

Norfolk Schools Forum

Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 17th October 2018

09:00 - 12:00 hours

South Green Park Mattishall

Present:

Mark Adamson
Keith Bates, Eaton Hall Specialist Academy
Chris Caddamy, City College
Carol Dallas, Taverham High School
Sandra Govender
Mike Grimble, Avenue Junior School
Bob Groome
David Hicks
Fiona-Louise Tilden

Fyfe Johnston, Clare School
Sarah Porter

Carole Jaques
Gavin King
Sarah Shirras, (Chair) St Williams Primary
Joanna Tuttle
Vicky Warnes
Martin White
Michael Bateman
Jane Blackwell
Martin Brock
Paul Cook
Sally Cutting
Marilyn Edgeley
Chris Snudden
Services

Apologies:

Alan Evans
John Banbury
Holly Bowman
Alison Clarke
Howard Nelson
Clare Jones
Christina Kenna

Representing

Academies
Special School Academy
16 – 19 Representative
Secondary Academies
Engage Trust
Primary Governors
JCC (Secondary phase)
EMAT (substitute for Christina Kenna)
Academy Representative (substitute for Alan Evans)
Special Schools
Academy Representative (substitute for Christina Kenna)
Substitute for Holly Bowman
Academy Substitute for Clare Jones
Primary Schools
Maintained Secondary
JCC (primary phase)
Primary Governors
Head of Education High Needs

Accountant
Interim Finance Business Partner
Senior Accountant
Admin Officer
Assistant Director (Education)

1. Welcome

2. School Forum Membership

Welcome to Martin White as a primary maintained representative.

In the recent elections for a primary governor the only nomination was Mike Grimble who was duly elected. Martin White subsequently learned of the election and expressed an interest in serving on the Schools Forum and therefore has filled the second vacancy.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

Accepted - no corrections.

4. Matters Arising

Fair Funding % has been used in consultation papers
Additional Growth information – will be discussed as part of the agenda

5. De-delegation

Schools Forum are asked on an annual basis to vote by primary and secondary sector on de-delegation of the services below:

Staff Costs

Members asked that as the budget was 86% underspent why they were being asked to contribute the same amount as last year.

This is to mitigate the risk, the underspend goes to the DSG (Dedicated Schools Grant).

The process goes through Human Resources and schools are made aware of this process in their budget information.

Action S. Cutting to check process and information going out to schools.

Decision

The primary sector was unanimously in favour of this service being de-delegated.

The secondary sector was against this service being de-delegated.

Licences

Subscriptions paid centrally by the Local Authority. This includes the Norfolk Governor Network Annual Grant (NGN), and the Consortium of Local Education Authorities for the Provision of Science Services (CLEAPSS). The reduction to the Basic Per-Pupil Entitlement value would be £0.70 per pupil.

Total budget £26,923 (£24,916 primary and £2,007 secondary).

Decision

Licences/Subscriptions for the Primary sector should be de-delegated

Unanimously agreed

Licences/Subscriptions for the Secondary sector should be de-delegated

Unanimously agreed

Action

Further information on CLEAPSS for next meeting

Contingencies

In 2018/19 no contingency budget was de-delegated, there have been no academy deficits costs charged so far in 2018/19. This would be the fund to go to if a deficit cost occurred otherwise costs would fall to the authority and this could result in a slow down of academisation. Any underspend would go to whole of DSG.

Primary sector members highlighted that they would not get back any underspends.

De-delegation of a £100k contingency budget for 2019/20 to be used to meet costs of sponsored academy deficits upon conversion.

Decision (primary sector only)

For 2

Against 1

Abstentions 0

Free School Meals

The reduction to FSM deprivation funding would be £5.63 per eligible pupil to provide a central service checking FSM eligibility data.

Decision

Free School Meals eligibility for the Primary sector should be de-delegated

Unanimously agreed

Free School Meals eligibility for the secondary sector should be de-delegated

Unanimously agreed

Growth

The growth fund sits within the School Block and Schools Forum are required to vote on the criteria and amount. It was proposed to maintain the current level of £950k and to use the same criteria for allocation in 2019/20.

Closing Schools

An additional growth fund to address pupil increases resulting from the early movement of pupils from closing schools was discussed, and it was proposed to retain £15k for this purpose, and to add an additional criterion for allocation of this.

Significant Growth Fund

A paper was presented to Schools Forum in September, suggesting that a significant growth fund, for pupil number increases in-year exceeding the greater of 15% of NOR or 10 pupils.

Further information was requested and is included in the de-delegation paper.

The recommendation is to not include growth fund for 2019/20 as all schools checked against the suggested criteria failed the test for an allocation due to growth popularity.

Decision 5a There should be a £950,000 centrally retained fund for pre-16 growth, with the same criteria to be used as in previous years for allocation of that funding.

Unanimously agreed

Decision 5b There should be £15,000 centrally retained fund to support growth in schools resulting from the early movement of pupils following school closures.

For 13

Abstentions 1

Central Services School Block/Education Services Grant

These are a set of statutory duties and Schools Forum are required to vote on the retention of the funding by the Local Authority to carry out these duties.

Decision 6a – Agree the central retained items

Unanimously agreed

Decision 6b – Agree the Historic Commitments

Unanimously agreed

Decision 6c – Agree the Education Services Grant retained element

Unanimously agreed

5. Forum Guidance and Terms of Reference

In September the DfE released updated Schools Forum Guidance and two paragraphs have additional wording.

- It is suggested that good practice for school forums would be to offer training to new and existing members.
- Timing of meetings should take note of local authority deadlines.

It is proposed to amend the Norfolk Constitution and Terms of Reference and these changes are highlighted in red. With regards to substitutes for meetings members must identify a substantive substitute that is deployed by the relevant organisation when the member cannot attend.

It was suggested that individual organisations could vote in substitutes.

Action: S.Shirras/C.Dallas to raise at next CEO meeting.

It was suggested that dates and times of meetings should be varied, and this will be given consideration at the time when meetings are agreed.

Information – Schools Forum noted the DfE's updated Schools Forum guidance, the changes to wording are highlighted in this paper.

Decision – Schools Forum agreed the change to Norfolk School Forum's Terms of Reference.

5. DSG and High Needs Block update

Chris Snudden circulated slide handouts to update members on this item. Children's Services are requesting capital and revenue borrowing in the region of £120m for a new specialist provision programme. A report will go to the Policy and Resources Committee on 29 October. The authority is presently paying up to £85,000 for each child in non-maintained provision.

We want to:

- Invest more in SRBs
- Create up to 4 more special schools

If the current cohort of children in independent places were moved to state funded the annual revenue saving would be £5.796m.

These proposals are dependent on a sign off by the Policy and Resources Committee at the end of this month.

Given the significant pressure on the high needs block the Local Authority will apply to the Secretary of State to move an additional £4.580m from the schools block to the high needs block in 2019/20. The capital investment will significantly reduce down revenue spending.

Comments

Driving down demand and changing the culture, is there more specific details to this how will be achieved.

- The council is looking at engaging external capacity for bringing sectors together
- Area SEND Board which includes parent voice and we need to communicate through these organisations
- Important for people to attend Educate Norfolk secondary Meeting

Important not to enshrine children in EHCPs

- The LA agrees this is very important.

Capital works – in the past SRB's have closed due to a school becoming an academy

- The authority is aware of this, and new SRBs will be protected.

The SEND transformation will need to change the culture and drive down demand for assessment/diagnosis enabling schools to meet needs earlier.

7. Fair Funding Consultation/National Funding Formula

In September forum were given the proposals - this paper summarises the responses from the consultation and gives the final proposal.

The Chair congratulated Martin and Sally on a very well-run consultation.

77 people responded to the consultation 23 of which attended the workshops.

School Forum had already agreed the 0.5% movement of funding from the Schools block to the High Needs block in September and the consultation included this information.

Through the Survey and School Forum Working Group the authority's preferred choice is option is 1A to move towards the National Funding Formula.

Option 1A

NFF with movement of £6.94m (0.5% plus extra £4.58m) to the High Needs Block. This is the Local Authority's and Schools Forum's NFF Working group preferred option.

The main reservation from schools was the government's 'moving' timetable, with no clear date of a full NFF implementation.

We also consulted on movement of extra funding of £4.58m in addition to the 0.5% to the High Needs block. It was made clear during the consultation that the authority would need to submit a disapplication to support this to the Secretary of State.

This would be an annual application.

In January a report will go to the Children's Services Committee proposing that Norfolk implements the unit values and methodologies of the National Funding Formula for 2019/20.

Schools Forum are asked to:

- Consider and comment on the proposed changes to the distribution formula of the Schools Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant.
- Consider and comment on the movement of funding to the High Needs Block, above the 0.5% already agreed at September's Forum meeting.

Comments

- Concerns over the future of the School Forum being here to oversee the recovery plan.
- Schools will have to make cutbacks
- Can't support money coming out of schools
- This is the right proposal – looking at the bigger picture
- Agree with LA strategy but concerns on how it is delivered
- Cluster funding did not meet need in the past

Does School Forum support the authority's preference of option 1A

For 7

Against 4

Abstain 2

Action –

Circulate decision from secretary of State

Include outcomes for schools in results of consultation going out to schools

8. Central Licencing Scheme

This includes all licences top-sliced by the DfE for state funded maintained schools. The DfE website has been updated to make process clearer and is summarised in the paper.

There is a check permission tool – links in paper.
It was suggested an MI Sheet is circulated to schools.

9. Any Other Business

None

10. Dates of Meetings

Friday 11th January 2019 – 9am-12pm – South Green Park Mattishall

DRAFT