

Nottingham City Council Delegated Decision



Nottingham
City Council

Reference Number:	4117
Author:	Lucy Juby
Department:	Children and Adults
Contact:	Lucy Juby (Job Title: Project Manager School Organisation, Email: lucy.juby@nottinghamcity.gov.uk, Phone: 01158765041)
Subject:	Nottingham Nursery School Funding Proposal
Total Value:	£0.075m per annum (Type: Revenue)
Decision Being Taken:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) To approve the application to the Secretary of State to make an in-year increase to the maintained nursery school's lump sum funding;2) To delegate authority to the Senior Commercial Business Partner (Schools Funding) to provide necessary information to the Secretary of State for the purpose of the application and subject to the successful application, implement the increase.

Reasons for the Decision(s)	<p>This proposal, alongside restructure proposals approved by the Nottingham Nursery School governing body on 17 December 2020, is necessary to put the City's single Maintained Nursery School onto a sustainable footing bringing the school out of deficit by 2023/24.</p> <p>Nottingham Nursery School went into deficit during the 2019/20 financial year, closing with a £0.086m deficit balance. The latest outturn projection for 2020/21 without the lump sum increase is a £0.141m deficit.</p> <p>Since the departure of the previous Headteacher, Nottingham Nursery has benefited from the leadership support of a neighbouring primary school. Local Authority officers have been working with the leadership and governing body of the Nursery School to develop a revised staffing model. It became clear as part of this process that the proposed additional funding would be required to support Nottingham Nursery to develop a workable staffing model.</p> <p>Under the Schools & Early Years Finance Regulations 2020, paragraph 10 (7) a local authority may not change its funding formula after the funding period has begun. Therefore, to increase the maintained nursery lump sum relating to the current financial year as proposed, an application will be required for approval of the Secretary of State under alternative arrangements set out in paragraph 31 of these regulations.</p> <p>The proposed funding increase would be met from the Dedicated Schools Grant funded Early Years Budget. Schools Forum were consulted at their meeting on 25 January 2021, in line with DfE requirements, and voted in favour of this proposal.</p>
Other Options Considered:	<p>Options for budget savings to recover the deficit over a 3-year period without the requirement for additional funding were considered. It was not feasible for the Nursery School to make savings to the level required to balance the budget and recover the deficit whilst remaining staffed in line with statutory ratios for the relevant age groups.</p>
Background Papers:	<p>Schools Forum Report 25/01/21 - Nottingham Nursery School Funding Proposal</p>
Unpublished background papers:	<p>Nottingham Nursery School Funding Proposal_Schools Forum 250121.pdf, General_disapplication_proforma_892 Nottingham City_Request2.xlsx</p>
Published Works:	<p>Schools & Early Years Finance Regulations 2020.</p>
Affected Wards:	<p>Radford</p>
Colleague / Councillor Interests:	
Consultations:	<p>Those not consulted are not directly affected by the decision.</p>

Crime and Disorder Implications:

N/A

Equality:

EIA not required. Reasons: An EIA is not required because there is no significant change to policy/practice. This proposal supports existing provision.

Decision Type:

Portfolio Holder

Subject to Call In:

Yes

Call In Expiry date:

18/02/2021

Advice Sought:

Legal, Finance, Human Resources

Legal Advice:

The proposals in this report raise no significant legal issues and are supported.

Regulation 10(7) of the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2020 states that a local authority may not change its funding formulae after the funding period has begun but Regulation 31(1)(e) permits alternative arrangements to be approved by the Secretary of State and this is the basis for this report.

The Schools Forum have already been consulted on this proposal and have approved it.

The implementation of any adjustment to reduce the deficit is subject to SofS approval and must only be implemented once the application has been submitted and formal approval provided. Advice provided by Dionne Claire Scream (Solicitor) on 02/02/2021.

Finance Advice:

This proposal will cost £0.075m from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funded Early Years budget. It is projected that there will be sufficient funding from within the 2020/21 Early Years block allocation to fund this in-year lump sum funding increase for Nottingham Nursery School. However, if required, there is an early years contingency of £0.652m set aside within the DSG reserve which can be drawn from. For 2021/22 the maintained nursery school lump sum has been budgeted at the increased level within the 2021/22 DSG Early Years budget.

This proposal is supported by finance officers as it is assessed as necessary in order to enable the setting to be able to recover its deficit (£0.086m as at 31 March 2020) over a 3-year period in conjunction with the implementation of a revised staffing model approved by governors.

Under the Schools and Early Years (England) Finance Regulations 2020, the LA may not change its funding formula once the funding period (April-March) has begun. Therefore the proposed disapplication request is required to obtain Secretary of State approval prior to implementation.

Advice provided by Kathryn Mair Stevenson (Finance Analyst) on 01/02/2021.

HR Advice:

This proposal does not raise any significant HR issues at this stage and is supported. It is noted that a new staffing model is being scoped and that this may include a formal federation with Mellers Primary. These actions will help to bring the Maintained Nursery School onto a sustainable footing whilst maintaining staffing in line with statutory ratios. HR will work with the governing body to ensure due consideration of restructuring, recruitment and pay policies, and to help ensure that appropriate consultation is carried out with affected colleagues. Advice provided by Matthew Hackney (Resourcing Consultant) on 04/02/2021.

Signatures

David Mellen (Leader/ PH Regeneration, Schools, Communications)
SIGNED and Dated: 10/02/2021
Catherine Underwood (Corporate Director for People)
SIGNED and Dated: 10/02/2021