**Norfolk Schools Forum**

**Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 8 July 2020**

**09:00 – 12:00 hours**

**Teams Meeting**

**Present: Representing**

Keith Bates, Eaton Hall Specialist Academy Special School Academy

Carol Dallas, Taverham High School Academies

Alan Evans, Eastern MAT Academies

Mike Grimble, Avenue Junior School Primary Maintained Governors

Bob Groome JCC ( secondary phase)

Glyn Hambling, Unity Education Trust Alternative Provision

Clare Jones, Boudica Schools Trust Academies

Howard Nelson, Diocese of Norwich

Education Diocesan Board of Education

Peter Pazitka, SJB CMAT Academies

Joanne Philpott, City of Norwich School Academies

Sarah Shirras, (Chair) St Williams Primary Primary Maintained Schools

Joanna Tuttle, Aylsham High School Secondary Maintained Schools

Vicky Warnes JCC (primary phase)

Martin White, Nebula Federation Primary Maintained Governors

Steph Askew Head of Virtual School for SEND

Michael Bateman Programme Director SEND &

Alternative Provision

Martin Brock Accountant

John Crowley Assistant Director Learning and

Achievement

Sally Cutting Senior Accountant

Marilyn Edgeley Admin Officer

Alison Randall Head of Leadership and Governance Issues

Chris Snudden Assistant Director (Education)

Alison Toombs SEND Advisor

Caramia Muffett DfE (Observer)

**Apologies:**

Holly Bowman, Emneth Nursery School Maintained Nursery Schools Chris Caddamy, (Vice Chair) City College 16 – 19 Representative

Ian Clayton, Thorpe St Andrew School

and Sixth Form Academies

Dawn Filtness Finance Business Partner

Nicki Rider Senior Adviser – SEND & AP

Sara Tough Executive Director Childrens Services

Sarah Young, Sidestrand Hall School Maintained Special Schools

1. **Welcome and Apologies**

The chair welcomed everyone to this first Teams meeting of the School Forum.

Although the last meeting was cancelled there were no decisions that were required to be made and the Chair has had any national updates directly from the DfE.

The following apologies were received:

Chris Caddamy, Ian Clayton, Dawn Filtness, Nicki Rider

1. **Minutes of Last Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2020 were accepted as a true record.

1. **Matters Arising**

* Norfolk HNB contributions to CAMHS compared to other LAs

This will be covered in agenda item 7.

* Admissions Appeals

A meeting of a task and finish group to include School Forum members who volunteered to participate will be set up and the first meeting will be arranged very soon. Chris Caddamy will chair this group and Sebastian Gasse will be invited to join.

* Themed Audits

This paper is for information only and is circulated to all schools.

The paper covers:

Data Protection Regulation and Pre-employment Safe Recruitment Checks

It was noted that Norfolk Audit Services are given a topic to cover and then report back to specific experts for that subject. The audits are a compliance order and are wide ranging.

* Shared Savings

This paper is for information only and explains the use of funding.

Members highlighted that it covers a very small % of children.

1. **Changes and support for local authority schools for Covid-19 and impact on School Budgets**

Alison Randall reported that Finance Support has conducted business as usual with schools with all school visits taking place remotely. A positive outcome from this new way or working has been that more governors have been in attendance.

It was reported that all data on the system can be accessed and we can share schemes . As far as budgets are concerned there are no negative impacts to this way of working.

There are 12 schools working on staffing adjustments.

Schools that may have to furlough staff (from traded income) and staff having to work at home could be viewed as negative impacts. Also, some schools have experienced poor internet connection.

All systems have been updated and roll out of staff into cloud to make a stronger connection.

The following issues were reported by members:

* Loss of traded income
* Maintaining contracts
* Lack of information from Norse
* Swimming charges – poor communication

Alison Randall said that any questions for Norse should be emailed to her at

[alison.randall@educatorsolutions.org.uk](mailto:alison.randall@educatorsolutions.org.uk)

Members asked about the issue of exam board charges and whether this would be the full amount.

It was suggested that Jo Tuttle contact Jim at Educate Norfolk, the authority would be happy to be involved in the issue of exam board charges. It was reported that school heads are already working with unions on this and some schools have already received refunds.

1. **Pupil Variations**

Officers first brought this to School Forum at the meeting on 10 January 2020 with estimated adjustments, this is now the final pupil numbers and includes Wymondham Prep School which had been previously missed from the list. The paper and spreadsheet are for information only.

1. **DSG Outturn 2019/20**

This paper is for information only and is the final outturn and level of school balances.

The overall DSG overspend is £8.8m,there is a continuing pressure in the High Needs Block which has an overspend of £10.3m.

The underspend of £1.4m on the School Block is from historic rates adjustments.

The Central School Block has a £69,000 underspend and the Early Years Budget broke even. The paper gives a breakdown of the overall position.

It was noted that the level of school balances has reduced but there are fewer schools.

Members had concerns that overspend on the High Needs Block was higher than the original forecast and asked if forecasts could be more accurate in future.

Michael Bateman will address this issue as part of the High Needs Focus update on the agenda.

Officers reported that Sports Premium and Pupil Premium are ring fenced grants and that the analysis of balances form has been revised. There is also no RAG rating for this term but this will be revised.

The chair thanked Alison Randall for the revising of the balances forms and said they were much easier.

1. **High Needs Block Focus – verbal update by Michael Bateman**

**Norfolk HNB Contributions to CAMHS compared to other LA’s**

Of our 10 regional LA's 6 responded to our request:

* 3 do fund
* 3 do not
* assume the nil return of 4 colleagues also do not fund

Of the 3 that do fund:

- £Suffolk 170k - primary mental health workers within schools

- £Essex 170k - CAMHS workers within each PRU

- Luton £no details - 4 x CMAHS workers across schools

The Authority does contribute to reviews of how this money is spent but schools are not directly involved.

£250,000 was agreed to be match funded by CCG and this goes into a central pot for mental health and we have been able to create a governance around this and schools need to work closely with this team of people.

Chris Snudden said that Rebecca Hulme Associated Director of Health and Children’s Services leads on mental health and would be happy to attend a future meeting of the Schools Forum and provide an overview.

It was confirmed that the authority funds PATHS and reviewing the way the service is organised.

Another piece of work will include a wrap around model to bring together Early Years, Schools, Colleges Representatives and will not be just for mental health but also for Tier 2 youngsters that the authority is worried about because of their vulnerability.

Sarah Shirras said that she has joined the board of an overarching Alliance Group that has directed a lot of the changes around CAMHS.

**Action**

**Sarah Shirras will report back from the Alliance group at the next meeting.**

**Chris Snudden to bring update of wrap around service to next meeting.**

**Michael Bateman to bring report on DfE Recovery Plan meeting to next meeting of the Schools Forum.**

The Authority does not have full details so far of the effects of Covid-19 on capital builds. But the broad view is that mitigations can be put in place to make any impact minimal.

**Accurate Forecasting**

Michael Bateman said unlike schools’ budget which are mostly staffing and therefore more stable the High Needs Block is different. However, it is only a few lines within this budget which have large fluctuations. In his view this is due to the fact that the LA is required to make provision for a child when notified. He said he realises the Authority needs to find ways to make the forecasting more accurate.

Members suggested that post covid-19 there needs to be a risk assessment in these areas and look at previous patterns to see possible scenarios.

Members said that inaccurate forecasting resulted in an issue of confidence.

Chris Snudden said she would share more high level modelling with Schools Forum in the future.

**Element 3 Funding Update – Steph Askew**

Virtual School Send are responsible for facilitating the Element 3 Funding we have an advisory group who help to guide us. All settings previously moderated have continued to receive this funding in the same way providing their children are still on roll with them. We have also conducted 55 new moderations. All these settings should have received feedback. We anticipate that in the autumn term all children on roll will continue to receive funding. We rely on settings to notify us when children leave or join their school roll. We have also been involved in providing some need descriptors for education – the content has been agreed and we are now at the project stage. We will be communicating with schools about these documents and will bring them to the Finance Consultative Group.

**Exceptional Circumstances – Alison Toombs**

Children coming into school in September with an Education Health Care Plan which suggests their circumstances are exceptional – we have been accepting requests for this funding prior to those children going on roll. Moderators are looking at these cases individually.

Needs Descriptors/Self Evaluation - these have moved into the project stage and we hope that they are going to be web forms.

1. **Scheme for Financing Schools**

The scheme sets out the relationship between the Authority and local authority maintained schools. This document, which is published each year on the website, requires annual updates to keep it in line with government and local authority guidance.

We are required to inform Schools Forum of any statutory changes made by the government and get Forum’s approval for any local changes.

There are no directed revisions however there are some changes to wording and these need updating for 2020/21. These changes are for information only and are noted in the paper.

The most significant change is the deletion of former cluster balances.

We ask Forum to note the information provided and approve the minor amendments.

**School Forum approved the changes.**

1. **Early Years**

Schools Forum were given a PowerPoint presentation by John Crowley for this item.

Points highlighted during the presentation:

The Authority is looking at the Early Years Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and undertaking a deep and thorough review of current formula and the new formula for next year, resulting in a consultation for next year’s funding.

In line with guidance we retain 5% of 3 & 4 year old funding but we do not retain any of the 2 year old DSG.

The formula was last reviewed with the introduction of the National Funding formula and the introduction of the 30 hours funding.

This was very difficult to predict and resulted in significant underspends in 2017/18 and 2018/19.

The Authority will fully engage with the sector in this review.

Step1 & 2

Engage widely with system – set up engagement sessions and gain feedback on the formula.

Internal review of methodology and external review of other authorities to check that our methodology is correct. Sally Cutting confirmed work has started on this.

Step 3

Feed into a Schools Forum review group to review formula and make recommendation for supplements to go out to consultation and Cabinet in January.

Chris Snudden welcomed Lacey Douglass to Forum as the new Early Years representative and said the authority recognises the challenges settings are facing.

Lacey reported that the support given by the authority during the Covid-19 crisis was beyond what settings had expected and is noted on the Norfolk Providers Facebook page.

Lacey Douglass agreed there would be significant challenges in the autumn and was pleased there would be a sustainability pot.

Lacey is employed by the Heather Nursery and runs the Norfolk Providers Facebook page. She highlighted the issue about settings not accepting children wanting to attend two settings.

Sally Cutting in answer to a member’s question confirmed that the Authority would work closely with the School Forum group during this review.

Past papers have included impacts on different types of settings and papers could include a table showing this information. Members also asked to see how the work of the review will influence the contexts and challenges shown in the presentation.

John Crowley said the funding needs to meet the sufficiency for Norfolk.

1. **Date of next meeting**

Members should get in touch if they have any questions prior to the next meeting on

30 September 2020 – 09:00am to 11.30am