

Schools Forum

Date: 19 June 2025

Time: 08.30 to 10.30

Venue: MS Teams

Paper

A

Public

MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON 20 MARCH 2025 – HELD VIA MS TEAMS

NOTES WERE PRODUCED USING AI VIA COPILOT AS AGREED BY FORUM AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MEETING

1	Apologies	
	Apologies received from Alison Ashley, Sandra Holloway, Rachel Williams, Marilyn Hunt, Shelley Hurdley and John Hitchings	
2	Minutes and Matters Arising	
	The minutes <u>were</u> / <u>were not</u> accepted as a true record	tbc
3	Email from Schools Forum Member – Sandra Holloway	WD
	<p>Bill read an email from Marilyn expressing questions about whether the meeting minutes were sufficiently detailed. She emphasized that the minutes should reflect the debate and challenges presented by the members, not just the officers' recommendations and votes.</p> <p>Automated Minutes: David explained the council's transition to a more automated and efficient way of recording minutes using Co-pilot and video recordings. This approach aims to capture the entirety of the discussions and make the recordings publicly available.</p> <p>Member Feedback: David suggested that forum members flag any inaccuracies or points that need expansion ahead of the meeting. This proactive approach would help ensure that the minutes accurately reflect the discussions, debate and challenge presented.</p> <p>Recording of Meetings: David explained that the council records meetings and we should share the recordings publicly on YouTube. He encouraged forum members to review the recordings and flag any inaccuracies or points that need expansion. He also mentioned that the minutes are covered in each agenda point, and any concerns should be sent to Sam.</p> <p>Challenge in Governing Body Meetings: Mark highlighted the importance of recording challenges in governing body meetings, as Ofsted frequently asks for examples of such challenges. He expressed concern that the current minutes might not meet the standards required by Ofsted and suggested including a note at the bottom of the minutes referring to the full</p>	



	<p>audio recording. He stressed the importance of recording these challenges to meet Ofsted's standards. He emphasized the need for the minutes to reflect the challenges presented during the meetings. He suggested including a note at the bottom of the minutes referring to the full audio recording. This would provide a comprehensive record of the discussions and challenges presented.</p> <p>Feedback from ESFA: David mentioned that the ESFA had previously attended a Schools Forum meeting and provided positive feedback on the meeting's appropriateness and challenge. He agreed that including a note at the bottom of the minutes referring to the full audio recording addressing any concerns about the minutes would be beneficial.</p>	
4	<p>Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Monitoring 2024-25</p> <p>Stephen presented the DSG monitoring paper, reporting an in-year deficit of £11.473 million, which, when added to the previous year's deficit, results in a cumulative deficit of £14.178 million. He explained the reasons for the overspend in the early years block and high needs block, highlighting the increase in demand and cost for independent providers.</p> <p>In-Year Deficit: Stephen reported an in-year deficit of £11.473 million for the DSG. When added to the previous year's deficit, this results in a cumulative deficit of £14.178 million.</p> <p>Early Years Block: Stephen explained the reasons for the overspend in the early years block, including the introduction of new entitlements and the time lag in funding allocations based on updated census data.</p> <p>High Needs Block: Stephen highlighted the overspend in the high needs block, attributing it to increased demand for top-up funding in mainstream and special schools, as well as rising costs for independent providers.</p> <p>Independent Providers: Stephen emphasized the significant increase in demand and cost for independent providers, which has contributed to the high needs block overspend, although this had reduced significantly compared to the previous year.</p> <p>High Needs Block Overspend: Stephen detailed the overspend in the high needs block, attributing it to increased demand for top-up funding in mainstream and special schools, as well as the rising costs of independent providers. He emphasized the need for a multi-year forecast to address the deficit and mentioned an upcoming meeting with the DfE to discuss the DSG deficit and financial management plan.</p>	SW

Commented [DS1]: @Samantha Bradley this should be an action Sam.

Commented [SB2R1]: Hi David, I have noted in point 10 follow up tasks and added point 12 for the link to sit, but awaiting confirmation from web services. Thank you Sam



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	<p>Top-Up Funding: Stephen detailed the increased demand for top-up funding in mainstream and special schools, which has significantly contributed to the high needs block overspend.</p> <p>Independent Costs: Stephen highlighted the rising costs of independent providers as another major factor in the high needs block overspend. These costs have been driven by increased demand and price inflationary pressures.</p> <p>DfE Meeting: Stephen mentioned an upcoming meeting with the DfE to discuss the DSG deficit and financial management plan. This meeting aims to seek support and share best practices for addressing the financial challenges.</p> <p>Benchmarking and National Comparison: David acknowledged the importance of benchmarking and national comparison to understand the wider picture of SEND funding. He mentioned that Collins has done some comparative work and suggested bringing it to the next forum meeting to provide context and inform discussions.</p> <p>Future Discussions: David suggested bringing the comparative work to the next forum meeting. This would provide context and inform discussions on SEN funding and related challenges.</p>	
5	<p>Shropshire Schools Forum Constitution</p> <p>Sam advised that due to recent Academy conversions, the membership needs to be reapportioned. The new composition should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 4 primary head teachers ○ 1 secondary head teacher ○ 14 Academy places ○ 1 special school place ○ 1 PRU plac <p>Changes to representation: Sam advised that Sandra Holloway, previously a primary governor, requested to attend as an Academy representative following Meil Brace Academy conversion. This would leave 3 vacancies for Academy representatives.</p> <p>Terms of office: Sam advised several terms of office has expired and these would need to be extended.</p>	SB

Commented [DS3]: @Samantha Bradley this should be an action. I've also shared some comparative benchmarks from f40 for Collins to include in the next Forum meeting.

Commented [SB4R3]: Hi David, this has been added in point 10. Thank you Sam

Commented [DS5]: @Samantha Bradley this is an action.

Commented [SB6R5]: Hi David, the new listing was circulated after the Schools Forum meeting in March, but have added to point 10, so can put as action completed for June minutes. Thank you Sam



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	Recommendation: School forum was asked to approve proposed membership changes to apply from April 2025 and extension of terms of service. These were approved by the Schools Forum.	
6	<p>Impact of the AP/Inclusion Development Fund Jan 24 – Jan 25</p> <p>John presented the impact of the AP Development Fund, highlighting a 38% reduction in permanent exclusions in secondary schools. He emphasized the importance of providing assurances to schools about the continuity of funding and the need to develop a primary AP model to support inclusive practice.</p> <p>Reduction in Exclusions: John highlighted a 38% reduction in permanent exclusions in secondary schools, attributing this positive outcome to the impact of the AP Development Fund.</p> <p>Funding Continuity: John emphasized the importance of providing assurances to schools about the continuity of funding. This stability is crucial for schools to plan and implement effective inclusive practices.</p> <p>Primary AP Model: John discussed the need to develop a primary AP model to support inclusive practice. This model would extend the benefits of the AP Development Fund to primary schools, promoting inclusion from an early age.</p>	JR
7	<p>GSP, EYIAF and EHCP Top Up Funding</p> <p>Graduated Support Pathway (GSP): John explained the changes to the GSP, emphasizing the importance of providing the right funding at the right time for schools. He mentioned the introduction of a panel to review GSP requests and the involvement of education quality advisors to provide advice and guidance to schools.</p> <p>Early Years Inclusion and Advice Fund: John discussed the early years inclusion and advice fund, which aims to support nurseries and early years settings with specific resources and advice. He highlighted the importance of providing swift intervention and support for children in early years settings.</p> <p>EHCP Top-Up Funding and Hub Funding: John provided an update on the development of EHCP top-up funding and hub funding, emphasizing the need for transparency, fairness, and support for inclusion. He mentioned the use of a banding matrix to ensure clarity and fairness in funding allocations.</p>	LT/JR

Commented [DS7]: @Samantha Bradley Any update reports should have a general action for all Forum members to note the update and share with the groups/organisations they represent.



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	SEND Capital Funds: John and Andy discussed the development of SEND capital funds to support schools in creating inclusive spaces and adapting their environments to meet the needs of children with SEND. They emphasized the importance of providing resource to schools to develop inclusive spaces and support children effectively.	
8	Council Senior Leadership Team Changes David informed the forum about the changes to the council's senior leadership team structure, including his appointment as the new DCS from July. He assured the forum of consistency in reporting lines and key contacts during the transition period and mentioned the ongoing recruitment and induction of new staff.	DS
9	Communication Bill and David discussed the holding of the letter that has been drafted to send to Government regarding the ongoing funding of Shropshire schools and early years given that elections are due to take place in May.	
10	Follow Up Tasks Meeting Minutes Accuracy: Ensure that the video recordings of the school forum meetings are publicly available on the YouTube channel and circulate the link to forum members. . Meeting Minutes Accuracy: Add a note at the bottom of the minutes referring to the availability of the full audio recording of the meeting on YouTube. . Meeting Minutes Accuracy: Circulate the minutes earlier than before the next meeting to allow members to review and flag any inaccuracies or points that need expansion. Terms of Office: Circulate updated list (<i>actioned 20 March 2025</i>) EHCP Funding: Provide the percentage of the 15.9 million spent on high needs that is allocated to post-16 placements. Benchmarking and National Comparison of SEND funding: CE to bring paper to June 2025 Schools Forum	SB SB SB SB SW CE JR/CE

Commented [DS8]: @Samantha Bradley action here to review the letter with the new administration following the elections in May.



	<p>Development of Primary AP fund and Secondary fund: model the development of the Primary AP fund and continuation of the secondary fund in the multi-year forecast to confirm affordability</p> <p>Communication: Review drafted letter to send to Government regarding the ongoing funding of Shropshire Schools and Early Years once elections have taken place in May, to include new Members signatures</p> <p>Communication: Share the presentation slides and SLT key contacts with Schools Forum members. <i>(actioned 20 March 2025)</i></p>	<p>WD/DS</p> <p>SB</p>
11	<p>Future Meeting Dates</p> <p>Thursday 19 June 2025 Thursday 11 September 2025 (tbc) Thursday 13 November 2025 (tbc)</p>	
12	<p>Link to recording of Schools Forum Meeting – 20 March 2025</p> <p>Following email from Web Services, a SharePoint is being set up for ALL to have access to Schools Forum Documentation and Meeting Recordings.</p>	SB



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