

Nottingham City Council

Schools Forum

Minutes of the meeting held at Remote - To be held remotely via Zoom - <https://www.youtube.com/user/NottCityCouncil> on 5 December 2023 from 1.47 pm - 3.22 pm

Membership

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ✓ Kerrie Fox (Chair) | - PRUs |
| ✓ David Tungay (Vice Chair) | - Secondary Academies |
| Kerrie Henton | - AP Academies and Free Schools |
| ✓ Debbie Simon | - Early Years PVI |
| ✓ Judith Kemplay |) |
| ✓ Terry Smith |) Maintained Primary Head Teachers |
| ✓ Alison Tones |) |
| ✓ Patricia Lewis | - Maintained Special Schools |
| Laura Patel | - The Nottingham Nursery |
| Meeta Dave |) |
| Tim Jeffs |) Primary Academies |
| ✓ Rob Perkins |) |
| Emma Howard |) |
| ✓ Andy Smith |) Secondary Academies |
| ✓ Sandra Stapleton |) |
| ✓ Andrew Gilbert |) |
| ✓ Phil Willott | - Special Academies |
| ✓ Sheena Wheatley | - Trade Unions |
| Adam Beazley | - 14-19 Education |

- ✓ indicates present at meeting

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| Trevor Bone | - Head of Building Services and Facilities Management |
| Kathryn Bouchlaghem | - Early Years Manager |
| Collins Elechi | - Senior Commercial Business Partner (Finance) |
| Jennifer Hardy | - Interim Head of Access to Learning |
| Julia Holmes | - Senior Commercial Business Partner (Childrens and Education) |
| Lucy Juby | - School Organisation and Place Planning Manager |
| James Lavender | - Governance Officer |
| Nick Lee | - Director of Education Services |
| Terry Shaw | - Interim Strategic Finance Business Partner (Childrens and Education) |
| Janine Walker | - Head of SEND and Vulnerable Pupils |
| Sheena Yadav-Staples | - HR Consultant (Employee Relations) |

11 Membership Change

Andrew Gilbert has been appointed as one of the Secondary Representatives for the Forum.

12 Apologies for Absence

Adam Beazeley
Meeta Dave
Kerrie Henton
Tim Jeffs

13 Declarations of Interest

Phil Willott and Robert Perkins declared interests in Item 5 (Minute 17) and therefore did not participate in this item.

14 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2023 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

15 Update on Section 114 Notice

Nick Lee, Director of Education Services, updated the Forum on the status of the agenda items in light of the issuing of the S114 notice by the Chief Financial Officer on Wednesday 29 November 2023. The Council has entered a twenty-one-day prohibition period on any new spending. Delegations to Officers has been suspended, so any spending must be approved will have to go through an internal Spending Review Board. Following advice from the Chief Financial Officer and Monitoring Officer, all the items on the agenda can proceed for decision. The three categories of reports include the passporting of ring-fenced grant funding, such as DSG and Early Years; the agreement of ring-fenced formula funding, such as the pupil growth funding; and the funding of council services such as the health and safety school building inspections which are subject to the internal approval process.

16 De-delegation of funding for Trade Union time off for Senior Representatives for 2024/25

Nick Lee, Director of Education Services, introduced the report, stating that this decision involves the Council refunding schools and academies for time-off taken by Trade Union representatives to undertake their duties. Whilst this is a funding formula decision and is classed as allowable spend, HR colleagues may have to get internal permission to release the funding.

Sheena Yadav-Staples, HR Consultant (Employee Relations), delivered the report which outlined the following information:

- (a) the purpose of this report is to outline the proposed funding arrangements for trade union facility time for senior trade union representatives from schools to

attend negotiations and consultation meetings and to represent their members in schools from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025;

- (b) under the Schools and Early Years Finance Regulations 2023, maintained schools can agree to de-delegate funding for trade union facility time. This has been done by maintained schools since the financial year 2013/14. To reduce the cost on maintained schools, the arrangement is also offered to academies;
- (c) the income generated pays for the salaries of the senior trade union representatives whilst carrying out trade union facility time duties;
- (d) maintained schools and academies are reimbursed the salaries of the trade union representatives who are employed by them. This is done so that no school loses out as a consequence of a member of their staff carrying out trade union duties;
- (e) new approval is required for de-delegation from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. 72 schools/academies have bought into the arrangement. Oakfield School and Nethergate Academy have bought back into the arrangement and this is reflected in 2023/24 and 2024/25 figures;
- (f) the allowance allocated for 2024/25 will remain the same as the last three years at 3.7 which equates to 18.5 days per week for trade union facility time;
- (g) the funding for senior trade union representatives will be at a rate of £1.77 per pupil and a lump sum of £1,746 per school. These charges will generate a £0.180m projected income based upon 72 maintained schools and academies buying into the scheme. The projected income from maintained primary schools, buy-back income of £0.180m and the underspend of £0.015m from the financial year 2022/23 are projected to generate sufficient income to achieve a breakeven position;

During the discussion and in response from questions from the Forum, the following points were raised:

- (h) the trade union representative on the Forum produced a report into the additional value of trade union contributions within schools and academies, and this will be circulated to the rest of the Forum after the meeting.

Resolved to:

- (1) approve the de-delegation of funding for senior trade union representatives at a rate of £1.77 per pupil and a lump sum of £1,746 per school;**
- (2) to note the total funding de-delegated by maintained mainstream primary schools is £0.068m;**
- (3) to note that the final decision will be subject to approval by the Council's Spending Control Board.**

17 Proposed approach to DSG budget setting 2024/25 by block

Nick Lee, Director of Education Services, introduced the report which proposes to transfer Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding from the High Needs Block to the Central Schools Service Block and the distribution of additional funding to primary and secondary schools through the local funding formula in 2024/25. This decision will be regarding the passporting of ring-fenced grant funding, so subject to Department for Education grant conditions which must be considered as part of the internal council process relating to the S114 notice.

Julia Holmes, Senior Commercial Business Partner (Childrens and Education) and Collins Elechi, Senior Commercial Business Partner (Finance), delivered the report which outlined the following information:

- (a) for the financial year 2024/25, the Local Authority (LA) proposes to continue to move away from the standard budget setting approach of balancing block budgets to the DSG income received for each specific block as it did in the financial year 2023/24;
- (b) at the December 2022 Schools Forum meeting, permission was granted to transfer from the High Needs Block (HNB) £0.458m to the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) and up to £2m to the School Block (SB). This year, permission is being sought to transfer HNB funding of £0.508m to the CSSB to allow for the additional cost of the Education Welfare Team which was approved by Schools Forum last year. This is an allowable cost under the DSG;
- (c) permission is also being sought for the distribution of additional funding to primary and secondary above the schools' national funding formula for 2024/25;
- (d) in the financial year 2023/24, primary and secondary schools were given an additional £85 per pupil through the basic entitlement factor. To enable the additional funding to be passed onto all schools including maintained schools and academies on the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG), permission was granted to the Secretary of State to make a one-off technical adjustment to ensure that schools on the MFG would receive the additional £85 per pupil;
- (e) the LA is concerned that some schools may not be able to set a balanced budget in 2024/25 due to cost pressures. Since the Schools Forum meeting on 10 October 2023, the LA has been looking into options to pass on additional funding to maintained schools and academies. The ESFA have been contacted to see what options are available. The only other option available is to leave in the additional funding that was given last year in the 2023/24 baseline funding. This proposal has been modelled and this would generate additional funding of £1.988m for mainstream maintained schools and academies in the FY 2024/25. 90 of the 94 schools would get the additional funding. The remaining four schools attract additional funding next year through a one of these factors: split site factor, exceptional premises factor (Building Schools for the Future) or the Private Finance Initiative funding factor;

- (f) the level of additional funding per school is calculated on the make-up of pupils and factors they attract. On average, primary schools will receive £18,500 per school and secondary schools will receive £30,000 per school. The October 2022 School Census data has been used in the calculations. Once the October 2023 census data will be received, the figures will be revised and will be checked to see if the additional funding is still affordable;
- (g) it is forecast that there should be sufficient funding in the Schools Block to provide the additional funding. If once the December 2023 funding settlement has been received and there is not sufficient funding within the Schools Block to fund this proposal the Local Authority propose to draw down up to £1.493m funding from the Statutory School Reserve (DSG Reserve). The £1.493m was included in the 2022/23 Dedicated Schools Grant - Outturn report on 27 June 2023. This funding is made up of pupil growth funding that could not be allocated through the national funding formula and was allocated to the pupil growth contingency fund and actual underspends on the pupil growth contingency fund between the financial years 2020/21 to 2022/23. Permission is being sought from Schools Forum to use the £1.493m within the reserve in the event of a shortfall in the additional funding to primary and secondary schools;
- (h) the consultation with Schools Forum and all schools has begun for two weeks until 19 December. All headteachers were sent the consultation this morning and information about it is included in the weekly Council email to all schools;
- (i) there has been a year-on-year increase in high needs funding from £33.7m to £61m between 2019 to 2025. The block transfer from the HNB to the CSSB would be to support the Education Welfare Team. In December 2022, Schools Forum granted a transfer of £0.458m from the HNB to the CSSB. Due to the national increase in local government pay scales by £1,925 in 2022/23 and in 2023/24 and the introduction of the LA's new pay scale in 2023/24, the amount of the block transfer requested has increased to £0.508m for 2024/25;
- (j) as the 2023/24 high needs budget is not fully allocated and has an anticipated £3m under-spent, coupled with the £2.835m additional funding for 2024/25, there will be £5.8m in high needs funding to prioritise for high needs developments and national pressures;
- (k) in September, the Executive Board approved a range of specialist provision under the SEN Sufficiency project, and these developments which are in early design stage include:
- expansion of Rosehill Special school - 80 places;
 - enhanced resource provision at Fernwood Secondary School – 20 places;
 - enhanced resource provision at Nottingham Girl's Academy – 8/10 places;
 - enhanced resource provision at Gladehill School – 8 places;
 - enhanced resource provision at Milford Academy – 8 places;

- (l) it is expected the financial impact for these projects will start in 2025/26, with a potential £2.883m in the first year and £4.841m and £5.600m in 2026/27 and 2027/28 when the full capacity has been utilised;

During the discussion and in response from questions to the Forum, the following points were raised:

- (m) concerns about moving funds from the HNB to CSSB are recognised, however, this investment in the Education Welfare Team will assist with early intervention for pupils with SEN and reduce higher impact costs further along the process of providing support to those pupils;
- (n) there is a huge national demand for funding to help schools support pupils with SEN. The LA is doing well to deliver a SEN provision within the constraints of a national funding model set nationally;
- (o) there will not be any announcements in high needs capital investment until February 2024, at which point the plans for Phase 2 of the Inclusion Strategy.

Resolved to:

- (1) agree to the proposal to leave in the additional funding given to mainstream primary and secondary schools in 2023/24 in the 2023/24 Minimum Funding Guarantee unit values in the 2024/25 local funding formula.**
- (2) approve the allocation of up to £1.493m ring-fenced within the Statutory School Reserve for pupil growth to fund the proposal to give mainstream maintained schools and academies additional funding in 2024/25 if there is insufficient funding within the Schools Block once the DSG settlement is received in December 2023;**
- (3) agree to a block transfer for 2024/25 from the High Needs Block to the Central Schools Services Block of £0.508m.**

18 Proposed high needs place changes 2024/25 academic year

Nick Lee, Director for Education Services, introduced a presentation into the proposals for high needs place changes for 2024/25. The presentation is for noting. Approvals for funding requirements are subject to grant conditions and approval from the ESFA.

Collins Elechi, Interim Senior Commercial Partner (Schools) delivered the presentation which outlined the following information:

- (a) the proposed high needs place changes for 2024/25 was previously reported to Schools Forum in October, but now Officers have full details about the place changes;

- (b) the place changes have been submitted to the ESFA and have been accepted by them. There have been no queries from the ESFA regarding the figures submitted;
- (c) prior to the submission of the place changes, consultation took place with the education settings who agreed with the figures;
- (d) the change to high needs places for 2024/25 includes six extra places each at Westbury and Djanogly Strelley Academies, eight extra places each at Woodlands and Denewood Academies and a reduction of four places Bulwell Academy. The overall additional cost to the high needs place changes in 2024-25 will be £0.564m;
- (e) Djanogly Strelley Academy's focus provision will go online sooner than believed in September 2024. The LA will fund the provision from the high needs block for one term before it opens to allow for the building to be set up and staffing to be recruited and trained. The funding for the summer term 2024 this entails full year of £0.143m;
- (f) Milford Academy focus provision may open during the 2024/25 academic year. Council Officers are consulting Schools Forum on ringfencing funding from the high needs block to fund any in-year provision should the building works be completed during this period. The expected costs are £0.095m (£0.071m in Top Ups and £0.024m in Place Funding);
- (g) the eight extra places at Denewood Academy will cost around £0.080m for the 2024/25 financial year. There will be an additional £0.161m budget requirement for Westbury special schools for 2024/25 arising from £0.060m in place number changes for the academic years 2023/24 and 2024/25, and £0.101m in top ups;
- (h) the place cost element of eight places at Woodlands Academy would be £0.181m in a full year, made up of £0.080m Place element in financial year 2024-25 and £0.101m in Top Ups;
- (i) £0.095m in savings will arise from Bulwell Academy as the place number changes from six to two;
- (j) A range of specialist provision has been agreed and is moving to early design works (see Minute 17k).

Resolved to note the presentation.

19 Early Years Central Expenditure 2024/25

Nick Lee, Director for Education Services, introduced the report which sought to approve £1.025m in Early Years Central Expenditure for 2024/25. This decision will be the passporting of ring-fenced grant funding, so it will be subject to Department for Education grant conditions which must be considered as part of the internal council process relating to the S114 notice.

Collins Elechi, Interim Senior Commercial Partner (Schools) and Kathryn Bouchlaghem, Early Years Manager, delivered the report which outlined the following information:

- (a) there has been no change to the national Early Years (EY) funding formula since April 2017. With this level of central expenditure, the LA should comfortably meet the 95% pass-through regulation;
- (b) the potential base rate for two-year olds for 2024/25 will be confirmed by the Department for Education (DfE) in December. Officers have been working to the current rate which came into force in September;
- (c) in the breakdown of the Central Expenditure Budget seen in Table 1 of the report, £0.878m will be spend on staffing and £0.147m will be spend on rent, insurance and other non-pay costs to support the activity of the team;
- (d) Table 2 breaks down the costs of each staff post from the Central Expenditure Budget;
- (e) the EY settlement will be received in December and a full report will be presented to Schools Forum in January 2024;
- (f) the supplementary rate will feature an uplift of 1%, from £4.96 to £5.01 an increase of £0.05 for three- and four-year olds, and 31.8% from £5.66 to £7.46 increased by £1.80 for two-year olds;
- (g) The proposed central expenditure budget is based on a contribution of £0.960m from the three- and four-year old funding and £0.065m from two-year-old funding. Based on the expected hourly funding increases, the projected three- and four-year old funding allocation for 2024/25 will be £16.363m and our projected two-year old funding allocation will be £4.464m;
- (h) the consultation on the base rate for two-, three- and four-year olds will begin from now until January 2024;
- (i) Agreement Trialling has been an integral part of support for providers to raise outcomes for the youngest children in the City of Nottingham. This forum has addressed the trends identified from the Early Years Foundation Stage Project (EYFSP) data and have provided targeted support around understanding, resourcing and moderating the weakest areas of attainment;
- (j) in the academic year 2022/23, face-to-face training resumed, in addition to continuing with some online sessions, thus offering a blended approach. Sessions were accessed by 259 practitioners from 82 settings (16 PVI settings and 66 schools) and representatives from 10 of the 12 Academy Trusts within the city;
- (k) all LAs are ranked in terms of EY development. Last year, Nottingham City Council (NCC) was ranked 138 out of 152. This year, it was ranked 135 out of 152. The LA has made great progress in addressing EY development in a city which was disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Resolved to approve the Early Years Central Expenditure of £1.025m for 2024/25.

20 Central Expenditure Budget 2024/25 – Historic Commitments

Nick Lee, Director of Education Services, introduced the report which requested the approval of the historic commitments within the CSSB for the financial year 2024/25. If approved, there will be requirement for individual services in receipt of this funding to go through the additional internal approvals.

Julia Holmes, Senior Commercial Business Partner (Childrens and Education), delivered the report which outlined the following information:

- (a) this report is bought annually to Schools Forum for approval;
- (b) in keeping with the DfE's commitment to reduce historic commitment funding, Nottingham City's historic commitments funding has been cut by a further 20% in 2024/25 which also happened in each of the financial years 2020/21 to 2023/24. Next financial year, if the DfE were to cut historic commitments funding by a further 20%, this would take the historic commitments funding below the budget for the termination of employment costs and prudential borrowing (£1.663m). Therefore, the LA will need to submit evidence to the DfE to request that the LA is funded at the same level as was budgeted in 2024/25 for termination of employment costs and prudential borrowing;
- (c) the LA will be receiving £1.859m in historic commitments funding for 2024/25, which is a reduction of £0.465m from the previous year. Since 2021, there has been year-on-year cuts of £3.7m to the historic commitments budget;
- (d) the historic commitments have been reviewed and cuts have been made to budgets to make-up the shortfall;
- (e) integrated placements contributions have been removed which has an annual value of £0.247m;
- (f) the Virtual School budget has been reduced by 19%;
- (g) the Capital Expenditure in revenue accounts has been removed which has an annual value of £0.173m;
- (h) the termination of employment costs and the prudential borrowing payments will remain the same;
- (i) SEN Transport budget is a historic commitment, hence it needs approval from Schools Forum;
- (j) supporting information relating to the Virtual School and SEN transport budgets are outlined in Appendices A and B of this report.

Resolved to approve the historic commitments totalling £2.859m for the financial year 2024/25, subject to final approval from the Spending Control Board.

21 Central Expenditure Budget 2024/25 – On Going Commitments

Nick Lee, Director of Education Services, introduced the report which requested the approval of the ongoing commitments within the CSSB for the financial year 2024/25. If approved, there will be requirement for individual services in receipt of this funding to go through the additional internal approvals.

Julia Holmes, Senior Commercial Business Partner (Childrens and Education), delivered the report which outlined the following information:

- (a) approval is sought for ongoing budget commitments of £2.275m, the details of which are set out in Appendix A of the report. This is proposed to be funded from the estimated allocation for ongoing commitments of £1.767m from the ESFA for the financial year 2024/25 and subject to approval from Schools Forum £0.508m from a High Needs to Central Schools Services Block transfer as outlined in agenda item 4 – ‘Proposed approach to DSG budget setting 2024/25 by block’ - Recommendation 2;
- (b) the estimated cost of Copyright Licences totalling £0.264m does not require approval as the licences are managed and procured by central government. The final figure will be updated and built into the Schools Budget report for the January Schools Forum meeting;
- (c) the indicative funding allocation is based on the October 2022 pupil numbers, but the final budgets will be based on the October 2023 pupil numbers once they have been received. Any additional funding as a result of increased pupil numbers is proposed to be allocated towards the costs of retained duties as there is a forecast shortfall in funding on this budget;
- (d) the services funded through ongoing commitments include the Admissions Team, copyright licences, administrative support for the Schools Forum, retained statutory duties and the Teachers Pay and Pension Contribution for centrally retained teachers;
- (e) from 2018/19 onwards, funding for LA’s ongoing responsibilities is calculated through a formula which is distributed on 90% per-pupil basic factor and 10% based on the deprivation factor. However, in the financial year 2024/25 a third factor has been introduced, a copyright licences per pupil factor to fund the additional costs of copyright licences that local authorities faced in 2023/24;
- (f) the total national budget for ongoing responsibilities in 2024/25 is around £304m. This includes £5.5m to cover the increased cost of copyright licences that LA’s faced in 2023/24. 90% of this (c.£274m) forms the budget to be allocated to LA’s through the basic per-pupil factor (the remaining 10% (c.£30m) will be allocated through the deprivation factor;

- (g) LA's continue to be protected so that the maximum per-pupil year-on-year reduction in funding for ongoing responsibilities is -2.5%, while the year-on-year gains cap will be set at the highest affordable rate of 5.51%. In 2024/25 Nottingham City will receive a 3.2% increase in the CSSB unit rate;
- (h) Table 2 highlights the CSSB unit rates of funding and total funding for ongoing responsibilities from 2019/20 to 2024/25. The rate for 2024/25 will be £40.88, which is a rise of £1.26 compared to the previous year. This figure includes an additional £0.67 per pupil for increased cost copyright licences costs faced by LA's in 2023/24. The total allocation for ongoing commitments is £1.768m. This will change once the pupil numbers for October 2023 are known. If there is an increase in the number of pupils in city schools, then the budgets will need to be adjusted and there will be less for retained duties;
- (i) the estimated cost for statutory retained duties for 2024/25 is £1.358m however, to keep within the funding envelope of £2.275m (subject to approval from SF for the High Needs Block transfer to the Central Schools Services Block of £0.508) the LA has used the statutory retained duties budget to balance the funding available for ongoing commitments. This is why the amount requested for approval by SF is £1.291m as shown in Table 3;
- (j) any budgets not approved will provide issues for the DSG. In this case, a consultation with stakeholders will need to take place and there will be an impact on the delivery of statutory requirements.

Resolved to:

- (1) approve the ongoing commitments budgets set out in Table 3 totalling £2.275m, noting the additional historical detail set out in Appendix A. £0.508m of this total is subject to the approval of the High Needs to the Central Schools Services Block transfer outlined in agenda item 4 – 'Proposed approach to DSG budget setting 2024/25 by block' - Recommendation 2 which was approved at this meeting;**
- (2) note that the estimated cost of Copyright Licences totalling £0.264m does not require approval as the licences are managed and procured by central government;**
- (3) note that where values are based on estimated pupil numbers, this report has used the latest October 2022 census however; once the October 2023 census and final allocations are issued from the DfE these figures will be updated and represented in the final budget report;**
- (4) approve that should any additional funding for ongoing commitments be received from the Education & Skills Funding Agency above the £1.768m that it is allocated to the LA to cover the cost of retained duties;**
- (5) note that the final decision will be subject to the Spending Control Board.**

22 Proposed pupil growth allocation for 2024/25

Nick Lee, Director of Education Services, introduced the report which outlined the proposed requirements of the Pupil Growth Contingency Fund (PGCF) for 2024/25 and seeks Schools Forum's approval to allocate £0.909m for this purpose. The funding will be used to fund pupil growth in both maintained schools and academies. As this is a report into the setting of formula for the ESFA, it will be subject to grant conditions which must be considered as part of the internal council process relating to the S114 notice.

Lucy Juby, School Organisation and Place Planning Manager, delivered the report which outlined the following information:

- (a) new DfE guidance has been issued regarding the pupil growth allocation. LA's are still responsible for managing pupil growth locally;
- (b) there will be a reimbursed by EFSA to the DSG relating to academy funding for April to August 2024 period;
- (c) all previous funding commitments have been factored in. The PGCF is not currently required for primary growth payments as all previous commitments have been met, but there are still significant pressures on secondary school places. The LA has a statutory duty to deliver sufficient school places, supporting those schools to meet basic need, and address any funding lag for increasing pupil numbers;
- (d) funding will continue to be allocated to schools, where they have agreed with the LA to admit an extra class (or more) to meet Basic Need in the area, either on a temporary basis or as an ongoing commitment or formal expansion;
- (e) the new requirement for the 2024/25 criteria is that an extra class will be funded regardless of whether it is within or over the Published Admission Numbers (PAN). Whereas previously, only increases over PAN have been funded through the PGCF;
- (f) the forecast expenditure for 2024/25 has been costed on the basis of the current and anticipated level of growth at the secondary phase. This figure includes both existing/known commitments for secondary growth, as well as an estimated contingency figure based on expected additional capacity needs for the September 2024 academic year;
- (g) a further sum £0.348m has been set aside to allow for contingency, to support other schools accommodating additional pupils. This year's contingency has been calculated on the basis of an estimated six additional classes required in September 2024, which includes extra capacity for Year 7 entry as well as some additional capacity for in-year admissions across other year groups;
- (h) as a minimum local authorities will have to provide funding to a level which is compliant with the following formula:

- Primary and secondary growth factor value (£1,550) x number of pupils x Area Cost Adjustment (ACA);

Based on the values allocated in both the primary and secondary phases for a class of 30 pupils, the pupil growth criteria for NCC exceeds the minimum value per pupil of £1,550 per pupil;

- (i) for the first time in 2024 to 2025 the ESFA will be allocating funding based on both growth and falling rolls. In the next financial year, LAs will continue to have discretion over whether to operate a falling rolls fund. The LA does not anticipate that it will receive any falling rolls funding in 2024/25 as it is anticipated that the falling rolls will not meet the 10% threshold reduction of primary number on toll across the LA, between the October 2022 and 2023 censuses.

Resolved to:

(1) approve the allocation of £0.909m to support pupil growth in 2024/25;

(2) to note:

(a) the requirement to allocate funding to academies for the period April 2024 to August 2024 as guided by the ESFA; but which will be reimbursed to the LA's Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG);

(b) the amount to be allocated (and reimbursed) is £0.302m;

(c) the total amount of academies individual school budget shares will be netted off against the pupil growth given out for this period and the Authority's Dedicated Schools Grant for 2024/25 will be adjusted accordingly.

23 De-delegation request for maintained schools for school improvement and brokerage grant 2024/25

Nick Lee, Director of Education Services, delivered the report which sought permission from Schools Forum to de-delegate funding to mitigate the reduction in the School Improvement, monitoring and brokerage grant received by Nottingham City Council to fund the Nottingham Schools Trust. As the Council is in a contractual agreement with the Nottingham Schools Trust until the end of 2024/25, the funding, if approved, forms part of an existing contractual commitment which will continue to be honoured as per the provisions of the S114 legislation. The following information was highlighted:

- (a) this grant was previously brought to Schools Forum in 2021 and 2022. The grant was used to provide school improvements and brokerage for intervention for maintained primary schools. The Nottingham Schools Trust was commissioned by the LA to provide this service;
- (b) the grant reduced by 50% and then fully withdrawn last year;

- (c) the amount requested of Schools Forum last year was £10.49 per head. This year, the cost will be £10.69 per head.

Resolved to:

- (1) approve the de-delegation of funding to mitigate the reduction in the School Improvement, monitoring and brokerage grant received by Nottingham City Council at a rate of £10.69 per pupil. This will ensure that Nottingham Schools Trust can maintain the agreed level of school improvement support established through its current grant agreement;**
- (2) note that the total funding requested to be de-delegated by maintained mainstream primary schools is £0.116m;**
- (3) note that the final approval of this decision will be subject to the Council's Spending Control Board.**

24 De-delegation of 2024/25 Health and Safety Building Inspection Funding

Nick Lee, Director of Education Services, introduced the annual report which sought permission to de-delegate funding to the LA to provide statutory and legislative health and safety responsibilities, including maintenance and testing to all maintained school properties in the City. If approved, spending decisions by the service will be subject to the Council's internal approval processes.

Trevor Bone, Head of Building Services and Facilities Management, delivered the report which outlined the following information:

- (a) Since 2019, the health and safety building inspections in maintained schools has been conducted by the LA's Building Services. Duties include assessing gas safety, electric inspections, asbestos management, gates, and air conditioning;
- (b) Since the issue of the S114 notice, Building Services can undertake the minimum amount of work under national statutory requirements;

During the discussion and in response from questions from the Forum, the following points were raised:

- (c) senior directors within the LA understand the implications if statutory requirements for health and safety in maintained schools' buildings are not met. Health and safety considerations and grant funding is an allowable spend criteria in the current spending environment;
- (d) the DfE have development conditions applied to S114 authorities to guarantee the security of funding for schools.

Resolved that:

- (1) the statutory and legislative health and safety responsibilities of the LA in relation to building maintenance of maintained primary and secondary**

schools and the type of costs that the requested funding will be used to fund, as detailed in paragraph 1.2, be noted;

(2) approve maintained mainstream primary schools to approve the de-delegation of health and safety building inspection funding for 2024/25 based on a rate of £8.33 per pupil, with a total estimated funding requirement for mainstream maintained primary schools, maintained special schools, maintained pupil referral unit and maintained nursery of £0.094m. This is made up of £0.091m from maintained primary schools and £0.003m from buy-back income;

(3) the final decision will be subject to approval by the Spending Control Board.

Schools Forum thanked Councillors and the Director of Education Services for the hard work they have undertaken for schools during these difficult financial circumstances for the Council.