

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

SCHOOLS FORUM

**MINUTES of the meeting held at Loxley House, Nottingham on 18 June 2015
from 13.50 - 15.15**

Membership

Present

Bev Angell
Susi Artis
Mark Precious (Chair)
Caroline Caille
Sally Coulton
Carole Fearria
Terry Smith
Paul Halcro
Sian Hampton (Vice Chair)
Andy Jenkins
Chris Manze
Richard Matthews
Janet Molyneux
James Strawbridge
Tracey Ydlibi

Absent

Carol Barker
Gary Holmes
Judith Kemplay
Wendy Vincent

Substitutes

Charlotte Malik (for Carol Barker)

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Alistair Conquer	- Head of Education Partnerships
Julia Holmes	- Finance Analyst, Children and Adults
Lucy Juby	- Project Manager, School Organisation
Jonny Kirk	- Head of Access to Learning
Dave Rowe	- Fernwood School
Kathryn Stevenson	- Finance Analyst, Children and Adults
Ceri Walters	- Finance Business Partner, Children and Adults
Sarah White	- Project Manager, Major Programmes
Phil Wye	- Governance Officer

48 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Carol Barker (sent substitute)
Gary Holmes
Judith Kemplay
Councillor Sam Webster

49 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

50 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Forum confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2015 as a correct record and these were signed by the chair.

51 SCHOOL ORGANISATION UPDATES

a PUPIL GROWTH CONTINGENCY FUND (Agenda Item 4a)

Lucy Juby, Project Manager, School Organisation, gave a verbal update on the Pupil Growth Contingency Fund, highlighting the following points:

(a) the remaining fund currently stands at £37,534;

(b) there are three changes since April:

- Middleton Primary has been added as it has taken a bulge year;
- Bluecoat Primary's fund has been increased due to adjustments;
- Heathfield Primary has been added to fund its new nursery;

(c) the criteria of the fund may be changed next year.

b PUPIL PROJECTIONS AND EXPANSION PROGRAMMES (Agenda Item 4b)

Jonny Kirk, Service Manager, Access to Learning gave a verbal update on pupil projections and future expansion plans in Nottingham City, highlighting the following:

(a) there has been a recent influx of families to the Wollaton area, putting pressure on the schools there. Nottingham City Council is consulting on the permanent expansion of Fernwood and Middleton primary schools;

(b) expansion of secondary schools will be needed across the city due to increasing pupil numbers, however this will not impact until the 2017/18 academic year at the earliest;

(c) on National Offer Day this year, 85% of parents received an offer of their first school preference and all parents were given the offer of a school (including 235 mandatory offers). However there has been an increase in the number of applicants of 138 compared to last year;

(d) the School Admissions team is under increasing pressure, as it is a difficult task to offer all parents the school they would like. However, they now have 8 languages spoken within the team, and 3 people dedicated to reception visits from parents;

The following responses were given in answer to questions from the Forum:

(e) some parents will not send their child to school unless they are offered a place at their preferred school, however the School Admissions team now has a dedicated person dealing with children without a school place, and there will be a week of action with the Education Welfare service to combat non-school attendance,

including possible prosecution;

- (f) there is pressure on school places in all areas of the city, however some parents have been refused a place in their catchment area school, such as Haydn Primary school. However, there were always other schools within a reasonable distance with places available;
- (g) the Access to Learning service tries to work with developers of new housing and the planning committee in areas where the pressure for school places is high, such as Wollaton;
- (h) siblings from one family being split between one or more schools is a common problem. Some other local authorities have consulted on removing the priority for siblings who do not live in the catchment area but this is currently not an idea that Nottingham City is pursuing. There may also be a review of school catchment areas for popular schools, but this can be complex and have a knock-on effect on neighbouring schools.

52 ALLOCATION OF ICT FUNDING TO SCHOOL EXPANSION PROJECTS

Sarah White, Project Manager, Major Programmes introduced the report of the Project Manager, Major Programmes requesting the approval to reallocate funding for Building Schools for the Future (BSF) Wave 5 schemes to cover ICT costs for expanding schools within the city. Sarah highlighted the following:

- (a) the funding for ICT provision within the Wave 5 BSF programme is no longer needed. As a result of budget pressures and the urgent requirement for primary school places, the level of funding for ICT infrastructure in school expansions has reduced;
- (b) expanding schools require £50 per pupil for hardware such as wireless access points, laptops or laptop trolleys. New-build schools, such as Heathfield Primary's new campus, require a higher level of funding at £115 per pupil for infrastructure such as servers, telephony kit and ICT hardware;

The following responses were given in answer to questions from the Forum:

- (c) the new-build school sites will be funded for a full complement of pupils, even though these schools may not initially be full as they are building up from the lower year groups. This is because it is better value for money to procure everything together;
- (d) the Schools IT team will be able to help schools and academies to procure the best value for money contracts.

RESOLVED to

- (1) approve the reallocation of £0.245m of the £0.275m BSF ICT funding to each of the following expanding schools (one abstention):**

School	Number of increased pupils	Total allocation
Heathfield Primary	472	£77,880
Bluecoat Primary	450	£74,250
Nottingham Academy	420	£69,300
Mellers Primary	210	£10,500
South Wilford Primary	90	£4,500
Fernwood Nursery	52	£2,600
Roslyn Primary	120	£6,000
TOTAL	1814	£245,030

- (2) approve a contingency of £0.030m to be set aside to fund any future school expansion schemes where ICT might be required and delegate responsibility for allocating the contingency to the Major Programmes team.**

53 FREE SCHOOL MEALS UPDATE

Kathryn Stevenson, Finance Analyst, Children and Families presented the report of the Corporate Director for Children and Adults giving an overview of the current processes in place to ensure Nottingham's schools are maximising their Pupil Premium funding even if those pupils are entitled to Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM). The following points were highlighted:

- (a) there has been a reduction in the number of parents registering for Free School Meals (FSM) as pupils are now entitled to UIFSM. This has had the knock-on effect of a reduction in the number of children eligible for the Pupil Premium;
- (b) a new Universal Primary Pupil Benefits registration form has been created, which was publicised in SCENE and discussed at meetings of the School/Academy Business Managers in April/May 2015;
- (c) schools have been encouraged to pass the form to all parents, and then filter out those parents who are not eligible for the Pupil Premium. The form also covers School Clothing Allowance;
- (d) the Forum will receive an update later in the academic year giving an update to demonstrate if there has been an improvement.

RESOLVED to

- (1) note the impact that pupils not registering for Free School Meals (FSM) could have on the allocation of funding to schools;**
- (2) note the actions undertaken to ensure the process of identifying pupils eligible for Pupil Premium funding;**
- (3) note how the reduced number of pupils registering for FSM impacted on the budget setting process.**

54 2014/15 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT - OUTTURN REPORT

Ceri Walters, Finance Business Partner, Children and Adults, introduced her report detailing the Statutory Schools Reserve (SSR) and Schools Reserve balances for 2015/16 and the commitments aligned to the SSR which will enable future funding decisions presented to the Forum.

The following responses were given in response to questions from the Forum:

- (a) the high underspend on 2 year old provision as take-up of funded places has been lower than predicted. It is unknown whether the Education Funding Agency (EFA) will claw this money back but even if it does there is still enough in the reserve to cover current commitments;
- (b) it is unknown whether the 2 year old provision underspend can be used for Capital programmes;
- (c) number 10 on the reserves commitments, Nottingham City Secondary Education Partnership Capital Expenditure, is still ongoing. This money is reserved for the PRU should it relocate to a new site.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) note that the 2014/15 financial outturn position of the DSG was an underspend of £5.815m and the reasons for the underspend as follows:**

2 Year old provision	£3.220m
BSF slippage	£0.740m
Pupil growth slippage	£0.099m
Children and Families Act contingency	£0.558m
Cross border top ups	£0.386m
TOTAL MATERIAL UNDERSPEND	£5.003m

- (2) note that this underspend has been allocated back to the SSR resulting in a closing balance of £15.698m as follows:**

Opening Balance as at 1 April 2014	£12.781m
Less: 2014/15 Commitments	(£2.898m)
Add: 2014/15 Underspends	£5.815m
Closing Balance as at 31 March 2015	£15.698m

- (3) note that, based on current commitments which includes the ring-fenced funding for 2 year olds, the SSR balance by 31 March 2017 should be £5.660m;**

(4) agree on the principle of the Local Authority exploring how the SSR balance, aligning to Early Years, may be utilised for specific schemes;

(5) request a report or presentation from the Early Years team around take up of 2 year old nursery places.

55 WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme for the next meeting of the Forum was noted, with the addition of any de-delegation reports that will be required.

56 MEETING DATES FOR THE 2015-16 ACADEMIC YEAR

The future meeting dates were not agreed, and further discussion will need to take place to ensure that meetings are suitable for Schools Forum members but also meet the requirements for financial deadlines. A list of the future meeting dates will be circulated to members prior to the next meeting.