

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting title: Nottinghamshire Early Years and Schools Forum
Date and time: 12th December 2024, 2pm to 4pm
Location: Microsoft Teams – Online

Membership

'A' denotes absence

| | | |
|---|-------------------|--|
| | Andrew Rossington | Maintained Primary Head Teacher |
| | Steve Border | Maintained Primary Head Teacher |
| A | Helen Roberts | Maintained Primary Head Teacher – (Vice Chair) |
| | David Phillips | Maintained Secondary Head Teacher |
| | Anne Hall | Academy Representative |
| | Neil Holmes | Academy Representative |
| | James Macdonald | Academy Representative - (Chair) |
| A | Neil Robinson | Academy Representative |
| | Daniel Moore | Academy Representative |
| A | Ella Tuxford | Academy Representative |
| | Katie Thackery | Academy Representative |
| | Matt Rooney | Maintained Special School Head Teacher |
| | 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 |
| | Karen Richards | PVI - Early Years Group Member |
| A | 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 | Director of Education and Inclusion, Children and Families |
| Gareth Moss | Group Manager, Finance |
| Steve Hawkins | Senior Finance Business Partner, Children and Families |
| Karen Hughman | Group Manager, Education Access, Standards and Safeguarding |
| Irene Kakoullis | Head of Service Early Years and Family Hubs |
| Cllr Nigel Moxon | Mansfield East |
| Rachel Livesey | Finance Business Partner, Children and Families Finance |
| 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 all members.</p> | |
| | <p>Apologies</p> <p>Apologies were received from Helen Roberts, Neil Robinson, Ella Tuxford, Nigel Frith and Mandy Stratford.</p> <p>Apologies accepted.</p> | |
| 2. | <p>Minutes – 14th November 2024</p> <p>Forum vacancies - with only one week left of the autumn term, advert for vacancies will be going out in January 2025</p> <p>Previous amendments to the September minutes have been actioned.</p> <p>Question - forecast for budget does this include recharges for pupil's that have been excluded. Awaiting information Sarju Sheta to update at the next Forum meeting in February.</p> <p>Page 5 3rd paragraph up from the bottom. The consultation period should be to the 4th of December, not November. Followed with giving us time rather than given.</p> <p>Page 6 On the scheme for financing schools. 2nd paragraph to be to inform members, rather than just a member. Giving maintained schools the opportunity rather than given and brought back to the next forum.</p> <p>Page 7 3rd paragraph from the bottom; spreadsheets are being <u>updated</u>. 2nd paragraph from bottom and making the transition as <u>smooth</u></p> <p>Peter McConnochie – the length of term for the chair and vice chair. Constitution states the following: - Each will hold office for a period of three years or until they resign from the position to which they have been elected.</p> <p>James Macdonald and Helen Roberts voted in at the September 2024 Forum. Members in agreement to hold office until September 2027 or resign from position.</p> <p>Minutes approved as accurate after above amendments actioned.</p> | <p>ACTION</p> <p>TG</p> <p>SS</p> |
| 3. | <p>3a Dedicated Schools Grant – verbal update</p> <p>Steve Hawkins gave a verbal update.</p> <p>DSG provisional allocation now received for Nottinghamshire.</p> <p>School Block an increase from £652M to £704M (based on October 23 census numbers). High Needs Block an increase from £120M to £130M. Central School Services Block an increase from £5.5M to £5.8M</p> | |

Increase in the school's block for 25_26 does include the rolling in of the teachers' pay grants, the teachers' pension employer contribution grants, and the core school's budget grants. For 24_25 £38M approx. for Nottinghamshire.

Local authorities are able to set the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) between -0.5% and 0%.

Jason Gooch gave a verbal update on the key points for the Early Years Block.

Minimum pass through rate is increasing from 95% to 96% from 25_26 and likely to increase to 97% in future years, though the DfE have not committed to this as yet for 26_27.

Current expectation to advise the Early Years rate to providers by 28th February though not mandatory, expect it will be mandatory from 26_27.

In terms of pupil numbers for the funding formula, there's no changes to how the Local Authority will be funded in 25_26 compared to 24_25.

No changes to the area cost adjustment factors that the Department of Education use to determine each local authority's rates, and no change to how any block underspends or overspends can be treated, therefore any underspends would go into the non ISB reserve.

Amounts quoted are the rates Nottinghamshire will receive from the Department for Education.

3 and 4 year olds £5.71 per hour, a 24p uplift. However, the early years budget grant calculated at 9p is rolled into the base for 25_26 therefore the 24p increase in real terms is only 15p uplift.

2 year olds receiving £7.86 up 23p. Under 2s £10.66 up 28p. Early Years Pupil Premium increasing from 68p to £1 per hour and the Disability Access Fund will continue to be paid on an annual rate, for 25_26 up to £938 from £910.

Further details to follow regards the £75M expansion grant made available to support the roll out of the government funded childcare expansion.

Jason Gooch attended a webinar and two main concerns from attendees were: -

1. Announcements that are sent out contain the average funding rates and this was misleading as average rates tend to be significantly higher than what local authorities tend to receive, certainly the case with Nottinghamshire.
2. Concern that increases to the funding rates for 25_26 will not be sufficient to cover the National Insurance increases that were announced in the autumn statement.

Early years entitlement: local authority funding operational guide 2025 to 2026 shared with members

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-funding-2025-to-2026/early-years-entitlements-local-authority-funding-operational-guide-2025-to-2026>

Laura Gapski - Is the expansion grant separate and distinct from the capital grant?
 Jason Gooch – believe so as it's believed to be a new grant, but details still to follow therefore for now cannot say for sure.

PowerPoint to be shared with members

TG

3b 2025-26 School Funding Formula Consultation Results

Steve Hawkins presented the paper.

Consultation ran 20th November to 4th December 2024.

Question 1 If it is not affordable to fund all schools and academies at National Funding Formula levels, how should mitigation be actioned.

Model 1 – Reduce Formula Factors

Model 2 – Introduce a gains cap

12 members able to vote all 12 voted for model 1 if not affordable to reduce formula factors, no votes for option 2.

Question 2 de-delegation

Free schools' meals eligibility assessment? Primary

| Votes for | Votes against | Abstentions |
|-----------|---------------|-------------|
| 3 | 0 | 0 |

Free schools' meals eligibility assessment? Secondary

| Votes for | Votes against | Abstentions |
|-----------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | 0 | 0 |

Support to underperforming ethnic minority groups and bilingual learners? Primary

| Votes for | Votes against | Abstentions |
|-----------|---------------|-------------|
| 3 | 0 | 0 |

Support to underperforming ethnic minority groups and bilingual learners?
 Secondary

| Votes for | Votes against | Abstentions |
|-----------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | 0 | 0 |

Contingency for crisis communications? Primary

| Votes for | Votes against | Abstentions |
|-----------|---------------|-------------|
| 3 | 0 | 0 |

Trade Union Facilities? Primary

| Votes for | Votes against | Abstentions |
|-----------|---------------|-------------|
| 3 | 0 | 0 |

Trade Union Facilities? Secondary

| Votes for | Votes against | Abstentions |
|-----------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | 0 | 0 |

School Improvement Service? Primary

| Votes for | Votes against | Abstentions |
|-----------|---------------|-------------|
| 3 | 0 | 0 |

School Improvement Service? Secondary

| Votes for | Votes against | Abstentions |
|-----------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | 0 | 0 |

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 2025-26. The schools local funding formula will be discussed at a Cabinet Member Briefing meeting in January 2025, with final approval by 22 January 2025. The funding formula will be submitted to the DfE on 22 January 2025. – vote undertaken results above.

3c Scheme for Financing Schools

Rachel Livesey presented the paper.

Consultation ran 18th November to 2nd December 2024.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Forum:

1. That the Schools Forum maintained members approve the updated Scheme

| Votes for | Votes against | Abstentions |
|-----------|---------------|-------------|
| 5 | 0 | 0 |

3d 2024-25 DSG Budget Monitoring Report

Sarju Sheta presented paper and Jason Gooch presented the early years section.

Period 7 forecasting an overspend £12.184M.

James Macdonald - is the additional £10M going to be sufficient or are we going to be running at an overspend in 25_26? Difficult to predict but need to be on top of any budget changes.

Post 16 has seen a large increase, it's a complex budget with many issues going forward. The post 16 team with finance colleagues are scrutinising the information to see if they can forecast more effectively going forward.

Matt Rooney – would it be beneficial for the high needs working group to look at the post 16 high needs spend with a breakdown of information. How many students? Where are they? What's happening across the different colleges?

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-------|--------------------------|--|
| <p>James Macdonald to add in something about post 16 into the key focus areas for the high needs block consultant brief.</p> <p>Early Years forecast has been updated with the autumn term uptake and headcount data giving a revised forecast of £542K underspend. Main reason for the increased underspend is due to a lower uptake in the autumn term on the three and four year olds entitlements across both the universal and the additional hours than what was previously forecast.</p> <p>Uptake on the working parents for two year olds and under twos is significantly higher than the last forecast. 500 places greater for working parents of two year olds and over 1,000 places greater on the under twos. As the entitlements for these are funded on a termly headcount it's expected that the overall funding will be closer to what is paid out.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION/S</p> <p>That the Forum:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Notes the content of the report; - report noted. | <p>JM</p> | | | | | | |
| <p>3e HLN Working Group Feedback</p> <p>High Level Needs Terms of Reference was sent out to all members to review. Terms of Reference approved by all members of the forum.</p> <p>Group has met a couple of times with the intention to meet once every ½ term.</p> <p>Discussed with members about engaging a consultant to deliver on a piece of work put forward by the working group, with a wide range of questions to be answered. Exploring which consultants have the expertise and skills for what is required by Nottinghamshire County Council.</p> <p>Will continue to keep Forum members updated on progress.</p> | | | | | | | |
| <p>4. Any Other Business</p> <p>Thanks was given to David Phillips who has been on the Forum for a number of years but leaving to retire.</p> | | | | | | | |
| <p>5. Confidentiality</p> <p>There were no confidential items.</p> | | | | | | | |
| <p>6. Date and time of next meeting.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="148 1823 1334 1906"> <tr> <td>Thursday 27 February 2025</td> <td>2-4pm</td> <td>Microsoft Teams</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Thursday 12 June 2025</td> <td>2-4pm</td> <td>In person – Location TBC</td> </tr> </table> | Thursday 27 February 2025 | 2-4pm | Microsoft Teams | Thursday 12 June 2025 | 2-4pm | In person – Location TBC | |
| Thursday 27 February 2025 | 2-4pm | Microsoft Teams | | | | | |
| Thursday 12 June 2025 | 2-4pm | In person – Location TBC | | | | | |