

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting title: Nottinghamshire Early Years and Schools Forum
Date and time: 6th December, 2pm to 4pm
Location: Queen Elizabeth Academy NG19 7AP

Membership

'A' denotes absence

A	Andrew Rossington	Maintained Primary Head Teacher
A	Steve Border	Maintained Primary Head Teacher
	Helen Roberts	Maintained Primary Head Teacher – (Vice Chair)
	Nadeem Shah	Maintained Primary Head
	David Phillips	Maintained Secondary Head Teacher
A	Anne Hall	Academy Representative
	Neil Holmes	Academy Representative
	James Macdonald	Academy Representative - (Chair)
A	Neil Robinson	Academy Representative
	Daniel Moore	Academy Representative
	Ella Tuxford	Academy Representative
A	Matt Rooney	Maintained Special School Head Teacher
A	Jamie Hutchinson	Academy Special School Head Teacher
	Colin Barnard	Governor Maintained School Representative
A	Andy Palmer	Governor Maintained School Representative
	Laura Gapski	PVI - Early Years Group Member
A	Karen Richards	PVI - Early Years Group Member
	Nigel Frith	Church of England Diocese Representative
A	Louise Knott	14-19 Partnership Representative
	Joe Jefferies	Trade Union Representative - NASUWT
A	Jo Myers	Trade Union Representative - UNISON

In attendance:

Peter McConnochie	Service Director, Education, Learning and Skills
Irene Kakoullis	Group Manager, Early Childhood Services
Mandy Stratford	Early Years Strategic Manager, Early Childhood Services
Sarju Sheta	Finance Business Partner, Children and Families Finance
Jason Gooch	Finance Business Partner, Children and Families Finance
Toni Gardner	Assistant Accountant, Children and Families Finance (Clerk)

1.	<p>Welcome</p> <p>James Macdonald welcomed members and thanked Neil Holmes for hosting the meeting. Members were advised of the expenses policy and that members can claim mileage – 0.45p per mile Toni Gardner to send out claim form to all members. Stressed Forum is a statutory body, an advisory body for the LA, the importance for attending in person meetings as well as online meetings, that not everything can be carried out online.</p>							
	<p>Apologies</p> <p>Apologies were received from Andrew Rossington, Steve Border, Anne Hall, Neil Robinson, Matt Rooney, Jamie Hutchinson, Andy Palmer, Karen Richards, Louise Knott, Cllr Sam Smith, Colin Pettigrew, Karen Hughman and Naomi Clark. The following members advised attendance but could be late David Philips and Nigel Frith.</p> <p>Members were advised Halina Angus had resigned from the Forum.</p> <p>Apologies accepted.</p>							
2.	<p>Minutes – 9 November 2023</p> <p>Membership paper waiting on information will now be bought to the next meeting in February.</p> <p>Early years action for Karen Hughman, Peter McConnochie and Sarju Sheta will be covered in DSG paper item 3c.</p> <p>Jason Gooch – Supplementary grant, why it is forecasting an overspend in year? This is to do with the way the Early Years Block and Supplementary Early Years Block is funded and the formula behind this. Funding is based on the January census data January 2023 and January 2024 and the LA pay out on actual children in attendance/uptake. Typically, Summer term has the highest uptake normally working in LA's favour but for supplementary grant this is only from September 2023 to March 2024 (7 months) 2-year-olds is causing the overspend typically Autumn and Spring term actuals are higher than full year average. Any overspend in Early Years can be offset with any underspend in Early Years which is reflected in the forecast.</p> <p>Minutes approved as accurate.</p>	<p>ACTION</p> <p>JMc// PMc/ TG</p>						
3.	<p>3a Schools Consultation Results</p> <p>James Macdonald presented the paper.</p> <p>Discussion was had regards the Minster disapplication, with new members joining the Forum it was agreed that the disapplication needs to be represented to members with how the formula works, and why The Minster School is disadvantaged through the National Funding Formula due to their primary pupil intake. Paper and presentation of formula to be bought to June 2024 meeting ahead of school funding modelling work for 2025-26.</p> <p>School Local Funding Formula – recommendation to the LA on the local formula, capacity of Forum is advisory with the LA deciding.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="146 1948 1332 2027"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="146 1948 539 1989">Agree</th> <th data-bbox="539 1948 938 1989">Disagree</th> <th data-bbox="938 1948 1332 1989">Abstain</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="146 1989 539 2027">7</td> <td data-bbox="539 1989 938 2027">0</td> <td data-bbox="938 1989 1332 2027">1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Agree	Disagree	Abstain	7	0	1	<p>NC/ TG</p>
Agree	Disagree	Abstain						
7	0	1						

Funding formula – The proposition to use reserves for any shortfall in funding to deliver the National Funding Formula for 2024-25 for one year will not be possible, cannot recommend this option and therefore no vote taken for question 4 of consultation. Guidance from the ESFA requires a simple and transparent formula to allocate any funds from reserves, the following year a disapplication would be required to remove any reserve injection with a high probability of it being rejected as injection would be to meeting National Funding Formula for LA to then move away from the National Funding Formula when reserve are no longer able to plug the funding gap making proposal unsustainable for future years and at the risk of the LA.

More responses received than previous years mainly from maintained schools, most popular models voted on was Model 4 with 43% with Model 2 with 25%. Comments received mentioned many regards using reserves though comments are useful not able to proceed with this as previously mentioned.

Though there's been an increase in participation and engagement from previous years. A requirement for more schools to take part. Established that presenting at trust board was not the correct avenue as schools do not attend these, but to plan in July as this year and change to bespoke presentations regards formula and models to all schools and academies and to not present at trust boards unless requested to. With many academies as part of Trusts, recommendation to also send out invites to CEO's and CFO's possibly specific meetings just for this group of colleagues, so that these colleagues can give a direction to their schools.

Model criteria was stated.

- Model 2 if unaffordable reduce pupil factors only MFG at 0.5%
- Model 3 if unaffordable reduce pupil factors and lump sum MFG at 0.5%
- Model 4 if unaffordable reduce pupil factors only MFG at 0%
- Model 5 if unaffordable reduce pupil factors and lump sum MFG at 0%

MFG at 0% was explained and the spread of the unaffordability across the 4 models was stated as per the modelling. Model 4 unaffordability is spread across the most schools, members informed the only schools it doesn't impact are does in receipt of MPP (Minimum Per Pupil)

Model 4 was proposed by James Macdonald and seconded by Helen Roberts.

No other model proposed, vote taken on model 4 (if unaffordable to reduce pupil factors only and MFG at 0%).

Agree	Disagree	Abstain
8	0	0

If formula is affordable there would be no reduction on factor amounts and MFG would be set at 0.5% £2M as an amount was used as this was shortfall in 2023-24.

Paper to be taken to cabinet 8th January – to be submitted to ESFA 22nd January.

Vote on de-delegation. Members reminded this vote is not members decision but Forum decision

Free schools' meals eligibility assessment

Agree	Disagree	Abstain
3	0	0

**NC/
TG**

Support to underperforming ethnic minority groups and bilingual learners

Agree	Disagree	Abstain
3	0	0

Contingency for crisis communications

Agree	Disagree	Abstain
3	0	0

Trade Union Facilities

Agree	Disagree	Abstain
3	0	0

School Improvement

Agree	Disagree	Abstain
3	0	0

Comments 4 directly mention school improvement. Terminology school improvement for schools with causes for concern and only for schools with causes for concern. Therefore, this allocation not benefitting schools with no concerns a significant feeling amongst maintained head teachers is the lack of provision in school improvement for these schools. Significant work required to create greater capacity within the school improvement team or something else that would support these schools with school improvement, schools that are not classed as causes for concern.

School improvement is a service area that needs to be kept under review due to funding levels, level of de-delegation discussed yearly, loss of central government allocation in the region of 7 to £800,000 over two years, current de-delegation amount around £230,000 will be less for 2024-25 doesn't equate to a full-service provision, needs to be targeted to deliver statutory functions. The LA would want to provide a broader offer however is restricted by funding available as outlined in the 2022/23 consultation. Work continues to review the service. De-delegation vote in order to sustain a level of service not guaranteeing the future shape of the service. To deliver a service schools would want we could be looking at a de-delegation amount in the region of £24/£25 per pupil or more.

Mansfield schools would be prepared to pay this amount for a quality school improvement service, funding to this level was not the feedback Forum received this time last year (this was general consultation feedback for 23/24 not specifically Mansfield schools) but something to explore further. A suggestion for schools to have increased ownership of the direction of the service.

An update on the EIS to be presented and revisited in the June meeting.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Forum:

1. Notes the content of the report. – report noted
2. Undertakes the votes required to recommend the schools local funding formula for 2024-25. The schools local funding formula will be discussed at the Cabinet Member Briefing meeting on 8 January and then final approval on 22 January. The funding formula will be submitted to the ESFA on 22 January 2024. – Votes are above.

PMc/
KH

3. Undertakes vote required for Minister Disapplication – Votes are above.
4. Consider and agree the approach to be taken regarding the methodology of mirroring the National Funding Formula (in keeping with the acceptable minimum and maximum values) and reducing factors (if required) to ensure affordability of the 2024-25 formula.

3b Early Years Consultation 24-25

Mandy Stratford presented the paper, report to agree proposed consultation questions which were discussed. The hourly rate is influenced by the level of centrally retained by the council, up to 5% of entire budget can be retained which in the past as only been permitted from the 3- and 4-year-old allocation.

LAs can have a 95% pass through rate which was previously only taken from the 3- and 4-year-olds allocation, and this is now applicable from all funding allocations within the Early Years Block of the DSG.

Typo mistake in Appendix 1 which will be rectified: -

I agree with the proposal (A) to retain 2.2% from the entire allocation and offer the funding rates (A) above.

To be changed to

I agree with the proposal (A) to retain 1.9% from the entire allocation and offer the funding rates (A) above.

Inclusion fund – early estimates about 3,000 children per year group in subsequent years could be access early years entitlement. Therefore, a need for supplementary funding a paper will be brought to Forum in the future jointly with schools.

David Phillips arrived.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Forum:

1. Consider and agree the proposed questions to be included in the consultation for early years funding rates for 2024-2025.

Agree	Disagree	Abstain
9	0	0

No school improvement for Early Years, if service is being looked at maybe a consideration for it to include Early Years and this sector.

3c DSG Budget Monitoring

Sarju Sheta presented the paper with Jason Gooch detailing the figures for Early Years £240,000 underspend estimated on Early Years Block, £128,000 overspend estimated on supplementary grant, reiterated what was said earlier and advised should have updated figures for Early Years Block at the next meeting reflecting what Nottinghamshire has received.

	<p>Nigel Frith arrived.</p> <p>High needs Block contingency figure of £653,000 showing as expected to be fully spent, is the expectation that the £150,000 overspend is on top of the contingency spend?</p> <p>Contingency still being agreed where it will be spent also looking at schools that require improvement. The projected overspend will be interesting to see what period 8 forecasts, biggest pressure on this budget is placement costs and the commissioning of places in a challenging market, hence the underspend here last year – demand is higher not convinced forecast will transpire due to such a challenging market.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION/S</p> <p>That the Forum:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notes the content of the report – report noted. 							
<p>4.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Confirmation that the disapplication for Minister needs re-demonstrating to members, agreement this will be carried out at the June 2024 in person meeting.</p> <p>Agreement due to early years consultation going out later as LA was waiting for national funding allocations to have a vote via email in regards the early years consultation results week commencing 15th January 2024.</p> <p>Re-confirmed the decision and votes taken – no queries raised.</p>							
<p>5.</p>	<p>Confidentiality</p> <p>There were no confidential items.</p>							
<p>6.</p>	<p>Date and time of next meeting</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="148 1491 1335 1570"> <tr> <td>Wednesday 28 February 2024</td> <td>2-4pm</td> <td>Virtual Teams meeting</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Thursday 13 June 2024</td> <td>2-4pm</td> <td>St Giles (in person only)</td> </tr> </table>	Wednesday 28 February 2024	2-4pm	Virtual Teams meeting	Thursday 13 June 2024	2-4pm	St Giles (in person only)	
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