

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

DERBYSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 19th October 2022
Committee Room 1, County Hall at 4pm

Present

Members

Name	School / Organisation
Alan Thomas	Northfield Junior
George Wolfe	Curbar Primary
Peter Johnston	The Village Federation
Michelle Jenkins	Etwall Primary
Nick Goforth	Belper Secondary
Peter Hallsworth	South Normanton Nursery
Julian Scholefield	Esteem MAT
Sarah Baker	TEAM Education Trust
Margaret Mason	Children 1st
Deborah Turner	NEU

Substitutes

Name	School / Organisation
Cilla Holman	Hadfield Infants School
Ben Riggott	Parkside Secondary

Observers

Name	School / Organisation
Patrick Grant	DFE

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

Shelley Kerslake opening the meeting with the election of the Chair and Vice Chair. Peter Johnston was appointed Chair. Expressions of interest for Vice Chair would be welcomed before the next meeting.

Peter Johnston then chaired the meeting.

22/18 Apologies

Name	School / Organisation
Siobhan Johnson	The Brigg Infants
Jennifer Murphy	Hunloke Park Primary
Thomas Osborn	Baslow St Anne's
Chris Greenhough	Swanwick School & Sports College
Donna Wakefield	Redhill Academy Trust

Name	School / Organisation
Emma Hill	Castle View Primary
Keith Hirst	Brookfield Community School
Simon Redfern	St Ralph Sherwin CMAT
Kate Martin	Derby College Group
Canon Carolyn Lewis	Church of England Diocese
Cllr Alex Dale	DCC
Cllr Ruth George	DCC
Cllr Julie Patten	DCC
Dan Careless	Strategic Lead Schools & Learning, Children's Services
Peter Crowe	ASCL

The Clerk confirmed the meeting was quorate.

22/19 Minutes of The Schools Forum 29th June 2022

Matters arising;

It was noted that Michelle Jenkins said she has attended the previous meeting but was not listed.

Alan Thomas asked if there were any developments on item 22/14. SS confirmed the SEND white paper has been pushed back by the DfE and SK confirmed there was no related financial scoping.

22/20 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) monitoring 2022-23 Q2

SK presented the paper to provide the Schools Forum with an update of the revenue budget position of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2022- 23 up to the end of September 2022.

The opening position of the DSG for 2022-23 was a total deficit of £5.05m but with an uncommitted DSG deficit of £8.177m.

The latest monitoring indicates an overall underspend on the DSG of £1.739m. This largely comprises of the £2.6m, 0.5% transfer from the Schools Block (SB) to the High Needs Block (HNB) and other planned underspends on Central Services Schools Block (CSSB) £0.58m, Pupil Growth Fund (PGF) £0.138m and a HNB contingency of £1.8m. The underspend would enable Derbyshire to reduce the overall deficit.

We are still experiencing pressure on the HNB. 84% of High Needs funding is spent on places and element three top ups for which there was an overspend of £2.5m across all sectors this year. The other 16% which funds centrally provided services is forecast to be £1.1m overspent, mainly due to increased pay awards and delays in planned service changes. There is a risk of an overall end of year overspend in the HNB, however, this is not expected to exceed the 0.5% transfer from SB.

JS commented that the increased pay awards apply to all schools as well as central services.

DT thought it would be useful to breakdown costs between LA and Academy provision and JS would like to see a breakdown for maintained and independent provision, internal and external to DCC.

SK added that a report on the HNB would be brought to the December meeting.

NG asked if now is a good time to reduce the DSG deficit when schools are experiencing funding pressures and SK replied if we don't reduce the deficit now, then when.

The Chair said we will discuss this matter next time and it is generally the HNB that overspends within the DSG.

SS confirmed that Dan Careless has been attending Headteachers' meetings and indeed one with Special Heads was planned tomorrow. His first priority is to look at the HNB and he is working on the financial aspects with SK and he should be invited to the next Forum meeting to discuss his plans. He is new to Derbyshire but is very experienced in SEND and inclusion.

MM wanted to bring to the Forum's attention the issues in SEN assessments for Under 5's. They are waiting between 12 and 18 months to be assessed and the priority should be to assess such young children and put support in place to address problems earlier and help to relieve the issues in primary and secondary sectors. The increase problems are substantial, and no support is being received from the LA, we should look at prevention. SS agreed and indeed the Nursery forum met yesterday, and a similar conversation took place. The Authority is looking at early intervention.

The Forum noted the report and the forecast overspend for 2022-23 and the projected decrease in the DSG deficit.

Action point	Responsibility	Timeline
HNB report	SK	December Forum meeting
Invite Dan Careless to present SEND update	SK	Prior to December Forum meeting

22/21 De-delegation 2023-24

SK presented the paper to ask representatives of LA maintained primary, secondary and special schools on the School Forum to consider the delegation (re-pooling) of funds for 2023-24.

She ran through Table 1 - Responses to de-delegation consultation.

NG asked if members were being asked to vote for this reduction in budgets on top of figures already quoted to schools and AW confirmed that the de-delegation was already included within School Support Finance projections for 2023-24 and future years.

Votes then took place;

- Primary schools agreed to the delegation in all areas by a vote of 4-0.
- Secondary schools agreed to the delegation in all areas with a vote of 1-0.
- No representative was available from Special schools and it was agreed that SK would ask their representative to seek views from special schools and report directly to her.

Action point	Responsibility	Timeline
Approach CG for Special School decision on de-delegation	SK	Prior to December Forum meeting

22/2 Indicative Funding settlement 2023-24

SK presented the paper to inform the Schools Forum of the indicative national school funding settlement for 2023-24 and the potential implications for Derbyshire.

Derbyshire's provisional settlement is an increase of £13.2m (2.4%) from 2022-23. This does take account of the supplementary grant being rolled into SB. The Minimum Per Pupil Level (MPPL) is only increasing by 0.5%, National Funding Formula (NFF) deprivation multipliers are increasing on average by 4.1% and basic entitlement increases by 2.5% however, an overall increase of 2.4% is likely to fall below inflation.

NG noted that the increase in MPPL is low and therefore the gap between schools funded on this basis and other schools is going to grow larger which seems unacceptable. SK replied this is mandatory figure from the DfE. PB added that the MPPL calculation comes after the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) calculation so changes in the MFG level are unlikely to have an impact on those schools falling with the MPPL. He also confirmed that the MFG parameters from the DfE this year are 0 – +0.5% and the consultation suggested Derbyshire adopted an MFG of +0.5%, the maximum allowed.

NG said if the MPPL could not be altered he thinks we should be lobbying the F40 group on this issue and it was agreed that SK would request counsellor Alex Dale to do so.

SK confirmed that papers regarding the HNB, Early Years Block, CSSB and PGF will be brought to the next meetings in December and January.

The Forum noted the report.

Action point	Responsibility	Timeline
Request Cllr Alex Dale to lobby F40 regarding the MPPL	SK	Immediately

22/23 Proposed Changes to School and Academy Funding 2023-24

SK presented a paper to provide Schools Forum with a summary of responses received to the Authority's consultation with schools and academies on proposed changes to funding for 2023-24, and invite Schools Forum views on the Authority's proposals to pare back all NFF multipliers should the full NFF multipliers be unaffordable within the SB allocation for 2023-24, as set out in the consultation.

Derbyshire is working towards the full NFF and it's already adopting the NFF multipliers as far as possible within the funding allocated. We don't have the final SB figures and are waiting for confirmation of October 2022 census data but anticipate we won't get enough funding to do the NFF in full due to the estimated increase in free school meal eligibility. To make Derbyshire's funding formula affordable within

the SB allocation the need to either cap gains or scale back multipliers is anticipated. The shortfall is estimated at £2.5m which is the equivalent of 0.55%. Options were laid out in Table 1 and Authority's recommendation was option 1 and options 2-4 were alternatives for schools to consider.

PB confirmed that 110 responses to the consultation were received which is 28% of maintained schools, of these 79% choose option one, 5% chose option 2b, none chose option three and 3.6% option 4, with 9% of respondents choosing others, suggesting mainly the MLLP is too low at an increase of 0.5%, which has already been discussed.

89% of respondents indicated they would like to MFG set at +0.5%

DT asked what was the split of respondents between primary and secondary sectors and PB replied 86% of respondents were from the primary sector and 14% from the secondary sector.

PJ asked if the shortfall in funding to enable the full NFF was Derbyshire specific or whether it was widespread across the country and PB replied that last year this was widespread amongst our neighbours. There is an estimated 9% increase in free school meal eligibility in Derbyshire, compared to last year, which was causing the shortfall.

NG was keen that we should look at the MPPL level, but PB confirmed we have very restrictive movement within factors laid out by the DfE and were unable to increase the level from 0.5% unless a disapplication request was made to Secretary of State.

MM then said we topped up the HNB by a transfer from SB last year and it is still unable to balance in 2022-23, how is it supposed to balance in 2023-24 without a transfer again. SK confirmed this paper is just about SB, however, the Authority is not asking for a transfer from SB to HNB, as it is not affordable to schools in general and pressures in the HNB will be considered at the next meeting.

The Chair summed up saying 79% schools were choosing option one and this should be our starting point in the decision-making process.

SK confirmed that the formula is a decision for the Authority in consultation with schools and the Schools Forum.

The Forum noted the consultation and the views expressed by respondents and generally supported LA principles if the full NFF multipliers are unaffordable within the final NFF allocation, however, one member wished to note that the increase of only 0.5% in MPPL was unfair.

22/24 National consultations

SK presented paper to inform the Schools Forum of national consultations and surveys which took place over the summer.

“Early years funding formula” consultation
DLUHC Dedicated School Grant Deficit/Statutory Override Voluntary Survey
“Implementing the Direct National Funding Formula” consultation

The Early years consultation has been concluded and the LA input is included within appendix 1.

The “Implementing the Direct National Funding Formula” consultation has now concluded and was discussed at the last Forum meeting.

The DLUHC Dedicated School Grant Deficit/Statutory Override Voluntary Survey is around whether the DSG should be kept separate from LA funding and is really of importance to Accountancy professionals. The current legal position is that the two are kept entirely separate, but this is coming an end and the consultation is about how it should be replaced. For some LA’s this is important as they may need to issue a section 114 notice, if they conclude the council cannot balance its budget in-year. This separation will need to be kept in place otherwise many LA’s will be issuing section 114 notices.

DT asked that if the hard NFF has been pushed back again to 2027-28, will Schools Forum be required until then to which SK replied, Schools Forum would exist even after that time, but its role would be different, and we do not know what that will look like at this stage.

The Forum noted the report.

22/25 Dates and venues of next meetings, and planned programme of work

A detailed discussion took place about future meetings regarding dates and venues, in particular whether meetings should be in person or virtual. The conclusion was that members would be e-mailed with a couple of alternative dates for the next meeting and asked to indicate availability, and that future meetings would be held in-person at County Hall, Matlock at 4pm with the proviso that if the weather looked like making travel unacceptable, the meeting would be changed to a virtual one with members being notified on the morning of the meeting. It was also agreed that use of a microphone in Committee Room 1 should be investigated, or meetings be held in the Council Chamber with microphones, to aid the ability of members to hear what was being said.

Action point	Responsibility	Timeline
Arrange to e-mail members with two alternative dates for January and June meetings	SK	Immediately
Investigate microphone options for future meetings	SK	Prior to December Forum meeting
Set up system for changing meetings to Virtual in the event of bad weather	SK/PJ	Prior to December Forum meeting

22/26 AOB

The following items of any other business were discussed and agreed:

- To cease sending paper copies of the agenda to members unless specifically requested them;
- If anyone receives definite information regarding staff pay awards this should be shared amongst members as soon as possible;

- Remove AOB off the agenda for future meetings. Matters arising questions must be asked in advance unless they were action points from the previous meeting;
- Include action items in minutes with a box at the end of each agenda item and the summary box at the end of the minutes.

PJ asked for feedback on his running of Schools Forum meetings.

Anybody interested in being vice chair should talk to PJ at the end of the meeting.

AW confirmed that Joe Banks the LA Energy Officer is still not certain how school's energy support from the government will work but thinks that the increases recommended by School Support Finance of +200% for gas and +75% for electricity in April 2022, compared with the previous year should be sufficient.

Action point	Responsibility	Timeline
Cease sending paper copies of the agenda to members unless specifically requested.	SK – members to contact SK if they would like to continue receiving a paper copy	Immediately
On receipt of definite information regarding staff pay awards, share such information.	This will be available in national press	
Remove AOB from the agenda for future meetings	SK	Prior to December forum meeting
Matters arising questions must be asked in advance	All members to e-mail	On receipt of each meeting agenda
Feedback on PJ as Chair	All members	On-going
Expressions of interest in Vice-Chair position	All members to contact PJ	Prior to December forum meeting

The meeting closed at 5.45pm.

Summary of action points

Action point	Responsibility	Timeline
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Invite Dan Careless to present SEND update	SK	Prior to December forum meeting
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