
BURY SCHOOLS' FORUM

MINUTES

of the meeting of the Bury Schools' Forum on
Tuesday 15 November 2022
Microsoft Teams Meeting

In Attendance:

Early Years

Rachel O'Neil Headteacher – Hoyle Nursery

Maintained Primary

Richard Ainsworth Governor's Forum
Governor – Lowercroft Primary School
Simon Waddington Headteacher – Hollins Grundy Primary

Maintained Secondary

Tina Owen Headteacher – Philips High School

Academy

Martin Van Hecke Roch Valley Trust – St Thomas Primary

Special

Joanne Hurst Headteacher – Millwood Primary

Special Academy

Orienne Langley – Sadler Oak Learning Partnership

Pupil Referral Unit

None in attendance

Non-Schools Sector

Tony Durack NESUWT
Helena Thom NEU

Children's Services Department

Isobel Booler Director of Education & Skills
Yusuf Erol Interim Finance lead
Michael Kemp Inclusion Lead
Paul Turney Deputy Chief Finance Officer
Alison Vidler Principal Finance Officer

Observers

Katherine Ashworth School Business Manager – Millwood Primary
David Monger

1. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies for absence were received from:

Paul Cooke

Lisa Corrigan

Kames Franklin – Oak Learning Partnership

Paul Lord – Headteacher Heaton Park Primary School

Emma Moncado – Headteacher St Joseph's RC Primary School

Susan Southworth – Governor, Derby High School

2. Introductions

3. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

Orienne Langley–Sadler agreed that she would take the Chair for this meeting.

Isobel Booler asked that the vacancies on the Forum be reported to BAPH and BASH to request membership and also the Headteachers' Schools Conference and once all vacancies are filled the Chair and Vice Chair can then be nominated.

It was also suggested that membership be sought at the upcoming Head Teachers' Schools Conference.

4. Minutes of the meeting 14 June 2022

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2022 were checked and agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

5. Matters arising from the Minutes (14/06/22)

There were no matters arising

6. Terms of Reference and Membership

The forum was presented with a paper outlining the Terms of Reference of the Forum and setting out the membership. Those present were asked for their comments/input.

It was suggested that the Terms of Reference should include a vision statement that explained that the Forum was about promoting excellent education across the borough and was child focussed.

The statement should be linked to the Children's Strategic Development Plan in relation to independent and successful lives.

The number of representatives from each area was included but this was not further broken down into teacher representatives and governors and it was asked whether this should be identified. It was also suggested that the membership of the Forum is benchmarked against other local authorities'

groups and that a flow chart should be included to show the governance structure of the forum and show what feeds in and flows out of it.

7. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2022-23 and DSG Outturn 2021-22

Yusuf Errol submitted a report informing Schools' Forum of the final Dedicated Schools Grant position for 2022 – 2023 and the final DSG outturn position for 2021- 2022.

The contents of the report was noted.

8. High Needs Funding Block and PSV Progress Report

A report was presented to the Forum setting out the progress made in relation to the High Needs Funding Block and PSV.

It was explained that Bury was one of the original Local Authorities and had set ambitious targets of £3.3m to be achieved in 2022/2023.

The latest PSV finance profile showed that the overall financial position had worsened, and the LA were now facing a negative change of £5.25m from that reported to the DfE in June. This was mainly as a result of increasing demand for EHCPs which had exceeded forecasts.

The report set out demand pressures both nationally and locally and the fact that the Covid pandemic had considerably increased the level of special education needs in children and young people with most local authorities reporting significant increases in requests for assessment.

The DfE's survey of SEND in January 2022 reported that the percentage of children with an EHCP had increased by 9.2%.

In Bury, the number of EHCPs shows a modest rise of 6.8% between January 2021 and January 2022 which was misleading due to the SEND team ceasing to maintain EHCPs which were no longer required particularly in the 16 – 25 age group. This has led to 250 being removed from the system and artificially deflating the statistics.

A more detailed analysis by age group reveals a growth in the numbers of EHCPs in early years and across the primary and sector sectors with an increase of 306 across those age groups.

The requests for assessment have increased from an average 39 per month in 2021/2022 to 50 per month in 2022/2023.

The figures relating to Independent, non-maintained provision and alternative provision were set out at no 4 of the report with a variation of £3,475,133 from June to September. The majority of the increase comprised independent and non-maintained Special School placements.

It was explained that in order to meet the continued support of the PSV funding the short-term aim must be to cover the £1.87m shortfall to balance living within the pre-PSV High Needs Funding allocation. The effects of the

overspend for the whole programme was currently under evaluation. The LA have put to the DfE that the £3.47m increase in out of borough placements could not have been foreseen due to being a result of the pandemic and in line with the national picture of increased demand.

9 High Need Places

a

A high priority has been placed in the PSV programme on increasing specialist SEND both with new Special Schools and new Resourced Provisions.

For September 2022 an additional 14 RP places were available and the majority of the planned new provision will be in place for the start of the 2023/2024 academic year.

The growth in the numbers of reception and key stage 1 pupils with severe needs has meant placing a significant number on the I/NMSS sector. The budget was forecast on the basis of a small growth in numbers followed by a steady fall as places in the new Special Free School are available, however, the numbers of I/NMSS placements had increased.

School fee levels in the sector are also anticipated to rise to by 6%.

b

The increased need for independent AP was explained.

It was reported that the sufficiency model has been updated to reflect continued and significant increasing demand for places.

It was requested that benchmarking against other local authorities across Greater Manchester and the northwest be provided in relation to EHCP assessment requests.

The increase in SEMH needs in 5 – 6-year-olds was referred to and it was asked what was feeding the increase and how did Bury compare to other LAs.

It was explained that the effect of the Covid lockdowns, the lack of socialisation and the impact of the gaps in health provision had fed into the situation. There had also been changes to the social, emotional pathways and how this work.

It was explained that provision was provided differently across local authorities and different ways of working but the main priority was to have in-borough provision. Local authorities in the area had moved to the Northwest Framework which will hopefully reduce costs and bring process down.

It was suggested that a pool of training for PAs could be developed collaboratively across schools which will draw on resources across all provisions.

10 Future work of the Forum

The next scheduled meeting of the Forum is Tuesday 17 January 2023 at 4pm
The items to be considered were reported as:-

1. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)
2. Schools Block
 - a. Formula Unit Values
 - b. Additional DSG Grant
 - c. De-Delegation
 - d. 0.5% Schools Block Transfer
 - e. Indicative Headline Budgets 2022/23
3. Central School Services Block (CSSB)
4. High Needs Block (if data available in time)
5. Early Years Funding 2022/23 - Hourly Rates (2-, 3- & 4-year-olds)
6. Pupil Premium Grant (PPG)
7. DSG Deficit Recovery – Programme Safety Valve (PSV)