

Schools Forum Briefing

From the meeting held on 29th September 2023

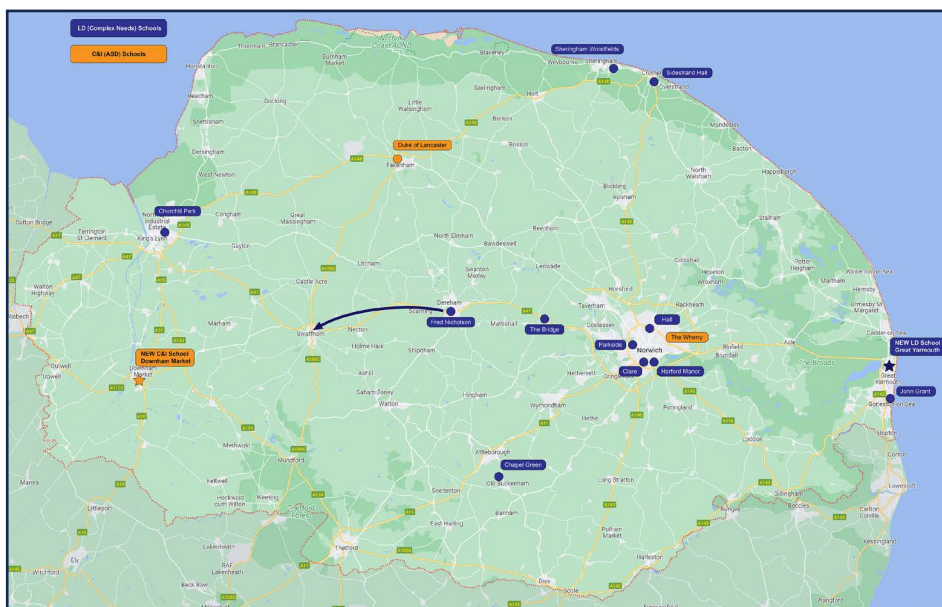
This Briefing provides a summary of key discussions and decisions taken by Forum at their most recent meeting. If you want to find more detail, the minutes and papers from all meetings are in the public domain and can be found on the Norfolk Schools website [here](#), along with contact details for Forum representatives.

Local First Inclusion

An update was provided, detailing the progress of the two new special schools to be built and the progress of the SLCN, S&I (ASD) and Early Support Learning Specialist Resource Bases.

Schools Forum asked how the School and Community Teams were being implemented, with a question around their Key Performance Indicators – it was reported that the KPIs aligned with those agreed for the Safety Valve program and that the teams were currently making direct contact with schools in their respective zones.

More information about Local First Inclusion can be found [here](#).



current and new special school sites

Early Years Pathfinder Project

Norfolk is one of 16 Local Authorities taking part in the Wraparound Childcare Pathfinder Scheme, supporting the DfE in the design and delivery of a programme to support all schools to deliver term-time childcare between 8am and 6pm. The programme makes funding available to support development of wraparound provision, with Norfolk's allocation being announced in October. It was reported that the majority of primary schools already offer some form of before/after school wraparound childcare.

Schools Forum asked what the provision would comprise; the programme is intended to provide high-quality play-work rather than teaching & learning or undirected time. The Forum also raised issues around transport and the provision of training to support implementation, particularly in rural areas; this will be fed back into the pathfinder programme.



Funding Consultations

A report was presented to Schools Forum on the Dedicated Schools Grant Consultation Proposals (which can be found [here](#)). There are two consultations currently in progress, one for Early Years and one for School Funding. Two sets of events have been arranged, in order to give schools and providers opportunities to discuss the proposals and understand their implications.

Schools Forum were keen to draw attention to the following points in the consultation:

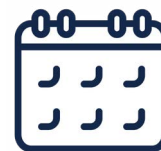
- The coming expansion of Early Years Funding will fundamentally change the total financial envelope for providers, with more funding available for younger children. Individual providers need to consider their business model going forward in line with the new opportunities open to them.
- The transfer from the schools block to the high needs block was part of the agreement secured between the DfE and NCC to receive £100M of additional funding through Local First Inclusion.

There is recognition from the DfE and Norfolk Children's Services that an ongoing 1.5% SB to HNB Transfer is required to support the overall financial plan. Equally, there is recognition that this can appear to be at odds with our request that mainstream schools are even more inclusive, acknowledging that moving funding in the short-term is challenging.

However, if a transfer does occur for all six years of the Local First Inclusion Programme the total transfer (£64m over 6 years) does result in a far greater re-investment for mainstream schools (£309m over 6 years)

There have been consultation events running over the previous two weeks, however given the recent update to the funding formula from the DfE, additional sessions have been scheduled (see above for dates and joining links).

Early Years Consultation Events:



Tuesday 17th October 9-5pm

The King's Centre, **Great Yarmouth**

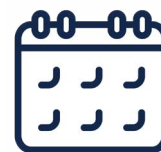
Thursday 19th October 9-5pm

North Walsham Community Centre

Friday 20th October 9-5pm

The Bell Hotel, **Thetford**

School Funding Consultation Events:



[Tuesday 17th October 1645-1745](#)

[Wednesday 18th October 1100-1200](#)

[Thursday 19th October 1500-1600](#)

All are online, via Teams. [Click the links above to join](#)

Notional SEN

An update concerning operational guidance from the DfE regarding the Notional SEN budget for mainstream schools for 2024-25 was presented to the Forum. There is a need to review whether the Notional Send budget for Norfolk should be brought into line with the national average, and if so, whether to do this over a three-year period.

Schools will be asked to vote on their preferred option, and this consultation will be opened alongside the above Fair Funding and Early Years funding consultations, with the results being provided to Norfolk County Council's Cabinet for a decision at the end of January.

Catering Group Contract Update

Schools Forum heard an update from the Schools Catering Commissioning Group, whose role is to assist with the review and potential procurement of a new Schools Catering Group Contract. The group comprises six school leaders alongside colleagues at NCC and has been meeting over the past three months to explore options and determine next steps.

There is still an appetite to go out for procurement, and the group are keen for non-maintained schools to be included in the future, but a further extension of current arrangements is likely to be necessary to ensure the best possible outcomes.

NCC will cover the costs of commissioning and procurement input up until March 2024, including engaging a consultant for expert input. Gaining commitment from schools will be crucial to securing the best deal. Communications will be go out to schools in the current contract to provide more information and ways to get involved as the process continues.

MyOracle: Teachers' Pensions

Schools Forum requested an update on the issue which resulted in school employees receiving an incorrect email from Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS), which caused some distress.

It was reported that the emails were generated as a result both of the ongoing MyOracle migration and a change in the way the the TPS required data to be presented for integration into their systems. NCC have been working with TPS to resolve this issue, and it is believed that all records should be complete by the end of October, with teachers being able to access this up-to-date information by mid-November.

It is asked that if any teachers were due to retire in the next 4-6 weeks, to communicate with NCC, who will ensure that these records are accurate and communicated with the TPS.

Risk Protection Arrangement / Local Authority Insurance Scheme

A report was presented to School Forum in reponse to a request from some schools to provide information as to how the current Local Authority Insurance Scheme compares to the DfE's Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA), since its refresh in March 2023.

In Norfolk, funds to pay for insurances are fully delegated to LA maintained schools and governors. To date 100% of LA maintained schools have bought back the NCC insurance via the NCC Insurance Team. The RPA, which is a pooled fund rather than an insurance product, which provides a flat rate cost regardless of risk. The RPA offer was extended to maintained schools by the DfE in 2020 and the cost is currently £23 per pupil.

Schools Forum asked for further information on the Cyber cover that the NCC insurance includes, which will be provided. They also recommended that NCC undertook market engagement ahead of contract renewals.