B

Minutes of the Suffolk Schools' Forum held at 9.30am on Tuesday 30 November 2021 via Microsoft Teams (and live streamed through YouTube)

Present:

Non-School Members	Colin Shaw, 16-19 Provider Amanda Havers, PVI Sharon Waldron, Diocesan Pat Chapman, PVI
Academy Members	Julia Upton, Mainstream Steve Lovett, Mainstream Andrew Berry, Mainstream Darren Woodward, Mainstream Peter Collins, Special (on behalf of Sue Prickett)
Maintained School Members	Allison Coleman, Primary (Chair) Alison Bowman, Primary Rowena Mackie, Secondary Ruth Coleman, Nursery

Observers and Local Authority

Observers	There were observers present at the meeting
Local Authority	Rachel Hood Allan Cadzow Adrian Orr Julia Grainger Christina Lewis Ros Somerville Gemma Morgan Sonya Harban Teresa Spilling Barbara Barraclough

Item No.	Item Description	
1.	Welcome – Virtual Meeting Etiquette	The Chair welcomed members to Schools Forum. This meeting is a public meeting being live streamed via YouTube.
2.	Apologies for absence	Apologies for absence were received from: • Angela Ransby, Daniel Jones, Darron Jackson, Gill Mitchell, Karen Lodge, Maria Kemble, Sue Prickett <u>Substitute</u>: • Peter Collins (on behalf of Sue Prickett) The Chair handed over to Adrian Orr with regards to members who are stepping down and a number of members moving on to other jobs. <u>Stepping Down</u>: Sharon Waldron, Gill Mitchell, Darron Jackson, Dawn Carman-Jones I would like to thank and pay tribute to a number of colleagues, firstly, Gill Mitchell who is a long term member of forum, a real advocate for primary aged children and the primary school sector. Gill's term of office would have come to an end in December and has decided to step down so I am keen that forum offers a vote of thanks for her excellent service to the children of Suffolk over a number of years. Dawn Carman-Jones has been a strong representative for children that attend academy schools. Dawn has been a member of Forum for a good number of years and again her term of office has come to an end but she has made the decision given her other commitments to step down. A vote of thanks to Dawn for her service to Forum over a number of years. Darron Jackson, Primary Headteacher, has due to a range of other commitments stepped down from Forum. Again thanks to Darron for his support over the years since he has been a member of Forum.

Item No.	Item Description	
		Sharon Waldron, who is in attendance at the meeting today, Sharon moves on from her headship to a new role as one of Her Majesty's Inspectors for Schools. Sharon will be greatly missed; you have really kept us sighted on the national agenda and the Worth Less Campaign. The things you have shared have been very helpful to us in our work with the F40 group and we wish you all the best in your new role. In addition, we have some current Forum members whose term of office has come to an end. I wrote to them last week, they are Julia Upton and Steve Lovitt strong academy and secondary representatives on Forum, thank you for all you have done on Forum but we hope you will consider standing again and the election process starts this week. Similarly, Alison Bowman, long term member of Forum, former Chair and Allison Coleman who has been an exceptional member of Forum and a fabulous Chair we hope that you will stand again. The Chair thanked all those that have served on Schools Forum as it's an extra commitment on top of their day to day lives that they agreed to take part in and they all know how long it takes to read all the papers and consider the issues and discuss with colleagues so that they come prepared to the meetings for days like today where we have some important voting. Thank you to all of you who are stepping down for the last time and to those of you who are being asked to put yourselves in for re-election, I would very much welcome those members putting themselves forward again as your knowledge and expertise built up over a number of years is very valuable to Forum.
3.	Minutes of the previous meeting & issues arising	The minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 October 2021 were agreed and signed off by the Chair. Amendment to be made to the minutes under Item 6 – 1 member not in Favour. Page 9 – Action for Growth Policy to come back to Forum in January which is on the forward agenda.
4.	Approval of De-delegated	**What is the Forum being asked to decide?**

Item No.	Item Description	
	Budgets 2022-23	Schools' Forum is being 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, Specialist Education Services (previously referred to as CISS), Support to under-performing ethnic groups including bilingual learners and Trade Unions, by phase for maintained primary and secondary schools. Sonya Harban, Strategic Finance Lead introduced this item. There have been some misunderstandings in the past with regard to CSSB and De-delegated which is why we present these at different Forum meetings. The de-delegated paper is a specific request to pass monies back which have been allocated through the NFF for services to be provided centrally by the local authority and this is only available to the maintained (primary and secondary) sector and therefore academies have the option to purchase these services from their individual school budget. This year we are asking for no change in the level of de-delegation. We also have representatives from each of the services to answer any questions you may have relating to their services. The amount of de-delegated funding which comes back to the local authority does drop each year and is shown in table 2 as academies convert, they then cannot buy-in in this way. <u>Question raised by Forum member</u>: Is there any forum for sharing if any funding does not get spent going back into a pot? *It's very unusual to have any level of underspend and more likely we put in additional monies from core funding.* A vote took place by maintained (Primary & Secondary) school members only. **<u>Intervention</u>** (schools in financial difficulties) **1. Do you agree the de-delegation of funding back to the LA for Intervention Fund?** After voting **2 primary maintained schools in**

Item No.	Item Description	
		favour, 0 members against and **0 abstained** to a per pupil amount of £11.00. After voting **1 secondary maintained school in favour, 0 members against** and **0 abstained** to a per pupil amount of £9.68. **<u>Specialist Education Services</u> (SES)** (previously reported against County Inclusion Support Service (CISS)) **2. Do you agree the de-delegation of funding back to the LA for SES?** After voting **2 primary maintained schools in favour, 0 members against** and **0 abstained** to a per pupil amount of £12.18. After voting **1 secondary maintained school in favour, 0 members against** and **0 abstained** to a per pupil amount of £12.18. **<u>Support to underperforming ethnic groups and bilingual learners</u>** **3. Do you agree the de-delegation of funding back to the LA for Support to underperforming ethnic groups and bilingual learners?** After voting **2 primary maintained schools in favour, 0 members against** and **0 abstained** to a per pupil amount of £1.91. After voting **1 secondary maintained school in favour, 0 members against** and **0 abstained** to a per pupil amount of £1.91. **<u>Trade Unions</u>** **4. Do you agree the de-delegation of funding back to the LA for Trade Unions?** After voting **2 primary maintained schools in favour, 0 members against** and **0 abstained** pupil amount of £1.50. After voting **1 secondary maintained school in favour, 0 members against** and **0 abstained** pupil

Item No.	Item Description	
		amount of £1.50. This concludes the voting for de-delegation.
5.	High Needs Funding and DSG Deficit Recovery Plan for Suffolk	**Decision Making and Information** To share with Schools' Forum the current spending of the 2021/22 High Needs Block allocation and comparison to the last financial year. To explain Suffolk's High Needs Block allocation in relation to our Statistical Neighbours. To share with Schools' Forum the updated DSG Deficit Recovery Plan. This plan will be shared with Forum on a termly basis. Schools Forum are required to vote annually to agree the continued contribution of 0.5% of the Schools Block to the DSG High Needs Deficit. Gemma Morgan, Head of SEND Funding and Provider Services. The paper outlines this year's spend in comparison with last year's spend and shows an increase of 13% in what we are spending from the HNB. The table has a breakdown of what we are spending the funding on and it outlines where we are spending more. Two areas specifically, Contingency and Teachers Pay and Pension pot, have been increased considerably but this is because we have had a budget increase to accommodate this. Money has also been used for that but this year has been moved into our budget so we are able to pay for that from the HNB. Also, to highlight that the 'other' includes special equipment, a variety of commissioned contracts, hospital tuition recoupment and the SEND contingency. We are supporting 15% more children in placements and we have overall 12% more children receiving high needs funding. We are underfunded as a local authority when compared to others, we receive £32 less per pupil head than our statistical neighbours and £58 per pupil head less than the regional average. Norfolk is paid higher than Suffolk, £46 per pupil head (2-18 population), although their deficit sits a lot higher than

Item No.	Item Description	
		Suffolk (at £32m) and is expected to increase to £45m by the end of this financial year. The DfE went out to consultation to look at how they might change the way that they pay out for the High Needs Block however, they agreed on a 2017-18 actual spend which as I explained Suffolk did not overspend in that year so it resulted in us receiving a really low settlement. The DfE agreed that everyone would receive at least 8% and Suffolk received 8.08% so a lot less than we had expected. Members of Forum and those on the High Needs Working Group did support the consultation response that SCC submitted. The 8.08% is the predicated for 22-23 - we did get a higher percentage increase in 21-22. As part of the papers for this meeting we have shared a copy of the DSG recovery plan which Mike Quinton has updated into a new template version, the details have not changed but the template did, we will continue to share this with members on a termly basis. <u>Questions received from Forum members</u>: Significant increase in contingency and TPP - no increments in STPCD so why has this increased - not sure I understand your explanation, Gemma? *SCC pay for Teachers Pay and Pensions in our Specialist settings, previously it has been paid but from another budget, the budget has been moved into the Inclusion budget. TPP has increased, the contingency hasn't. 1.3m is TPP not contingency.* Have the local MPs got together yet to lobby the Minister? *A meeting took place last Friday with SCC Cabinet members and all Suffolk MPs at which these issues were explained and discussed.* Does this correlate with the current SEND provision across the county which I understand is not in a strong position? *We have had a recent SEND review which was undertaken by Lincolnshire County Council, we are therefore following recommendations, one of which is to work with a consultancy IMPower who are looking at the work we undertake with our providers, services*

Item No.	Item Description	
		we offer to the children and looking at an overall improvement to the SEND provision. This information has been published and can be found here: Independent SEND Review, September 2021 | Suffolk County Council. Cllr Rachel Hood wanted members to know that next Thursday, 9 December, there will be an Education Scrutiny Committee meeting at which the work being done in the last 6 months to address some of the issues will be discussed and explained at this meeting. A vote took place by all Forum members. **1. Do you agree the continued contribution of 0.5% of the Schools Block to the DSG High Needs Deficit.** After voting **11 forum members in favour, 0 members against** and **0 abstained.**
6.	Schools Block Funding Formula: 2022-23	**What is the Forum being asked to decide?** The paper provides an update to the National Funding Formula (NFF) for 2022-23. All factors used in 2023-23 will be the same as those used in 2021-22. There are no proposals for any changes and it is proposed that Forum agree that Suffolk continues to follow the NFF. Sonya Harban presented this paper as Mike Quinton is unwell. We will benefit in Suffolk from the changes to the sparsity funding not only the increase in sparsity that schools can attract but also because the DfE have recognised '*as the crow flies'* is not the best or fairest measure. There is a taper measurement in effect now, so the number of schools that would benefit from sparsity is projected to increase from 46 to 73 with an extra £900,000 will be coming into county because of change in measure methodology. Although we are getting more money, we are still low funded and we know Cllr Rachel Hood has raised this with our MPs and we continue to lobby for that. The APT which Mike has included in Annex A is still based on the October 2020 data because we don't have the

Item No.	Item Description	
		October 2021 data as yet, which generally comes in the day before Christmas Eve or Christmas Eve. A vote took place by Maintained and Academy Schools Forum member: **1. Do you agree to continue to follow the NFF (as previously agreed by forum) to determine schools' budgets in 2022-23?** After voting **11 forum members in favour, 0 members against** and **0 abstained.**
7.	Early Years Surplus Delegation	**What is the Forum being asked to decide?** To ensure parity with contributions from DSG blocks supporting the current High Needs deficit, move 0.5% of the Early Years total block surplus (£0.190m) to offset part of HNB deficit. To agree the proposed approach for distributing any further surplus in the Early Years Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Christina Lews, Head of Early Years and Childcare presented this item. At the previous Forum Christina was asked to put forward a proposal in consultation with the Early Years Providers Consultative Forum, to agree a mechanism how best we could distribute any surplus to providers. The consultative forum felt the best way to distribute any surplus was to do it on the summer term take-up figures, given this is the busiest term for early years settings and more providers would benefit from any surplus. When the paper was first drafted, we did not know how much the DfE would want to recoup but on 18 November we were given the figures. The proposal is that a contribution of 0.5% is made to the HNB. This would be appropriate as early years children do benefit from this block. We also suggest that we keep a small reserve as the take up figures in early years fluctuate and whilst we might have a surplus this year that may not be the same next year. The local authority recoupment for 2020-21 was

Item No.	Item Description	
		£765,000, £233,000 more than we had budgeted for, which therefore reduces the actual 2020-21 early years block surplus in the DSG reserves to £817,000. Of this we are suggesting that £184,000 be put towards the DSG deficit on high needs funding and that £132,000 is put into reserves and that £500,000 is distributed immediately to early years providers. <u>Questions raised by Forum members</u>: Does the surplus distribution include Nursery settings in Primary Schools? *Yes, it does.* The £132,000 is in reserve what happens if it doesn't get spent? *Then we will come back this time next year to give a revised figure of what surplus we have and how to distribute that.* A vote took place by all Forum members. **1. Do you agree the proposed approach for distributing any further surplus in the Early Years Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).** After voting **11 forum members in favour, 0 members against** and **0 abstained**. 2. **Do you agree from the Early Years surplus the distribution of £0.5m to Early Years Providers, and £0.19m as a contribution to offset the DSG HNB deficit?** After voting **11 forum members in favour, 0 members against** and **0 abstained**.
8.	Forward Agenda	<u>January</u> • Early Years Funding Rates 2022-23 • Schools Growth Policy • School Budget 2022-23 APT • Q3 DSG Forecast • Election of Chair and Vice-Chair of Schools Forum • Terms of Reference re: Terms of Office Arrangements

Item No.	Item Description	
8.	AOB	None.
10.	Date of the next meeting	The next meeting is confirmed as **Thursday 13 January 2022, 9.30am Microsoft Teams (and live streamed through YouTube).**
		Meeting closed at 10.25am.