

Minutes of the Schools Forum

16 January 2025

-: Present :-

Steven Hulme, Stuart Bellworthy, Clive Star, Jim Piper, Tim Stephens, Jayne Jones, Alex Newton, Tamsin Summers, Laurence Frewin, Sarah Tomkinson (Chairwoman), Rachel Setter, Graham Pirt and Sally Banfield

(Also in attendance:)

1. Apologies/Changes to Membership

Apologies

Jake Grinsill Headteacher at Ilsham Academy primary academies.
Steve Margetts Principle Torquay Academy
Anya Williams Early Years finance and business officer.
Stewart Biddles Primary academies and I'm the chief executive of Riviera Education Trust, which is Oldway, Shippy and Rosland's primaries in Torbay.

Debbie Horn will be attending future meetings

2. Minutes of the last meeting

There was an error around the Synergy system on previous minutes –
Under Point 7 – The context and summary for this is written under point 9 (wraparound)
Under Point 8 Action is about insurance and not EY. The recommendation was agreed to reverse the £100,000 contribution
Under Point 9 - It was just an update was given around wraparound programme and money allocated to date – no actions

Coombe Pafford wanted noted in minutes regarding their concerns around the reduction of places at the school.

The DCS for Torbay stated that the councils officers are attending by invitation only to the Schools Forum.

3. Financial Report

Rob Parr presented to the board the forecast year end position.
The four main areas of concern remain the same as the standard forecast year end position that comes to each meeting. Currently the forecast is £1.409 million overspend. Last time at the forum it was £1.344. The areas are: -

- * South Devon College placements
- *Independent School Placements
- *EOTAS packages
- *EHCP in year adjustments for schools.

Torbay have since had the December figure come through for the EHCP in year adjustments and that shows a decrease of £30 K.

The board were informed that Finance continues to meet with the placements team each time that we need to do a budget monitoring and they liaise with the SEN team at pupil level. The forecast is for a net overspend at the end of 24/5 of nearly £6 million. There are two more years of safety valve payments to come through. The first one is expected to be £1.55 million and the final year is expected to be £3.1 million. A total of £4.65 million.

Unless anything changes in the next two years and we can reduce our spend, we won't be at a balanced position at the end of 26/7 with a deficit of £1.2 million.

The council have two years to make an impact on some of the high spend areas and we do not know what the settlements on the High Needs block will be in the next two years. Although this is still challenging we have made progress from where we were at £13 million deficit because of the Safety Valve agreement.

A request was made for an update of the Statutory override which is only running for another year - information will be delivered in due course.

National Funding Formulas Unit Values 24/25

Torbay Council are going to fund our school allocations for next year on the national funding formula rates that have been released by the ESFA.

Comparison between 24/25 & 25/26 DSG

The board were informed that a big increase in early years is due to the number of hours extending in various age groups and also a considerable increase in the high needs block of around 7%.

Centrally retained functions for 25/26

Planned pupil growth - **Agreed**

Schools' admission services. **Agreed**

Servicing the Schools Forum. **Agreed**

Funding moved from Schools block to High Needs Block **(it was agreed this was not necessary this coming financial year)**

Retained element of Early Years – **Partially agreed** -A detailed discussion was had regarding how current Early Years funding rates are decided and worked out. This includes what is attributed to the centrally retained funds and contributions from the High Needs Block. After a lengthy discussion the funding rates for 25/26 were agreed as the minimum rate providers will receive. However, an action was set to look at how any EY underspend is managed and also any future contributions to EY from the HNB. This will be brought back to the next forum as a paper for discussion and decision.

% Increase for Special Schools funding 25/26

The board was asked to agree to a decision that was previously made at the Schools Forum that the percentage increases in primary and secondary schools were higher than we were receiving on the high needs block. So, it was a decision

that we would match that increase for special schools, in effect this is allocating the 0.55% increase

All in agreement.

4. Forecast Year End position 24-25- Rob Parr

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9. Early Years potential hourly rates - Emma Kerridge

Finance discussed with the members the spreadsheet and changes proposed for this year.

Tim Stephens requests ring fencing and retaining the whole of the Early Years budget in the early year's money. So far £161,000 has gone to reduce the deficit. It was agreed that the funding rates would be shared with providers but it would be made clear that this would be the minimum with a potential increase once the decision has been made about Early Years budget grant spending.

Action

Agenda item for next forum 24th May 2025

10. Locality proposal Hannah Baker/Graham Pirt

Hannah Baker delivered her presentation on the Locality proposal. She explained that the local authority are not dictating that this has to be done but are still going to be fulfilling all of our other statutory duties in relation to SEND. Children's services are trying a new approach and trying to build by designing a system which will foster collaboration. At this stage EAL has not been discussed within the pilot but will be moving forward. The proposal is to enable our schools to enhance their ordinarily available provision in the area of speech, language and communication needs. There has been a limited response from post 16 but the Council welcomes further discussions. The council clarified that it is a collaboration.

Torbay Council are aligned with information coming from the Labour Government. 28 schools have agreed to join in a pilot with health colleagues to target Early Years Speech Language and Communication needs. The local authority is calling this a locality model. Children's Services will be writing to all schools and Early Years providers to ask if they would like to come on board.

Action

Children's Services will be writing to all schools to ask if they would like to come on board - HB

LF and GP to meet this week to discuss further the post 16 involvement.

11. MTS/Section 19/ERP's - Dan Hamer/Graham Pirt - verbal

MTS

1. Planning in line with the consultation
2. Interim leadership being provided via the Vul Pupils Team
3. 4 Yr 11 on site, 20+ in the Outreach offer
4. 67 children supports per year.

Section 19

1. Met with The Spires and Torquay Academy staff regarding S19
2. Coproduction of a self assessment process for secondary phase
3. With TASH for discussion.

Exclusion and Suspension

1. 21% reduction in secondary in the Autumn Term
2. 23% reduction in primary in the Autumn Term
3. Small increase in primary exclusion
4. Small decrease in secondary exclusion

Provision

1. 3 excluded primary children on EOTAS due to a lack of spaces for excluded children
2. Safety Valve prevents commissioning of more
3. EdClass online tuition being used for tuition as they are registered with OFSTED/DfE
4. Some parental pushbacks.

12. Safety Valve update - Hannah Baker/Grace Beer/Matt Gifford

Hannah shared the PowerPoint to the Forum of the graphs and figures.

Tribunals in Torbay have changed in their nature over the last 2/3 years. Previously they were about educational need and setting now they have a greater multi agency complexity considering health and social care needs.

ICEP costing

Torbay Council has too many children going to ISEP, they are all putting their prices up significantly and when children are placed in an ISEP they are difficult to bring back into special schools.

A reset of the position will be worked on over the next 2 years.

All ISEPS have gone to the IPOP panel and are exploring block contracts.

It was questioned if the top 3 placements in red were placed by tribunal and the council confirmed that was the case. It was added that we are going to put into place a placement ladder system whereby going to ISEP would mean we have exhausted everything else. For information the council are also looking at block contracting.

SEND Data

The slides were shared with the Forum, and it is possible to compare Torbay figures with other Local Authorities, go to www.public-alchemy.com

ACTION

Principal & CEO of South Devon Collage would like to see the evidence that drives the of the Locality Model.

**Email PowerPoint presentation with minutes.
Invite Sarah Miller to Schools Forum re Mapping work by ward and how they
have overlaid SLCN need against deprivation**

13. Home to school transport - Rachel Setter

Deferred

14. ToR - Sarah Tomkinson

Deferred

15. AOB

The next meeting 24th April 2025