

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES of the meeting held at Ground Floor Committee Room - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 18 December 2014 from 13.46 - 15.30

Membership

Present

Mike McKeever (Chair)
Mark Precious (Vice Chair)
Bev Angell
Susi Artis
Caroline Caille
Sally Coulton
Carole Fearria
Sian Hampton
Andy Jenkins
Judith Kemplay
Richard Matthews
Janet Molyneux
James Strawbridge

Absent

Carol Barker
Gary Holmes
Terry Smith
Wendy Vincent

Substitutes

Charlotte Malik (Substitute for Carol Barker)

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Alistair Conquer	- Head of Education Partnerships
Mick Evans	- Pupil & School Services Manager
Pat Fielding	- Director of Education
Andrew Fletcher	- Team Leader, Property Safety and Compliance
Trish Haw	- Behaviour Support Team Leader
Jennifer Hardy	- Project Manager, School Organisation
Julia Holmes	- Finance Analyst, Children and Adults
Nick Lee	- Head of Access and Learning
Tajinder Madahar	- Service Duty Manager, Children and Adults
Ceri Walters	- Acting Head of Departmental Finance Support
Alison Weaver	- Service Manager, Inclusion and Disability
Ruth Zoumides	- Schools Energy Officer, Energy Services
Laura Wilson	- Governance Officer/Clerk to the Forum
Phil Wye	- Governance Officer/Minutes
Ann Witheford	- Public

15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Terry Smith (Maintained Primary Schools)
Carol Barker (Special Schools)

16 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None

17 MINUTES

The Forum confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2014 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

18 WORK PROGRAMME

Laura Wilson, Governance Officer and Clerk, informed the Forum that all items of business for the January meeting had been deferred until the February meeting.

RESOLVED to cancel the January meeting of the Forum.

19 PROPOSED BUDGET FOR PUPIL GROWTH FOR 2015/16

Jennifer Hardy, Project Manager, School Organisation, introduced her report on the proposed budget for Pupil Growth 2015/16, and highlighted the following points:

- (a) the level of funding requested for pupil growth for the 2015/16 academic year is £1.047 million. It is estimated that this will be spent on the following:

Planned expansions	£0.338m
Classroom set up	£0.112m
Additional funding for academies to fund full financial years	£0.297m
Contingency	£0.300m
Total	£1.047m

- (b) the Education Funding Agency (EFA) require local authorities to provide funding for growth in academies from September to August because academies are funded on an academic year basis rather than financial year. This means that academies receive 12 months of funding rather than the 7 month equivalent provided for maintained schools;
- (c) to ensure the local authority have the appropriate funding to continue payments to academies, the EFA calculate the academies budget shares and deduct the amounts given out for pupil growth for April 2015 to August. The revised total is the amount that is recouped for the local authority;
- (d) any unspent money will be returned to the Forum at the end of the financial year.

Jennifer gave the following additional information in response to questions and comments from the Forum:

- (e) although pupil growth is an ongoing problem there are not many more primary school expansions planned in the near future;
- (f) the demand for places will become an issue for secondary schools from approximately 2017. This is currently being investigated but no decisions have been made about where expansions will be as a city-wide discussion, with engagement from all schools and academies, will need to take place first.

The Forum Members suggested that a strategy will need to be agreed on how discussions and consultations on secondary school expansions take place.

RESOLVED to

- (1) approve the allocation of £1.047m to support pupil growth in 2015/16;**
- (2) note:**
 - (a) the requirement to allocate funding to academies for the period April 2015 to August 2015, as guided by the EFA;**
 - (b) the amount to be allocated is £0.297m;**
 - (c) the funding will be included on the submission of the 2015/16 Authority Pro-forma Tool sent in to the EFA which includes all school budgets shares for 2015/16 and the amounts to be given out to academies for pupil growth April 2015 to August 2015;**
 - (d) 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 2015/16 will be adjusted accordingly;**
- (3) delegate authority to the Schools Forum sub-group to consider the current criteria for allocation of funding through the pupil growth contingency fund and bring updated criteria back to the Forum in Spring 2015 for a decision, if required;**
- (4) approve that an update on the spend for pupil growth contingency fund in 2015/16 is included as a standing item on the agenda for all future Schools Forum meetings.**

20 DE-DELEGATION OF FUNDING FOR THE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT TEAM

Trish Haw, Behaviour Support Team (BST) Leader introduced the revised version of her report requesting de-delegation of funding for BST services for maintained mainstream schools to enable the local authority to deliver its statutory obligations, which the Forum had previously considered and deferred for further information to be provided at its meeting on 16 October 2014 (minute 9(a)).

The Forum confirmed that the revised report included the clarification requested at the last meeting.

RESOLVED

- (1) **for maintained mainstream primary schools representatives to approve the de-delegation of funding for the statutory services provided by the BST at a lump sum of £3,000 per maintained mainstream primary school and £55.00 per eligible free school meal pupil, at a total cost of £322,043;**
- (2) **for the maintained mainstream secondary schools representative to not approve the de-delegation of funding of £42,905 for the statutory services provided by the BST for maintained mainstream secondary schools.**

21 DE-DELEGATION OF 2015/16 HEALTH AND SAFETY BUILDING MAINTENANCE FUNDING

Andrew Fletcher, Team Leader, Property Safety and Compliance, introduced the revised version of the Finance Analyst, Children and Adults' report requesting de-delegation of funding for 2015/16 Health and Safety Building Maintenance to enable the local authority (LA) to deliver its statutory obligations regarding health and safety, which the Forum had previously considered and deferred for further information to be provided at its meeting on 16 October 2014 (minute 9(e)).

The funding requested will be used to carry out tests and inspections for:

- air conditioning units;
- automatic doors;
- boilers;
- circuit testing;
- emergency lighting;
- fire alarms;
- heat pumps;
- intruder alarms;
- bi-annual legionella risk assessments;
- lifts lightning protection;
- pressure sets;
- stage lighting.

The following comments were made during the discussion:

- (a) the overall responsibility for health and safety lies with individual schools, but the Council offers a buy-back service to cover the management of this;
- (b) schools could engage contractors individually but this is likely to be more expensive for them;
- (c) this service would allow for easier management of tests and inspections, as they can be complicated due to different timescales;
- (d) the costs cover the tests but not officer time;
- (e) the costs are calculated according to the numbers of pupils at an individual school;

- (f) if maintained school representatives do not approve the de-delegation, the inspections and tests will be still be carried out but schools will be charged per test/inspection, which may cost more or less depending on the number of pupils on roll;
- (g) there is not enough information in the report for members to make an informed decision but, due to Department for Education deadlines, the decision needs to be taken at this meeting.

RESOLVED

- (1) to note the statutory and legislative responsibilities of the LA in relation to Health and Safety Building Maintenance of maintained mainstream primary and secondary schools and the type of costs that the funding will be used for, detailed above and in paragraph 1.6 of the report;**
- (2) for maintained mainstream primary and secondary schools to approve the de-delegation of the Health and Safety Building Maintenance funding in 2015/16:**
 - (a) maintained mainstream primary schools - £0.171m;**
 - (b) maintained mainstream secondary schools - £0.028m;**
- (3) to note the total funding requirement for health and safety testing and inspections on maintained primary and secondary school sites for 2015/16 and is £0.199m;**
- (4) to agree that further details of the Health and Safety benefits for schools will be provided by Ceri Walters, Finance Business Partner, Children and Adults, to Forum members;**
- (5) to note that Forum members can contact Andrew Fletcher with any concerns they may have around testing and inspections.**

22 STATUTORY SCHOOL RESERVE 2014/15

Ceri Walters, Finance Business Partner, Children and Adults, presented her report detailing the balance on the Statutory School Reserve (SSR) 2014/15 and confirming the latest commitments aligned to the SSR, and highlighted the following points:

- (a) at 1 April 2014 there was a reserve balance of £12.781m which has increased from £7.511m since 1 April 2013. The reserve is 6% of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocation;
- (b) the commitments aligned to the reserve currently total £5.558m, which leaves a total balance of £7.466m which is 3.27% of the DSG allocation;
- (c) the Department for Education (DfE) does not have formal guidance on best practice for percentages, the guidance only relates to schools balances which are 5% for secondary schools and 8% for primary and special schools, but this has not been reached by Nottingham City Council;

- (d) a risk assessment of the reserve will be carried out and included in the budget report brought to the February 2015 meeting of the Forum.

The following comments were made during the discussion:

- (e) it is a concern that the reserve is growing, as the money held in reserve should be maximised for the education of young people;
- (f) options to utilise the reserve are being explored, such as the re-introduction of Strategic Partnership Bids.

RESOLVED to

- (1) note the total value of the SSR as at 1 April 2014 was £12.781m, as detailed in Appendix A of the report;**
- (2) note the latest commitments against the SSR balance is £5.558m, as detailed in Appendix B of the report;**
- (3) agree to utilise the Schools Forum Sub Group to undertake further reserve analysis to inform future budget processes;**
- (4) note the values for the risk register will be captured as part of the budget report in February 2015.**

23 CENTRAL EXPENDITURE BUDGET 2015/16

Ceri Walters, Finance Business Partner, Children and Adults, presented her report on the proposed Central Expenditure Budget for 2015/16, and highlighted the following points:

- (a) Appendix A of the report shows the underspend/overspend of different services;
- (b) any underspend will go into the reserve and there is currently a forecasted underspend of around £7m;
- (c) the total for the Early Years block in Appendix A should read £1.159m.

The following comments were made during the discussion:

- (d) work needs to be done to ensure value for money/success of projects;
- (e) benchmarking data can be discussed in more detail at the Forum Sub Group and further work can be done with comparable authorities on how they record their data;
- (f) where there are discrepancies in certain services with statistical neighbours, this can be due to differing recording processes.

RESOLVED to

- (1) **approve:**
 - (a) **the Schools Block central expenditure for 2015/16 totalling £7.065m, as set out in Appendix A of the report;**
 - (b) **the Early Years Block central expenditure for 2015/16 totalling £1.159m, as set out in Appendix A of the report.**

- (2) **note:**
 - (a) **the High Needs block central expenditure for 2015/16 totalling £3.186m, as set out in Appendix A of the report;**
 - (b) **that the central expenditure has not breached in 2015/16;**
 - (c) **the approvals gained from this report will be incorporated into the final budget report in February 2015;**

- (3) **agree to:**
 - (a) **the utilisation of the Schools Forum Sub Group to undertake further budget discussions to inform future budget processes;**
 - (b) **the establishment of terms of reference for the Schools Forum Sub Group, timeline for meetings and initial focus for discussion.**

24 PERMANENT EXCLUSIONS - FULL COST RECOVERY ARRANGEMENTS FROM 1 SEPTEMBER 2014

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

25 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

The Forum decided to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining agenda item in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on that basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

26 PERMANENT EXCLUSIONS - FULL COST RECOVERY ARRANGEMENTS FROM 1 SEPTEMBER 2014 - EXEMPT APPENDICES

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

27 EXEMPT MINUTE

RESOLVED to confirm the exempt minute from the meeting held on 16 October 2014 as a correct record, and note that, although the decision that was taken stands, members felt that there had been insufficient information provided in the report.