

**Minutes of the Suffolk Schools' Forum held at 9.30 am on 10 July 2018
in the Conference Room, Landmark House, Ipswich**

Present:

Non-School Members	Pat Chapman, PVI Helen Wilson, Post 16 Amanda Havers, Early Years
Academy Members	Lyn Eldrett, Mainstream Lisa Jones, Mainstream (on behalf of Dawn Carmen-Jones) Mark Kemp, Special Steve Lovett, Mainstream Dave Siddall, PRU Mia Chadwick, Mainstream (on behalf of Jo Stanley-Bell) Colin Turner, Mainstream Nigel Burgoyne, Mainstream (on behalf of Julia Upton)
Maintained School Members	Graham Alcock, PRU Allison Coleman, Primary Governor (Chair) Vacancy, Special Dave Hutton, Secondary Head (Vice Chair) Gillian Mitchell, Primary Lil Newton, Nursery Louise Spall, Primary

Observers and Local Authority

Observers	There were observers present
Local Authority	Sue Cook Cllr Gordon Jones Cllr Chris Chambers Christine Fogg Judith Mobbs and Jamie Mills (for Papers C & D) Sonya Harban Teresa Spilling Michael Quinton

Item No.	Item Description	
1.	Welcome and Apologies	Apologies for absence were received from Louise Spall, Maria Kemble, Lil Newton, Patricia Chapman and Graham Alcock.

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		<p>Apologies from Adrian Orr (Local Authority).</p> <p><u>Apologies and Substitutes:</u></p> <p>Jo Stanley-Bell (substituted by Mia Chadwick) Dawn Carmen-Jones (substituted by Lisa Jones) Julia Upton (substituted by Nigel Burgoyne).</p> <p>Welcome to Kay Goodacre, our DfE contact in relation to schools and academies, who is in attendance as an Observer.</p>
2.	Minutes of the previous meeting & issues arising	The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 November 2017 were approved and signed by the Chair. There were no issues arising.
3.	DSG Outturn 2018-19 (Including Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS))	<p>SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS:</p> <p>Sonya Harban presented the report to Schools Forum who are being asked to note the overspend on the DSG revenue budget for 2017-18 of £0.336m and the deficit balance of reserves at 31 March 2018 of £0.335m. The transfer of £0.970m from the Schools Block of funding agreed for 2018-19 will increase the DSG reserves position to £0.634m (of which £0.231m is held to offset academy debts), and this paper recommends that this balance is left uncommitted and held as a contingency.</p> <p>Schools Forum are also asked to note the information with regards to SFVS (paragraph 30 onwards).</p> <p>Reason for recommendation</p> <p>The recommendation is in accordance with the conditions of the grant. It will ensure a small level of DSG reserves for contingency purposes whilst DfE regulations are clarified on how future DSG deficits should be funded under the National Funding Formula. Whilst a separate financial provision of £2.5m has been made for the predicted level of Early Years funding that will need to be returned to the DfE in 2018-19 based on activity levels in 2017-18, this reserve will provide some additional contingent funding if the clawback is higher than provided for in the accounts.</p> <p>Alternative options</p> <p>An alternative option would be to request the clawback of the net overspend from the 2019-20 Schools Budget. This is not an option considered</p>

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		<p>necessary based on the current known pressures in 2018-19.</p> <p>Who will be affected by this decision? The availability of reserves affects all schools and provider settings, and the associated activity that can be funded over and above that funded from the revenue budgets.</p> <p>The DSG budget was overspent in 2017-18 by £0.336m. At the end of the financial year, the overspend was transferred to DSG reserves, creating a DSG reserves deficit position at the end of the financial year. This deficit will be recovered once the agreed contribution from the Schools Block of £0.970m in 2018-19 is transferred in the 2018-19 financial year.</p> <p>ACTIONS/OUTCOMES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amanda Havers commented that EY block is underspent plus provision for clawback. This has discussed the report with Christina Lewis, and that they both agreed that the Early Years underspend should be returned to the service rather than be held as part of the contingency in the DSG reserves, as the sector would benefit from this re-investment. • Forum agreed that the DSG would be reviewed once there was clarity on what Early Years DSG income was recouped in-year, and if this affected the overall sum in reserves. • Item to come back to October Schools Forum, after actual amount of clawback is known with revised proposals for this underspend. • Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) update is completed on an annual basis. E&L colleagues to write to schools early in the Autumn Term outlining the importance of the process along with the help and support of the LA. • Recommendation to hold off decision making until have October meeting and then make further decision.
4.	Suffolk's Future Policy for funding	SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS:

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	High Needs Learners	<p>Schools' Forum are asked to note the outcomes of the recent consultation on high needs funding reform developed in partnership with the High Needs Working Group and the recommendations for implementation of the new policy proposed in response.</p> <p>Suffolk County Council requests feedback from Schools' Forum on the proposed plans for new high needs funding policy.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATIONS:</p> <p>In 2014 the Education Funding Agency set out a series of funding reforms designed to improve the equity in funding of additional support for high needs learners in mainstream and specialist education provision. These reforms were based on moving to a model of needs driven funding rather than the provision based system that existed previously.</p> <p>In Suffolk the current funding system for high needs has not been reformed since the introduction of these changes by the Education Funding Agency in 2014. There is widespread agreement across the system that the Suffolk high needs funding system should now be reformed and this is an action in the Suffolk SEND Strategy.</p> <p>Following a period of development work with the Forum's High Needs Working Group, Suffolk County Council undertook a consultation throughout December and January on a series of proposals designed to fully embed the national funding reform of 2014 and to ensure that there is a more equitable, straightforward, and transparent funding system for all providers accessing the high needs funding across Suffolk. This paper sets out plans for implementation following the consultation and taking account of the responses from providers.</p> <p>Alternative options</p> <p>Remain with the existing disparate funding arrangements for Special Schools, Alternative Provision, mainstream and post-16 settings. These arrangements build inequity into the system and are the source of frustration and confusion to providers</p>

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		<p>and families alike.</p> <p>Who will be affected by this decision? The proposed policy funding reforms for the high needs block set out in this paper will affect all providers who access funding through the DSG High Needs Block. This includes mainstream schools, special schools, PRUs, Alternative Provision Academies, FE Colleges and training providers.</p> <p>Main body of the Report Over December and January Suffolk County Council consulted with stakeholders and residents on a series of reforms to the way in which high needs funding is allocated. This paper reports on that consultation and the proposed policy changes as a result. The reforms are a key element of Suffolk’s response to its Area SEND inspection in December 2016 and are highlighted in the 2017-20 SEND Strategy. They are designed to establish a clearer and more equitable funding system which will better enable the council to deliver its statutory duty to provide mainstream education wherever preferred and practicable.</p> <p>Currently over £10m of the £49m in the high needs block is spent on placements in the independent non-maintained sector. The consultation proposed an approach that would offer increased freedom to Suffolk’s providers incentivising them to consider more bespoke learning packages. This should in turn reduce the need for reliance on the independent non-maintained sector with the aim of reinvesting more of the high needs block back in local provision and reducing overall funding pressures.</p> <p>The proposals for policy change set out in this document have been developed in partnership with the Schools’ Forum High Needs Group, Special Heads and PRU Heads.</p> <p>JM summarised how this work fits around the wider strategy of how we bring out spending into tighter management and efficient and effective high needs in Suffolk.</p> <p>JM talked about undertaking responses to address the situation and the challenges we face.</p>

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		<p>1. Rearrange the funding system in Suffolk, challenge if we only had a static demand.</p> <p>2. Look at strategies for local places –providers have been positive at responding this request. 200 additional places found in the system. Another part of our response has been consultation - sets out clearly demands. Challenges ahead for the high needs block. Increase places, build on sufficiency plan – address funding issues relating to this in order to address numbers of available places. Been working on high needs system, worked closely with high needs working group but acknowledge improvements still to be made.</p> <p>Now at a point where we can go live for the first year to test descriptors – 2 stage implementation of the system from Autumn term and further time to check band descriptors are right. Risk of not going ahead is delaying for a further year, and impact on high numbers of children in need of support.</p> <p>JM welcomes thoughts and ideas with Schools Forums backing – if so we will go ahead – Autumn term training, then Christmas review bandings, 2,500 live cases would have been undertaken. JM wants to work closely with all providers to adapt and grow in the new funding model.</p> <p>Forum members commented a sensible, clear and well thought out paper.</p> <p>ACTIONS/OUTCOMES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification as to timing – JM confirmed a rolling approach which will give SENCO colleagues feedback and to get benchmarking right, modernisation moving as quick as possible. • Further case studies coming out to help people make their judgement. • Agenda item for next meeting - impact on settings, modelling and impact. Regional colleagues views - MQ to enquire with other authorities how they are/did manage similar situation.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair and Forum Members thanked JM, her team and the High Needs Group for all their hard work carried out with the new high needs funding policy in order to help pupils across Suffolk.
5.	Policy for the Local Authority recoupment of funding after the permanent exclusion of a pupil from mainstream school	<p>SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS: Schools Forum were asked for their approval on the Suffolk policy for Recoupment of Funding following a Permanent Exclusion for implementation from September 2018. Following approval, the next step will be to write to academy schools to sign up to agreement. This will automatically apply to maintained schools once it has been agreed.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATIONS: At Schools’ Forum in November 2017 the elements of the new policy were agreed, and this item is therefore to sign off the final policy following that decision.</p> <p>Alternative options Alternative options were considered in October 2017 and it was agreed then that this was the option that should be taken forward.</p> <p>Who will be affected by this decision? All schools in Suffolk.</p> <p>Main body of the Report In October 2017 the Schools’ Forum considered a new policy for recoupment of funding following a permanent exclusion.</p> <p>This was because Suffolk’s current policy for recouping funds for permanently excluded pupils does not align with the new School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2017 nor is it workable in a system where some schools are academies.</p> <p>The Forum was asked to agree a new local policy that will apply to all settings, using the principle that funding ‘follows the pupil’ where a child or young person has been permanently excluded from either a maintained school or an academy. This was to enable the receiving school to be adequately funded or Local</p>

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		<p>Authority to provide an education for these pupils whilst they are not able to attend mainstream school. Two decisions were taken:</p> <p>Decision 1 – Establishing a new policy for financing education for permanently excluded pupils</p> <p>It was agreed to introduce a revised policy that aligns to the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2017 and which can be universally applied across all settings in Suffolk. The policy would set out the arrangements for the transfer of funding between a school and the Local Authority, or receiving school, when a school permanently excludes a pupil.</p> <p>It was also agreed that Schools’ Forum would approve a local agreement to establish a policy that applies to all schools, regardless of their status, therefore ensuring that the arrangements for funding excluded pupils are consistent, equitable and fair to all settings.</p> <p>Decision 2 – To agree the level of funding to be transferred from school budget to the receiving school or Local Authority to support a permanently excluded pupil</p> <p>After considering the options, it was agreed that the new policy should be as follows: that the amount of funding transferred to the receiving school or Local Authority by the school/academy at the point of permanent exclusion is the greater of the ‘funding attributable to a pupil of the same age and personal circumstances’ as per the regulations or the sum of £2,000 + AWPU (pro-rata) – the current level of funding agreed under the existing exclusion policy. This approach was agreed to protect the high needs block against a further cost pressure where pupils were funded late in the funding year.</p> <p>Officers were asked by Forum to make it clear in the policy which settings it would apply to and how the system would work for settings with differing funding years.</p> <p>ACTIONS / OUTCOMES: JM was asked to:</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review national policy to ensure correct guidelines are being adhered to and provide some modelling with examples referred to in Section 9. • Further work on following up on unpaid sums and report back to forum in detail. • Further clarification before implementation for the new academic year. • To attend Schools Forum in November. • Further information to be gathered re: to sign up of Academies • Correction to be made in paragraph 5 to read mainstream (not maintained). • MQ to check guidance with regards to Paragraph B.
6.	Forward Agenda	<p>The Forum agreed the forward agenda (Paper E), no further items added.</p> <p>Dates of the next meetings confirmed as Tuesday 2 October and Thursday 28 November 2018.</p> <p>Proposed dates for 2019 meetings were noted and will be circulated to the group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday 14 January - VMC, Landmark House • Tuesday 30 April - VMC, Landmark House • Tuesday 9 July – VMC, Landmark House • Tuesday 15 October – room tbc
7.	AOB	It would be helpful to ensure name of author and job titles are included on reports.
		Meeting closed at 10.30am.