

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

SCHOOLS FORUM

**MINUTES of the meeting held at Loxley House, Nottingham on 26 June 2018
from 1.45 pm - 2.53 pm**

Membership

Present

Sian Hampton (Chair)
Judith Kemplay (Vice Chair)
Maria Artingstoll
Sally Coulton
David Holdsworth
David Hooker
Andy Jenkins
Stephen McLaren
Janet Molyneux
Tracy Rees
Terry Smith
James Strawbridge
Sheena Wheatley

Absent

David Blackley
Caroline Caille
Debbie Simon
David Stewart

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

John Dexter	- Director of Education
Julia Holmes	- Senior Commercial Business Partner
Cllr Neghat Khan	- Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills
Nick Lee	- Head of Access and Learning
Alison Michalska	- Corporate Director for Children and Adults
Kathryn Stevenson	- Senior Commercial Business Partner
Phil Wye	- Governance Officer

30 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Caroline Caille

31 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

32 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

33 WORK PROGRAMME

The Work Programme was noted.

34 PROJECTS TO SUPPORT SCHOOL INCLUSION

Nick Lee, Head of Access and Inclusion, introduced the report and highlighted the following:

- (a) the exclusions taskforce has identified the need to embed better early identification and early intervention practice within city schools and academies across all phases;
- (b) Routes 2 Inclusion is a toolkit being developed by Behaviour Support professionals and Educational Psychologists alongside SENCOs in the city's primary schools. Phase 2 would embed this across all city schools, including workshops and bespoke training;
- (c) extension of the programme to the secondary phase has been considered, and a proposed programme has been costed at £48,000;
- (d) an additional pilot programme where Learning Mentors have worked with pupils at risk of exclusion has also been successful, as it prevented 15 out of 16 pupils worked with from being permanently excluded. This resulted in value for money compared to permanently excluding them, as well as the pupils remaining in mainstream education. It is proposed to extend this programme for a further year.

The following points were raised during the discussion which followed:

- (e) it can be difficult to engage with parents for early intervention, as they don't always see that there is a problem;
- (f) the work has early years elements built into it which is important to be sustainable long-term;
- (g) the aims of the programmes is to support early identification and targeting to reduce the number of permanent exclusions at both primary and secondary level.

RESOLVED to

- (1) note the proposed use of £0.084m from the DSG reserve to launch and further extend the Routes 2 Inclusion pilot project which had received pump priming funding through SEND Reforms grant;**
- (2) note the proposed use of £0.050m from the DSG reserve to extend the existing programme of Behaviour Support Team provision for targeted interventions for primary age pupils identified as high risk of permanent exclusion.**

35 2017/18 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT OUTTURN REPORT

Kathryn Stevenson, Senior Commercial Business Partner, introduced the report setting out the 2017/18 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) outturn and the updated reserve balance. Kathryn highlighted the following:

- (a) £0.255m from the underspend from the Early Years Block will be ring-fenced in the SSR to mitigate against any clawback from the DfE following the January census;
- (b) the High Needs Block was over-spent by £0.176m, but benefitted from a one-off underspend on Fair Access as this was funded from NCSEP reserves in 2017/18.

Members asked that when they are approving central expenditure – for Early Help and Targeted Family Support services which is a Combined Services budget for 2019/20 at the next meeting, they are given clear information as to how this will support education, schools and reducing pupil exclusions. It was also highlighted that if the LA would like to meet to discuss this with the sub-group it should be done in early September 2018 to enable for the work to be carried out in time for the presentation of the report to Schools Forum on the 9 October 2018.

RESOLVED to

- (1) note that the 2017/18 financial outturn position of the DSG was an under-spend of £0.535m (0.21%) against a final budget of £255.522m;**
- (2) note that this under-spend has been allocated back to the Statutory Schools Reserve (SSR) resulting in a closing balance of £8.500m for 2017/18, as below:**

Opening Balance as at 1 April 2017	£11.516m
Less: DSG reserve supporting 2017/18 budget	-£2.870m
Less: 2017/18 Draw downs	-£0.681m
Add: 2017/18 Under spend	+£0.535
Closing balance as at 31 March 2018	£8.500m
Less: Future commitments	-£5.228m
Uncommitted balance as at 1 April 2018	£3.272m

- (3) note that the uncommitted balance on the SSR balance is £3.272m.**

36 SCHOOLS BLOCK TRANSFER TO THE HIGH NEEDS BLOCK 2019/20

Kathryn Stevenson, Senior Commercial Business partner, delivered a presentation on a proposed schools block transfer in 2019/20, highlighting the following:

- (a) a schools block transfer is a move of funds from the Schools Block to another block. There may be a requirement to transfer funds from the Schools Block to the High Needs block, which would result in delegated budgets for schools being lower than they would have been;
- (b) the transfer would require consultation with schools and Schools Forum approval. If the transfer is in excess of 0.5% or does not have support of the Forum, it can be submitted to the Secretary of State. This flexibility may cease from 2020/21

under the new hard National Funding Formula;

- (c) the transfer may be required as not all schools have signed up to the devolved Alternative Provision model which would have brought the High Needs budget back onto a sustainable footing after 2 years. Since 2015/16, the Council has been using funds from the DSG reserves but these have reduced year on year;
- (d) two options are proposed for implementing the transfer:
- plan A: a 0.73% block transfer, implemented by cutting funding per pupil in secondary schools by 1.5% in 2019/20. Schools which are signed up to the AP devolved model would receive a 35% reimbursement;
 - plan B: a 0.5% block transfer, implemented by all mainstream schools foregoing a 0.5% funding increase in 2019/20;
- (e) plan A would require Secretary of State approval, but would not affect primary schools as well as reducing the impact on secondary schools participating in the AP devolved model. On average secondary schools would be worse off by £88k, but the impact varies according to school size and level of deprivation;
- (f) Plan B is within local control but would affect all schools. Impact varies according to school size and level of deprivation, but most primaries' impact would be less than £10k and secondary impact would on average be a loss of £24k;
- (g) if Secretary of State approval is required, this will need to be done by the end of November 2018. Therefore, a consultation with schools will need to be launched prior to the summer holidays and close in early September so results can be reported back at the October meeting.

The following points were raised during the discussion which followed:

- (h) it would be preferable if the consultation could be slightly extended as Head Teachers are less likely to respond over the summer holidays, and if it could be brought to a Head Teacher's Briefing session;
- (i) it may be difficult for primary schools to sign up to plan B due to their already reducing budgets, with some already having deficit budgets;
- (j) the preferred option is still for all secondary schools to sign up to the devolved Alternative Provision model, and if this happens then neither option will be required. 8 schools are already signed up, with another 3 likely to soon and others undecided.

RESOLVED to thank Kathryn for the information provided.

37 UPDATE ON THE NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA INFORMATION SESSION BY THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION

Julia Homes, Senior Commercial Business Partner, delivered a presentation, highlighting the following:

- (a) the 2019-20 schools National Funding Formula (NFF) will be broadly the same as in 2018-19, with a few key differences including a formulaic approach to the growth factor and mobility and premises being funded based on actual spend in 2018-19, with an RPIX uplift for private finance initiative schemes;
- (b) illustrative LA and school level allocations for 2019/20 will be released in July 2018 by the Department of Education (DfE) as well as operational guidance on the NFF for 2019/20;
- (c) final allocations for 2019-20 will be released in December 2018;
- (d) the 2019-20 Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) will be very similar to 2018-19. The 2018-19 DSG allocations published in December 2017 will form the 2018-19 baselines for the CSSB in 2019-20. In 2019-20, LAs will be allowed to gain a maximum of 2.14% on a per pupil basis and lose up to a maximum of minus 2.5% per pupil as in 2018/19;
- (e) LAs will be funded for historic commitments based on the budget agreed for 2018-19 and if any savings are made they will be allowed to use savings elsewhere in either the Schools or High Needs blocks. There is still an expectation that historic commitments will reduce over time. From 2020/21 onwards the DfE expect to start reducing the funding given to LA's for historic commitments by a set amount where authorities do not reduce the expenditure of their own accord;
- (f) risks and pressures to the budget in 2019-20 include re-evaluations of business rates, pupil growth and high exclusion rates.

RESOLVED to thank Julia for the information provided.

Sian Hampton announced that she would be stepping down as a member of the Forum for the 2018-19 academic year and thanked other Forum members and Council officers for their support in her role as Chair.

38 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

AGREED to meet on Tuesday 09 October at 1.45pm at Loxley House.