>	<b>MEMBERSHIP UPDATE</b>	
5.1	<u>Purpose</u>  The Clerk advised that the local authority was responsible for reviewing membership of Schools' Forum in October of each year.	
5.2	<u>Discussion/Challenge</u>	
5.2.1	Several Schools' Forum members' terms of office had expired since the last meeting had been held. The Clerk had contacted maintained schools and academies inviting nominations for membership at the start of the autumn term. Nominations for membership had been shared with Schools' Forum members in advance of the meeting for consideration. All existing members apart from one had reapplied for a further term of office, and one new application had been received from an academy representative. There was no requirement for a ballot on this occasion.	
5.2.2	All those eligible to vote on membership were in approval of the applications submitted.	

		<b>ACTION</b>
5.3	<p><u>Outcome</u></p> <p>The clerk would update the membership list, confirming that terms of office had been renewed.</p>	Clerk
<b>6.</b>	<b>CONSULTATION REGARDING HIGH NEEDS BLOCK FUNDING TRANSFER</b>	
6.1	<p><u>Purpose</u></p> <p>To seek the views of all schools in Redcar and Cleveland on a proposal by Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council to transfer 0.5% of Schools Block allocation to High Needs Block in the financial year 2024-25. This would support the funding of recurring financial pressures facing the High Needs Block, which was administered by the Council. A similar exercise had been carried out for the financial year 2023-24 and had been tabled at Schools Forum on 3 October 2022.</p>	
6.2	<p><u>Discussion/Challenge</u></p>	
6.2.1	A consultation paper had been shared with all schools in the borough, with a request that responses be shared with Schools' Forum representatives.	
6.2.2	Mrs Laird guided Schools' Forum through the report, highlighting pertinent areas for consideration. Owing to the ongoing increase in numbers of pupils identified as having special educational needs, and an increasing number of external placements to support the demand, 0.5% had been transferred from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block in five of the last six years.	
6.2.3	Although the rate of growth in the borough had slowed, there continued to be increases in the overall number of children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) between January 2022 and January 2023. Over the last three years, there had been a higher-than-average proportion of pupils in Redcar and Cleveland with EHCPs when compared to local and statistical neighbours.	
6.2.4	The national funding formula had been outlined in the report. Mrs Laird shared detailed information on the cumulative deficit for the Dedicated Schools Grant, the current forecast for the High Needs Block and the forecast cumulative total deficit (£6.284m by 31 March 2024).	
6.2.5	Schools' Forum members were informed of a £1m grant that had been allocating through the Delivering Better Value programme, which aimed to relieve some of the pressures in the education system in the short term. The Department for Education (DfE) sought to support local authorities to provide high quality SEND services, enabling them to implement the recommendations of the SEND review when they came into place.	

	<b>ACTION</b>
<p>6.2.6 Schools' Forum members questioned if there had been a trend in whether more EHCPs had been allocated in primary, secondary or post-16 settings. Members were informed that the increase had primarily been noted in very early years and during Year 8. The most significant costs were incurred when pupils were withdrawn from the mainstream secondary system, as local special schools were full. Places at independent placements began at approximately £85,000 per pupil, before transport.</p>	
<p>6.3 <u>Outcome</u></p> <p>Schools had been consulted in advance of Schools' Forum, and Mrs Laird advised that of the six responses received, five had been in favour and one had no opinion. During the meeting, of those members of Schools' Forum eligible to vote, all approved the request to transfer 0.5%, if required, from Schools Block funding to High Needs funding.</p>	
<p><b>7. EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY PROPOSAL</b></p>	
<p>7.1 Schools' Forum members were introduced to Mrs Jane Ratcliffe, the local authority's recently appointed Lead for Achievement. Mrs Ratcliffe shared an overview of her role, which included a broad remit. Mrs Ratcliffe's team included a Primary Advisory teacher, an Early Years professional and the Governance Support Service. Mrs Ratcliffe looked forward to visiting schools and meeting staff and pupils.</p>	
<p>7.2 Mrs Rachel Leonard, the local authority's Principal Educational Psychologist, shared a proposal around how educational psychology could provide support for children and young people at the earliest stages. Mrs Leonard sought to ensure that support from her team was made available to schools and families at earlier stages than it had been historically, through building strong relationships with schools to provide advice and support before situations escalated to a crisis point.</p>	
<p>7.3 A questionnaire had been issued to SENCOs at the end of the 2022-23 academic year. Responses indicated a requirement for more educational psychologists, and support at earlier stages. Mrs Leonard sought to increase staffing within the team to meet the requirements of schools, and to further develop the service to ensure that schools had named contacts who would offer support. The overall aim was to build a team of support around schools, ensuring that school staff had access to professional advice at the earliest opportunities.</p> <p><i>Mr M Robson and Dr J Hawthorne joined the meeting.</i></p>	
<p>7.4 The intention was to grow the current capacity in the team and move towards a traded model in the future. A specialist teacher role would be considered, and some High Needs Funding would be used to facilitate this.</p>	
<p>7.5 Schools' Forum members welcomed the proposals and were pleased that additional capacity would be added to the team.</p>	

		<b>ACTION</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>	
	No items had been declared for consideration under any other business.	
<b>9.</b>	<b>ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS</b>	
	No items were identified for discussion at future meetings. The clerk invited Schools' Forum to contact her or the Chair with any agenda items.	
<b>10.</b>	<b>DATE OF THE FUTURE MEETING</b>	
	The next meeting would be held on Monday 4 December 2023 at 3pm. The meeting would be held virtually.	

Meeting closed at 3:35pm.