

MINUTES

Title of Meeting:	School's Forum High Needs Working Group	
Purpose or Mandate:	To oversee the HNB of the DSG	
Date:	Thursday 5 November 2020	
Place:	Teams Meeting	
Times:	3:00 – 4:30	
Attendees:	Gemma Morgan (Chair) Allison Bowman Allison Coleman Graham Alcock Calvin Marshall Darron Jackson Ashlee Jacobs Jan Hatchell Lisa Jones Sophie Harbut Saffron Ransom Steve Newman Joy Settle Samantha Porter	Head of SEND Funding and Provider Services, SCC Governor, Earl Soham Primary School Governor, Federation of Fairfield and Colneis Schools Headteacher, Chalk Hill PRU Director of Inclusive Learning, West Suffolk College Headteacher, Gorseland Primary School Raedwald Trust Headteacher, Riverwalk School Consortium Multi-Academy Trust Apprentice Business Support Officer, SCC Apprentice Business Support Officer, SCC SEND Policy and Funding Manager, SCC High Needs Funding Moderation Lead, SCC Whitehouse

Item No	Item Description	Lead Officer
1.	Welcome and Introductions Apologies: Michael Quinton, Sam Porter, Sally Garrett	GM
2.	<p><u>Actions from the last meeting:</u></p> <p>The first action from the last meeting was for GM to share the Schools Forum paper which she did, and this will be discussed later in the meeting. The next item was the Policy Update which SN is continuing working on and he will provide an update later in the meeting. The following item was for MQ to work with PM's to increase funding for Suffolk which is an ongoing item which he will continue with. GM,SN and MQ have looked at how the COVID funding is being released and explained that there are 3 payments being made to all settings for each pupil. Schools should have already received a payment in October, and they are expected to receive the other two payments in the Spring and Autumn terms. All schools should have already received their first payment – JH confirmed that she had. They are expecting the first two payments to be</p>	GM

Item No	Item Description	Lead Officer
	smaller and the final payment to be larger. SN added that if anyone had any concerns, they could contact him.	
3	<p><u>Schools Forum Paper:</u></p> <p>GM explained that the Schools Forum paper is currently being finalised as there was some changes that needed to be made since the last meeting. It is currently being modified to go to DMT next week and we have been told that the ESFA will not accept a 7-year recovery plan. They haven't been explicit to writing to us about that however it will still be included in the paper. It's unlikely DMT or Schools Forum will agree to this. The paper will still reflect the 7-year option, but it is under strong belief that it won't be accepted. The new version of the paper is still on the same lines as before. It is split into 3 areas. The first being to agree length of time to clear the £13 million deficit. AB asked if they asked DFE directly and GM believes they did.</p> <p>The second is to agree where to identify the funding from – this will be either the Schools Block or a reduction in the High Needs top up values. Points from previous discussions are still in the paper and it will be up to Schools Forum to decide. GM explained that they need to build a buffer into the budget to allow for future demand as if they try to clear the deficit it will continue to grow. They also need to decide on how much funding will be taken from either option. The options for this are 0.3% or 0.5% from the Schools Block or to reduce High Needs top up values by 5% or 7.5%. GM has collated all of the data to see what this would leave for a buffer.</p> <p>JH raised that 7.5% is far higher than schools have. GM agreed and would need state agreement for this option. The recommendation is to take the money from the Schools Block as it affects all schools not just those in special education. GM hasn't currently got the final paper to share as it is still being finalised, but she will share it before Schools Forum.</p> <p>CM states that they cancelled the Schools Forum meeting in October as there wasn't a post 16 member on the panel. Since then, the principal at West Suffolk College has been elected and will join future meetings. GM asked for support from those who will be at the Schools Forum meeting as the deficit needs to be recovered and so she would appreciate support on the day. They want to recover over 5 years and take the money from the Schools Block as they believe it is the best option. They believe in inclusiveness and fairly recovering the funding.</p> <p>AC asked for a view of which routes the group think are best so that she can have their thoughts and opinions prior to the Schools Forum meeting.</p> <p>JH commented that the longer they have access, the better it is for all children so she believes it would be best to go for the 5-year option as the 7-year option is no longer available. GM added that the 3-year option is included for transparency but unlikely to be chosen.</p> <p>CM believes the best option is for the money to come out of the Schools Block. AB believes the 7-year option either shouldn't be in the paper or needs to give clear reasons in the paper to state why it isn't an option for them. GM explained that the rational is that they are expected to recover over 3-years and they're accepting 5-years as they understand that all Local Authorities are in a deficit and 7-years is pushing it.</p> <p>AB wonders why it was in paper at all. GM explained that she was being optimistic. AB states that it will cause lots of debate adding it to paper but not allowing it as an option. GM added that it is highly unlikely to be agreed in her paper. It wasn't until the paper was at DMT that they stated it was unlikely to be</p>	GM

Item No	Item Description	Lead Officer
	<p>agreed. GM can recommend that it is taken out before Schools Forum. SP stated that she understands how taking money from the Schools Block affects mainstream but asked how it affects those directly. GM explained that the Schools Block is where all funding comes for education and High Needs top up is for High Needs so would affect all children across Suffolk. DJ thanked GM for her hard work and understands why 7 years isn't possible. He asked if there's any other options, but GM explained that she hasn't been able to find any others.</p> <p>GM went into detail on how Suffolk is poorly funded even though it has similar demographics to other local authorities which are also in a deficit. This demonstrates that we are doing better than others with less money.</p> <p>DJ was interested to hear about what the council and politicians are doing to support the finances and GM said she will follow this up.</p> <p>JH had a discussion with other colleagues in other regions and can confirm we don't have the greatest deficit – Essex have a much larger deficit with greater funding and Norfolk is similar but get thousands per head more than us.</p> <p>AB said she will vote for the money to come off the Schools Block within the 5 years as that's what she believes is fairest for everyone. GM appreciated the support.</p> <p>AC found it helpful to know more opinions and explained that at Schools Forum they're not there representing their sector, they're there to support all children in Suffolk.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <p>GM to share the paper with the group before the Schools Forum meeting. GM to recommend to DMT that the 7-year option is taken out of the paper before Schools Forum. GM to follow up what the council and politicians are doing to support finances.</p>	
4.	<p><u>Update on Moderation Process:</u></p> <p>JS explained that the High Needs funding is currently being audited. Sarah Collins has joined JS and SN for several meetings to review all aspects of the moderation process. Up until last night they weren't sure if they would be able to go to Endeavour House for the moderation however this has now been confirmed. In the Endeavour House restaurant area, they have amended it to allow colleagues to safely work together at a distance and so they will be able to hold the moderation event. It is taking place on 12th, 13th, 16th and 17th November. They have found they are getting more accuracy with the spreadsheets and there are only around 5 settings that haven't sent in a spreadsheet. Schools are also getting more accurate with the bands, so this shows schools are improving. For special schools they are extending a virtual moderation and JS will be in touch with them after the moderation for the mainstream schools. They no longer include SSC's as these are new units and so they will need the moderation to go into an evidence situation. JS has been working with all new units to ensure all learners have a band to start with so there shouldn't be too much to moderate this term. There will be a virtual moderation for special and larger FE settings. JS has worked with people (mostly SENCOs) and everyone is set up and ready. JS has been working with IC on the SENCO forums which have given her a good opportunity to talk to people. There was one yesterday for new SENCOs and it gave JS an opportunity to talk to the new SENCOs, explain the High Needs process and offer support where needed.</p>	JS

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	Actions:	
5.	<u>Policy Update:</u> Actions:	SN
6.	<u>A.O.B</u> The next Schools Forum meetings are booked in for 7 January, 15 April and 22 June. Actions: SH and SR to book the next meetings to be roughly one month prior to the Schools Forum meeting.	ALL
	High Needs Working Group Future Meeting Dates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 10th Sept 2020 – Endeavour House ▪ 5th Nov 2020 - G01 Landmark House Venues to be confirmed pending lockdown arrangements.	Schools Forum Dates: Thurs 8 th Oct 2020 Thurs 26 th Nov 2020