

Minutes of the Suffolk Schools' Forum held at 1.30pm on Thursday 30 November 2023 via Microsoft Teams (and live streamed through YouTube)

Present:

Non-School Members	Colin Shaw, 16-19 Provider (<i>Sub: Kate Sida-Nicholls</i>) Amanda Havers, PVI Emma White, PVI Maria Kemble, RC Diocese (<i>Sub: Anne-Marie Price</i>)
Academy Members	Andrew Berry, Mainstream Daniel Jones, Mainstream Darren Woodward, Mainstream Gordon Jones, Mainstream Paul Fykin, Mainstream Wendy James Mainstream Steven Dewing, Mainstream Sue Prickett, Special Angela Ransby, AP Provision (<i>Sub: Ashlee Jacobs</i>)
Maintained School Members	Allison Coleman, Primary (Chair) Robert Lenko, Secondary Rowena Mackie, Secondary

Observers and Local Authority

Observers	There were observers present at the meeting
Local Authority	Rachel Hood El Mayhew Adrian Orr Sonya Harban Mike Quinton Gemma Morgan Julia Grainger Sally Swann Susan Groome Anneka Wright Teresa Spilling Jacqueline Dyer

Item No.	Item Description	
1.	Welcome –	The Chair welcomed members to this meeting.

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	Virtual Meeting Etiquette	This meeting is a public meeting being live streamed via YouTube.
2.	Apologies for absence	<p>Apologies for absence were received from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chris Chambers, Ros Somerville, Andrew Robinson, Ruth Coleman, Karen Pringle, Angelo Goduti, Cheryl Singleton and Emma Thake.
3.	Minutes of the previous meeting & issues arising	The minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 October 2023 were agreed as an accurate reflection of the meeting and signed off by the Chair.
4.	Approval of De-Delegated budgets 2024-25	<p>This paper was presented by Sonya Harban (SH), Strategic Finance Lead CYP. This paper is only relevant to those representing the maintained sector, as academies have their own arrangements within the trust of how they manage these services.</p> <p>De-delegating the recommended element of an individual school's budget to the local authority to provide the services as detailed in the report.</p> <p>Service Leads who provided details of how this funding is used are present in the meeting today, should you have any questions.</p> <p>Robert Lenko raised comment that this was a detailed and well written paper.</p> <p>A vote took place by maintained Primary and Secondary school members only, for the following de- delegated items:</p> <p><u>Specialist Education Services (SES)</u> <i>(previously reported against County Inclusion Support Service (CISS))</i></p> <p>1. Do you agree the de-delegation of funding back to the LA for SES?</p> <p>After voting 1 primary maintained school in favour, 0 members against to a per pupil amount of £12.18.</p> <p>After voting 2 secondary maintained school in favour, 0 members against to a per pupil amount of</p>

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		<p>£12.18.</p> <p><u>Support to underperforming ethnic groups and bilingual learners.</u></p> <p>2. Do you agree the de-delegation of funding back to the LA for Support to underperforming ethnic groups and bilingual learners?</p> <p>After voting 1 primary maintained school in favour, 0 members against to a per pupil amount of £1.91.</p> <p>After voting 2 secondary maintained school in favour, 0 members against to a per pupil amount of £1.91.</p> <p><u>Trade Unions</u></p> <p>3. Do you agree the de-delegation of funding back to the LA for Trade Unions?</p> <p>After voting 1 primary maintained school in favour, 0 members against to a per pupil amount of £1.50.</p> <p>After voting 2 secondary maintained school in favour, 0 members against pupil amount of £1.50.</p> <p><u>Local Authority School Improvement function statutory duties</u></p> <p>4. Do you agree the de-delegation of funding back to the LA for school improvement?</p> <p>After voting 1 primary maintained school in favour, 0 members against to a per pupil amount of £6.56 (lump sum £1,000).</p> <p>After voting 2 secondary maintained school in favour, 0 members against to a per pupil amount of £6.56 (lump sum £2,000).</p> <p>This concludes the voting for de-delegation.</p>
5.	Schools Block Funding Submission: 2024-25	<p>The paper was introduced by Mike Quinton, Senior Accountant, SCC CYP.</p> <p>This paper is based on the schools' block funding formula for 2024-25 including a brief update on</p>

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		<p>changes.</p> <p>Schools' Forum are being asked to agree to the national funding formula (NFF) for 2023-25. Suffolk has been following the NFF since 2018-19.</p> <p>Point 3 refers to local authorities looking to move their funding formula 10% closer to the governments NFF each year. Suffolk are not in this position due to the good planning of forum members, past and present.</p> <p>As you are already aware funding for Suffolk is low and we continue to lobby for more funding for schools, early years and high needs block. However, funding remains quite consistent year on year and following NFF has enabled that for our schools.</p> <p>The DfE publishes the draft DSG allocations each year in July, local authorities use that for planning for the next financial years budgets. Point 6 shows the explanation from DfE as to what happened with the initial allocations.</p> <p>Final allocations are published just before Christmas. Once received with the census information, the team will work on this to get the APT back to the DfE around 21 January. Primary and secondary members may wish to do some early planning by using the unit values in the schools' block proforma.</p> <p>Point 10 update shows that mainstream schools' additional grant has gone into the block funding formula this year, plus small increases around the other factors.</p> <p>There is a new formulaic approach to split sites which has been introduced by the DfE for 2024-25.</p> <p>Point 12 shows minimum per pupil funding levels for 2024/25. It has dropped for Suffolk over the last few years.</p> <p>A vote took place by all Forum Members:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you agree for Suffolk to continue to follow the NFF for next year's submission (as previously agreed by Schools' Forum) to determine schools' budgets in 2024-25?

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		<p>After voting 14 forum members in favour, 0 members against.</p> <p>With the final figures coming out close to Christmas/New Year, the Chair wished Mike and his team well to get the budget packs ready.</p>
6.	SEND Provision Update	<p>The paper was introduced by Gemma Morgan, Head of SEND Funding and Provider Services.</p> <p>The paper gives some background information as to where we are with budgets and what it looks like with trajectories. The first section of the paper looks at the trajectory work which was undertaken with our external strategic partner. This gives a picture of the funding gap, how the projections look on the demand and how many more places we are going to need over the next 5 years.</p> <p>Forum members are being asked to vote on the continuation of the 0.5% contribution to the High Needs Block Deficit Recovery from the Schools' Block.</p> <p>When the high needs model was set up, where a child has a band and they keep that band for life, and the band only changes if there may be a transition year or change in need. We expected the request for new bands to become less. However, as you can see from the data this is not the case. Autumn term data shows 1,126 requests for new bands and 436 requests for increases. Through the moderation process the number has gone down to 1,300 who have been moderated a 'yes/no' or 'evidence not provided'. Therefore, just over 1,000 new bands being requested for the Autumn term.</p> <p>Breakdown of spend expected this financial year, our budget from DfE is £88m and we are expected to spend £112m, giving us just over £24m deficit.</p> <p>Questions raised by Forum members:</p> <p><u>Robert Lenko (RL):</u> How is Suffolk doing compared with the rest of the country? <i>GM to check with the team regarding the data</i></p>

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		<p><i>dashboard and will send RL the information.</i></p> <p><u>Gordon Jones (GJ):</u> The Excel spreadsheet is signed off by the Director of Children's Services and signed off by the Section 151 Officer. Is the accumulated deficit kept separate and is not off set against the reserves? <i>GM: The high needs block deficit is not held against our reserves at the moment and that's the case until 2026, but we don't know if it will change in 2026.</i> <i>SH: We are constantly lobbying as Suffolk is significantly underfunded on the high needs block, although they are reducing the amount of money that is allocated via the historical element.</i></p> <p><u>Steven Dewing (SD):</u> What are we going to do because it feels like we're just going to watch it balloon to £112 million deficit? <i>GM: We have been working with central government around the deficits and what changes we can make and what we need to do to improve. We are at a point where we are exhausting every avenue and continuing to look at what else we can do to make an improvement on our spend and to reduce the future overspend. Ros Somerville is working closely with El Mayhew, Interim Director of Children and Families to look at what can be done to mitigate this situation.</i> <i>AC: The high needs working group was set up as a subgroup of Forum a few years ago due to the need of more detailed discussions outside of this meeting.</i></p> <p>Please see link to High Needs Working Group where you can find the minutes of previous meetings for your information: High Needs Funding – Suffolk Learning</p> <p>A vote took place by Forum Members:</p> <p>1. Do you agree to the continuation of the 0.5% contribution to the High Needs Block Deficit Recovery, from the Schools Block?</p> <p>After voting 12 forum members in favour, 1 member against.</p> <p><u>ACTION:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>GM to feedback to Forum at a later meeting on the Autumn Term data after the moderation process has taken place.</i>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following RL question GM to check with the team and send RL the information.
7.	AOB	None.
8.	Forward Agenda	<p>As per the forward plan, these meetings are focused meetings with standard agenda items. Forum members can suggest adding other items.</p> <p><u>Amanda Havers, Early Years, PVI, Rep:</u> Would it be possible for settings to be made aware of the proposed rates before January's Schools Forum? <i>AO: A good point to raise. Christina Lewis and I were working on a communication to go out to the sector this week. I know you will be attending Christina Lewis' Early Years Consultative Forum 13 December.</i></p>
9.	Date of the next meeting	The next meeting is confirmed as Thursday 18 January 2024, 9.30am Microsoft Teams (and live streamed through YouTube).
		Meeting closed at 10.20.