

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
SCHOOLS FORUM
HELD ON 6 NOVEMBER 2023 FROM 10.00 AM TO 10.13 AM**

Schools Representatives

Carol Simpson	School Business Manager - Colleton Primary (Maintained)
Brian Prebble	Primary Head - Rivermead Primary - Vice Chairman (Bellevue Place Education Trust)
Liz Woodards	School Business Manager - Hawkedon Primary (Maintained)
Amanda Woodfin	Headteacher - Bulmershe School (Maintained)
Julia Mead	School Business Manager - St Sebastian's CE Primary (The Keys Academy Trust)
Phil Sherwood	Primary Academy Head - Sonning Cof E Primary (The Keys Academy Trust)
Derren Gray	Academy Head - The Piggott School (The Agape Multi- Academy Trust)
Andy Hinchliff	Academy Head - St Crispin's School (The Circle Trust)
Jenny Comber	Academy Head - Bohunt School (Bohunt Education Trust)
Shirley Austin	Academy Head - The Forest School (The Forest School Academy Trust)
Debra Briault	Secondary Academy School Representative (The Circle Trust)
Sara Attra	Special School Head - Addington School
Iain Thomas	Pupil Referral Unit Head – Foundry College
Kerry Clifford	Nursery Head – Ambleside Centre

Non School Representatives

Ian Pittock	Wokingham Borough Council
Ming Zhang	Assistant Director for Education and SEND

Also Present

Luciane Bowker, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist
Jamie Conran, Head of SEND
Al Moore, Finance Business Partner
Katherine Vernon, Schools Finance Manager
Jonathan Wilding, Safety Valve and SEND Consultant

12 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Corrina Gillard.

13 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

14 2024/25 DSG SCHOOLS BLOCK BUDGET UPDATE

Katherine Vernon, Schools Finance Manager presented the 2024/25 DSG Schools Block Budget Update report.

Katherine Vernon informed that the income to be received per Primary Unit of Funding (PUF) and Secondary Unit of Funding (SUF) had been reduced since this was last reported to Schools Forum. The report contained details of the changes. The final

allocation would be confirmed with the October census figures and reported to the January meeting for sign off. Provisional figures would be reported to the December meeting.

Schools Forum was requested to vote on the request for dis-application for the all-through school, prior to its submission to the DfE. Schools had been consulted about this proposal and were in support of the request for dis-application for the all-through school.

Upon being put to the vote, Schools Forum members voted unanimously in favour of the request for dis-application for the all-through school.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) The Schools Block Budget update be noted; and
- 2) The request for dis-application for the all-through school be approved.

15 REQUESTED TRANSFER OF 0.5% DSG SCHOOLS BLOCK TO THE HIGH NEEDS BLOCK 2024/25

Ming Zhang, Assistant Director for Education and SEND explained that a consultation had been carried out with schools, requesting schools support to the proposal of a request for a 0.5% transfer from the DSG Schools Block to the High Needs Block (HNB) for 2024/25.

Ming Zhang thanked school leaders for their support in reaching a proactive solution to the challenges faced in relation to the HNB.

Jonathan Wilding informed that 58% of all schools had responded to the survey, and 92.5% of schools were in favour of the new proposals. The feedback from headteachers was that the new formula was now more affordable for primary schools.

Upon being put to the vote, Schools Forum members voted unanimously in favour of the requested transfer of 0.5% from the Schools Block to the HNB.

During the voting, the following comments were made:

- Members asked that an annual report be presented to Schools Forum, detailing how the 0.5% is being used and what impact this has had;
- Members asked what would happen to those schools that were already in deficit, what would be the impact for those schools?
- Katherine Vernon explained that further analysis was needed to work out how those schools would be affected. This would only be known when the final allocation was confirmed. The current modelling showed that those schools currently in a deficit position were not contributing to the transfer;
- In response to a question Jonathan Wilding stated that cash values would be known in December and shared with Schools Forum then;
- It was confirmed that the cost to schools would not be higher than what had been previously presented.

Councillor Bray, Executive Member for Children's Services wished to thank school leaders for their collective support. It was hoped that improvements would start to make a difference for schools in the near future.

RESOLVED That the requested transfer of 0.5% DSG Schools Block to the High Needs Block for 2024/25 be approved.