

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

DERBYSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 15th December 2022

Committee Room 1, County Hall at 4pm

Present

Members

Name	School / Organisation
George Wolfe	Curbar Primary
Siobhan Johnson	The Brigg Infants
Jennifer Murphy	Hunloke Park Primary
Peter Johnston	The Village Federation
Michelle Jenkins	Etwall Primary
Nick Goforth	Belper Secondary
Peter Hallsworth	South Normanton Nursery
Julian Scholefield	Esteem MAT
Emma Hill	QEGS MAT
Keith Hurst	Brookfield Community School
Peter Crowe	ASCL

Substitutes

Name	School / Organisation
Cilla Holman	Hadfield Infants School

Observers

Name	School / Organisation
Cllr Alex Dale	DCC

DCC Officers/others

Name	School / Organisation
Saranjit Shetra	Assistant Director, Education & Improvement
Amanda Gordon	Early Years Manager
Phil Burrows	CS & T Finance
Shelley Kerslake	CS & T Finance
Andy Walker	CS & T Finance
Ruth Lane	CS & T Finance
Eddie Grant	CS & T Finance

Peter Johnston chaired the meeting.

PJ confirmed that the only person to have put themselves forward for the position of Vice-Chair was Julian Scholefield and therefore he was duly elected.

22/19 Apologies

Name	School / Organisation
Alan Thomas	Northfield Junior
Jeannie Haigh	Willows Academy Trust
Nicola Foulds	The Dales Federation
Sarah Baker	TEAM Education Trust
Donna Wakefield	Redhill Academy Trust
Tom Osborn	Baslow St Anne's
Simon Redfern	St Ralph Sherwin CMAT
Margaret Mason	Children 1st
Canon Carolyn Lewis	Church of England Diocese
Ben Riggott	Parkside Community School
Cllr Julie Patten	DCC
Dan Careless	Strategic Lead Schools & Learning, Children's Services
Carol Cammiss	Executive Director, Children's Services

The Clerk confirmed the meeting was quorate.

22/27 Minutes of The Schools Forum 19th October 2022

PJ went through the action points listed at the end of the minutes, all of which had been completed.

SK confirmed CG, the special schools' representative, had agreed de-delegation for 2023-24.

Cllr Dale confirmed lobby activities by F40 group had taken place.

Dates for next meetings have been set as 30th January 2023 and 28th June 2023.

Pay award information has been shared.

There were no other matters arising.

22/28 Autumn budget statement

SK presented the paper to update the Schools Forum regarding the potential implications of the Autumn Statement 2022 for school funding.

Additional Core Schools funding of £2bn for 2023-24 and 2024-25 was announced in the Autumn Statement after an adjustment of £0.3bn to account for the removal of the compensation for employer costs of the Health & Social Care Levy. Of this £2bn, £0.4bn will be allocated to meeting pressures within high needs budgets and the remainder to mainstream schools and academies.

If Derbyshire were to receive the same proportion of this additional funding as it did of the funding allocated at this time last year via the new School Supplementary Grant (SSG), the High Needs Block would be ~£10.73m (10.7%) higher and Schools Block would be ~£34.121m (6.3%) higher than 2022-23 funding. The DfE have confirmed that the additional funding will be received as a grant which is good news for schools in receipt of Minimum Funding Guarantee and Minimum Per Pupil Level funding.

According to the DfE, a typical primary school with 200 pupils will get approximately £28,000 extra, secondary schools with around 900 pupils will receive approximately £170,000 more from the additional funding.

In addition to the above, an additional £447m investment to shield schools from high energy bills has been announced. Schools and colleges in England will be allocated the funds to spend on energy efficiency upgrades, help save on bills during the winter months and manage energy consumption. Funding will be allocated at the rate of £20.06 per weighted pupil plus £10,000 per institution, which the DfE estimates will be worth £16,000 to an average primary school, whilst an average secondary school will receive approximately £42,000. It is estimated that institutions in Derbyshire will receive around £7m from this announcement.

JS asked for clarification if special schools would receive any of the additional funding. PB confirmed the DfE are to take steps to ensure that they do.

MJ asked if the energy efficiency funding could be spent outside of DCC Property Services. PJ replied that Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) funding could be spent with whoever the school chose.

PJ thought that for the four schools in the Village Federation the estimated additional funding estimated in the School Support Finance (SSF) spreadsheets approximately covered the increase in utility costs and the pay award.

AW pointed out that there was no additional funding towards the 2022-23 pay award in the current financial year.

NG asked for clarification that 2023-24 budgets would be confirmed in January 2023 and the modelling is for +2.5% in 2024-25 and that DFC can continue to be rolled over and SK confirmed these assumptions were correct at this stage.

22/29 Update from Dan Careless – DSG and HNB management Plan

Dan Careless provided a paper to advise Schools Forum of the DSG and HNB Management plan. Although he was unable to attend the meeting he will attend in January and bring an updated report as the plan is progressing quickly. He offered to do a virtual meeting with Forum members next week if required but this was not deemed necessary by members.

JM had attended a meeting for Headteachers with DC on this issue, which was received positively, and JS is due to attend a SEND Strategic Board meeting on 20th December which will progress matters.

22/30 High Needs Block (HNB) planning 2023-24

SK presented a paper to inform the Schools Forum of the provisional indicative HNB settlement for 2023-24 and the potential spend for next year. She confirmed that the report doesn't include any of the work highlighted in the previous report, which will be updated and included in the report at the next meeting.

Derbyshire's indicative settlement for 2023-24 announced in July shows an overall increase of £5.6m. It is thought Derbyshire's share of the additional funding announced in the Autumn Budget statement is likely to provide a further increase of around £5.1m, making a total estimated increase of £10.7m (10.7%) compared to 2022-23. The 2023-24 HNB allocation for Derbyshire should be confirmed later this month.

Taking a first look at estimated costs and income for 2023-24 indicates an estimated shortfall of around £4.3m. However, there is considerable uncertainty, for example demographic pressures are difficult to predict and pay awards, utility costs and general inflation for 2023-24 are unknown. However, these initial estimates highlight that setting a balanced budget and avoiding an increase to the overall DSG deficit will be challenging. A further report will be presented at the next meeting of Schools Forum in January setting out the final grant settlement and proposed allocations.

Decisions on the HNB are a matter for the local authority rather than the Schools Forum. However, the views of the Schools Forum are welcomed and will be considered when the Authority makes its final decisions in March 2023.

NG noted that an estimated pay award of 5% for Teachers from September 2023 had been included, although for mainstream schools the forecast model uses 3% and SK said she would amend this.

SK highlighted that it will be necessary to secure under spends in other budgets to support the HNB and overall DSG.

22/31 Pupil Growth Fund (PGF) 2023-24

SK presented a paper to seek the Schools Forum approval for plans in principle for use of the Pupil Growth Fund (PGF) for 2023-24, pending final settlement figures due later this month.

The PGF element of the DSG funds in-year pupil growth as well as supporting new free schools and Key Stage 1 class sizes. The distribution of the PGF is a matter for the Schools Forum rather than the County Council.

Derbyshire received £2.509m in 2022-23 and very tentative estimates are between £2.4m and £2.5m for 2023-24.

The following recommendations were approved by the Forum.

R1 – Agreement to fund the cost of the Free Schools in year increases at an estimated cost of £0.250m.

R2 – The basis for supporting maintained and academy schools' Key Stage 1 class costs from April 2023 in the paper were agreed.

R3 – Agreement for a Key Stage 1 budget of £0.450m for 2023-24.

R4 – Approval to an in-year pupil increases budget of £0.300m for 2023-24 and that the existing eligibility arrangements for 2023-24 are retained.

R5 – The forecast funding requirement in respect of Free Schools was noted and agreement was given to contribute £0.500m to the Free Schools Reserve for 2023-24.

Options for using the residual balance of the PGF were discussed.

R6 – The residual pupil growth balance and the potential for it to contribute towards the overall DSG deficit was noted.

R7 – Forum agreed £0.5m of the residual Pupil Growth Fund would be utilised towards closing the Schools Block shortfall, any remaining balance will be held in contingency.

22/32 Central Schools Services Block 2023-24

SK presented paper to seek Schools Forum approval to the 2023-24 Central School Services Block budgets.

No changes, other than inflationary increases are recommended for on-going responsibilities. The historic commitments element relates to the Early Help Offer and although it reduces by 20% each year if we cease contributing to the Early Help Offer, the funding will also cease.

Projections indicate there may be a residual balance of £0.386m which could go to support the overall DSG deficit.

Schools Forum agreed the 2023-24 CSSB allocations proposed by the Authority.

22/33 Exceptional site factors

PB presented the paper to inform Schools Forum of the exceptional site factors disapplication request.

The schools block National Funding Formula (NFF) has an optional factor for exceptional site factors which Local Authorities can apply to use that relate to school premises only, for example rents or joint-use sports facilities, and where the value of the factor is more than 1% of a school's budget and applies to fewer than 5% of the schools in the Local Authority's area.

There are 7 schools that qualify who operate in buildings that are entirely rented from a 3rd party. The current agreement with the DfE is that these schools will contribute the costs equating to the first 1% of their 2022-23 budget with the remainder paid as an Exceptional Circumstances (Rents) formula factor.

Derbyshire's exceptional circumstances (rents) factor was approved in in 2012-13 and so the Authority will need to reapply to the DfE to continue to use this factor.

In order to meet DfE deadlines an application has already been submitted and is being in the process of being considered. In fact, the DfE had contacted the LA on the day of the meeting to ask if Forum had approved the application.

A discussion took place amongst members about whether rents for land could be included as a number of schools in Derbyshire have to pay this, but PB confirmed the DfE regulations only apply to premises. Pre-2013-14, Derbyshire withheld funding and paid rents centrally, however, at this stage DfE regulations changed and said funding could not be retained for this purpose and must be distributed to schools via the funding formula. It was clarified that if a school becomes an academy, the rental arrangements transfer with the school and it becomes the Academy Trust's problem.

PJ asked if a history of land rent and regulations could be provided for the next meeting.

PB said the DfE are scrutinising exceptional site factors and a consultation in the summer suggested that schools could be expected to contribute 2.5% of their budget rather than the existing 1% in the future which would have a considerable impact on the schools involved.

Forum approved Derbyshire's disapplication request to continue to use the exceptional circumstances (rents) factor.

Action point	Responsibility	Timeline
Provide a history of land rents and regulations	SK	January 2023 meeting

PJ encouraged people to attend the Forum in person as that had been the consensus at that meeting and reminded members that they could register items of any other business up to the start of the meeting.

The meeting closed at 5.10pm.

The next meeting will be held at County Hall, Matlock on 30 January 2023 at 5pm.

Summary of action points

Action point	Responsibility	Timeline
Provide a history of land rents and regulations	SK	January 2023 meeting