

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

DERBYSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 28th June 2023
On Microsoft TEAMS at 4pm

Present

Members

Name	School / Organisation
Alan Thomas	Northfield Junior School
Peter Johnston	The Village Federation
Chris Greenhough	Swanwick School & Sports College
Julian Scholefield	Esteem MAT
Keith Hirst	Brookfield Community School
Sarah Baker	TEAM Education Trust
Nick Goforth	Belper Secondary School
Jennifer Murphy	Hunloke Park Primary School
Siobhan Johnston	The Brigg Infants
Carolyn Lewis	Church of England Diocese
Deborah Turner	NEU
Corrine Coward	UNISON
Simon Redfern	St Ralph Sherwin CMAT

Substitutes

Name	School / Organisation
Cilla Holman	Hadfield Infants School

Observers

Name	School / Organisation
Cllr Alex Dale	DCC
Patrick Grant	ESFA

DCC Officers/others

Name	School / Organisation
Saranjit Shetra	Assistant Director, Education & Improvement
Dan Careless	Strategic Lead Schools & Learning
Phil Burrows	CS & T Finance
Adam Addis	CS & T Finance
Eddie Grant	CS & T Finance
Ruth Lane	CS & T Finance
Shelley Kerslake	CS & T Finance

Peter Johnston chaired the meeting.

23/08 Apologies for Absence

Name	School / Organisation
George Wolfe	Curbar Primary
Margaret Mason	Children 1 st
Peter Crowe	ASCL

23/09 Minutes of The Schools Forum 28th June 2023

The minutes were agreed and the action.

Phil Burrows responded to the action point from the previous meeting to provide a history of land and rents regulations.

Prior to 2013 all payments for rents were retained centrally and paid direct by the LA. Part of the Government reforms to the funding formula in 2013 was that this money had to be paid directly to schools via the funding formula and from a limited choice of factors.

If rents were higher than 1% of a school's budget share they could be treated as premises related exceptional circumstances and form part of an additional payment within the budget share to individual schools.

The same seven schools in Derbyshire have qualified under this formula for the last ten years.

The DfE are looking to engage on this matter ahead of the hard NFF being implemented but are looking to increase the limit over which payments can be made to only when payments exceed 2.5% of an individual school budget share.

Peter Johnston commented that he remembers this change in 2013 to Kirk Ireton Primary school.

No other matters arising were raised.

23/10 – 2022-23 DSG Outturn report

Eddie Grant presented a paper to provide the Schools Forum with the final position of the Revenue Budget outturn of the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2022-23.

As 31st March 2022 the deficit was £5.050m with an underlying deficit of £8.177m including committed funds.

The table in 2.1.2 shows that during the 2022-23 year a combined surplus of £0.419m was achieved resulting in a deficit of £4,631m at 31st March 2023 and went through the individual areas of under/over spends. The two principal areas were an overspend of £5.498m on the High Needs Block (HNB) and an under spend of £2.763m on the Schools Block (SB) which was in fact a transfer of funds between SB and HNB. Appendix 1 details the individual areas of over/under spends within the HNB. The major variances were an overspend of £6.840m in Top ups and an under spend of £1.343m in Central Services.

Julian Scholefield asked why there was a large under spend of £0.265m in Access & Inclusion projects. Shelley Kerslake replied that this was funding set aside for Paula Williams, a previous Assistant Director, to undertake improvement projects, but as she left this money had not been spent and it has not been carried forward to 2023-24. Julian replied that by not undertaking such projects it was likely that more money was being lost in the budget as improvements to SEN funding were not being made. Dan Careless echoed Julian's point saying if the plan was to improve recoupment it should have been money well spent. He said he was working with Ian Dixon from the DfE on a new plan regarding the HNB deficit and will present this to Schools Forum in due course.

Eddie Grant also said individual school's balances had fallen during 2022-23 to £33.368m, a fall of £3.612m, about 10%, after stripping out schools converting to academy status.

23/11 – Early Years Supplementary Grant – verbal update

Phil Burrows provided a verbal update.

The DfE have announced in the spring budget 2023, additional Early Years funding from September 2023 which will be paid as a one-off Early Years Supplementary Grant to LAs. The actual amounts to each LA are still not yet known but should be announced before the summer break, but using the published percentage increases to the national average rates could mean that £7.30 per hour for 2 year olds and an £0.18 increase for 3 and 4 year olds may be the outcome for Derbyshire. The LA is not obliged to consult on this payment but will keep everyone informed. The guidance is awaited from the DfE before we can move any further on this matter.

This grant is part of a wider communication about the Early Years sector and in particular the wider eligibility changes in the future detailed in the spring budget. Deborah Turner asked about whether Derbyshire had the capacity to implement the new arrangements and Phil and Saranjit Shetra confirmed that part of the DfE contact on this matter is about this. The LA is looking at its sufficiency, including new initiatives about wraparound care and will report to the Forum if required. Deborah replied she would like to be advised as there may be staffing implications for her Union members.

Action point	Responsibility	Timeline
Provide review of Early Years changes to next meeting	SS	October 2023 meeting

A question from the floor was asked about whether Schools Forum had recently completed a Schools Forum self-evaluation and the Chair replied that as Any other Business was not on the agenda, this could be brought to the next meeting.

Next meeting – 18th October 2023 at County Hall, Matlock at 4.30pm. at which time the remainder of meeting dates for the academic year could be confirmed.

The Chair thanked the members of the Forum and the team at the LA for their work during the last year and wished everyone an enjoyable summer break.

The meeting closed at 16.40.

Summary of action points

Action point	Responsibility	Timeline
Review Schools Forum self-evaluation Form	SK	October 2023 meeting
Provide review of Early Years changes to next meeting	SS	October 2023 meeting