



Rutland County Council

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Minutes of the **MEETING of the SCHOOLS' FORUM** held in the Zoom on Thursday, 11th February, 2021 at 4.00 pm

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Dawn Godfrey, the Deputy Director of Childrens Services, and Andrew Merry, the Finance Manager.

2 MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting which took place on 10 December 2020 were confirmed.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations received.

4 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

There were no petitions, deputations or questions received.

5 FUNDING UPDATE

The Forum received a report from Andrew Merry, Finance Manager (RCC) providing Members with an update on funding. The report updated the Forum on the provisional outturn for the Schools Budget for 2021/21. He was unable to attend the meeting but any questions, if could not be answered immediately, would be fed back to him and written responses provided.

There were no specific questions although it was recognised that there was a high deficit for High Needs of £978,000 which needed addressing. Other blocks were looking stable.

RESOLVED that

- 1. The Dedicated Schools Grant report outlining the forecast outturn position for 2020/21 be noted. The budget for 2021/22 be noted.**
- 2. That the budget for 2021/22 be noted; and**
- 3. The Early Years Funding rates be noted as follows:**
 - £4.25 for 3 and 4 year olds (£4.25 2020/21)**
 - £5.36 for 2 year olds (£5.20 2020/21)**

6 SEND RECOVERY PLAN

A report on the SEND Recovery Plan initiatives and pilot projects designed to reduce the pressure on the DSG High Needs Block was received from Sharon Milner, Academies, and Louise Crookenden-Johnsons, SEND Capital Programme Manager.

The report outlined the amounts allocated for the four work streams and the expenditure which had already been committed for the year. The Covid-19 pandemic had impacted the project progress, especially the Education Inclusion Partnership and Therapeutic Provisions, and it was anticipated that following the pandemic the demand for these would further increase.

The next steps for the Recovery Plan were to continue to implement each project and monitor success, measuring outcomes for children and gathering feedback from schools with a view to determining the way forward.

Questions were asked around the Recovery Programme and it was noted that members would receive a more detailed report with data at the next meeting in June. Members were reminded that it was a five year plan and circumstances over the previous year had made things more difficult at this stage.

RESOLVED:

That the project progress to date be noted.

7 SCHOOL CAPACITY (SCAP)

The Forum received a verbal update from Gill Curtis, the Head of Service for Learning and Skills (RCC) on School Capacity (SCAP)

The Forum was advised that since the last meeting, there was not a significant amount that had changed to update upon. The first round of Secondary School admission preferences to year 7 had been completed. There had been oversubscriptions to both Casterton and Catmose. Oakham had three places remaining.

Primary places had closed and the indication was that there were enough places. It was looking positive at this stage.

During discussion it was raised whether there was an impact of the Local Plan and, in the background, St Georges Barracks for this. The Forum was advised that there was no timetable for St Georges and discussions and the timescale was ongoing.

8 EARLY YEARS/DSP INCLUSION PATHWAY REVIEW

The Forum received a report from Pat Bullen and Jane Friswell from the SEND Consultancy on the Early Years/DSP Inclusion Pathway Review and the background to the project.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- A working group was developing the SLAs (service level agreements) for the DSPs or enhanced resource provisions and would be making reference to the secondary DSPs for consistency. They should be completed in draft for the new

financial year and potentially agreed through due process, for September 2021 implementation.

- Options for the Parks School, which would capitalise on the staff skills, parental confidence, but also enable wider models of support for early years pathways; also developing a model which could be consistently reviewed and updated. This agreement could be in place for September 2021 but could take longer, given the range of options presented to the school, requiring consultation.
- The project team were currently working with the school and RCC to articulate some workable models of provision through an options appraisal activity where value for money indicators would feature as one element of many for the Local Authority and the school to consider. This work had just begun and, if appropriate, there would be an opportunity for the schools working party to report further.
- School Improvement for SEND/Inclusion practice report with schools by March 2021

The Consultancy Team thanked schools for their time working with them to help inform the review. During February/March the information would be used to corroborate the effective practice that had been established. The team would then make recommendations for further SEND/Inclusion school improvements, with schools being placed to take forward developments in summer or autumn 2021, according to their operating conditions at the time.

RESOLVED:

That the report from the SEND Consultancy, detailing the progress made, be noted.

9 FORWARD PLAN FOR 2021

The Forward Plan for 2021 was noted.

A request was made for more detail on the funding arrangements of the recovery plan and this would be covered in June.

Councillor Wilbury, Portfolio Holder for Children's Services and Education, gave his thanks to everyone for their work over the pandemic to continue making progress.

10 ANY URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

11 MEETING DATES

The next meeting date of the Schools Forum would take place in June 2021. The date would be confirmed at Rutland County Council's Annual Council Meeting.

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The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 4.55 pm.

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