

**SCHOOLS FORUM**  
**VIRTUAL MEETING VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**  
**HELD ON 8 OCTOBER 2024**

**PRESENT:**

Primary Maintained School Headteacher: Mrs J Stanyard and Mr E Squire

Primary Academy Headteacher Representative: Ms S Richardson (Chair)

Primary School Governor Representatives: Mr R Powner and Mr A McClurg

Secondary School Headteacher Representative: Mr R Henderson

Special School Representative: Mr M Little

14-19 Representative: Mr J Faulkner

Trade Union Representative: Mr L Russell

LA Representative: Councillor C Clark

Observer: Mrs G Bracchi

**OFFICIALS:** Mr A Bryson – Chief Accountant

Mr G Waller – Senior Accountant

Mrs S Hewitson - Secretary to the Forum

Mr E Huntington – Head of Education

Mrs V Housley – Service Lead Education and Wellbeing

Mrs M McCarthy – Director of Children Services

Mr D Leane - BHCET

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs A Swift, Mrs H Gregory, Mrs J Armstrong, Miss H Dalby and Mr C Wilkinson.

**2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Members were invited to declare any personal or business interests they may have in any item included on the agenda.

No interests were declared.

**3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – 2 JULY 2024**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2024 be approved.

**4. MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.



## **5. STOCKTON SCHOOLS' FORUM CONSTITUTION AND RULES OF CONDUCT**

A copy of the Constitution Covering Report, Stockton Schools Forum Constitution and Membership and Vacancies for information. The purpose of the covering report circulated was to present to the Schools Forum the Constitution and Procedural Rules. The document notes how Stockton Councils Schools Forum will operate from September 2024. The document would be reviewed annually or as and when guidance/updates necessitate.

The recommendation was made to approve the Stockton Schools Forum Constitution and Rules of Conduct for the 2024/25 Academic year with specific reference to the proposal that the Membership Terms of Office being two years for both School and Non School Members. It was highlighted that there was one PVI vacancy which had been passed onto Mrs N Coverdale, Early Years Training and Development Coordinator who would feedback to the Clerk in November 2024.

RESOLVED that:

- a) The Schools Forum approve the Schools Forum Constitution and rules of conduct for 2024/25 including agreeing members terms of office of 2 years.

### **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

RESOLVED that this item be reviewed in the Spring Term.

## **7. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR**

One nomination had been received for the position of Vice Chair, Mrs H Gregory.

RESOLVED that Mrs H Gregory be appointed as Vice Chair to Schools Forum.

### **SCHOOLS FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS 2025/26**

A copy of the Schools Forum National Funding Formula (NFF) update and the summary policy document for NFF for 2025/26. The purpose of this paper was to provide the Schools Forum with an update on the Schools Funding Arrangements for 2025/26. Due to the timing of the general election, the publication of the notional schools and high needs NFF allocations for 2025 to 2026 had been delayed. This information was usually received in July each year.

The recommendation was to note the current information provided on the schools national funding formula and the requirement to commence the consultation on the schools block transfer.

Mr Bryson explained that he had not received funding allocations therefore an estimate of the 0.5% cannot yet be calculated. The agreed 2024/25 0.5% block transfer figure was £837k. It was therefore proposed to limit any transfer to the lower of £900k or 0.5%.

A member questioned if Schools Forum had ever agreed to transfer more than £900k. Mr Bryson confirmed that £1.4 million had been transferred in previous years however, they still had to go through the disapplication process.



It was suggested by a member of Schools Forum to propose to limit any transfer to whichever higher (£900k or 0.5%) instead of whichever figure was lower. A member questioned what the deficit was last year. Mr Bryson confirmed it was £3.8 million.

In response to a members question, Mr Bryson explained he would have to submit the disapplication process if the 0.5% was higher than £900k. A member questioned if there was an option not to move any money at all. This was an option.

A vote ensued on three separate options:

- a) To limit any transfer to the lower of £900k or 0.5%.
- b) To limit any transfer to the higher of £900k or 0.5%.
- c) To not transfer any funds from Schools Block funding to Special Educational Needs Funds.

RESOLVED that the Schools Forum agreed to limit any transfer to the higher of £900k or 0.5%.

In response to a members question, Mr Bryson confirmed there was one return per school from the consultation including all mainstream schools ( which included special schools). Schools Forum members were informed that it was still their overall decision regardless of the feedback from the consultation. A vote would be undertaken at the next meeting Schools Forum meeting scheduled on 12th November.

## **9. DELEGATION / DE-DELEGATION 2025/26**

A copy of the Delegation / De-Delegation 2025/26, Facility Time Paper NASUWT and Unions single letter to LA. Funding for de-delegated services must be allocated through the formula but can be passed back, or de-delegated for maintained primary and secondary schools with school forum approval.

The authority was proposing the option of de-delegation for all of the areas covered in the report circulated for 2025/26. As per previous years it was agreed that this paper would again be scheduled earlier in the year to allow, if required, eligible voting members time to seek the views of their respective representative on the options open to them. Also, in the event of the proposal being rejected this would allow time to plan for the transfer of budgets and responsibilities.

It was recommended that the eligible Schools Forum members representing maintained schools seek the views of their respective maintained school representatives with a view to a vote at the Schools Forum on the 12th November. The Clerk would forward a list of the current maintained schools in Stockton along with contact information to Mr E Squire.

RESOLVED that Mr E Squire would send the delegation / de-delegation document to all maintained schools in Stockton prior to the next meeting to gather feedback.

## **10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **10.1 Introduction**

M McCarthy, Director of Children's Services introduced herself to the members of Schools Forum.



**11. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

RESOLVED that the next meeting of Schools Forum would be held on 12th November 2024 at 1.00 p.m.