

# MINUTES OF MEETING



**Nottinghamshire  
County Council**

**Meeting title:** Nottinghamshire Early Years and Schools Forum  
**Date and time:** 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022, 2pm to 4pm  
**Location:** In person – Chilwell School NG9 5AL

## Membership

*'A' denotes absence*

A	Andrew Rossington	Maintained Primary Head Teacher
	Ben Waldram	Maintained Primary Head Teacher
	Steve Border	Maintained Primary Head Teacher
	Helen Roberts	Maintained Primary Head Teacher
	David Phillips	Maintained Secondary Head Teacher
A	Dr Philip Smith	Academy Representative
A	Halina Angus	Academy Representative
A	Anne Hall	Academy Representative – (Vice Chair)
A	Neil Holmes	Academy Representative
	James Macdonald	Academy Representative - (Chair)
A	Neil Robinson	Academy Representative
A	Matt Rooney	Maintained Special School Head Teacher
	Jamie Hutchinson	Academy Special School Head Teacher
A	Colin Barnard	Governor Maintained School Representative
A	Andy Palmer	Governor Maintained School Representative
A	Fiona Jones	Governor Academy Representative
A	Jacquie Sainsbury	Governor Special School Representative
	Laura Gapski	PVI - Early Years Group Member
A	Karen Richards	PVI - Early Years Group Member
A	Nigel Frith	Church of England Diocese Representative
	Daniel Moore	Catholic 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
Karen Hughman	Group Manager, Education Access, Standards and Safeguarding
Mandy Stratford	Early Years Strategic Manager
Naomi Clark	Senior Finance Business Partner, Children and Families Finance
Mark Needham	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><b>Welcome</b></p> <p>James Macdonald welcomed all members to the meeting and introduced Helen Roberts a new member for the maintained primary sector, with a special thanks to David Phillips for hosting the meeting.</p> <p>Members were informed that the meeting was not quorate so no decision could be made however the meeting was to continue, comments documented, election of Chair and Vice Chair and any reports requesting an approval would be carried forward to the November meeting.</p>
	<p><b>Apologies</b></p> <p>Apologies were received from Andrew Rossington, Anne Hall, Dr Philip Smith, Halina Angus, Neil Holmes, Neil Robinson, Matt Rooney, Colin Barnard, Andy Palmer, Fiona Jones, Karen Richards, Louise Knott, Jacquie Sainsbury, Nigel Frith, Councillor Sinead Anderson, Councillor Tracey Taylor and Colin Pettigrew.</p>
2.	<p><b>Minutes – 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022</b></p> <p>Jason Gooch updated forum members, Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) after further work were able to provide a split allocation for the additional 11p per hour for financial year 2021-22 (6p allocated in July 2022, the remaining 5p to be allocated in Autumn 2022 before October half term)</p> <p>James Macdonald thanked members who were involved in the response for the Direct Formula Consultation this has been submitted on behalf of the forum unfortunately the website did not allow for a copy to be saved.</p> <p>A conversation was had around a venue for the November meeting and the requirement for this to be in person as the consultation includes large spreadsheets that need explaining.</p> <p>Meeting was not quorate therefore unable to approve minutes as accurate to be carried forward to November meeting.</p> <p><b>ACTION</b></p>
3.	<p><b>3a Election of Chair &amp; Vice Chair</b></p> <p>Carried forward to November meeting – members informed that Anne Hall would be standing down as Vice Chair for academic year 2022-23 so if interested members could think about this position, nominations etc</p>
	<p><b>3b Review of Forum Membership &amp; Constitution</b></p> <p>Toni Gardner presented the paper – no comments or questions. Carried forward to November meeting for approval, to continue with recruitment of vacancies.</p> <p>All vacancies currently in the academy sector to try and combat the low responses to also include an article on the schools’ bulletin and an email to trust CEO’s.</p>
	<p><b>3c DSG Financial Monitoring Period</b></p> <p>Mark Needham presented the paper. At period 5 the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is forecasting an underspend of £2.1m - £1.5m in the High Needs Block £0.6m in the Early Years Block.</p> <p>The High Needs underspend was explained as detailed top of page 2, an additional £6.3m was added into the independent specialist provision budget to cover previous overspends and anticipated increases in cost and demand, the increase in cost and</p>

<p>demand have not yet materialised officers will continue to monitor this budget closely.</p> <p>However, there is the new September 2022 intake (academic year) and a backlog of EHC assessments currently being carried out that need to be factored into the final forecast.</p> <p>The Early Years underspend full breakdown is detailed in Appendix B. Early Years numbers seem to have settled down after the pandemic and funding has reverted to pre-pandemic methodology this has enabled Jason Gooch to look at the funding received and the rate we pay out. A proposal to increase the hourly rate paid to providers for 2022-23 by 5p per hour for 3- &amp; 4-year-old provision will be presented under agenda item 3d. If this is agreed, it will increase the forecast expenditure in the Early Years by approximately £0.5 million, thereby reducing the underspend.</p> <p>Non-ISB reserve and growth funding was explained details on page 3 of the report.</p> <p>Question – the £1.5m underspend in the High Needs Block is the prediction this will go downwards? Officers at this point feel it could go either way if numbers don't come in then the underspend would increase but with more numbers and the impact of cost of living it could decrease and /or go into an overspend.</p> <p>James Macdonald – always been an aim to carry one percent in reserves current levels enables us to meet this, Nottinghamshire are now in a much better position than the last few years in regards reserve levels. No longer on the cliff edge and in a more robust position.</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 – report noted</li> </ol>	
<p><b>3d Proposal to Increase the In Year Funding Financial Year 2022-2023</b></p> <p>Mandy Stratford presented the paper.</p> <p>In previous years, any underspend has been allocated as a lump sum to providers in the following financial year once the final allocations have been known.</p> <p>This financial year, we have been able to forecast with more certainty, any likely underspend, this is due to a revised monitoring process for payments to the PVI and Schools, using this data we have better predict numbers of children more accurately in attendance.</p> <p>This has enabled Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) to make payments to providers within this financial year. The proposal is to offer a lump sum payment in year for Summer 22 and Autumn 22 to be paid in late Autumn equating to 5p per 3- and 4-year-old attending in those terms, and for Spring 23 term increase the hourly rate paid to providers by 5p to £4.53.</p> <p>The Early Years consultation group are already aware of this and agree</p> <p><b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b></p> <p>That the Forum:</p>	

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Accept and agree the recommendation to uplift the hourly rate for three and four year olds by 5p per hour per child</li> <li>2. To allow Early Childhood Services to make one lump sum payment for all children in attendance in the Summer and Autumn Terms 2022 in late Autumn term</li> <li>3. To allow Early Childhood Services to uplift the hourly rate by 5p on children attending in the Spring 2023 term</li> </ol> <p>Carried forward to November meeting for approval</p>	
	<p><b>3e Cessation of the School Improvement Monitoring &amp; Brokering Grant (LAM Grant)</b></p> <p>Karen Hughman presented the paper.</p> <p>This is an annual grant used to undertake school improvement by Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) for maintained schools of which we currently have 170+. The Department of Education (DfE) have stated in the white paper the intention that all schools academise by 2030 where the trust will be taking on the role of school improvement.</p> <p>The DfE have already taken the decision to stop this grant from April 2023, and in April 2022 we only received around half of our allocation. The grant is used to pay Nottinghamshire's school improvement team and to commission support for schools in a category from education associate advisors. The pandemic has meant we have not spent at the rate we normally would and with what we have in reserves we can continue the service for this academic year.</p> <p>After this we need to make some serious decisions about how we take the funding for this service forward. DfE are aware of the gap between when funding stops and the intended date for all schools to academise. They have revised guidance to allow for the cost to be de-delegated.</p> <p>Team consists of 1 x Team Manager, 6 x Advisers and 2 x Regional Recovery Consultants, the table shows how the positions are funded not all but most of it comes from the school improvement grant. To keep this team going and to maintain the intervention work as present, we need a decision on where the funding will come from.</p> <p>The paper has three options: -</p> <p>Option 1 - De-delegate the entire amount on a per pupil basis from maintained schools' budgets.</p> <p>Option 2 - The LA could increase its contribution and make up the difference</p> <p>Option 3 – Schools and the LA work together to make up the funding required to keep the teams going</p> <p>Without funding the service would have to reduce or cease. Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) would be unable to support those schools going into Ofsted categories or at risk of going into Ofsted categories and working with good schools that are going into decline.</p>	

<p>Naomi Clark mentioned the current budget pressures faced by Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) and that option 2 would be unlikely. Maintained members discussed increasing cost for schools, how the full amount de-delegated solely from schools would be extremely difficult and challenging not only next year but going forward. The service is of value and maintained members would not want to lose or abandon the service, but with all costs increasing it would be difficult to see how this could be funded just from schools. Acknowledgment that the service is there for the greater and collective good and not just for schools that have used the service to date.</p> <p>James Macdonald - paper and subject to be discussed further in the November meeting would need to be part of the consultation process.</p> <p>A query was raised on the sustainability of funding from reserves with a seven-year gap before all schools are academized. If we find a solution what next is going to be removed that we will have to find the funding for?</p> <p>Daniel Moore – would there come a time that as more maintained schools convert, we would need to review the level of service? It was agreed this was critical and would require a review as and when schools convert but there needs to be an 18 to 24 months commitment in place for people and school security. Members are aware this is not just a Nottinghamshire issue, but a national issue and it will be interesting to see how this is dealt with by other LA's</p> <p>Mark Needham – officers would review this budget and service so as and when schools convert, we would monitor the affect. Amounts de-delegated would need to be consulted on even if they remain the same so it would be bought to forum at least once a year around the consultation time.</p> <p>James Macdonald - with the difficulty around this we need to ensure that schools engage with the school's consultation, last year only 12 responses were received. Can we ensure education bulletins have a script highlighted and signposted to the consultation with a sentence around the importance of responding?</p> <p>We need to find better ways of getting schools to engage in the process, last years it was agreed that we would carry out consultation workshops to present and explain the options.</p> <p>Carried forward to November meeting for further discuss</p>	
<p><b>3f 2023/24 National Funding Formula</b></p> <p>Naomi Clark gave a verbal update.</p> <p>Headlines: -  National Funding Formula is increasing by 1.9% per pupil.  Sparsity is now a compulsory factor  This year the aim is about bringing the local formula 10% closer to the National Funding Formula (NFF) – Nottinghamshire have mirrored the NFF factor values for the last couple of years.  Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) is set between 0% and 0.5%</p> <p>Members were informed that in 22-23 we had a short fall in funding of around £600k, consultation was to introduce a gains cap if formula was unaffordable, this affected some small schools with the sparsity factor. This year we are looking to model</p>	

	<p>different options in the event the formula is once again affordable – members agreed with this approach</p> <p>Mark Needham – High Needs Funding the initial allocation for 23-24 for Nottinghamshire has an additional £6.8m a total of £109m, that's a 6.7% increase. This £6.8m is in addition to the supplementary grant advised in December of £3.9m</p> <p>£6.8m may seem a considerable amount but as a percentage based on previous years where we saw 17.8%, 13.9% and 15.5% for 23-24 the percentage increase isn't as large</p> <p>Final funding figure could change depending on imports/ exports outcome and October 22 census data – meetings and decisions will take place with colleagues on how this additional funding will be allocated trying to sort out issues such as the raise in cost of living.</p> <p>For 23-24 a change in guidance for special schools is that there will be an MFG of 3% - this could change what Nottinghamshire have tried to do over the last couple of years, where we have tried to increase and balance out all bands across special schools so that a Band C in one school is funded at the same level in another school.</p>													
<b>4.</b>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>Mark Needham – the Section 251 is a statutory document that is completed for all our Children's Services, aids with comparing against other Local Authorities (LA) if any one is interested this is on the Nottinghamshire County Council website.</p> <p>November meeting to be in person due to the consultation data a suggestion to try and hold this at County Hall, email to be sent to members re the importance of attendance in person for certain meetings from James Macdonald and Peter McConnochie.</p> <p>Members discussed options if a member is unable to attend and powers if a member continually missed meeting.</p> <p>In the absence of the elected representative, a substitute member can be sent and has full membership status at a forum meeting. The substitute member is part of the quorum and has voting rights, substitutes can be sent once in any academic year and a proxy form must be completed. Members who fail to attend 3 consecutive meetings must stand down to allow the election process for a new member to be undertaken.</p>	JM/PM												
<b>5.</b>	<p><b>Confidentiality</b></p> <p>There were no confidential items.</p>													
<b>6.</b>	<p><b>Date and time of next meeting</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Thursday 10 November 2022</td><td>2-4pm</td><td>In person – County Council</td></tr> <tr> <td>Thursday 8 December 2022</td><td>2-4pm</td><td>Virtual – Microsoft Teams</td></tr> <tr> <td>Thursday 23 February 2023</td><td>2-4pm</td><td>Virtual – Microsoft Teams</td></tr> <tr> <td>Thursday 15 June 2023</td><td>2-4pm</td><td>In person – Location TBC</td></tr> </table>	Thursday 10 November 2022	2-4pm	In person – County Council	Thursday 8 December 2022	2-4pm	Virtual – Microsoft Teams	Thursday 23 February 2023	2-4pm	Virtual – Microsoft Teams	Thursday 15 June 2023	2-4pm	In person – Location TBC	
Thursday 10 November 2022	2-4pm	In person – County Council												
Thursday 8 December 2022	2-4pm	Virtual – Microsoft Teams												
Thursday 23 February 2023	2-4pm	Virtual – Microsoft Teams												
Thursday 15 June 2023	2-4pm	In person – Location TBC												