

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting title: Nottinghamshire Schools Forum
Date and time: 10 January 2018, 10am to 12 noon
Location: National Watersports Centre, NG12 2LU

Membership

'A' denotes absence

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| | Mr A Rossington | Maintained Primary Head Teacher (Gedling) |
| | Mrs H Atkins | Maintained Primary Head Teacher (Mansfield) – (Vice Chair) |
| A | Mrs H Richardson | Maintained Primary Head Teacher (Newark) |
| A | Ms L Regan | Maintained Primary Head Teacher (Ashfield) |
| | Ms L Toom | Maintained Primary Head Teacher (Rushcliffe) |
| | Ms L Corner-Brown | Maintained Primary Head Teacher (Broxtowe) |
| | Vacancy | Maintained Secondary Head Teacher |
| | Mr C Weaver | Academy Representative |
| A | Mr D Vasey | Academy Representative |
| | Mr J McGeachie | Academy Representative |
| | Vacancy | Academy Representative |
| | Vacancy | Academy Representative |
| | Vacancy | Academy Representative |
| | Vacancy | Academy Representative |
| | Ms D Wigley | Special School Head Teacher |
| | Mr A O'Malley | Academy Special School Head Teacher |
| A | Mr T Colton | Governor - Maintained Secondary |
| | Ms V Holland | Governor - Maintained Primary |
| | Vacancy | Governor |
| | Vacancy | Governor |
| | Vacancy | Governor |
| A | Ms C Walton | PVI - Early Years Group Member |
| | Ms K O'Connell | PVI - Early Years Group Member |
| | Mr C Cuomo | Diocesan Representative - (Chair) |
| A | Ms C Meese | Diocesan Representative |
| A | Ms L Maddison | Trades Union Representative |
| A | Mr J Jefferies | Trades Union Representative |

In attendance:

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| Mr C Pettigrew | Corporate Director – Children, and Families |
| Mrs M Clay | Service Director – Education Learning and Skills |
| Mrs S Summerscales | Senior Finance Business Partner, Children & Families Finance |
| Mrs L Foster | Acting Group Manager – Support to Schools Service |
| Mr C Savage | Principal Educational Psychologist |
| Mr M Rooney | Team Manager – SEND |
| Mr L Jones | Interim Service Director, Commissioning and Resources |
| Mr S Hawkins | Finance Business Partner, Children & Families Finance |
| Mrs T Gardner (Clerk) | Assistant Account, Children & Families Finance |

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| 1. | <p>Welcome</p> <p>Carlo Cuomo welcomed all members to the meeting and introductions were made.</p> | |
| | <p>Apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were received from Louise Regan, Helen Richardson, Dick Vasey, Tony Colton and Lorraine Maddison. Karen Richards replaces Chris Walton as an Early Years Group Member</p> | |
| 2. | <p>High Needs Block – Pressure</p> <p>Marion Clay presented the report. She explained that the meeting had been called for two reasons</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Non representation of Special Schools at the December 2017 meeting 2. Elected members wanted to ensure that the Schools Forum were clear of the implications of not approving the transfer of funds from the schools block are. <p>Marion confirmed that it was elected council members who have the final decision on the formula and this has been delayed to carry out an extraordinary meeting.</p> <p>Marion Clay explained that the high needs block is not a Local Authority budget but a school's budget and that the non ISB reserve would not be available to cover any future overspends due to it being forecast to enter a deficit by the end of 2017/18.</p> <p>Marion explained that the pressures being faced by Nottinghamshire's high needs block were not unique to Nottinghamshire and pressures were being felt by LA's throughout the country.</p> <p>Marion Clay stressed that even with the 0.5% transfer the high needs block would still be overspent in 2018/19 and that any 2017-18 deficit would be deducted from the new year (18-19) allocation. There will be an impact to Schools budget from April 2018.</p> <p>Marion Clay presented the appendices, and explained that the high needs review (appendix 5) was currently underway and that the appendices modelling effects on schools funding were attached (appendices 7 to 9).</p> <p>There was a pause for discussion before the financial modelling was discussed.</p> <p>Craig weaver stated that members appreciate the pressure and overspend in the High Needs Block, but that he felt it was a long term problem effecting future years.</p> <p>Adrian O'Malley asked what other Local Authorities were doing, and officers confirmed that some others that we have contacted were planning to do the same as NCC in seeking to transfer 0.5% the of Schools Block to the High Needs Block.</p> <p>Sue Summerscales reiterated that we are able to transfer 0.5% with Forum approval and anything above would need Secretary of State approval.</p> <p>Craig Weaver commented that schools have demands too and are trying to be inclusive, with increasing pressures. Even with the 0.5% transfer there is still an overspend so where will this come from, would School Partnerships be reduced to cover the rest?</p> <p>Craig Weaver requested more detailed information on appendix 7. He commented that where a school has an overspend they would need to make efficiency savings and asked if operational efficiencies been looked at.</p> <p>Linda Foster explained that the strategic review (appendix 6) covered this. The Local Authority has statutory duties and schools draw on the service as and when required. Currently there is £30,000 for management cost, something we are currently looking at, with the possibility of reducing this to half.</p> | ACTION |

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| <p>Marion Clay confirmed there was very little in the High Needs Block to support management.</p> <p>Linda Foster further added that we are still looking at all of this using Appendix 6. The Local Authority want to work with schools and academies to make changes together. There is a freeze on vacancies, which will impact schools though we are looking at new ways of working.</p> <p>Marion Clay stressed a solution to this cannot be achieved with just Local Authority officers but as a group with Schools working together.</p> <p>Craig Weaver is concerned that primary, secondary and special schools money is being used to fund very expensive provision, and are we feeding a bit of a beast? There is an understanding about plugging the gap for now but cannot see where this is going to ever stop, with no provision like this in Nottingham.</p> <p>Charles Savage explained that the increase in children with SEND is out of our control. The mechanics of the issue can be looked at and that the systems are clogged. Due to pressure on the Additional Family Need (AFN) budget EHC plans are sought which then put more pressure on budgets than if we had been able to help from within the AFN allocations. This will not be a quick fix but we have seen a change in mechanics can reduce the constant increase, something we have had some success in.</p> <p>Laurence Jones – we also need to start modelling needs and not just finance, though it will take time and is complicated. Other areas to look at regards Independent Schools could be to buy block places and not just spot places to reduce costs.</p> <p>Carlo Cuomo – What would have helped with pressure would have been the free school application unfortunately we were turned down.</p> <p>Matt Rooney – discussed the special free school and expansions and confirmed that the free school route would re-open again which the Local Authority will pursue. We have a moral duty for children to attend special provision in their local communities.</p> <p>Marion Clay added that the DFE were actively looking at those schools who can provide their own provision.</p> <p>James McGeachie commented that he was surprised that the LA were not presenting more detail on the issues in INMas it is such a huge percentage of the funding. He agreed with points made by Craig Weaver and asked if the Local Authority had looked at authorities ahead of the game to see what they were doing.</p> <p>Linda Foster advised this had not been actioned, but agreed with James McGeachie and this would be added to the plan and that it could be funded from the HN strategic review grant.</p> <p>Carlo Cuomo pointed out that this would only be meaningful if the Local Authorities had similar characters to Nottinghamshire, therefore it was agreed to look at our statistical neighbours.</p> <p>Charles Savage explained that Additional Family Needs has been a fixed budget, High Level Needs is demand led, and as always had a balance budget, 17-18 will be the first year with a deficit. Foundation stage 2 is where the demand is so this will be long-term. The amount of £10,987 has been the same for a number of years and though it's not</p> | <p>LF</p> |
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decreased in real terms it has due to rising costs.

Adrian O'Malley said that If we don't top slice we would have to reduce budgets even more, which would cause more to look at IMN places.

Helen Atkins wanted to point out two issues, the first was the length of time it takes the Local Authority to address issues. We were hurtling towards this situation years ago.

The second issue was the possibility of becoming divisive between schools, and to avoid this we need to work together.

Carlo Cuomo with only 0.5% being the allowable transfer without secretary of state approval the process will be slow.

Dawn Wigley discussed how the Health contribution changes have had a big impact on specials schools and that the statutory duty lies only with Education out of the 3 partners involved.

Within Dawn's school they have 5 complex medical needs children, nurses have been taken away so all care needs to be funded from the education budget. Physio and speech specialists are also been removed causing the school to lose a lot of tribunals. The cost to the school due to this change in Health is costing between 12-15% of the schools budget.

Linda foster added that Specials schools are in the process of drafting a letter through their trust board to go to national level to explain and point out the pressures.

James McGeachie commented that the process of calling this meeting was concerning to himself and the schools he represents. It seems a vote was taken, the outcome has been ignored, and there is a feeling of unfairness. He asked whether the vote of members present at the last meeting but not at this one be taken into account?

Carlo Cuomo reminded the Forum that a precedence has already been set with a similar situation in 2015 when a vote was re-taken. Proxy can be given to take your vote if you are not present.

Chris Weaver asked should the forum vote to re-vote on the 0.5% transfer. Carlo Cuomo confirmed a consensus from Forum Members is required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Schools Forum:

1. Notes the content of the report – report was noted
2. Acknowledges that the current financial position of the HNB is unsustainable and needs to be addressed – this was acknowledged.
3. Considers retaking the vote regarding the 0.5% transfer.

| For | Against | Abstentions |
|-----|---------|-------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 |

Do you agree with the proposal to transfer 0.5% from the total schools block funding to the high needs block?

| For | Against | Abstentions |
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| 6 | 5 | 1 |

NB the chair had the casting vote after the vote was tied.

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| | <p>4. Considers the alternatives for funding the HNB shortfall – More work is required and this will be bought back to the Forum in the February meeting.</p> <p>5. Continues to receive reports from the High Needs review on-going until Summer 2018 as part of the mitigating actions – This was agreed.</p> <p>Linda Foster added that this would give the Local Authority time to work with Schools to find solutions together as a group.</p> <p>Craig Weaver – as a school we will be affected more than 0.5% as this was straight forward it's the rest of the deficit that will have a greater impact.</p> <p>Carlo Cuomo – the 0.5% is to buy us time to carry out the review which will be a long process.</p> <p>Steve Hawkins talked through appendix 7 and reiterated that these were illustrative. Craig Weaver would like more detailed modelling at a school level around appendix 7, table 3 to be able to make a more informed decision.</p> <p>Sue Summerscales informed the Forum members that the proposal for the transfer in the consultation was based on a per pupil amount, which would mean a contribution from all schools. In order to do this we have had to submit a disapplication form to the Secretary of State and are still awaiting a decision.</p> <p>Carlo Cuomo understood, but it's the time required to give the review and decisions to be made. It's important that we have a snapshot throughout the year and proposed this becomes a regular agenda item.</p> <p>Linda Foster requested that all members go back to the schools they represent and strongly encourage them to engage with this review as only together we are going to make the right decisions.</p> <p>Helen Atkins – we need to get this done and not use times as an excuse.</p> <p>Linda Foster – advised this projected has been given to an outside consultant due to time.</p> <p>Marion Clay made Forum Members aware that the number of employees in departments are a fraction of what they were, and work is carried out as fast as possible but capacity is stretched. Difficult decisions will need to be made unless something changes nationally.</p> | TG | | | | | | | | |
| <p>3.</p> | <p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Sue Summerscales advised that we have received Nottinghamshire's Schools Block settlement and we have 1,900 additional pupils spread evenly over the primary and secondary phase. This has resulted in an extra £16 million – ½ from the National Funding Formula and ½ from the additional pupil numbers.</p> | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>7.</p> | <p>Confidentiality</p> <p>No items were identified as confidential.</p> | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>8.</p> | <p>Date and time of next meeting</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="183 1921 1238 2072"> <tr> <td>Thursday 8th February 2018</td> <td>2-4pm National Watersports Centre</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tuesday 5th June 2018</td> <td>2-4pm National Watersports Centre</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tuesday 18th September 2018</td> <td>2-4pm National Watersports Centre</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Thursday 18th October 2018</td> <td>2-4pm National Watersports Centre</td> </tr> </table> | Thursday 8 th February 2018 | 2-4pm National Watersports Centre | Tuesday 5 th June 2018 | 2-4pm National Watersports Centre | Tuesday 18 th September 2018 | 2-4pm National Watersports Centre | Thursday 18 th October 2018 | 2-4pm National Watersports Centre | |
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| | Thursday 6 th December 2018 | 2-4pm National Watersports Centre | | |
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