

Nottingham City Council

Schools Forum

Minutes of the meeting held remotely via Zoom on 1 December 2020 from 1.50 pm - 2.40 pm

Membership

Present

Judith Kemplay (Chair)	Maintained Primaries
Derek Hobbs (Vice Chair)	Secondary Academies
Paul Burke	Secondary Academies
Meeta Dave	Primary Academies
Kerrie Fox	PRUs
Kerrie Henton	AP Academies and Free Schools
Tim Jeffs	Primary Academies
Patricia Lewis	Maintained Special Schools
Stephen McLaren	The Nottingham Nursery School
Cath Rowell	Secondary Academies
Terry Smith	Maintained Primary Head Teachers
David Tungate	Secondary Academies
Sheena Wheatley	Trade Unions
Bob White	Secondary Academies

Absent

Phil Briscoe	14-19 Education
Janet Molyneux	Maintained Primaries
Lee Morgan	Special Academies
Debbie Simon	Early Years PVI
James Strawbridge	Primary Academies

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Kathryn Bouchlaghem	- Early Years Manager
John Dexter	- Education Director
Julia Holmes	- Senior Commercial Business Partner
Lucy Juby	- Project Manager
Nick Lee	- Director of Education Services
Kathryn Stevenson	- Senior Commercial Business Partner
Janine Walker	- Head of SEND and Vulnerable Pupils
Ceri Walters	- Head of Commercial Finance
Phil Wye	- Governance Officer

15 Apologies for Absence

Janet Molyneux
Debbie Simon

16 Declarations of Interest

None.

17 Minutes of the last meeting

The Forum confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2020 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

18 Proposed pupil growth allocation for 2021/22

Lucy Juby, Project Manager, Education Services, presented the report outlining the proposed requirements of the Pupil Growth Contingency Fund (PGCF) for 2021/22 and seeking Schools Forum's approval to allocate £1.282m for this purpose, highlighting the following:

- (a) the funding will be used to fund pupil growth in both maintained schools and academies. The funding required for 2021/22 is a reduction on that requested for 2019/20;
- (b) no more expansions of primary schools are planned, and contingency is required only to fund those schools that have already begun to expand;
- (c) pupil forecasting shows there is further need for places in secondary schools, with the Year 7 demand projected to peak in 2022-24, and overall capacity pressure set to peak in 2025/26 as the larger cohorts move through. The expectation is that most or all of this remaining need will be met by the opening of the new Bluecoat Trent Academy 11-16 secondary school, which is supported by the Council. The Archway Learning Trust has been approved as a sponsor by the Secretary of State for Education to open the new school in September 2021.

Resolved to

(1) approve the allocation of £1.282m to support pupil growth in 2021/22;

(2) note:

(a) the requirement to allocate funding to academies for the period April 2021 to August 2021 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 £0.458m;

(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 2021/22 will be adjusted accordingly;

(3) approve the allocation of any unallocated DSG funding in the Schools Block which cannot be passed onto schools due the national funding formula guidelines in 2021/22 to the pupil growth contingency fund should there be a surplus balance.

19 Local Authority Budget Position

Ceri Walters, Head of Commercial Finance, delivered a presentation to explain the link between the Schools Forum funding for the Local Authority and the Local Authority budget setting process, highlighting the following:

- (a) following the setting of the 2020-21 budget, there was a reduction of central expenditure of £1.060m from the government which was covered by reserves. For the 2021-22 budget, there is a further reduction of £1.931m, which will be captured from the Local Authority (LA)'s budget rather than requested from Schools Forum;
- (b) the Local Authority (LA) set its interim budget in September 2020 setting out the estimated in-year budget gap due to Covid-19, increased pressure and demand and reduced income. This captured the reduced income from grants, including the Dedicated Schools Grant. The LA is developing a plan for mitigation which may or may not impact on those services where reductions are being incurred;
- (c) it is a statutory requirement that Schools Forum approves Central Expenditure. The Schools Forum Sub-Group was set up to review the detail of this and report back to the full Forum with outcomes and recommendations.

20 Early Years Central Expenditure 2021-22

Kathryn Stevenson, Senior Commercial Business Partner, and Kathryn Bouchlaghem, Early Years Service Manager, introduced the report requesting approval of the Early Years Central Expenditure budget for 2021/22.

If 3 & 4 year old funding rates for 2021/22 that were announced in December represent an increase above the 2020/21 level then the 5% permitted early years expenditure limit will increase accordingly. If this is the case then a proposal for an incremental increase on top of the £0.997m will be brought to Schools Forum as part of the 2021/22 Schools Budget report. This would not lead to a significant increase, with each extra 1p on the hourly rate allowing up to £1864 in additional central expenditure.

Resolved to

- (1) approve Early Years Central Expenditure of £0.997m for 2021/22, subject to this meeting the high pass-through requirement;**
- (2) note that this will not fully cover anticipated early years central expenditure costs and that a proposal for an additional incremental amount will be tabled as part of the January budget report if national EYFF rates are increased for 2021/22.**

21 Central Expenditure Budget 2021/22 – Historic Commitments

The Chair introduced the report setting out the recommendations of the Schools Forum Sub Group (SFSG) on specific items of expenditure for inclusion in the 2021/22 budget setting process. The SFSG met on the 13 and 16 November 2020

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and were content to accept the proposals put forward by the Local Authority (LA) on the funding of historic commitments for the financial year 2021/22.

Contributions to some of the combined budgets have reduced or removed with the shortfall being funded from elsewhere. The costs for termination of employment, prudential borrowing and capital expenditure must continue but will reduce over time.

If all commitments are spent, a reserve will remain of £2.2m, and Forum members queried whether any of this could be used to support schools that are struggling financially.

Resolved to approve historic commitments set out in Table 3 totalling £4.632m for the financial year 2021/22, noting the additional historical detail set out in Appendices B to F of the report.

22 Central Expenditure Budget 2021/22 – Ongoing Commitments

The Chair introduced the report setting out the recommendations of the Schools Forum Sub-Group (SFSG) on specific items of expenditure for inclusion in the 2020/21 budget setting process. The SFSG met on the 13 and 16 November 2020 and were content to accept the proposals put forward by the Local Authority (LA) on the funding of “Ongoing commitments” for the financial year 2021/22.

Resolved to

- (1) approve the ongoing commitments budgets set out in Table 3 of the report totalling £1.473m, noting the additional historical detail set out in Appendix A;**
- (2) note that the estimated cost of Copyright Licences totalling £0.219m 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, the report has used the latest October 2019 census however; once the October 2020 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 be received above the £1.473m that it is allocated to the LA to cover the cost of retained duties.**

23 Next meeting date

The Forum noted that the next meeting is scheduled for 19th January 2021 at 1.45pm, either online or at Loxley House.