

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting title: Nottinghamshire Early Years and Schools Forum
Date and time: 16th June 2022, 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
A	David Phillips	Maintained Secondary Head Teacher
A	Dr Philip Smith	Academy Representative
	Halina Angus	Academy Representative
	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
A	Colin Barnard	Governor Maintained School Representative
	Andy Palmer	Governor Maintained School Representative
	Fiona Jones	Governor Academy Representative
A	Paul Hawkins	Governor Academy Representative - resigned
A	Jacquie Sainsbury	Governor Special School Representative
	Laura Gapski	PVI - Early Years Group Member
	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:

Cllr Sinead Anderson	Conservative County Councillor for Mansfield West
Cllr Tracey Taylor	Conservative County Councillor for Misterton
Colin Pettigrew	Corporate Director Children, Families & Cultural Services
Marion Clay	Service Director, Education, Learning and Skills
Mandy Stratford	Early Years Strategic Manager
Steven Hawkins	Senior Pupil Place Planning Practitioner
Jason Gooch	Finance Business Partner, Children and Families Finance
Toni Gardner	Assistant Accountant, Children and Families Finance (Clerk)

<p>1. Welcome</p>	<p>James Macdonald welcomed all members to the meeting, two new Councillors were in attendance, Cllr Tracey Taylor and Cllr Sinead Anderson, introduction and a summary of their current roles was given to members.</p> <p>Cllr Tracey Taylor was chairman of Children’s in People’s Committee, Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) had recently moved to a cabinet system. Under the cabinet structure Cllr Tracey Taylor is the lead member for children’s services at NCC. It’s the same job, same office just a different title. The shuffle does mean that Cllr Sam Smith who had been attending Forum has moved and has taken a different position.</p> <p>Cllr Sinead Anderson was vice chair of Children’s in People’s Committee, is now deputy of the portfolio with Cllr Tracey Taylor. Both expressed thanks and look forward to working and meeting forum members.</p> <p>James Macdonald introduced and welcomed Jason Gooch to members, a NCC officer that would be presenting papers for Naomi Clark & Mark Needham. Jason Gooch gave a brief outline of his time at NCC and explained that from this financial year and moving forward he will be monitoring the early years block.</p>
	<p>Apologies</p> <p>Apologies were received from Ben Waldram, David Phillips, Dr Philip Smith, Colin Barnard, Jacque Sainsbury, Louise Knott, Nigel Firth, Naomi Clark and Mark Needham.</p>
<p>2. Minutes – 24th February 2022</p>	<p>ACTION</p> <p>Action point from page 3 – Toni Gardner confirmed this was sent out after the meeting to all members, along with the High Needs Presentation.</p> <p>Page 4 – Item 3d 2022-23 Early Years DSG Funding Central Expenditure, Jason Gooch pointed out there was a slight discrepancy in the paper and had been asked by the service to update members. At the bottom of page 5 ‘Teachers and Teaching Assistants in SFSS’ where it quotes 19.4 FTE teaching assistants this needs to read 16.4 FTE teaching assistants.</p> <p>Page 9 – A question had been received from Jamie Hutchinson, this has been addressed with both Jamie Hutchinson and Matt Rooney and was part of the special school network.</p> <p>Remaining minutes approved as accurate and correct.</p>
<p>3. 3a. Final Accounts 2021-22</p>	<p>Jason Gooch presented the paper, as this was being presented on behalf of Mark Needham any questions that cannot be answered would be taken back and response forwarded on to members.</p> <p>The table on page 1 was explained, the budget, expenditure, and variance. Members were advised that the Early Years underspend was only indicative at this stage as we have yet to receive Nottinghamshire’s final funding allocation, this is being expected in the very near future.</p> <p>Explanation for other variances was given, points 4, 5 and 6 of the report.</p> <p>Cllr Sinead Anderson asked what the APT budget cycle was and what did the acronym stand for. Toni Gardner advised this stood for ‘Authority Proforma Tool’ it’s</p>

completed by finance officers yearly with various school and academy information which then works out their individual budgets.

Moving on to the High Needs section point 5, Appendix A which was circulated by Toni Gardner earlier provides a full breakdown of the variances within the High Needs Block, this was then explained in detail by Jason Gooch, members were informed the main variance overspend was on the EHCP specialist provision, the impact on the block due to a lack of special school places and the overspend for Looked After Children specialist provision which relates to an increase in children residing and educated in other Local Authorities but funded by NCC.

Early Years Block point 6, Jason Gooch re-confirmed that this is an indicative underspend of 1.355m and that it was based on our forecast and not the confirmed allocation from the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

The narrative on page 3 was explained and the top totals of Appendix B were used as an example to aid the narrative, the funding method and payment method aren't aligned, and this has worked in our favour.

Subject to final confirmation from the ESFA, NCC are proposing to redistribute the underspend from the allocation for 3- and 4-year-olds entitlement at a rate of 11p per hour, per nursery child attending in year 21-22. This amount will be paid in one lump sum to providers at the beginning of the autumn term.

Further consultation on any potential opportunities to uplift the current and future hourly rate will take place in autumn term 2022, once a forecast for the current financial year (22-23) can be estimated.

Karen Richards asked why some of the underspend, around £200,000 has been retained, why will it not be all distributed to schools and early years providers. Jason Gooch clarified it was the 3- and 4-year-old allocation that was being re-distributed, any amount retained would be used to replenish the reserves. Last financial year the early years block was overspent by £880,000 which came from reserves the retained allocation will help replenish the reserve so that we can be resilient moving forward.

Karen Richards also asked why the 11p couldn't be given now, why were we waiting until the Autumn term. The allocation needs to be utilized on the pupils that were entitled to it and there now. Officers explained that the reason they were waiting until Autumn was because Nottinghamshire's allocation was not yet confirmed, the timetable for confirmation as not changed and we would be notified as previous years sometime in July. It was agreed that this would be taken back to see if we could allocate before the Autumn, there was a suggestion that maybe have 6p now and 5p in the Autumn term.

Laura Gapski echoed what Karen Richards had said about the retained amount that will be used to replenish the reserve and asked if an exercise should be carried out as a percentage of the overall allocation.

A conversation was had around birth rates and the significant decline, the downward trajectory, there was 500 fewer children admitted into Reception and it's believed could be several thousand less over the next few years, that secondaries are still dealing with the bulge but this decline in a few years would impact secondaries too. Colin Pettigrew – there's a subtle difference between sufficient primary school places across the county and sufficient primary school's places where we need those places, the situation that we have now in Nottinghamshire.

Mandy Stratford – With numbers dropping this also impacts on our ability to predict and forecast budgets going forward, why we need to be cautious of any re-distribution before we have had confirmation of our early years' allocation.

JG

<p>RECOMMENDATION/S</p> <p>That the Forum:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the contents of this report - noted 2. Note the carry forward of underspend detailed in paragraph 4 into 2022/23 – noted 3. To approve the distribution of the underspend for 3- & 4-year-olds for 2021/22 to the Early Years Sector <p>It was agreed that point 3 would be re-word as follows: - To approve the distribution of the underspend for 3- & 4-year-olds for 2021/22 to the Early Years Sector, with distribution to be actioned as soon as possible – Approved by all members</p>	
<p>3b. DSG Financial Monitoring Period 2 2022/23.</p> <p>Jason Gooch presented the paper and went through the figures for the 2022-23 DSG. Nottinghamshire has seen an increase of £38m, from £702m in 2021-22 to £740m in 2022-23. The split of the allocation and the forecast expenditure was detailed over the four blocks, the allocation for the early years block is indicative. Officers are working in the background to try and improve forecast of our early years block.</p> <p>A detailed explanation was given on the under and overspends related to the High Needs Block. Independent Specialist Provision EHCP (Education & Health Care Plans) has a budget of £26m significantly up from last year, the risks associated with forecasting EHCP's and the volatility of this budget, the use of the Schools non-ISB reserve the opening balance which includes the early years block which is still indicative and how we intend to replenish the reserves to account for some of the previous overspends and to increase the robustness of the reserve for future costs and demographic pressures.</p> <p>A further discussion was had around the retention percentage of the early years block, that not all the underspend (£200,000) was being re-distributed as it was going towards replenishing the reserves, which the previous year was used to cover the early years overspend (£800,000), clarification around the de-delegated items, that these amounts are retained from the school block to provide specific services to schools, the above two items are similar amounts and causing some confusion.</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>3c. Distribution of Pupil Growth Funding for 2022/23</p> <p>Steve Hawkins presented the paper, and informed members the report is what is usually bought annually, it's solely to update the forum on the distribution of the school's growth from the school block who are eligible. However, at this meeting we are also asking forum members to approve the methodology for funding secondary schools and academies for increased pupil numbers, and bulge year groups.</p>	

Nottinghamshire in 22-23 has received £4.217m in growth funding as part of the school's block of the DSG, with a specific criteria to support growth in pre 16 for basic need, support additional classes needed to meet the infant class size regulations and to meet new schools pre and post start-up costs.

For primary to secondary transfer in September 2022 (NCC) Nottinghamshire County Council has had a shortage of year seven places in some areas of the county. Schools and academies were approached to admit pupils over PAN as bulge year groups. Appendix A was explained.

A funding mechanism for these additional pupils is required, after referring to the guidance and talking to DfE colleagues a per pupil rate was suggested as a good way of funding schools for the additional pupils.

The proposal is to match the current minimum per pupil rates for secondary schools, for 2022-23 this would be £5,525 per pupil. Table 1 was explained and shows the schools and allocation they would receive using this mechanism, as this would relate to an academic year the funding would be split over two financial years as shown in the table.

Primary growth funding - this part of the report is as previous years and details NCC's allocation to our schools who have previously expanded their PAN at the request of the Local Authority, those in breach of Infant Class Sizes (ICS) and start-up costs for new schools. Appendix B lists the commitments proposed for this year, which are very low compared to previous years reflective of the fall in numbers of primary age pupils across the county which is also demonstrated on a graph in appendix A.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Forum:

1. Notes the content of the report and agrees the allocations listed in appendix B for payment to primary schools for 2022-23 – noted and approved by all members.
2. Agrees the methodology for funding secondary schools and academies for admitting additional pupils, as a bulge year group, due to Basic Need – approved by all members.
3. Continues to monitor the use of this fund throughout 2022-23 – agreed by all members

4. Any Other Business

Marion Clay

James Macdonald informed members that this would be Marion Clay's last forum meeting as she would be retiring in the summer. Thanks was given for all her work and commitment not just on the forum but all aspects of her role in public service. The amount of support that was provided directly from Marion, either through phone calls or other means of communication such as the bulletins have been invaluable. This was echoed by Colin Pettigrew and all members of the forum.

Direct Formula Consultation

It was agreed that a forum working group would be formed by interested member to submit a response on behalf of Nottinghamshire's Early Years & Schools Forum. A meeting date would be communicated to all members, to include the consultation document and an update will be given at the next meeting.

JM

5.	Confidentiality																	
There were no confidential items.																		
6.	Date and time of next meeting																	
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