

Schools' forum minutes – 22 November 2023

Minutes of the virtual Microsoft Teams meeting held on the 22 November 2023

Present

Schools Members

	Name
Mainstream Academies	Jane Ridgewell, Mike Hobbs, Rose Angus, Amelia Smith
Special Academies	~
Special School Governors	~
Special School Heads	Sarah Osborne
Secondary School Head Representatives	Anna White
Secondary School Governor Representatives	Sabera Seedat
Primary School Governors	Glenys Mulvany
Primary School Head representatives	Karl Stewart, Matt Potts, Richard McKenzie
Pupil Referral Unit	Shaun Whittingham

Non-School members

	Name
Teaching Unions	Jennifer Day
School Support Staff Unions	Samuel Randfield (Chair)
16-19 Providers	~
Early Years (private, voluntary or independent) providers	Farah Farooq (Substitute for Matthew Leedham)

In Attendance

	Role
Simon Walton	Principal Accountant, Finance – Leicester City Council
Martin Judson	Head of Finance – Leicester City Council
Sophie Maltby	Principal Education Officer – Leicester City Council
Jennifer Bradbury	Business Partner, Estates and Buildings Services – Leicester City Council
Karen Mills	Business Partner, Estates and Buildings Services – Leicester City Council

Karuna Bennett	Funding and Grants Manager - Leicester City Council
Kevin Smith	Service Manager – Hard Facilities Management - Leicester City Council
Cllr Vi Dempster	Lead Member for Education – Leicester City Council
Michael Wilsher	Head of Service Education Sufficiency and Admissions – Leicester City Council
Robyn Cooper	Clerk to Schools’ Forum – Leicester City Council
Steve McDonald	School Business Manager – Children’s Hospital School (Observer)

Prior to the start of the meeting, introductions were made, and Richard McKenzie was welcomed as the new Primary Headteacher representative.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Matthew Leedham (Farah Farooq was attending as a substitute).

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made in the business to be transacted.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting (4 October 2023)

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2023 were accepted as an accurate record.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

The 21 June 2023 minutes had been amended and uploaded onto the website.

The capital budget item was on the agenda for this meeting.

Karl Stewart asked whether the suggested amendment to the Scheme for Financing Schools Annex G to include some examples had been done. Martin Judson confirmed that it had been amended as per the discussion at the meeting. Karl Stewart asked whether the Scheme had been shared with schools. Simon Walton confirmed that it was sent out via an Extranet Bulletin.

5. Capital budget briefing (Jennifer Bradbury and Karen Mills)

Samuel Randfield explained that this item had been requested last academic year as there had been confusion around capital budgets and what was available to schools.

Jennifer Bradbury shared the presentation with the Forum on the Children's Capital Improvement Programme outlining the formation of the programme, the approval process and current/completed projects in 2023/24.

Questions were invited.

Karl Stewart – In terms of contacting schools, was this done at the end of the approval process?

Jennifer Bradbury stated that the Development Consultant Officer (DCO) should have regular contact with schools. She stated that once it had gone through the approval process it would be communicated back out to the school.

Karl Stewart - Schools would know they were on the list and work was planned?
Jennifer Bradbury stated yes.

Jane Ridgewell – In terms of the annual cycle, how far ahead that you have plans in place based on information that you gather?

Kevin Smith explained that a lot of work came through and they did not have the budget to do all of it. He explained that works were planned 12 months to 2 years in advance. He stated that if there was something coming to the end of life in school, he suggested that schools engaged with DCOs early to get on the approval process early before it became an emergency situation.

Karl Stewart – And this did not include Salix?

Kevin Smith confirmed that this was a completely different programme.

Karl Stewart – The DfE had recently carried out a survey in school, would the results of this feed into the data gathering?

Kevin Smith explained that the LA would normally receive a copy and it would feed into the process.

Jenny Day – How much had the impact of RAAC impinged on the work of the programme?

Kevin Smith explained that it had not impacted the programme as such. He stated that the works that had been put through as part of bidding process had gone through and happened. He explained that what had been impacted was the emergency provisions. Kevin Smith reiterated that if schools had things that they think will become an emergency in future, they needed to get these on the programme, so they did not have to deal with them as an emergency.

6. De-delegation consultation conclusion

The de-delegation consultation analysis report had been shared with the paperwork for the meeting. Simon Walton took the Forum through the results of the consultation. He highlighted that there had been a low turnout for the consultation, 23% overall with a 22% response rate from maintained primary schools (10 out of 45) and 29% from maintained secondary schools (2 out of 7).

Simon Walton highlighted the summary of the results and drew attention to the specific comments (appendix 1).

Voting – Primary

Samuel Randfield reminded all parties that only those representing the primary maintained sector were eligible to vote.

Social, Emotional and Mental Health Team (SEMH Team) for Leicester City
Primary Schools

4 in favour

0 against

Approved unanimously.

Primary School Improvement

4 in favour

0 against

Approved unanimously.

Assessment and moderation

4 in favour

0 against

Approved unanimously.

LA Strategic School Improvement

4 in favour

0 against

Approved unanimously.

Closing the Gap.

4 in favour

0 against

Approved unanimously.

Whatever It Takes

4 in favour

0 against

Approved unanimously.

Staff costs for trade union facility time

4 in favour

0 against

Approved unanimously.

Voting - Secondary

LA Strategic School Improvement

3 in favour

0 against

Approved unanimously.

Staff costs for trade union facility time

3 in favour

0 against

Approved unanimously.

7. Update on High Needs Block recovery plan

Martin Judson stated that he had explained that at the last meeting they were waiting for formal feedback following the meeting with the DfE. He stated that he was hoping to bring this to this meeting, however the response had been delayed as the DfE had come back with further questions and clarifications. Martin Judson stated that they would aim to bring this to the January meeting along with the presentation provided to the DfE and what was needed to enact the recovery process.

ACTION: Agenda item for next meeting.

8. Early years funding formula

The 2024 Early Years Expansion Consultation paper had been shared with the paperwork for the meeting. Martin Judson explained that the background to the consultation was that as part of new entitlements working parents would be able to access free childcare. He explained that by September 2025, parents could claim 30 hours of free childcare once their child turned 9 months up to when they started school. He explained the current entitlements and how this would be expanded and the timeframes for this as outlined on the paper.

Martin Judson explained that the DfE had not finalised the rates for LAs.

Martin Judson explained that the consultation was to seek views on how the LA would allocate funding to providers. He stated that the LA wanted to mirror what was currently done for 3- and 4-year-olds. He explained that there was not much flexibility. He stated that it was based on base rate per hour together with deprivation and quality related supplements (if and as applicable). Martin Judson highlighted that the deprivation supplement was mandatory, and the LA was proposing the same methodology at all levels. He explained that the proposal in terms of the quality supplement was in keeping with what was currently done for 3- and 4-year-olds.

Martin Judson explained that they would put in the rates per hour for supplements but not the base rate as this had not yet been finalised.

A closing date for responses would be 15 December 2023.

Martin Judson explained that by the January meeting the DfE should have informed LAs of the base rates. He would also report back on the consultation responses.

Glenys Mulvany – Who would the consultation be sent to?

Martin Judson explained that it would be sent to all providers - PVI's and Schools.

9. Any other business

There were no further items to discuss.