

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL DERBYSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 12th January 2022 At 6pm on Microsoft Teams

Present

Members	Schools / Organisation
Alan Thomas	Northfield Junior
Siobhan Johnston	The Brigg Infants
Michelle Jenkins	Etwall Primary
Thomas Osborn	Baslow St Anne's
Chris Greenhough	Swanwick School & Sports College
Nick Goforth	Belper Secondary School
Martin Brader	Dronfield Henry Fanshawe
Peter Hallsworth	South Normanton Nursery
Tom England	Esteem MAT
Julian Scholefield	Esteem MAT
Joy Williams	David Neiper Academy
Tim Croft	Redhill Academy Trust
Keith Hirst	Brookfield Community School
Sarah Le-Good	16-19 Rep Derby College Group
Sarah Baker	Team Education Trust
Peter Crowe	ASCL
Deborah Turner	NEU

Substitutes

Members	Schools / Organisation
Cilla Holman	Hadfield Infants School
Chris Wayment	ASCL
Ben Riggott	Parkside Community School

Observers

None

DCC Officers/others

Members	Schools / Organisation
Saranjit Shetra	Ass't Director, Education and Improvement
Iain Peel	Service Director, Schools and Learning
Chris Allcock	CS & T Finance
Phil Burrows	CS & T Finance
Elena Beard	CS & T Finance
Shelley Kerslake	CS & T Finance
Andy Walker	CS & T Finance
Ruth Lane	CS & T Finance

Martin Brader chaired the meeting. Chris Allcock confirmed that the meeting was quorate and reported that Simon Redfern was replacing Philip Curtis on behalf of the Catholic Dioceses of Nottingham and Hallam.

22/01 Apologies

Members	Schools / Organisation
Jennifer Murphy	Hunloke Park Primary
Peter Johnston	The Village Federation
Jeannie Haigh	Willows Academy Trust
Simon Redfern	Catholic Dioceses of Nott'm and Hallam
Canon Carolyn Lewis	Church of England Diocese - Derby
Margaret Mason	Children 1st
Carol Cammiss	Executive Director, Children's Services
Cllr Julie Patten	Elected Member DCC

22/02 Schools Block Budgets 2022 - 23

Chris Allcock presented the paper to inform the Forum of the Authority's Schools Block allocation for 2022-23, including the pupil growth fund (PGF), and to seek the Forum's approval to utilise some of the PGF to support school and academy budgets for 2022-23.

Chris confirmed that the DfE announced the 2022-23 Schools Block allocation on 16th December 2021. In addition, the announcement included an unexpected but welcome supplementary grant for schools worth £1.2bn nationally, to provide support for the cost of the health and social care levy and wider costs. This grant, which is outside of the NFF, is estimated to be worth £15.661m for Derbyshire. An average 200 pupil primary school could expect to receive around £27,000 and an average 900 pupil secondary school around £162,000.

The Forum has previously agreed to a transfer of 0.5% from Schools Block to High Needs Block. As part of the formula impacts, the Authority has asked the DfE for permission to reduce the Minimum Per Pupil Level (MPPL) for 2022-23. At the time of the meeting the Authority was still awaiting a decision, if the application were refused it would be necessary to take an extra £6.25 and £10.25 from the KS1/2 and KS3/4 multipliers.

Based on the DfE's formula data published on 20th December 2021, the cost of funding formula budgets locally would be £2.006m more than the grant. The main reasons for this being demographic increases in FSM, both current and Ever 6, increased PFI costs, less a saving in low prior attainment costs due to reductions in pupil numbers. The £2m over commitment must be addressed as the Authority would not sanction any outcome that would increase the projected DSG deficit, which at 31st March 2022 is estimated will be around £5.5m. Three options to cover the shortfall were set out in Table 2, namely:

- 1) pare back one or more of the multipliers driving the shortfall e.g. FSM
- 2) pare back all formula multipliers
- 3) supplement the available funding by using pupil growth fund resources.

A discussion then took place.

Deborah Turner asked if we are reducing funding to schools via schools block because of the supplementary grant. Nick Goforth asked if the supplementary grant covers the increase in national insurance costs from April.

Chris Allcock replied that the increase in national insurance costs is covered by the supplementary grant. The total grant is worth £15.661m for Derbyshire and in addition to the national insurance increase, the grant will also be needed to cover wider cost

pressures in the system, for example future pay awards and the impact on energy price rises.

Chris said he suspected the DfE would reference the additional grant should pressures in the schools system continue to rise. Chris Wayment said she agreed with the comment on future budget pressures but aren't we doing the same when reducing schools block budgets? Would we feel morally more secure if we didn't consider the supplementary grant in connection with the Schools Block?

Chris Allcock accepted the comparison but contended that in planning the best use of resources, although we could not access the supplementary grant funding, it was reasonable for the Forum to be aware of it.

The decision for the Forum is what level of support to give to school budgets from the PGF. The Authority's proposal is to adopt a combination of options 2 and 3. Specifically, to utilise £1.221m of the PGF to fund the in-year increase in free schools' budgets (£0.221m) and a fixed contribution of £1.000m towards the shortfall. The residual shortfall, estimated to be £0.785m, would be closed by paring back all formula multipliers by around 0.21%.

The contributions would utilise £1.221m of the £2.509m PGF and the report set out proposals for how the remaining PGF funds should be utilised. The main change would be a tightening of the support for Key Stage 1, where the Authority is currently more generous than many other LAs. In future support would be focussed on small to medium sized schools only with schools expected to make a greater contribution to costs from their own resources. Appendix 5 set out the KS1 funding allocated in 2020-21 and showed that very few schools needed this income when judged against their end of year balances.

The new arrangements would have a core KS1 budget of £0.300m with a £0.100m contingency to support schools needing greater support.

A number of comments and questions were raised by Forum members.

Michelle Jenkins said schools are currently struggling with supply costs due to COVID, the 2021-22 carry forwards are disappearing quickly and some schools of course did not have a high carry forward.

Deborah Turner said Appendix 5 didn't provide any balances for academy schools so there was a big hole in the data. Some schools have huge carry forwards, others don't and we don't know what the carry forwards will be at the end of 2021- 22.

Joy Williams said supply costs were rising quickly in schools and she was expecting electricity costs to double. Although other grants have been rolled up into schools block previously, she didn't expect the supplementary grant to be the same.

Chris Wayment agreed with all the comments regarding the pressures on school budgets in the future. Looking at the 95 schools in Appendix 5, only seven of those really needed the KS1 funding, which is the point she thought Chris Allcock was making. Chris Wayment agreed with the proposal to reduce KS1 support.

Chris Allcock responded that each school's movement in balances would be different but noted that between 2019-20 and 2020-21 total school balances increased from £22m to £33m in Derbyshire. He also stated that the DfE have confirmed that the supplementary

grant will form part of the national funding formula in future, this will add the grant into the funding baseline for future years which is good news.

No further comments were made and the Forum approved the report's recommendations.

The meeting closed at 6.30pm.