

Nottingham City Council

Schools Forum

Minutes of the meeting held remotely on Zoom on 25 January 2021 from 10.03 am - 11.13 am

Membership

Present

Judith Kemplay (Chair)	Maintained Primaries
Paul Burke	Secondary Academies
Meeta Dave	Primary Academies
Kerrie Henton	AP Academies and Free Schools
Patricia Lewis	Maintained Special Schools
Stephen McLaren	The Nottingham Nursery School
Janet Molyneux	Maintained Primaries
Debbie Simon	Early Years PVI
Terry Smith	Maintained Primaries
David Tungate	Secondary Academies
Sheena Wheatley	Trade Unions
Bob White	Secondary Academies

Absent

Phil Briscoe	14-19 Education
Kerrie Fox	PRUs
Tim Jeffs	Primary Academies
Lee Morgan	Special Academies
Cath Rowell	Secondary Academies
James Strawbridge	Primary Academies

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

John Dexter	- Education Director
Julia Holmes	- Senior Commercial Business Partner
Patricia Lockhart	- Commercial Analyst
Councillor David Mellen	- Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Schools and Communication
Nick Lee	- Director of Education Services
Catherine Smith	- Early Years Programmes Manager
Kathryn Stevenson	- Senior Commercial Business Partner
Janine Walker	- Head of SEND and Vulnerable Pupils
Ceri Walters	- Head of Commercial Finance
Phil Wye	- Governance Officer

24 Apologies for Absence

Kerrie Fox
Tim Jeffs
Cath Rowell

25 Declarations of Interest

Stephen McLaren declared an Interest in agenda item 8 –Nottingham Nursery School Funding Proposal (minute reference number 31) because he is a Governor of Nottingham Nursery School. He left the room prior to discussion and voting on this item.

26 Minutes of the last meeting

The Forum confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2020 on as a correct record.

27 Appointment of Vice-Chair

Resolved to appoint Paul Burke as Vice-Chair for the remainder of the 2020/21 academic year.

28 Membership update

Phil Wye, Clerk to the Forum, informed the members that there are two vacancies for a Primary Academy representative and a Secondary Academy representative. Invitations for nomination will be sent out to all Academy Head Teachers following the meeting.

29 Schools Budget 2021/22

Ceri Walters, Head of Commercial Finance, introduced the report presenting the proposed Schools Budget for the financial year 2021/22, highlighting the following:

- (a) the Schools Budget has been prepared in line with the parameters agreed at Schools Forum and with the financial regulations issued by the Department for Education (DfE);
- (b) minimum per pupil funding has increased in the 2021/22 financial year across all education sectors. This is partially because funding previously received through the Teachers' Pay Grant, Teachers' Pension Employer Contribution Grants and the Supplementary fund, to mainstream schools, will be allocated through the National Funding Formula (NFF) from 2021/22 by adding funding to schools baselines, increasing the basic per pupil funding and increasing the minimum per pupil funding;
- (c) the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2021/22 totals £310.287m. This is split between the Schools Block, the Early Years Block, the High Needs Block and the Central Schools Services Block. The High Needs Block has seen a £5.389m increase on the 2020/21 allocation;
- (d) final individual school budgets will be issued as well as the indicative early years, high needs funding allocations and guidance notes by 28 February 2021.

Resolved to

- (1) note the overall indicative 2021/22 Schools Budget to be spent incorporating the Schools, Central Schools Services, Early Years and high Needs blocks is £310.745m;**
- (2) note this is funded by the provisional 2021/22 DSG allocation of £310.287m and the reimbursement of £0.458m funding paid to academies for pupil growth April to August 2021;**
- (3) note that the budget will be updated in year to reflect subsequent adjustments made by the ESFA to the 2021/22 DSG allocation as described in the report;**
- (4) note that any balance remaining will be allocated to the Statutory School reserve;**
- (5) note the impact to schools budgets of the indicative allocation as set out in table 5 of the report;**
- (6) approve £0.011m additional early years central expenditure over and above the £0.997m already approved a Schools Forum on 1 December 2020;**
- (7) note the allocation of Pupil Premium funding will be allocated to schools in accordance with the grant conditions.**

30 Revised High Level Needs (HLN) System

Janine Walker, Head of SEND and Vulnerable Pupils, provided a verbal update and provided the following information:

- (a) following consultation with primary schools it was noted that the existing system for HLN funding was bureaucratic and difficult to access, and there were concerns that allocations were subjective leading to a lack of confidence. As a result of this feedback, improvements were made with a new HLN grid which is simpler to complete;
- (b) feedback on the new system has been positive, and around 900 requests for support have been made to date, with the first panel meeting in January. The next step will be to establish a training programme for schools;
- (c) the new system increases the number of funding bands from 3 to 9, and children are spread more evenly between them than before, with more children attracting higher funding levels. Nottingham City has gained High Needs funding recently so it is hoped that the system will be sustainable.

31 Nottingham Nursery School Funding Proposal

Stephen McLaren declared an Interest in this item because he is a Governor of Nottingham Nursery School. He left the room prior to discussion and voting on this item.

Nick Lee, Director of Education Services, presented the report consulting the Forum on proposals to increase lump sum funding to Nottingham Nursery School by £0.075m from the current financial year. This is to ensure that, in combination with restructure proposals committed to by the Governing Body, the school can recover its financial deficit over a 3-year period. The following information was highlighted:

- (a) it is nationally recognised that standalone maintained nursery schools face higher costs per head than other types of settings in delivering the early years education entitlements. Nottingham Nursery School has seen reduced funding over the time period since the introduction of the Early Years National Funding Formula of around £0.075m per year due to the introduction of the national 30 hour offer;
- (b) since the departure of the previous Headteacher, Nottingham Nursery has benefited from the leadership support of Mellers Primary. The deputy head teacher from Mellers is currently seconded to Nottingham Nursery 3 days per week. The Council has been working with the leadership and governing body of the Nursery School to develop a revised staffing model;
- (c) The new staffing model is more similar to a key worker model operated in the private sector, with provision lead and planned by qualified teachers but delivered in the main by teaching assistants;
- (d) The nursery currently provides an outstanding standard of education and provides much needed early years provision in the Radford area, and is very popular with parents.

Resolved to

- (1) agree to support a disapplication request to the Secretary of State to make an in-year increase to the Nottingham Nursery School lump sum of £0.075m;**
- (2) note that this will be an ongoing increase, taking the annual lump sum from £0.203m to £0.278m.**

Stephen McLaren re-joined the meeting.

32 Early Years Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) report

Kathryn Stevenson, Senior Commercial Business Partner, introduced the report consulting the Forum on proposals for the distribution of Early Years Special Education Needs (SEND) underspends relating to the 2019/20 financial year only.

- (a) Nottingham City's Disability Access Funding allocation for 2019/20 was £0.090m which equated to an estimated 146 pupils. However, schools & providers only claimed DAF for 30 pupils meaning £0.072m was unspent. In order to remedy this communication on DAF will be issued to Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) Special Education Needs Coordinators (SENCO's) and will repeated on a termly basis and replicated for school SENCO's;

- (b) data analysis of applications to the Early Years SEND Fund over the past 12 months have indicated a rise in the need of Speech and Language interventions as the pandemic has resulted in learning loss in relation to language development.

Resolved to

- (1) note the proposal to use the £0.072m Disability Access Fund (DAF) underspend from 2019/20 to provide support to settings with addressing gaps in Speech Language & Communication (SLC) Needs post-COVID;**
- (2) note the proposal to distribute the £0.146m SEN IF underspend to schools/settings on the basis outlined in the report;**
- (3) note that the level and eligibility criteria for the SEN Inclusion Fund will be reviewed in parallel with the High Level Needs review for the EY's phase and that revised proposals will be consulted on with the sector in line with ESFA operational guidance.**

33 Date of the next meeting

The Forum noted that the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 23 February 2021, but there is currently nothing on the agenda, so the Clerk to the Forum will check and confirm if this meeting is to proceed. The following meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 27 April 2021.