

**Minutes of the Suffolk Schools' Forum held at 9.30 am on 15 October 2019 in the Conference Room, Landmark House, Ipswich**

**Present:**

<b>Non-School Members</b>	Amanda Havers, Early Years Helen Wilson, 16-19 Provider (Vice Chair) Maria Kemble, Diocesan (Catholic) Pat Chapman, PVI
<b>Academy Members</b>	Dawn Carman-Jones, Mainstream Mark Kemp, Special Steve Lovett, Mainstream Colin Turner, Mainstream Angela Ransby, AP Provision Darren Woodward, Mainstream
<b>Maintained School Members</b>	Allison Coleman, Primary (Chair) Alison Bowman, Governor Darron Jackson, Primary Karen Mills, Primary Graham Alcock, PRU

**Observers and Local Authority**

<b>Observers</b>	There were observers present at the meeting
<b>Local Authority</b>	Allan Cadzow Adrian Orr Judith Mobbs Gemma Morgan Sonya Harban Michael Quinton Teresa Spilling

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1.	Welcome and Apologies	<p>The Chair welcomed members of Schools Forum to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Gordon Jones, Jo Stanley Bell, Gillian Mitchell, Jenny Milsom, Sharon Waldron, Julia Upton.</p> <p>Lynn Eldrett has resigned as Academy School Rep from Schools Forum due to her change in role – thanks were passed onto Lynn for her commitment to Schools Forum over a number of years.</p> <p>As from 1 November, Graham Alcock, will no longer be eligible to sit on Schools Forum as the rep for LA maintained PRUs, as Hampden House will become Chalk Hill, an academy within SENDAT.</p> <p>The Chair passed on her thanks to Graham for his contribution on Schools Forum and appreciation around work on the High Needs Block.</p> <p>The regulations around Schools Forum charge the LA to manage the election to seek representatives from maintained schools. In the past the LA has supported the academy sector by running the elections process for academy representation as well and this was offered to the academy sector again at this meeting. The academy sector welcomed the LA offering this support. AO to arrange the process and share a schedule with Dawn Carman-Jones who will be the link for the academy sector around the timing of elections, or if there is a tie in elections.</p> <p><b>ACTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AO to organise election and share schedule with DCJ</li> </ul>
2.	Minutes of the previous meeting & issues arising	<p><u>Matters arising:</u></p> <p>Item 4 High Needs Block re: SEND funding Analysis of features ongoing and will be shared in the November meeting including numbers by pupil level, analysis of all pupil levels and aggregating up; recasting data in the SEND Sufficiency plan and updating known data to projected data.</p> <p>Item 5: Growth Policy and Funding Update CT asked about secondary school expansion. AO</p>

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		<p>shared that the LA has been in discussions with RSC in terms of agreement to expansions – we are awaiting RSC decision in writing.</p> <p>Chantry High will be adding another form of entry from 2021 to meet basic need growth.</p> <p>DCJ asked about Exclusions payment policy. JM responded that the policy has been to forum and had been agreed. Next step: to be sent out to all Academies for them to confirm their agreement. Gemma Morgan has this in hand as a priority. Agenda item for the November meeting.</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 July were agreed and signed off by the Chair.</p>
3.	2020-21 Central School Services Block (CSSB)	<p>You will have read the report, but as a result of the funding level information which came to the LA on Friday last from the DfE this item has been withdrawn from the agenda pending a redraft in the light of the detail of the 1 year funding settlement.</p> <p>AO took the opportunity to share the different methodology used in this year's CSSB paper.</p> <p>Although we will be bring a revised version based on the recent funding announcement it was important to note that the LA in previous years had unintentionally created the perception that the CSSB elements were top slice on all school budgets by treating the CSSB elements in the same way as the de-delegated aspects of the DSG, which are a top slice on school budgets Section 8 of the paper set out the background rationale to our approach to CSSB this year this additional money Section 8 sets that out.</p> <p>There is a requirement for Schools Forum to approve CSSB but we have set out to clarify that this is not school money. A revised paper will come back to Forum in November with voting on the three core areas of the CSSB along with the de-delegated reports.</p> <p>The funding in the CSSB is an additional block of money put into the DSG by the DfE to cover the cost of the local authorities range of duties when the</p>

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		<p>Education Services Grant (ESG) was removed in September 2017.</p> <p>From the one-year settlement figures received last Friday the news is generally positive for the schools block and the high needs block. The CSSB however has been reduced by 20%. It is also important to note that although Suffolk has seen an increase to the schools block and the high Needs block, there are still issues in terms of Suffolk's ranking for school level funding. It was noted by SH that the Early Years Block information has not come in yet, this will be known in December.</p> <p>DJ asked about challenge to local MP and politicians about Suffolk's funding settlement. AC reported that councillors and officers held regular briefing meeting with MPs, so that they are aware of the funding situation. MK shared the meeting that she had been involved in with GJ, the local MP and LA officer about school level funding and the implication for school leaders. AO reported that GJ and Sue Cook had held a meeting with the schools minister and there was a robust co robust exchange about pupil level funding in Suffolk. This is being followed up again this term</p> <p>In terms of the next steps for the DSG settlement overall, we need some time to consolidate, look at the guidance, do a bit more work to consider where we allocate spending and bring this back to forum</p> <p><b>ACTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSSB to come to November meeting</li> <li>• Draft APT Report – to come to November meeting.</li> <li>• Include page numbers in the next report.</li> </ul>
4.	2019-20 DSG Forecast Outturn Report	<p><b>What is the Forum being asked to decide?</b></p> <p>Schools Forum are asked to note the current DSG forecast outturn for 2019-20, and the impact this will have on the DSG reserve position if both DSG funding and spending remain unchanged this financial year.</p> <p><b>Reason for recommendation</b></p> <p>The DfE require the Local Authority to submit a recovery plan when the deficit balance of the DSG</p>

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		<p>reserve is more than 1% of the local DSG budget. For Suffolk, this means a deficit position of £5.2m or more. At the time of writing, the impact of the spending review on the Suffolk DSG budget for 2020-21 onwards is unclear, and how this will impact on the way in which the deficit could be recovered through a recovery plan. Further details over the coming months as the DfE update their guidance.</p> <p>Report Figures are based on Quarter 1 as we are now finishing Quarter 2 – position for Q2 looks to be slightly better by £50,000.</p> <p>Forecast based on current level of funding, nothing extra this year, but there is extra money coming in next year.</p> <p>The current levels of spend forecast for 2019-20 show increasing demand for SEND services creating an overspend.</p> <p>The £10.5m additional monies will need to be reviewed alongside the decrease to the CSSB, but it is overall good news.</p> <p>The majority of the £0.3m underspend against the CSSB reflects the reduced spending against termination costs of employees.</p> <p>The overall Level of overspend at the end of the financial year for DSG budgets is likely to be a £10m deficit, close to 2% of DSG block. This will mean a recovery plan will need to be agreed by Forum and the authority, showing a recovered position within 3 years based on current guidance. this will need to be submitted to the DfE by the end of June 2020.</p> <p><b>ACTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report re recovery plan to come back to November meeting when further details should be available.</li> </ul>
5.	The High Needs Block – an update on current expenditure and	<p><b>What is the Forum being asked to decide?</b></p> <p>To receive an update on the continued significant pressures on the DSG High Needs Block due to rising numbers and complexity of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities</p>

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	future activity	<p>(SEND); a lack of local specialist education placements and the impact of the fairer funding arrangements for high needs funded pupils in mainstream provision as part of the new high needs funding.</p> <p>To be updated on the SEND Capital Programme and its progress.</p> <p><b>Reason for recommendation</b></p> <p>To update Schools' Forum members on the continuing significant and escalating pressures on the high needs block following the report in July 2019.</p> <p>To update Schools' Forum on the latest position on the SEND Capital Programme.</p> <p>Joint report presented by JM/GM. GM was introduced as the key contact for High Needs Funding. Since paper written Suffolk has confirmation of a single additional payment of £10.5m for 2020/21, which is welcomed, however this needs to be considered in the context of currently projected deficit of £7m for 19/20 in High Need Block and the previously accrued deficit of £3m for 18/19. It will be necessary to offset additional money to recover this position. Demand continues to increase, more EHC assessments and plans. Aim to create more specialist places locally to reduce cost per place, but need to recognise cost pressure of volume growth against per place reduction. Forum members were asked to help share the message with constituent members so that all colleagues understand that while the £10.5m is good news it must be balanced against CSSB challenge, and the accrued deficits for 18/19 and 19/20 and therefore is not an injection of cash, this just means our situation will not worsen. Suffolk still remains significantly underfunded in its high need block compared with other LAs – as all have been given more high needs funding.</p> <p>Outturn position for 2018-19 was £3.5m deficit. In 2019-20 projected to double to £7m. New specialist provision is moving forward but none of that comes into place until September 2020 and will take time to impact - but will increase between 2020-25.</p>

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		<p><u>High Needs Funding System</u>  The new system is now fully operational with virtually all pupils having a banding assigned within the new system – just a few FE learners left to assign by end of October. An initial review of the band funding rates has been undertaken to compare rates paid against actual costs of provision. Early review of this work indicates that most bands are reflective of average costs and a fair allocation. Only band C appears to be potentially a little generous. A more in-depth review will be undertaken and then reviewed at High Needs Working Group and will bring back to Forum in November.</p> <p>Update on specialist units programme: Good response from expression of interest for specialist units and are confident we can deliver plans in 2020-21. Face to face panel discussions took place last week with settings who applied to host new units in 2020-21. Good quality presentations and proposals and we will have enough provision in order to deliver places for 2020, not yet enough to deliver on 2021 provision. Good interest from west and south, across key stages. Less interest from the north, which will be addressed after this process complete. Plan is for us to review the work completed by Infrastructure Team on floor space provision in the north, this will indicate discussions to explore potential interest.</p> <p>In terms of modelling impact of new places on whole budget, we are undertaking modelling exercises at pupil level which we will be bring back to November forum to share modelling work. The paper will include whole impact of demand management work, funding changes, new places model to reflect the impact of the whole system change.</p> <p><b>ACTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future cost modelling – bring back to November meeting.</li> </ul>
6.	Forward Agenda	<p><u>Items to add to November meeting:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEN future cost modelling</li> <li>• CSSB</li> <li>• Exclusion Report</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft APT</li> </ul> <p><u>January meeting:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EY funding (bring forward if known beforehand)</li> </ul>
7.	AOB	<p>AC informed Forum members that there has been a Cabinet reshuffle, with immediate effect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Gordon Jones moves into the role of cabinet member for finance and resources</li> <li>• Cllr Mary Evans remains as deputy leader and moves into the role of cabinet member for children’s services, education and skills</li> </ul>
8.	Date of the next meeting	<p>The next meeting is confirmed as <b>Monday 18 November, 1.30pm in the VMC at Landmark House.</b></p>
		<p>Meeting closed at 10.50am</p>