

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
DERBYSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 22nd November 2018
at 4.30pm Sporton Room, Post Mill Centre, South Normanton

Present

Members			
Stephanie Marbrow	Rosliston C of E Primary	Martin Brader	Dronfield Henry Fanshawe
Peter Johnston	The Village Federation	Karen Burton	Elmsleigh Infant & Nursery
David Baker	The Pingle Academy	Chris Greenhough	Swanwick School & Sports Coll.
Tracey Burnside	Whittington Green School	Chris Wayment	ASCL
Angela Stanton	Alfreton Nursery School	Julien Scholefield	Esteem MAT
Dan O'Donovan	Esteem MAT	David Plummer	Netherthorpe School
Dawn Curry	The Avenue Nursery	Deborah Turner	NUT
Substitutes			
Alan Thomas	Northfield Junior	Monica White	ATL
Observers			
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DCC Officers/others			
Chris Allcock	Children's Services Finance	Andy Walker	Children's Services Finance
Karen Gurney	Children's Services Finance	Kathryn Boulton	Children's Services Finance
Andrew Rowan	Traded Services	Mark Emly	Learning Access and Inclusion
Ruth Lane	Children's Services Finance	Ben Bryant	Isos Partnership

Apologies

Barbara Arrandale, Linda Du-Roe, Bridget Handley, Gill Hutton, Janet Snell, Lisa Key, Cllr Alex Dale, Cllr Julie Patton, John Clapham, Andrew Wild, Caroline Rodgers

Martin Brader chaired the meeting and confirmed that it was quorate.

18/32 Strategic Review of High Needs Provision in Derbyshire – Isos Partnership

Ben Bryant from the Isos Partnership gave a detailed presentation of the following:

- Aims of the review
- Where we are in the process
- Next steps after today

Isos have met with many partners within Derbyshire involved in SEN provision including parents and young people. Much of the evidence gathering has been completed, although there is still more to do to fill in some gaps. After Christmas Isos will pull together a report and start to develop a new strategy in conjunction with schools and LA staff.

Deborah Turner commented that no mention had been made about the Early Help Offer around mainstream schools. Isos replied that the scope of the review did not include the Early Help Offer, although there is of course some overlap. They have found that in some places early help is working well but there are inconsistencies across the county. The review terms do not include the specialist services outside of the LA, however they have engaged with Child

and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's) to input into the process.

Peter Johnston noted that from the graphs provided there seems to be a considerable difference in the parents and professionals' perspectives as to whether there is the right offer of support, services and provision. Isos replied that they sensed that the professionals are doing a good job, but whether they were answering the question on behalf of their individual service or on the wider offer was unclear. An individual at the point of delivery is less likely to be positive because they are the ones who encounter the problems. Parents do understand the system but some have unrealistic expectations due to a lack of resources. Some consider it a battle to secure what they feel they need.

Julian Scholefield felt that Derbyshire, whilst not yet at crisis point, was fast approaching it due to insufficient High Needs Block (HNB) funding. The strategic review has to be the key driver for change, other reviews of SEN in Derbyshire have been open to interpretation. The Isos review needs to result in clear recommendations that don't need further interpretation. Isos commented that some LAs are absolutely in the mire financially and it is difficult to see how they can resolve their situations. Derbyshire is not immune to these pressures but is not in the same financial position and has some time to reassess and allocate resources to reflect priorities. Isos want to use stakeholders' knowledge to provide a clear strategy and will assess the recommendations in conjunction with HNB funding at a later stage.

18/33 Minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2018

Matters of accuracy

There were no matters of accuracy discussed.

Matters arising

Page 5 – Chris Allcock confirmed that the applications to make changes to the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) calculations to the Secretary of State for Glossopdale and Belper Schools have been agreed.

18/34 Mainstream Schools – MFG/Floor protection

Chris Allcock presented the paper to inform the Schools Forum of the responses from schools and academies to the Authority's mainstream formula consultation.

Derbyshire's spend on MFG protection, when expressed as a proportion of Schools Block funding, is 101st highest of 152 LAs. Chris expressed the view that the national spend on MFG suggests some form of protection, MFG or otherwise, will be required within a hard National Funding Formula (NFF).

Table 1 shows that as the amount delegated via Low Prior Attainment (LPA) increases, the amount of MFG decreases in the primary sector. Table 2 demonstrates that, in general, it is the smallest schools which rely most on MFG with an average of £15,000 each for school with less than 50 pupils and an average of £7,500 for schools with between 50 and 100 pupils. The level of MFG support is mainly due to the £20,000 reduction in the lump sum when the NFF was introduced.

Chris' key message was that the long term cost of MFG should be manageable.

Table 3 shows the schools whose reliance on MFG/Floor exceeded 4% of their SB income, the protection being due to a variety of individual-school issues. The next national spending review in 2020-21 should increase the NFF multipliers in which case reliance on MFG for these schools would reduce. In addition Derbyshire could apply to the DfE to reduce the MFG support to these schools. However, at present, this would result in less money coming to Derbyshire as a whole so he counselled against it.

When the Hard NFF is introduced the DfE could choose to phase out MFG over a number of years as they did with post 16 funding some years ago.

No comments were raised by the Forum which agreed to note the report.

18/35 DSG overall financial assessment

Chris Allcock presented the paper to provide a financial context regarding the DSG for 2018-19 and 2019-20 to help inform future decisions. Chris explained that the report was designed to give members the wider DSG context before considering the allocation of individual blocks, both at this meeting and the one in January.

The latest 2018-19 projected DSG spend indicates an overspend of £2.198m of which £1.85m relates to the HNB. The DSG budget included a planned drawdown of £1.210m from reserves, meaning that total spending is forecast to exceed the grant income by about £3.408m. After adjustments it is forecast that the uncommitted DSG balance going into 2019-20 will be around £2.737m meaning that, based on current spending patterns, DSG reserves will be exhausted during that year. Any shortfall would be likely to result in a reduction in school budgets to recover the deficit in 2020-21. If the DSG can be kept in balance for 2019-20 the next Comprehensive Spending Review may provide some relief.

The issue of the impact of the teachers' pay award for staff not employed directly in schools was raised e.g. SSSEN. Although schools have been given a Teachers Pay Grant to minimise the effect of the award to approximately 1%, no such grant is given for teachers employed outside of schools. Peter Johnston said he would pass on this information to Jules White who is the founder of the WorthLess Campaign, an organisation campaigning on schools' funding.

The HNB is the main area of concern. There will be the Isos review as an agenda item in June as the review concludes in May. Meantime the LA will look to capture savings wherever possible by means of a line by line review of individual budgets. Several possible savings were listed in the paper which may save up to £1m.

Julian Scholefield said that if we have an idea of the findings of the Isos review could we implement savings earlier. Chris replied that we would look at this. Other options would be to ask schools and the Forum to subsidise the HNB from the Schools Block, or for the Council to subsidise the HNB. Either way, long term DSG spending, including the HNB, must be kept within the financial envelope. Tracey Burnside commented that one of potential savings – for schools to pay for Integrated Pathways Team (IPT) services – was already charged to schools so would not be an additional saving. Kathryn Boulton and Chris Allcock said they would follow this up.

Chris stated that the DfE have already signalled the £1.7m historic commitment allocation of Derbyshire's Central School Services Block will start to be phased out from 2020-21, adding further pressure on the DSG and the Council, which benefits from this allocation.

Schools Forum agreed to note the report and the implications raised.

18/36 School funding – responses to the LA’s mainstream consultation

Chris Allcock presented the paper to inform the Schools Forum of the responses from schools and academies to the Authority’s mainstream formula consultation. Schools had provided 28 responses to the consultation and on the whole they agreed with the proposals recommended by the LA with only a small number of comments made.

The LA intends to implement the consultation proposals for 2019-20 subject to the actual settlement which will be published by the DfE in December.

No comments were raised from the floor and the Forum agreed to note the responses to the mainstream consultation.

18/37 Pupil Growth funding

Chris Allcock presented the paper to inform the Schools Forum of the estimated growth funding allocation for 2019-20 and to determine its use. The Schools Block allocation to LAs currently includes an amount to reflect historic spending on supporting schools with increasing numbers of pupils and KS1 class size issues, which for Derbyshire is currently £1.1m. The DfE want to formalise this.

From 2019-20 the DfE will base growth funding on increases in pupil numbers as measured at Middle Super Output Area (MSOA) level, plus £65,000 per new institution that is registered for the first time in October 2018 (none in Derbyshire’s case) although two new schools are planned to open in September 2019. A template has been provided for LAs to calculate their own estimates of the amount of funding that may be received. Our calculation indicates an estimated allocation of £2.475m, representing an increase of £1.375m. A separate calculation will be performed each year giving uncertainty about future allocations, a key consideration when determining how this funding may be utilised.

Prior to April 2018 there has never been a general growth fund for in-year increases in pupils in Derbyshire. In December 2017, the Forum agreed to retain a small fund of £0.1m to meet potential claims from academies where increases in pupil numbers arose as a direct consequence of the LA requiring an academy to admit a significant number of additional pupils. It is now proposed to include LA schools in this fund which will continue to be subject to careful vetting with an expectation that schools and academies should meet some of the costs from their own resources.

Pupil Growth Funding also has to cover new free schools (all new schools fall within this category). A table in 2.2.2 calculates that the net formula impact of a typical 210 pupil primary school would be ~£412,846. Additionally, post opening support is required for leadership and resources, resulting in a potential further cost of up to £335,500, bringing the total cost to ~£0.75M per school. There are currently four new schools planned in the medium term which could require support of up to £3m.

Deborah Turner noted that as all new schools have to be academies it seems that the LA is being harshly treated. Kathryn Boulton commented that pupils joining schools as a result of new housing developments is not an exact science and is difficult to predict pupil numbers in these new schools.

The Forum noted the indicative pupil growth funding for 2019-20 and agreed to:

- set aside £1.10m to support Key Stage 1 class size requirements;
- set aside £0.25m to support in year increases in pupil numbers for schools and academies as set out in section 2.2.1;

- allocate the balance of the funding to support new free schools; and
- carry forward any underspend against the budget in (iii) in a reserve to help meet future years' costs.

18/38 Early Years Block budgets 2019-20

Chris presented the paper, which set out the key Early Years Block issues for 2019-20, and said that a further paper would be presented at the January 2019 meeting. Table 1 is the LA's assumption of the amount of funding for 2019-20. However, the DfE had announced today that our funding rate would be reduced from £4.40 per hour to £4.39 per hour. The table shows that the number of hours being provided is predicted to reduce in 2019-20 compared with 2018-19.

For 2019-20 95% of funding has to be delegated, also, given the LA's reduced DSG reserves, the 2018-19 EYB over-commitment (£491k) has to be eliminated.

Table 3 in 2.3.2 sets out the proposed 2019-20 Early Years delegated allocations which reflect:

- An increase in the basic hourly rate to all providers from £4.03 to £4.08;
- Removal of the current £0.27 per hour nursery unit supplement;
- The nursery school enhanced rate would be set at £0.54 per hour, thereby maintaining the overall £4.62 per hour funding rate; and
- All other formula multipliers have been kept at 2018-19 levels.

To provide some context, an additional £0.01 per hour increase in the universal rate would cost around £0.074m, assuming the nursery school rate stays at £4.62.

David Plummer asked why the rate for nursery schools is protected and not nursery units. Angela Stanton replied that nursery schools are protected by the Maintained Nursey Schools Grant whilst further research on nursery schools is conducted. Chris Allcock added that the grant has only been confirmed until the end of 2019-20.

Schools Forum agreed to note the report and that an updated report will be provided to the January 2019 meeting.

18/39 Dates and venues of future meetings

31 January 2019, 4.30pm – 6.30pm, Sporton Room, Post Mill Centre, South Normanton
19 June 2019, 6pm to 8pm, Committee Room 1, County Hall, Matlock

The meeting closed at 6.25pm.