

High Needs Block Committee

Draft minutes of the meeting held on 7th January 2022 at 2.00pm via Teams

Schools Forum Members

Martin Doyle: Headteacher Riverside School – Chair
Sian McDermott: Headteacher Rowland Hill Nursery School and Children Centre
Melian Mansfield: Pembury House Chair of Governors
+ Mike McKenzie: Secondary Heads Rep. Headteacher Alexandra Park School
+ Will Wawn: Primary Heads Rep. Headteacher Bounds Green School
+ Gerry Robinson: Alternative Provision
+ Kurt Hintz: CoNEL

Also Invited

Mary Jarrett: Integrated Head of Service
Phil di Leo: Chair of Governors, The Vale
+ Tony Hartney: Headteacher Gladesmore, Chair, Schools Forum
Brian Smith: Schools Finance Manager
+ Ngozi Anuforo: Commissioning Manager

Attending

Robin Hindley: CoNEL
+ Lewis Antony: Finance Trainee

Sarah Hargreaves: Senior Governance Officer + Denotes absence

1. Welcome, apologies for absence and acceptance

- 1.1 The Chair (Martin Doyle) welcomed everyone present to the meeting.
- 1.2 Apologies for absence have been received from **Mike McKenzie**.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 19th November 2021

- 2.1 The minutes were **agreed** as a correct record of the meeting. They will be signed and returned for safe keeping when this is next possible.
- 2.2 MD asked that the minutes are circulated to the Special Heads meeting from now on. He will provide the contact details to the Clerk. **Action MD, SH**

3. Matters arising from the minutes

- 3.1 Year 14 placements have all now been confirmed for next September, but Martin, Robin and Dean will be setting up a joint working party to coordinate these placements for next year. **Action MD**
- 3.2 Pt 3.3 Mary to circulate the link to the feedback received on the SEND consultation; in particular that received from parents. **Action MJ**
- 3.3 Pt 3.4 WW is still to distribute the minutes of the School Block working party. It is assumed that they will be presented at the School Forum meeting next week. **Action WW**
- 3.4 Pt 3.5 The query about funded places at CoNEL wasn't passed on, however, following discussion, it was confirmed that only occupied places are now paid for.
- 3.4.1 MJ reported that she is currently reviewing all funded places.
- 3.5 Pt 3.6 The interface between the SEND Review and Early Years has been agreed. It was **agreed** that early expenditure on children's needs can prevent higher costs later on.

- 3.6 Pt 3.7 The level of financial information to come to this group was discussed. The full s251 document is unlikely to be necessary but relevant, up to date, information will be provided. MD to provide MJ with examples of what has previously been received for discussion. **Action MD, MJ**
- 3.6.1 BS reported that the ESFA have undertaken an informal review and looked at the HNB budget classifications to ensure that everything has been properly coded. The Council are reviewing the £1.3 million annual transfer from the High Needs Block to support Early Help services and reduction proposals will be taken to Schools Forum when the review is completed.
- 4. Minutes of the Early Years Forum meeting (17th November) for information**
- 4.1 Noted. See 3.5 above.
- 5. SEND Strategy and Written Statement of Action: Mary Jarrett**
- 5.1 Mary explained that this will be going to Scrutiny Committee for approval
- 5.2 There were 96 responses to the strategy consultation, There was only 1 response from a young person, but this is to be expected as the strategy was aimed at parents and practitioners in SEND Services. The strategy includes proposals for improving the participation of children and young people.
- 5.2.1 MJ confirmed that parents and carers of all pupils are included, but children younger than KS2 won't themselves be included at this stage.
- 6. s251: Brian Smith**
- 6.1 The next return will be in July 2022 and so the details will come to the HNB meeting on July 1st. It will form part of the HNB Recovery Plan. A further discussion can be held at the 11th February meeting
Action BS
- 6.2 *Members noted that they wish to receive in-year live data and not just historical data. It was suggested that data similar to that submitted to school governing bodies would be appropriate.* It was noted that this group does not have the same governance arrangements as a school GB; the level of scrutiny will be discussed at the next meeting.
- 7. HNB Recovery Update**
- 7.1 Presentation regarding ISOS work to be circulated with the minutes for discussion regarding review of funding to support children in mainstream schools with SEND. **Action MJ**
- 8. AOB**
- 8.1 Members discussed the SEND contingency fund. It was agreed that this system required review and this would be the work supported by Isos. Members noted:
- Concern about the quality of provision described in plans
 - Concern about the rigour used to establish the success in achieving outcomes from EHCPs.
 - Impact of SEND funding in mainstream schools with falling Rolls.
- MJ noted that there had been an additional 0.25% transfer to the Schools Block to address some of these extra costs.
- 8.1.2 MJ explained that if a school has more than 40% above the average number of SEND pupils they can access this additional funding. This applies to around a third of schools. BS said he would send the link to last year's distribution of funds. He confirmed that the same system would be used this year. **Action BS**
- 8.3 It was **agreed** that these minutes would go to the February Schools Forum meeting, not to next week's meeting.

There being no further business the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at **3.20pm**.