

Nottingham City Council

Schools Forum

Minutes of the meeting livestreamed at <https://www.youtube.com/user/NottCityCouncil> on 25 January 2022 from 1.45 pm - 2.43 pm

Membership

Present

Kerrie Fox (PRUs)
Andy Smith (Secondary Academies)
Paul Burke (Secondary Academies) (Vice Chair)
David Tungate (Secondary Academies)
Meeta Dave (Primary Academies)
Terry Smith (Maintained Primary Head Teachers)
Kerrie Henton (AP Academies and Free Schools)
Tim Jeffs (Primary Academies)
Patricia Lewis (maintained Special Schools)
Judith Kemplay (Maintained Primary Head Teachers) (Chair)
Bob White (Secondary Academies)
Laura Patel (The Nottingham Nursery)
Alison Tones (Maintained Primary Head Teachers)
Caroline Sheard (14-19 Education) – substitute for Lisa Wilson

Absent

Lisa Wilson (14-19 Education)
Rob Perkins (Primary Academies)
Lee Morgan (Special Academies)

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Nick Lee	- Director of Education Services
Mark Leavesley	- Governance Officer
Kathryn Stevenson	- Senior Commercial Business Partner (School Funding)
Julia Holmes	- Senior Commercial Business Partner
Janine Walker	- Head of SEND and Vulnerable Pupils

18 Appointment of Chair

This item was deferred for nominations and, to allow for a Chair to be in place prior to the next meeting on 1 March 2022, it was agreed that elections for the position would be done via an email ballot administered by the Clerk to the Forum.

As such, Paul Burke, Vice-Chair, assumed the Chair for this meeting.

19 Apologies for Absence

Lisa Wilson (14-19 Education) – substituted by Caroline Sheard
Lee Morgan (Special Academies)
Rob Perkins (Primary Academies)

20 Declarations of Interests

None.

21 Constitution / membership

Constitution

Mark Leavesley (Clerk to the Forum) explained that the Constitution of the Schools Forum should be reviewed annually but due to the Covid pandemic this had not been done.

Resolved that the Schools Forum Constitution, as attached to the agenda, be approved.

Membership

Nick Lee, Director of Education Services reported that he had explored training sessions for forum members and wanted to consider the role of the forum within the City Council's governance structure, working with finance colleagues who would offer support in establishing an overview of the budget and various strands of the forum.

Mark Leavesley updated the membership as follows, and the Forum

(1) noted:

- (a) the replacement of Stephen McLaren by Laura Patel (The Nottingham Nursery School);**
- (b) the resignation of James Strawbridge (Primary Academies);**
- (b) that having reached the end of their 3-year term of office, the following 4 members had agreed to stand again:**
 - i) Bob White (Secondary Academies);**
 - ii) Terry Smith (Primary maintained);**
 - iii) Kerrie Henton (Stone Soup);**
 - iv) Judith Kemplay (Primary maintained)**
- (c) that a Secondary Academy vacancy had arisen as Cath Rowell had not agreed to stand again at the end of her 3-year term of office;**

- (2) Resolved that Alison Tones (Maintained Primary Head Teachers) and Rob Perkins (Academy Primary Head Teachers) be appointed to the forum for a 3-year term of office.**

22 Early Years Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SEN IF)

Kathryn Stevenson, Senior Commercial Business Partner (School Funding) introduced the report on the Early Years Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund. The following information was highlighted:

- a) The Special Educational Needs (SEN) Inclusion Fund budget has been underspent in previous years due to fewer children qualifying for lower level support than anticipated when the budget was first set. Underspends have been distributed in full to providers each year on a basis consulted on via Schools Forum, pending a full review of the SEN IF in conjunction with the review of high needs funding arrangements for the early year's phase.
- b) A sector wide consultation had taken place and all schools and providers were invited to respond to a consultation questionnaire between 7th and 15th December 2021 which had received a good level of engagement.
- c) The proposal was that the budget remains the same for 3 and 4 year olds; the number of children qualifying for High Level Needs (HNL) block being much higher than in previous years. Whilst it was proposed for the budget to remain the same, a further proposal was the introduction of two new strands of support to:
 - Introduce a setting level for those with the greatest number of high needs children needing support;
 - Third universal level of strand support to help all settings.
- d) The underspend would be universally distributed to all settings due to the heightened Speech, Language and Communications needs as a result of the pandemic.
- e) It was proposed that the budget for 2 year olds be reduced; a budget had been set but very few 2 year olds were qualifying as it was very difficult to distinguish low level Special Educational Needs in that age bracket.
- f) The introduction of the two strands would mitigate future underspends although there remains some unpredictability as the number of high level needs pupils are not always known coupled with a high level of young contingents.

Resolved to note:

- (1) the results of the sector wide consultation on proposals to revise the SEN IF eligibility criteria from April 2022 and the use of SEN IF underspends, as detailed in appendix A of the report;**
- (2) that the LA proposes to implement the revised SEN IF criteria, as outlined in paragraph 2.5 of the report, from April 2022;**
- (3) that the LA proposes to reduce the SEN IF budget set aside from 2-year-old funding to £0.010m from April 2022, as outlined in paragraph 2.4 of the report;**
- (4) the proposal to distribute the £0.148m SEN IF under-spend from 2020/21 to schools/settings on the basis outlined in paragraph 2.7 of the report, and to use a similar approach for the SEN IF underspend arising in 2021/22.**

23 Schools Budget 2022-23

Paul Burke commented that there were over 80 local authorities whose Schools Budgets were in a deficit and credited officers for getting Nottingham City Council into a positive position.

Julia Holmes, Senior Commercial Business Partner, introduced a report that presented the proposed Schools Budget for the financial year (FY) 2022/23. The following information was highlighted:

- a) The overall indicative 2022/23 Schools Budget to be spent incorporating the Schools, Central Schools Services, EY's and HN's blocks is £324.535m.
- b) Following the Autumn 2021 spending review, local authorities have also been allocated supplementary funding for 2022 to 2023 worth £1.2 billion on top of the schools NFF. This equates to £7m for Nottingham City maintained schools and academies. For early years and post-16 provision in schools, the grant is being provided in respect of the Health and Social Care Levy. For primary and secondary provision, the grant is being provided in respect of both the Health and Social Care Levy and other cost pressures.
- c) After applying the +2% minimum funding guarantee (MFG) per pupil within the local funding formula (this is the maximum MFG that can be applied within the formula in 2022/23), this has created expenditure of £246.180m in the schools block. This left a surplus balance of £0.519m unallocated; this has since been allocated to the pupils' growth contingency fund as the most equitable way of distributing the money.
- d) The early years national funding formula (EYNFF) dictates the hourly rate that each Local Authority receives for 3 & 4 year olds; the rate for 2022/23 has increased by £0.17 per hour compared to the rate for 2021/22 and an increase of £0.21 per hour for 2 year olds. This increase was significantly greater than previous years and the increase would be passed on to schools and providers.
- e) As one of the Local Authorities due to gain most significantly under the HN NFF, Nottingham City has received an 11% increase per head of 2-18 population which is the maximum allowable gain. The LA's provisional EY block allocation, as published on 16 December 2021, is £21.181m. In 2022/23 LA's can receive increases between 8% to 11% per head of population.
- f) The figures provided were provisional and would be amended as a result of the detailed calculation of indicative budgets for settings prior to the end of February and the finalisation of 2022/23 service budgets. The provisional budget figures are underpinned by the assumptions and principles which were unlikely to change.

In response to questions raised, the following information was noted:

- g) With regards the daily provision funding for AP schools it was noted that the AP was commissioned via the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and there was a proposed increase in the budget by the PRU to reflect potential increases in the sector who will be setting their prices accordingly to take into account the Health and Social Care Levy.

- h) The R21 rollout has previously been funded from reserves but there will be a need for managerial oversights in the long term to ensure that it is sitting best in the budget.

Nick Lee (Director of Educational services) acknowledged the work of officers in the Local Area Review of SEND and reported that a positive report had been received from Ofsted and CQC, highlighting the interventions and the value that it has given the City. There was recognition that the offer, the value for money and the City has put into both early interventions and specialist services was paying dividends for children and young people. It was further reported that the City Council had been asked by the Department of Education to work with them around good practice in high needs funding with the intention for it to be replicated nationally.

Resolved to note:

- (1) the overall indicative 2022/23 Schools Budget to be spent, incorporating the Schools, Central Schools Services, EY's and HN's blocks, is £324.535m;**
- (2) that the above is funded by the provisional 2022/23 DSG allocation of £322.042m, reimbursement of £0.445m funding paid to academies for pupil growth for April to August 2022, and an additional £2.048m HN's allocation;**
- (3) that the budget will be updated in-year to reflect subsequent adjustments made by the ESFA to the 2022/23 DSG allocation, as described in the report;**
- (4) that any balance remaining will be allocated to the Statutory School reserve;**
- (5) the impact to schools' budgets of the indicative allocation, as set out in Table 5 of the report;**
- (6) that total planned early years central expenditure aligns to the £1.025m approved at SF on 7 December 2021, funded based on a revised split between 2 and 3 & 4-year-old funding;**
- (7) that Pupil Premium funding will be allocated to schools in accordance with grant conditions.**

24 Dates of future meetings

The Forum noted the following meeting dates and agreed that, for the foreseeable future, meetings would be held remotely via Zoom;

2022

01 March

26 April

The meeting scheduled for 28 July was moved to 19 July.