

**Minutes of the Suffolk Schools' Forum held at 9.30am on Thursday 26 November 2020 via Microsoft Teams (and live streamed through YouTube) due to the current COVID pandemic**

**Present:**

<b>Non-School Members</b>	Colin Shaw, 16-19 Provider Maria Kemble, Diocesan Pat Chapman, PVI Sharon Waldron, Diocesan
<b>Academy Members</b>	Dawn-Carman-Jones, Mainstream Julia Upton, Mainstream Steve Lovett, Mainstream Darren Woodward, Mainstream Louise Spall, Mainstream Angela Berry, Mainstream Daniel Jones, Mainstream Andrew Berry, Mainstream Sue Prickett, Special Angela Ransby, AP Provision
<b>Maintained School Members</b>	Allison Coleman, Primary (Chair) Alison Bowman, Primary Darron Jackson, Primary Gill Mitchell, Primary Karen Mills, Primary Ruth Coleman, Nursery Lizzi Murphy, Special Paul Morton, PRU

**Observers and Local Authority**

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

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1.	Welcome – Virtual Meeting Etiquette	<p>The Chair welcomed new elected members to Schools Forum for their first meeting.</p> <p>Schools Forum is a collective group all representing different parts of the education sector in Suffolk, the most important thing to us is that we all voice what is important, so all views can be taken into consideration, but when it comes to decision making we act collectively and in the best interest for all pupils in Suffolk whether in Early Years, Post-16, SEN or Mainstream provision and that we think of everyone not just our own settings when coming to collective decisions together and given that this is one of our major decision making meetings of the year it's more important to keep that in mind.</p> <p>The Chair would like noted in the minutes our thanks to Helen Wilson who has stepped down since our last meeting.</p> <p>AO: Helen Wilson was a long-standing member of Suffolk's Schools Forum, Helen made a fantastic contribution to Forum over a good number of years and I want to echo the comments of the chair. Helen also wanted to pass on her thanks to forum members and to say she had valued being part of forum.</p>
2.	Apologies for absence	Apologies for absence were received from Amanda Havers.
3.	Election of the Chair and Vice Chair	<p>AO: We need to elect our Chair and Vice Chair, forum members that have been members of the forum for a while will know that we review on an annual basis. For this meeting I am looking for any nominations for Chair. I understand that Allison Coleman is happy to stand again, but I am putting it out to the whole of forum to see whether anyone else would like to stand as Chair, please place it in the meeting chat.</p> <p>No further nominations were received. Therefore, we have 1 nomination for Chair, Allison Coleman, along with a number of members agreeing and seconding.</p> <p>Congratulations to Allison, who has been re-elected as the Chair of Forum.</p> <p>The meeting was therefore handed back to the Chair for nominations and election of Vice Chair.</p> <p>The Chair sought nominations for Vice Chair. Alison Bowman offered her support as the Vice Chair. The</p>

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		<p>Chair mentioned that for those of you who are new to Forum, Alison has Chaired Forum in the past. Forum members were asked to confirm their support.</p> <p>Alison Bowman is elected as Vice Chair.</p>
4.	Term of Office	<p>AO: Apologies for the error on the agenda that members may not have seen which said 'decision' but in fact it was an 'information' item.</p> <p>Forum members that have been members for some years will know that we have looked over a period of time about the election process and one thing we still have to do is define the term of office period for Forum members other than the Chair and Vice Chair. We planned to do some work on this earlier in the year but then Covid got in the way.</p> <p>Some of you will be familiar with the forum guidance but one thing the DfE did during the pandemic was to bring out some more guidance in May, which is broadly very similar to the previous guidance other than the arrangements for virtual meetings. It states that essentially the decision of the term of office for forum members rests with the Local Authority, because the LA is the convening body. However, we want to do this in a more collegiate way. We will bring a set of proposals with some options, which we will bring in January and vote on that at that time.</p> <p><b><u>Action:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Paper to come to Forum in January.</b></li> </ul>
5.	Minutes of the previous meeting & issues arising	The minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 June were agreed and signed off by the Chair.
6.	Approval of Central School Services Block (CSSB) savings and commitments for 2021-22	<p><b>What is the Forum being asked to decide?</b></p> <p>To agree the CSSB savings proposed as described in the paper at paragraph 19, which are the result of work of a Schools Forum sub-group and Local Authority Officers, to enable the CSSB savings to be met in the 2021-22 financial year.</p> <p>To agree the services to be funded from the remaining CSSB available in 2021-22 as per paragraph 19, and described in Annex A.</p> <p><b>Reason for recommendation</b></p> <p>The DfE have applied a 20% reduction to the CSSB</p>

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		<p data-bbox="624 282 1401 427">budget relating to historical commitments for 2021-22, following the same percentage decrease to the budget for 2020-21. They have reiterated that this will be an on-going annual reduction.</p> <p data-bbox="624 465 1401 902">Following the imposition of the budget reduction last year, Schools Forum agreed to set up a working group to work alongside Local Authority officers to ensure that a planned timetable of savings and service restructures could be agreed. The savings for 2020-21 were unanimously agreed via an electronic voting process following the report distributed to School Forum members in April 2020 in lieu of the meeting not being held in person. This same working group has agreed the proposals to make the savings required in 2021-22, and thereby those services which should continue to be funded from the CSSB.</p> <p data-bbox="624 940 1401 1160">The budgets funded by the CSSB provide the services that fall under the on-going responsibilities, retained duties and central functions required of the Local Authority, or are contributions towards service budgets for which no other funding is available, that have been agreed by Schools Forum previously.</p> <p data-bbox="624 1198 1401 1417">Reducing the budgets means that the local authority is challenged to meet its retained duties and the relevant services provided to schools, either with a different funding stream under potentially a different model or where this is not possible, the services would cease and schools would need to source individually.</p> <p data-bbox="624 1456 1401 1742">The savings proposed limit the reduction in service that schools would be impacted by to those services that could continue with a different funding stream or trading model. They reflect that these services were subject to a part year saving effect in 2020-21 given the late notification by the DfE of savings required, and that the High Needs Block has provisionally received a significant increase in funding for 2021-22.</p> <p data-bbox="624 1780 1401 2049">AO introduced this item and referred to the report and questions that came in the last 24 hours which we will pick up as part of the discussion. Firstly, two key things – thank you to Forum members who joined the working group that looked at the complexity which we have to managed around the CSSB this year and in the coming years. The proposals in this report were</p>

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		<p>developed by the LA in consultation with that group. The CSSB element of the dedicated schools grant (DSG) is complex and there are a lot of myths around it. I just wanted to put some context to it to say, although we have got a few new forum members they are very experienced educationalists they know about school funding and system funding in education. You will recall the Education Services Grant (ESG) was removed nationally in 2016/17. This was a block grant that went to LAs to pay for the statutory duties that sit with us around Section 13A of the 1996 Education Act predominantly around standards in all schools, along with a range of other duties around admissions, buildings, and other statutory duties. At the same time Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) also received an ESG. Following the removal of the ESG additional funding was added into the DSG to fund LA duties. This was called the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB). Another element of the CSSB was what Schools Forums in all parts of the country had historically assigned for particular activities and projects and the CSSB ran as a ESG replacement for a number of years. However, in the last couple of years we have been faced with a particular challenge which is at the heart of this paper, the CSSB is an area that the government have been reducing in terms of funding coming into the DSG. The area they are particularly focussed on are those historic commitments. Forum therefore have to make some complex decisions about the choices we make in spending this money. The CSSB is additional money that was added into the DSG but Forum have decision making powers around how that money is spent.</p> <p>Sonya commented I would echo Adrian's word about the support of the Working Group, we met back in January to agree the initial proposals. for savings.</p> <p>This is a second year of a 20% reduction in CSSB funding applied by DfE. SH met with working group earlier this year, without officers and Heads of Services directly responsible for the services because we did not feel it was appropriate, to propose initial savings for this financial year and these were unanimously and were agreed via a virtual vote in May.</p>

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		<p>In 2021-22 proposed savings follow the precedent that we set in 2020 ie. a full year impact of what was agreed last year. Last year we did not have a lot of time between the announcement of 20% and the need to implement the changes. The working group felt it was an appropriate thing to do to not reduce the full amount of funding in 2020-21, but the final 1/3 would be a first call of savings required in 2021-22. The majority of the other savings were agreed by utilising the increase in HNB budget because these costs can be managed this way under the DSG guidance. This will only have a marginal impact overall on the HNB in 2021-22 as there is no 0.5% HNB transfer to reserves suggested as in 2020-21.</p> <p>It is important to raise with members some key comments from the working group alongside agreeing these proposed savings for 2021-22. These include asking if the remaining services that would continue to be funded by CSSB, i.e. those not up for being recommended as a saving in 2021-22, if they are potentially already looking at how they can trade in future and also ensuring (credit to Angela Ransby) that we are targeting our resources to those most vulnerable so they are fully protected. Important to say that the savings for 2022-23 will no doubt be more difficult to achieve without impacting directly on the most vulnerable and the services that the schools have come to expect that are provided by the LA. The savings requirement in 2022-23 is going to be £847,000 and coming back to the discussion about trading, E&amp;L are looking at the implication at how they can meet some of the saving. As a DMT in the LA we are looking to review those and see how those plans can be used in the virtual school and early help service that will be the two main services left that are funded partially through the CSSB to see how they can mitigate savings in future years and ensure continuity of current services. This time last year we were assuming we would have a comprehensive spending review, 3 year settlement which would allow the Corporate Leadership Team to take a favourable view on covering at least a proportion or if not all of the CSSB loss from Corporate resources. We are now in a very different position, we had a 1 year</p>

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		<p>settlement, the headlines of which were announced yesterday, so we are just working out what that means in terms of the plans we currently have in our medium plan. What we do know is the capacity of the LA to fund any kind of budget pressure has been diminished. We are showing the loss of the CSSB as a cost pressure in our medium term financial plan, but my confidence levels that there will be central resources to match the loss are a lot lower than they were last year.</p> <p>We will continue to work with the working group to get options for 2022-23 and beyond and will start that process early in the next year, by that time we should have a clearer picture of funding. After the announcement yesterday we will not get to see the final funding for Suffolk until just before Christmas, therefore we are still not sure on the savings. With regards to Early Help, Troubled Families funding is continuing in 2021-22 but again we have only been given a 1 year settlement so potentially there is a 1m loss in 2022-23.</p> <p>DfE guidance means that if the savings are agreed the remaining commitments have to be agreed by Schools Forum on a line by line basis.</p> <p>Questions taken from Forum:          Andrew Berry, Tilian Partnership – Paper B, para 15 and 19, Landlord Duties continuing in 2021 and 0 in 2022.</p> <p>No representation from Property present at the meeting, they were working on the expectation that this was already agreed by Forum last year. Adrian Orr – this sits as part of CSSB the former ESG requirement and you are right it is health and safety. ie. an academy school has to run a whole range of its own H&amp;S arrangements, if there was issue with the building then SCC are still the landlord.</p> <p>Questions were raised by Forum members.</p> <p>Headteacher Association funding, reducing significantly and from a Primary perspective, don't understand SPHA funding, although SASH has a</p>

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		<p>healthy reserve?</p> <p><i>AO HT associations have been an excellent conduit for joint working with the LA – we met on Tuesday with HT reps SASH/SPHA/CEO Network (monthly meetings).</i></p> <p><i>A SPHA/SASH paper was brought to Forum back in 2016 asking for funding to support both Headteacher Associations. Forum where agreeable to at the time but there was always the view that it would not necessarily be a long term funding. It was hoped that it establish and embed the support role that both associations provide to HTs. SASH continued to work on a subscription basis as well as receiving a grant from the LA. SPHA did not require a subscription, but we understand it is their intention to do so in the future. There are some reserves held by SPHA allowing them to run until the end of the academic year. I would like to pay tribute to Jacqui Frost, the SPAH executive officer who has done a remarkable job in that role. Jacqui is moving on to new ventures and we would like to continue our close working relationship with SPHA and SASH</i></p> <p>AB asked about SLIN and the number of primary and secondary schools in Wave 1, 2 and 3 as there appear to be no secondary schools in Wave 3?</p> <p>Julia Grainger (JG), Head of School Improvement responded to this question. <i>Some schools signed up for Wave 1 and then signed up for Wave 2. The number of secondary schools signed up to Wave 2 was lower than in Wave 1. When SASH evaluated the project at the end of the year they felt it needed some tweaking to meet secondary headteacher needs. Currently Wave 3 is all primary schools but we continue to work with the headteacher associations to look to see how it needs adapted for secondary schools too.</i></p> <p>Reviewing additional questions in the meeting chat from Alison Bowman, Pat Chapman and Sharon Waldron, Sonya to take these questions back to Property and get a written response to circulate to Forum.</p>



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		<p>PM asked about the Education and Learning funding. Has there been any thought given in future years to providing direct funding to schools to encouraged more to school to school as a more cost-effective way to offer support?</p> <p>AO commented on the value of headteachers supporting headteachers, we absolutely endorse this idea and this is one of the founding principles of the Suffolk Learning and Improvement Network (SLIN). I would recognise particularly the need to do some further development in the Specialist and AP sector. The challenge is this block of money is going to reduce and reality is reducing but we still need to meet all of our statutory duties.</p> <p>AO stated we would be happy to have a conversation outside of this meeting with any members about projects and activities where we can assist in further developing a self-supporting system in Suffolk.</p> <p>AB noted that the LA had significant statutory duties and it might be beneficial in future reports to break down how the funding was used for statutory work and for projects like SLIN.</p> <p>The chair thanked AB for his questions which will be noted and considered for next year.</p> <p>Voting then took place on the proposals set out in the paper</p> <p><b>1. Do you agree that the CSSB savings required of £1.059m for 2021-22 should be made as proposed as per paragraph 19 of Paper B?</b></p> <p>After voting <b>21 (23*)</b> forum members in favour, <b>0</b> members against and <b>0</b> abstained.</p> <p><b>2. Do you agree to the CSSB continuation of funding of £0.345m for the Virtual School for CiC services described in Annex A of Paper B?</b></p> <p>After voting <b>19 (20*)</b> forum members in favour, <b>0</b> members against and <b>0</b> abstained.</p>

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		<p><b>3. Do you agree to the CSSB continuation of funding of £1.287m for Education and Learning services described in Annex A of Paper B?</b></p> <p>After voting <b>19</b> forum members in favour, <b>0</b> members against and <b>0</b> abstained.</p> <p><b>4. Do you agree to the CSSB continuation of funding of £2.460m for Early Help services described in Annex A of Paper B?</b></p> <p>After voting <b>18 (21*)</b> forum members in favour, <b>0</b> members against and <b>0</b> abstained.</p> <p><b>5. Do you agree to the CSSB continuation of funding of £0.122m for SEND School Support services described in Annex A of Paper B?</b></p> <p>After voting <b>19 (21*)</b> forum members in favour, <b>0</b> members against and <b>0</b> abstained.</p> <p><i>* further votes were received after the meeting, as shown in brackets.</i></p> <p><b>ACTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sonya to take Alison Bowman, Pat Chapman and Sharon Waldron's questions back to Property and get a written response to circulate to Forum.</i></li> </ul>
7.	De-delegation Approval 2021-22	<p><b>What is the Forum being asked to decide?</b></p> <p>Schools Forum is also asked to agree the de-delegation of funding back to the Local Authority for the continuation of each of the following services detailed in Annexes A-D: Intervention Fund, County Inclusion Support Services (CISS), Support to under-performing ethnic groups including bilingual learners and Trade Unions, by phase for maintained primary and secondary schools.</p> <p><b>Reason for recommendation</b></p> <p>Funding for de-delegated services is allocated through the funding formula to all schools, but can be passed back i.e. de-delegated, for maintained mainstream primary and secondary schools, so that</p>

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		<p>the service can be provided centrally.</p> <p><b>Alternative options</b></p> <p>Schools Forum could decide not to approve the continuation of these de-delegated budgets. Schools would then have to manage these services individually.</p> <p>AO introduced the paper noting that colleagues are present today from other services who can respond to any questions. I am delighted that one of the commentators on one of the papers is Colin Turner, one of the former members of Forum who is in attendance with Paul Widdowson for the Trade Union related item.</p> <p>The paper sets out the arrangements for centralising funding for a number of services for maintained schools. It was noted that there are no maintained secondary school members on forum at present. There is not a requirement for phase representation, but with Helen Wilson stepping down we need to look at how secondary can give their views on the de-delegation, in the future. We will seek advice and guidance outside of this meeting. Therefore in the meeting the voting will be for primary sector.</p> <p>We usually present the CSSB and de-delegated papers at separate forum meetings as there has been some confusion in the past about the difference between the CSSB vote and the de-delegation vote. The de-delegation element is a specific request to pass monies back to the LA from maintained schools for the services to be provided centrally by the LA. This is only available to the maintained sector. Academies have the option to purchase these services separately from their individual school budget.</p> <p>No questions were raised by Forum members.</p> <p>A vote took place by maintained (Primary) members only.</p> <p><b><u>Intervention</u></b> (schools in financial difficulties)</p> <p><b>1. Do you agree the de-delegation of funding back to the LA for Intervention Fund?</b></p>

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		<p>After voting <b>5 primary maintained schools in favour, 0 members against and 0 abstained</b> to a per pupil amount of £11.00.</p> <p><b><u>County Inclusion Support Service</u></b></p> <p><b>2. Do you agree the de-delegation of funding back to the LA for CISS?</b></p> <p>After voting <b>5 primary maintained schools in favour, 0 members against and 0 abstained</b> to a per pupil amount of £11.00.</p> <p><b><u>Support to underperforming ethnic groups and bilingual learners</u></b></p> <p><b>3. Do you agree the de-delegation of funding back to the LA for Support to underperforming ethnic groups and bilingual learners?</b></p> <p>After voting <b>5 primary maintained schools in favour, 0 members against and 0 abstained</b> to a per pupil amount of £1.91.</p> <p><b><u>Trade Unions</u></b></p> <p><b>4. Do you agree the de-delegation of funding back to the LA for Trade Unions?</b></p> <p>After voting <b>4 primary maintained schools in favour, 0 members against and 1 abstained</b> pupil amount of £1.50.</p> <p>This concludes the voting for de-delegation.</p>
8.	2021-22 Schools Block Budget Funding Formula	<p><b>What is the Forum being asked to decide?</b></p> <p>The paper provides an update to the National Funding Formula (NFF) for 2021-22. All factors used in 2021-22 will be the same as used in 2020-21. There are no proposals for any changes and for Forum to agree that Suffolk continues to follow the NFF.</p> <p><b>Reason for recommendation</b></p> <p>The recommendation is to continue to follow the NFF to determine schools' budgets in 2021-22.</p>

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		<p>Paper introduced by Mike Quinton. To give some background for new members about four years ago, we as an LA came up with some options about the NFF; we could have gone down the local route and still had lots of local factors or go down the NFF route. Forum at that time were unanimous in their decision that we should follow the NFF which had some good advantages as all LAs would be on NFF eventually. We are not sure when the NFF will be fully implemented as yet and it's been delayed again due to the current pandemic. Forum agreed it would be fair, transparent and there would be consistency to the funding for all our schools in Suffolk. It would reduce the local complexities, reduce all the formula factors we could have used, which benefitted some schools and also it reduces the turbulence for all of the schools in Suffolk. Hopefully over the past 3 years you will have seen that budgets have been fairly stable and not many changes happen year on year. This is why back in 2018-19 Forum agreed that Suffolk should follow the NFF.</p> <p>Suffolk continues to see welcome increases in our overall DSG allocations, based on the information we have for next year of £466.7m, although likely to change with updated census information from October this year. However, we recognise that we are funded fairly low compared with other LAs, although Cllr Mary Evans, Allan Cadzow and Adrian Orr are very active in F40 Group and continue to lobby for Suffolk to ensure we seek to get the funding we feel we deserve.</p> <p>There are a few key changes in 2021-22:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher Pension and Pay Grants which had previously been paid separate from the DSG. These have now been included in the DSG funding settlement for 2021-22; (table 2) shows how much is being added for primary and secondary.</li> <li>• Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) the DfE are updating information that they hold from 2015-19 data, not many changes for the funding in this area for schools.</li> <li>• Sparsity funding – welcome news for rural schools the lump sum for sparsity is increasing. Currently we don't know the data or which schools are eligible.</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimum Per Pupil Funding (MPPF) has increased (paragraph 13) and on top of that the pension and pay grants have been added to the MPPF levels. MPPF means any school that falls below this on a per pupil level is then propped up so that all schools are funded on exactly the same basis.</li> </ul> <p>The Authority Proforma Tool (APT) will need to be submitted by 21 January and signed off by Cllr Mary Evans. Annex A looks at the funding based on the NFF unit values without the 0.5% transfer to the HNB. Annex B links into the next paper which shows what the APT would look like with the 0.5% transfer.</p> <p>The following question was raised by a Forum members:</p> <p>It's difficult to drill down and track what is coming in from certain areas and as budgets get tighter schools will want to know so they can get their costs in line?  <i>In one of the toolkits that goes out to the maintain schools we do split out all the unit values in the schools block. Similarly, the general annual grant (GAG) that goes out to academies is all split out. The factors used in the schools block are proxy measures so it's a way of distributing funding to schools based on the pupil characteristics.</i></p> <p>A vote took place by all Forum members.</p> <p><b>1. Do you agree that Suffolk continues to follow the NFF as agreed by Schools Forum in previous years?</b></p> <p>After voting <b>18 (20*) forum members in favour, 0 members against and 0 abstained.</b></p> <p><b>* further votes were received after the meeting, as shown in brackets.</b></p> <p>Following this vote we will therefore continue to use the NFF as our method of allocating our funding to schools.</p>
9.	Strategy for Reducing the Cumulative Deficit within the	<p><b>What is the Forum being asked to decide?</b></p> <p>To agree the length of time to clear the current deficit of £13million in the High Needs Block due to the</p>

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	High Needs Block	<p>cumulative overspend created from the increase in demand for SEND specialist provision over the last three years.</p> <p><i>Preferred Option: The LA Recommends that Schools Forum adopt a proposal for recovery over 5 years.</i></p> <p>To agree the strategy for securing funds to clear the current deficit, either from a contribution from the Schools Block or from a reduction in the High needs Funding Top-Up. <i>Preferred Option: The LA Recommends that Schools Forum agree to transfer additional funding needed for the recovery and future demand cushioning from the Schools Block and do not reduce the current high needs top up rates.</i></p> <p>To agree, as part of the recovery plan, how much funding is taken as a demand cushion to ensure future overspends are avoided.</p> <p><i>The LA Recommends that Schools Forum agree to transfer 0.5% per annum from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block for the next 5 years to support the recovery of the deficit and build a demand cushion.</i></p> <p>Paper introduced by Judith Mobbs.</p> <p>Suffolk is and has been underfunded in previous years with regards to the HNB. In the current year we are £3.5m less well funded than the average LA in the country, than the rest of the LAs in the East of England and compared with our statistical neighbours. The previous year would have been about £6.5m below all those averages. Other LAs nationally are struggling to meet demand on higher levels of funding than Suffolk.</p> <p>Suffolk has low level of funding, but like everywhere else we are seeing an increase in demand. In recent years this has escalated. A current illustration of this would be the 550 new requests for HNB we have received this Autumn term. If children already have a high needs funded banding there isn't a need to make a request so these are new requests. This pattern is being repeated year on year.</p> <p>Impact of this underfunding and continuing increase in demand is a 13m cumulative deficit for Suffolk in recent years in the HNB. In the current year the deficit</p>

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		<p>will be about 3m and in the previous year about 6m.</p> <p>Over the last 4 years we have put in place some very tight cost management arrangements, consistent arrangements around funding and we have worked really hard to ensure there is a transparent system in place to ensure it is fair and equitable in the way that we are funding provision.</p> <p>Nationally, SEND funding is a big discussion point and there is a national SEND review which has been delayed due to the pandemic, however we hope there will be long term change.</p> <p>In summary, I am commending to Forum a commitment to a decision for a recovery plan over 5 years, to take the additional funds needed to achieve this from the schools block. This would be over a 5 year period and to suggest the level of transfer per annum should be 0.5%. This is a big ask and a long term commitment. Forum will want an annual report on this and we would come back and report on progress against that and the recovery plan. If demand is lower in years to come or the SEND national review suggests that funding will come to Suffolk at a higher level, then my proposal would be that we reduce or cease that transfer as and when appropriate.</p> <p>The chair noted this is a complex piece of work and thanked JM for setting it out to Forum this morning in a very helpful way. Those of us who are on the High Needs Working Group have a much deeper understanding of this but you have given a good clear explanation of how we can move forward and address the deficit in the way that you have described it.</p> <p>Forum members suggested that the ongoing under funding of high needs be raised with our MPs. Cllr Mary Evans offered to raise this topic with them. JM agreed to write a statement for Cllr Mary Evans to take to local MPs as how Suffolk is underfunded in all 3 ways compared with national averages, our statistical neighbours and the region.</p> <p>The following questions were raised by Forum members:</p>



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		<p>Some clarification around paragraph 13 with regards to additional funding, how does that impact on reducing of the deficit?</p> <p><i>This has already been taken into account in the projection for us to be at 13m by the end of this year. These additional sums are for a 1 year period so we have no certainty that they will continue.</i></p> <p>PM commented that he appreciates schools will not be overjoyed at losing 0.5% of their budget for the last 5 years, but in context with what the special and PRUs have been dealing with regards to stagnation of funding with no element of inflation change at all over the timespan, we have had at least or more than 10% reduction in budget. So if you take 0.5% over 5 years is 2.5% therefore other than doing it in the way Judith is proposing is not really terrible. For special/PRUs, as we have been having some serious cuts over the past few years because we have not had any changes at all, it would be very difficult to do it any other way for us at the moment.</p> <p>Assuming the recovery plan is presented to forum on an annual basis with progress to date in removing the deficit - that way forum can see the impact of the % reduction of schools block and be confident that the recovery plan is being implemented and will provide a balanced/surplus position in 5 year's time?</p> <p><i>SH added that the DfE are clear that it has to be signed off by Schools Forum, Director of CYP and Section 151 Officer</i></p> <p><i>Whatever we agree this is about a 5 year plan, and as plans can be reviewed, it would still need to be agreed on an annual basis, we cannot do an in-year change because the percentages have to be agreed in terms of movements between blocks on the APT and has to be agreed by Forum annually.</i></p> <p>JM added that should the recovery plan be achieved in a shorter time span as a result in increased external funding then this reduction in schools block is reversed at an appropriate time - returning the funds to the mainstream sector.</p> <p><i>We would look at what the additional funding is and how that could be used and that could be by reducing</i></p>

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		<p><i>the contribution entirely or it might mean that there would be capacity to increase bandings or look at other kind of investments could be made, but it all depends on what the future funding is.</i></p> <p>A vote took place by all Forum members.</p> <p><b>1. Do you agree that the reduction of the Cumulative Deficit within the High Needs Block is recovered over 5 years?</b></p> <p>After voting <b>18 forum members in favour, 0 members against and 0 abstained.</b></p> <p><b>2. Do you agree that the funding needed for the recovery and the future demand cushion come from the Schools Block?</b></p> <p>After voting <b>18 forum members in favour, 0 members against and 0 abstained.</b></p> <p>Note: Julia Upton is having some difficulty with the voting. We will give Julia the option to vote by email, but it won't make any difference to the result today. If it had been in the balance then we would have waited for a reply from Julia, therefore in the minutes we will note the final vote.</p> <p><b>3. Do you agree to a 0.5% Transfer per annum from the Schools block to the High Needs Block for the next 5 years, to support the recovery of the deficit and build a demand cushion?</b></p> <p>After voting <b>18 forum members in favour, 0 members against and 0 abstained.</b></p> <p>Following this vote we will take a 0.5% transfer for the next 5 years, with an annual review providing for the option to reduce if need/funding allows.</p> <p>The chair noted that we have now completed the paper, can I thank you all very much for that, I know it will have an impact on a lot of your schools budgets, but I am really pleased to see that everyone thinks in the same way that it's about doing what's best for all pupils in Suffolk and that's the way we voted today.</p>

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10.	The adoption by Academy Trusts of the Policy for the recoupment of Education Funding after the Permanent Exclusion of a Pupil	<p><b>What is the Forum being asked to decide?</b></p> <p>To update Schools' Forum Members on the current position regarding the adoption by Academy Trusts of the Policy for the recoupment of Education Funding after the Permanent Exclusion of a Pupil. To offer advice on what action can be taken regarding the Trusts who have not yet responded or have declined to adopt the policy.</p> <p><b>Reason for recommendation</b></p> <p>Support required from Schools' Forum to encourage more Academy Trusts to adopt the new policy.</p> <p>GM presented the report.</p> <p>This report is to talk to you about the adoption of the policy that was introduced in September 2020. It was introduced following the previous discussions that Schools Forum had had and the agreement to introduce this new policy. The new policy is about how we recoup funding following the permanent exclusion of a child. It looks at the transparent way in which we would recoup the money from the excluding school and then passport that to the receiving school or establishment. Maintained schools started using this policy from September 2020 and implemented that across all our maintained settings. With regards to Academy Trust we wrote to them to ask them to adopt this policy along with some worked examples.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 academy trusts have adopted the policy</li> <li>• 4 have refused to adopt the policy, which means we won't be able to recoup funding from them, but they also won't receive funding if they take on a child that has been excluded from another setting.</li> <li>• 24 academy trusts have not yet made a decision to either adopt or reject the policy, although, some have come back to ask some questions which we have answered.</li> </ul> <p>We have written again to academy trusts to say as we haven't heard from them and we are going to presume they have adopted the policy and we will continue to start implementing the policy for all children who have been permanently excluded from September 2020.</p>

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		<p>The following questions were raised by Forum members:</p> <p>Would those academy trusts then be required to keep the PEX children within the trust schools? So 'internally transfer' so to speak? Thus using their central funds</p> <p><i>No not necessary, if a child is permanently excluded following the various stages of process then if they haven't adopted the recoupment policy that does not affect where the child may be placed, it is about the recoupment of the funding and the funding provided if a school receives a child that has been permanently excluded.</i></p> <p>Does the current version of the policy require 2k payment above the pro rata amount?</p> <p><i>The previous policy had a £2,000 fee however that does not exist in the policy anymore. Where a school is excluding very close to the end of the academic year which is when the prorated amount is too small to allow the receiving school to offer meaningful education then we do put in a higher amount but it only comes into play when the prorated amount is less than £2,000.</i></p> <p>Would maintained schools then not get the funding if taking a child from a Trust who haven't signed up? This would not be acceptable to the receiving school presumably?</p> <p><i>No unfortunately there would be no funding.</i></p> <p>Andrew Berry suggested Gemma attends the CEO Network meeting to discuss the policy with all academy leads. He offered to arrange an invitation</p> <p>GM confirmed that the policy will be published on the Suffolk Learning website.</p> <p>That would need to be made clear to maintained schools so the decision to accept a child can be made with the knowledge there would be no funding and the decision would go to governors?</p> <p><i>We may have some funding that we can make available if a child leaves one setting that has signed up to the policy and then goes into another that hasn't, however, it is unclear as to what level it will be at this point. But no, as it stands there will be no</i></p>

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		<p><i>funding where the child comes from a excluding school that hasn't adopted the policy.</i></p> <p>Has this policy been partially adopted already? Is it being implemented?  <i>GM confirmed that the policy was implemented from September 2020 we wait until the off roll dates come through following permanent exclusions, we had the first one last week so the process is starting to be followed, my team undertake the internal funding calculations and then they will share that with the excluding school. We are trying to be really transparent about how we recoup the funding so we include breakdowns of all the costs we've used and percentages to come up with the amounts we are recouping.</i></p> <p><b>ACTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Gemma to contact Andrew Berry in order to arrange attending CEO Network.</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>GM to send TS a copy of the policy in order to circulate to Forum.</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Gemma to follow up Gill Mitchell's suggestion around Diocesan Board of Education</i></b></li> </ul>
10.	Forward Agenda	<p><u>January 2021</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2021-22 Submission of Schools Block Funding Formula</li> <li>• Early Years Challenges and Sufficiency</li> <li>• Schools facing budget challenges/deficits following lockdown</li> <li>• Lobbying re: DfE support for schools with pandemic costs</li> </ul> <p>Please let us know if you have any further items to raise.</p>
11.	AOB	None
12.	Date of the next meeting	The next meeting is confirmed as <b>Thursday 21 January 2021, 9.30am Microsoft Teams (and live streamed through YouTube).</b>
		Meeting closed at 11.46am