

# MINUTES OF MEETING

**Meeting title:** Nottinghamshire Early Years and Schools Forum  
**Date and time:** 9<sup>th</sup> December 2021, 2pm to 4pm  
**Location:** Virtual Meeting – Microsoft Teams

## Membership

*'A' denotes absence*

	Andrew Rossington	Maintained Primary Head Teacher - Gedling
A	Ben Waldram	Maintained Primary Head Teacher - Newark
	Steve Border	Maintained Primary Head Teacher - Rushcliffe
	David Phillips	Maintained Secondary Head Teacher
	Dr Philip Smith	Academy Representative
	Halina Angus	Academy Representative
A	Anne Hall	Academy Representative – (Vice Chair)
	Neil Holmes	Academy Representative
	James Macdonald	Academy Representative - (Chair)
	Neil Robinson	Academy Representative
	Matt Rooney	Maintained Special School Head Teacher
	Jamie Hutchinson	Academy Special School Head Teacher
	Colin Barnard	Governor Maintained School Representative
	Andy Palmer	Governor Maintained School Representative
	Fiona Jones	Governor Academy Representative
A	Paul Hawkins	Governor Academy Representative
	Jacquie Sainsbury	Governor Special School Representative
	Laura Gapski	PVI - Early Years Group Member
	Karen Richards	PVI - Early Years Group Member
	Nigel Frith	Church of England Diocese Representative
A	Daniel Moore	Catholic Diocese Representative
A	Louise Knott	14-19 Partnership Representative
	Joe Jefferies	Trade Union Representative - NASUWT
	Jo Myers	Trade Union Representative - UNISON

## ***In attendance:***

Cllr Sam Smith	Conservative County Councillor for Newark East
Marion Clay	Service Director, Education, Learning and Skills
Naomi Clark	Senior Finance Business Partner, Children and Families Finance
Irene Kakoullis	Group Manager, Early Childhood Services
Mark Needham	Finance Business Partner, Children and Families Finance
Colin Pettigrew	Corporate Director, Children, Families and Cultural Services
Toni Gardner	Assistant Accountant, Children and Families Finance (Clerk)

1.	<p><b>Welcome</b></p> <p>James Macdonald welcomed all members to the meeting.</p>	
	<p><b>Apologies</b></p> <p>Apologies were received from Ben Waldram, Anne Hall, Paul Hawkins, Louise Knott, and Daniel Moore. Members were advised that Andy Seymour had resigned from the forum. There are four vacancies on the forum, two in the maintained primary sector and two in the academy sector, positions to be advertised in the new year if possible before February meeting.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Minutes – 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021</b></p> <p>Minutes approved as accurate and correct.</p>	<p><b>ACTION</b></p>
3.	<p><b>3a. DSG Budget Monitoring including High Needs update</b></p> <p>Mark Needham presented the paper. There was not a great deal of change from the last reports presented at the December meeting, forecast overall is an overspend of just over 800,000. The main areas being High Needs Block, which is £2.4 million over, that's offset by the Early Years Block which is forecasting an underspend of just under £1.6 million. We continue to work on the 2022-23 budget and discussions are being had in regards where the increase in the High Needs Block will be allocated; the final allocation from the Education &amp; Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) will be confirmed later this month.</p> <p>Main areas of focus on using the increase in funding are staffing costs, so pay awards. The overspending areas as mentioned, independent sector, post 16 and the special school places as we try to increase the number of pupils that our schools take. There are some projects as well to increase the size of the estate, modelling for this is being worked on, this does come with a caveat that it will need to be contained within the funding allocation that we have.</p> <p>There continues to be a large backlog on EHC assessments due to the pandemic. This is affecting the data trends, which complicates some of the estimates and forecasting on what the budgets will need for next year.</p> <p>The Early Years Block will continue to be monitored on a termly basis and any underspend will be reported to the Forum.</p> <p>Colin Pettigrew mentioned that various local authorities in the Midlands are predicting an overspend of £5 million some an overspend of £20 million, and though it may not be a great comfort Nottinghamshire's projected overspend around £2.4 million which might go down to £1.9 million is relatively smaller than our peers across the Midlands</p> <p>A discussion was had around future schools budget position, Andrew Rossington mentioned that he had read 1 in 4 schools could have a deficit budget in the future. Mark Needham advised that the school finance team would be in a better position to advise on schools' deficits or surplus budgets, from memory the reserve across all maintained schools in our area increased last year (For info £17.4m in 2019/20 to £24.7m in 2020/21). Naomi Clark advised that the school's finance team monitor any schools that go into deficit and a deficit recovery plan is put in place, Nottinghamshire is not looking like that at all.</p> <p><b>RECOMMENDATION/S</b></p> <p>That the Forum:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notes the content of the report – noted</li> </ol>	

### 3b. 2022/23 National Funding Formula – Consultation responses

Naomi Clark presented the paper and advised that she would go through the responses received, which were very low, only 12 responses.

Appendix A shows a summary of the answers and comments received.

All agreed that the responses were very low and going forward we need to find a better way of engaging schools and academies so that they understand the formula better and take part in the consultation which will give a better and broader representation.

Suggestions to consider were: -

- Request a nil return or confirmation of receipt
- Send out reminders
- Carry out workshops to engage schools and academies in the consultation and to talk through the National and Local Formula
- An agenda item at Head Teachers meeting
- Governors' newsletter, as a standard agenda item for Governing Boards and Governor Hub

It was agreed that when voting we would request if a member is not in agreement or abstains, otherwise we would accept all agreed.

Nottinghamshire is following the National Funding Formula as closely as possible, question one is to continue with this principle.

Eligible to vote are Schools, Academy, Governor and PVI members

**Question 1: -**

**In order to continue with the principle to mirror the NFF as far as possible the local authority would need to increase the unit values for each factor as detailed in Appendix 1.**

All Members agreed

**Question 2: -**

**To continue with the principle to mirror the NFF as closely as possible the local authority would continue to set the MFG at 2.00% (subject to affordability).**

All Members agreed

Question 3 we received a mixed response to this question. 58% were in favour, 25% against and 17% not sure.

**Question 3: -**

**In order to make the formula affordable a gains cap may be required for 2022-23. In consideration with Models 1 – 3 (Appendix 2) which illustrate the impact of a gains cap set at 2.80%, 2.75% and 2.6%**

All Members agreed

Moving onto de-delegation, votes are required only from maintained primary members for the primary element and the maintained secondary members for the secondary element.

**Question 4: -**

**As a representative of a maintained primary school, do you agree to the de-delegation of the following in 2022-23?**

**Free school meals eligibility assessment?**

**Support to underperforming ethnic minority groups and bilingual learners?**

**Contingency for crisis communications?**

### **Trade Union Facilities?**

All maintained primary members agreed all four de-delegation elements.

**As a representative of a maintained secondary school, do you agree to the de-delegation of the following in 2022-23?**

**Free school meals eligibility assessment?**

**Support to underperforming ethnic minority groups and bilingual learners?**

**Trade Union Facilities?**

All maintained secondary members agreed all three de-delegation elements.

### **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 2022-23 for approval by the County Council Policy Committee on 10 February 2022 and for submission to the ESFA on 21 January 2022 – This has been actioned and outcome is listed above

This will go to policy committee 10<sup>th</sup> February for approval, once we have final DSG allocations which we expected to receive before schools break for Christmas

3. Consider and agree the approach to be taken to the level of the MFG and gains cap to ensure affordability of the 2022-23 formula – this is addressed above with the agreement of a 2% MFG and an introduction of a gains cap to make the formula affordable if required.

### **3c. 2022/23 Early Years Funding – Consultation responses**

Irene Kakoullis presented the paper.

Consultation had the same time scale as the school's consultation, at the last forum there had been an announcement there would be additional funding for the Early Years Block, but Nottinghamshire's hourly rate hadn't been confirmed or announced.

As the questions are different to the consultation it would make sense to go through the report.

At the last forum meeting in principle, we agreed that whatever uplift we got for the hourly rates in early years, 100% of this would be passported over to early years settings.

The consultation had a much better response compared to last year, with 100 settings responding.

The first question, most responses were in favour, concerns and comments were around the living wage minimum going up and the affordability of this.

We also asked the sector if they understood that there would be a temporary uplift?

This can only be done once we have census information and can confirm if and exactly what the underspend is. Any underspend in the Early Years Block would be given out to settings, though not ideal, as it's late in the year.

Members were taken through the report and advised of the increases and hourly rate to the Early Years Block.

<p><b>Question 1: -</b>  <b>In line with Government funding announcements, it is proposed that the basic hourly rate for 2-year-olds is increased by 21p from £5.39 to £5.60.</b></p> <p>All Members agreed</p> <p><b>Question 2: -</b>  <b>In line with Government funding announcements, it is proposed that the basic hourly rate for 3- and 4-year-olds is increased by 17p from £4.31 to £4.48</b></p> <p>All Members agreed</p> <p><b>Question 3: -</b>  <b>In line with Government funding announcements, it is proposed that the hourly top up rate for 3- and 4-year-olds eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium is increased by 7p from £0.53 to £0.60.</b></p> <p>All Members agreed</p> <p><b>Question 4: -</b>  <b>In line with Government funding announcements, it is proposed that the hourly top up rate for all Looked After Children is increased by 7p per hour from £0.53 to £0.60.</b></p> <p>All Members agreed</p> <p><b>Question 5: -</b>  <b>In line with Government funding announcements, it is proposed that the Disability Access Fund for 3- and 4-year-olds claiming Disability Living Allowance is increased from £615 per annum to £800 per annum</b></p> <p>All Members agreed</p> <p><b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b></p> <p>That the Forum:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notes the content of the report – report noted.</li> <li>2. Undertakes the votes required to recommend the early years local funding formula for 2022-23 for approval by the County Council Policy Committee on 10 February 2022 and for submission to the ESFA by the deadline of 31 March 2022 – vote taken and recorded above.</li> </ol> <p>Laura Gapski requested that any information sessions, workshops, different ways of engaging schools in the consultation and about the formula be extended to the PVI sector. It was agreed that we should replicate anything we do across the whole of early years and schools.</p>	
<p><b>4. Any Other Business</b></p> <p>James Macdonald, February’s meeting is virtual as planned, as it works better with the High Needs presentation and colleagues been able to attend.  We have new members that we have never met in person, which is not ideal, we are still in a pandemic but something to discuss and decide on later in the year. If still acceptable with David, a meeting face to face at Chilwell School next year would be an idea.</p>	

5.	<p><b>Confidentiality</b></p> <p>There were no confidential items.</p>							
6.	<p><b>Date and time of next meeting</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="148 322 1018 394"> <tr> <td data-bbox="148 322 539 360">Thursday 24 February 22</td> <td data-bbox="539 322 651 360">2-4pm</td> <td data-bbox="651 322 1018 360">Virtual – Microsoft Teams</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="148 360 539 394">Thursday 16 June 22</td> <td data-bbox="539 360 651 394">2-4pm</td> <td data-bbox="651 360 1018 394">Virtual – Microsoft Teams</td> </tr> </table>	Thursday 24 February 22	2-4pm	Virtual – Microsoft Teams	Thursday 16 June 22	2-4pm	Virtual – Microsoft Teams	
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