

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
DERBYSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM**

**Minutes of the Meeting Held on 27th January 2022
At 6pm on Microsoft Teams**

Present

Members	School / Organisation
Alan Thomas	Northfield Junior
George Wolfe	Curbar Primary
Jennifer Murphy	Hunloke Park Primary
Peter Johnston	The Village Federation
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
Jeannie Haigh	Willows Academy Trust
Sarah Baker	Team Education Trust
Simon Redfern	St Ralph Sherwin Trust
Margaret Mason	Children 1st
Peter Crowe	ASCL
Deborah Turner	NEU

Substitutes

Members	School / Organisation
Cilla Holman	Hadfield Infants School
Chris Wayment	ASCL

Observers

Members	School / Organisation
Cllr Ruth George	Derbyshire County Council

DCC Officers/others

Members	School / Organisation
Carol Cammiss	Executive Director, Children's Services
Saranjit Shetra	Assistant Director, Education & Improvement
Paula Williams	Assistant Director, Learning Access & Inclusion
Iain Peel	Service Director, Schools and Learning
Amanda Gordon	Early Years Manager
Jane Morgan	Risk & Insurance Manager
Sarah Bryan	Early Years Manager
Chris Allcock	CS & T Finance
Phil Burrows	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. Chris welcomed Simon Redfern the new Diocesan representative from The St Ralph Sherwin CMAT and Carol Cammiss, the recently appointed Executive Director for Children’s Services, who gave a few words of introduction.

22/03 Apologies

Members	School / Organisation
Siobhan Johnston	The Brigg Infants
Laura Needham	Cavendish Learning Trust
Michelle Jenkins	Etwall Primary
Ben Riggott	Parkside Community
Canon Carolyn Lewis	Church of England Diocese - Derby
Emma Hill	Castle View Primary

22/04 Minutes of The Schools Forum 1st December 2021

The minutes were approved for accuracy and there were no matters arising.

22/05 Minutes of The Schools Forum 12th January 2022

The minutes were approved for accuracy and there were no matters arising.

22/06 Schools Insurance Update

Jane Morgan, the Council’s Insurance & Risk Manager, gave a PowerPoint presentation on schools’ insurance. The current position for schools is that insurance is de-delegated. The LA’s insurance contract was agreed in 2019 for five years with a potential break clause in May 2022.

The base price in 2021-22 is £22.56 per pupil. An actuarial review has resulted in a reduced price of £22.25 per pupil for 2022-23, subject to annual review. The price for 2022-23 also now includes “all risk” cover for personal accident and travel for which there is currently a separate charge. The new arrangements therefore represent a saving of around £5 per pupil compared with 2021-22.

The new rates are more competitive, the comparable insurance arrangements via the DfE’s Risk Protection Arrangements is £22 per pupil, whilst the School and Academy Insurance Framework offer from Zurich was now around £30 per pupil

Jane said that the LA proposes retaining the current insurance scheme for the next two years. The Authority will invite tenders for a replacement contract for LA maintained schools to take effect from 2024, the level of cover and cost per pupil cannot be guaranteed at this stage.

No comments were raised from the floor and the Forum agreed to note the position.

22/07 Schools Block 2022-23 – final settlement and outcomes

Chris Allcock gave a verbal report. The Schools Block budget report 2022-23 had been considered and approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 24th January 2022. The

final figures were consistent with the position presented to Schools Forum on 12th January 2022. Cabinet's decision was still subject to the five day calling in period, whilst the final formula details were subject to approval by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The ESFA have raised a couple of minor issues to resolve but nothing that should derail approval. The intention was that provisional Schools Block budgets would be published either tomorrow (28th) or Monday (31st).

Finally, Chris confirmed that the DfE had rejected the Authority's requested reduction in the Minimum Per Pupil Level for 2022-23.

Forum agreed to note the briefing.

22/08 High Needs Block Budgets 2022-23

Chris Allcock presented a paper to report the High Needs Block settlement for 2022-23 and seek the views of the Schools Forum on its allocation.

The High Needs Block (HNB) settlement published on the 16th December 2021 was better than the indicative sum signalled back in July 2021 with a further 4.12% increase, resulting in an additional £3.839m for Derbyshire. This extra funding recognises the additional costs that LAs and schools will face in the coming year which were not foreseen when the original HNB allocations were calculated, including the Health and Social Care Levy.

Chris had attended an F40 webinar where it was confirmed by the Deputy Director of the DfE's Funding Policy Unit that the extra funding is part of the HNB and there are no restrictions on its use.

Chris confirmed that the DfE had signalled that the HNB increases for 2022-23 of around 13% were exceptional and cannot be expected in the future; for planning purposes the DfE recommended that LAs assume increases of 5% in 2023-24 and 3% per annum beyond that.

Locally, the latest HNB monitoring for Derbyshire indicates a 2021-22 overspend of £4.787m, around £0.9m more than the figure reported to the December Forum meeting. The additional pressure reflects increases in the overspends for independent special schools (£0.67m) and special schools (£0.40m).

The budget increases for 2022-23 for special schools, Enhanced Resource (ER) schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) can only be delivered by an increase in the profiles as the place values are set nationally. The proposed profile increases of between 5% and 7% would increase aggregate resources for each sector by around 3%. Informal contact with other East Midlands LAs indicates that Derbyshire's profile increases will be amongst the highest, if not the highest overall.

Within the proposed top up budgets, a contingency of £2.193m has been included which Chris felt to be the minimum required. If top-ups keep increasing the risk is that even this sum, which is higher than previous years, could prove to be insufficient.

A savings figure of £0.818m has been incorporated in the estimates which would be delivered by reducing the funding of dual registered pupils i.e. those registered both on the roll of a school and a PRU.

The allocation of the HNB is a matter for the LA, but the Schools Forum is requested to give its views. In addition, the LA maintained special schools' representative is asked to consider and agree to top slice funding to cover the loss of the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant for 2022-23.

A general discussion then took place and the following points were raised;

Special schools are grateful that some of the additional funding is being passed on to them and they are aware the increase is at the higher end of local LAs increases. The real problem is the spiralling cost of independent placements, local maintained and academy special schools need additional funding to maintain their provision and compete with the independent sector.

Paula Williams reported that a number of work streams are on-going to increase the confidence of parents regarding Derbyshire special schools and mainstream SEN provision, to try and reduce the level of demand for more costly independent sector provision. This is a big challenge, but the LA has been successful in a number of cases to bring back pupils from the independent sector

Communication is vital and often parents feel they have to wait too long for support which can drive them towards tribunals. The number of pupils attending independent schools is increasing, in Derbyshire the average cost is £0.061m per pupil and there are currently 220 attending. If the LA says no to an independent request, parents tend to take them to tribunal and 97% of the outcomes are in favour of the parents.

In the wider context, since the 2014 SEND reforms there has been a national explosion of EHCPs. In the last three years there has been an increase of 80,000 nationally, and since 2014 there has been a 111% increase in tribunals. In 2021 alone there has been a 9.5% increase in the number of EHCPs in Derbyshire

A Forum member felt we could expect another big increase in EHCPs as we come out of COVID.

Chris Greenhough felt that, although special school resources were increasing by 3%, that is just equivalent to the increase in mainstream budgets so the supplementary grant is not really being passed on to special schools.

Chris Greenhough, the LA maintained special schools' representative, did not personally agree to top slicing funds to cover the loss of the school improvement monitoring and brokering grant. However, Chris said he would be happy to consult with the other maintained special schools for their views before coming to a decision.

The Forum agree to this approach and noted that the outcome would be reported formally to the June Forum meeting.

22/09 Early Years Block (EYB) Budgets 2022-23

Chris Allcock presented a paper to update the Schools Forum on the Early Years Block announcements for 2022-23 and to seek approval to central early years budgets for next year.

The early years funding rates for 2022-23 and implied funding totals were published by the DfE on 16th December 2021. The announcement included the following: an increase from £4.44 to £4.61 in the basic hourly rate, an increase from 53p per hour to 60p in early years pupil premium rates and an increase in disability access funding of 30%. A supplementary grant has also been announced of £24 per pupil in nursery units and nursery schools.

In terms of the Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) that funds providers, the Authority proposes the following for 2022-23;

A universal hourly rate of £4.30, an increase of £0.14 (3.36%).

An enhanced hourly rate for nursery schools of £0.56, an increase £0.02 (3.7%).

Retention of the existing deprivation multiplier of £1.31 per hour per eligible child: the early years pupil premium which applies to the same cohort of children, will increase by 13.2%.

A nursery school lump sum of £92,500, an increase of £2,686 (2.99%).

In terms of central early years budgets, these are a matter for the Forum. Details of the proposals for 2022-23 were set out in Table 3 of the report, with the total proposed being largely unchanged from 2021-22.

No comments were raised in the meeting and the Schools Forum agreed the report's recommendations.

22/10 Date and venue of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is 29th June 2022 and a discussion took place regarding the potential venue. Alternatives to the Post Mill Centre, South Normanton were discussed as the location presented a long journey for some members, particularly those from the north west of the county.

County Hall is currently unable to accommodate the Forum safely and possible options included using a Matlock school.

It was decided to wait until closer to the date when a review of Covid restrictions could take place and a suitable venue be arranged for an in-person meeting if possible.

Finally, it was noted that Chris Allcock was retiring and that this was his last Forum meeting. The Forum Chair and others thanked Chris for his contribution to the work of the Forum over many years.

The meeting closed at 7.20pm