



Rutland County Council

Catmose Oakham Rutland LE15 6HP

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Minutes of the **MEETING of the SCHOOLS' FORUM** held in via Zoom on Thursday, 17th June, 2021 at 4.00 pm

PRESENT:		Representing
1.	Mr C Smith (Chair)	Academies
2.	Mr S Cox (Deputy Chair)	Special Schools
3.	Mrs A Chambers	Academies
4.	Mrs M Darlington	PVI
5.	Mr B Gale	Trade Unions
6.	Mrs J Gilboy	Academies (Governors)
7.	Mr R Gooding	Academies
8.	Mrs S Milner	Academies
9.	Mr R Shore	Post 16 Provision
10.	Mr G Thompson	Dioceses
11.	Mrs F Wilce	Maintained Schools
12.	Mr S Williams	Academies

IN ATTENDANCE:		Representing
13.	Cllr D Wilby	Portfolio Holder for Children's Services and Education
14.	Cllr P Ainsley	Chair of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

DEPUTIES:		Representing
15.	Mrs D Chipman	PVI

OFFICERS:		TITLE:
16.	Ms D Godfrey	Interim Director – Children's Services, RCC
17.	Ms G Curtis	Head of School Improvement, RCC
18.	Ms B Caffrey	Head of Early Help, SEND and Inclusion
19.	Mr A Merry	Finance Manager, RCC
20.	Ms L Crookenden Johnson	SEND Capital Programme Manager

1 MINUTES AND ACTIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Schools' Forum held on the 11th February 2021 were confirmed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

There were no actions from the previous meeting.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

3 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

None received

4 FUNDING UPDATE

A report was received from Mr Andrew Merry. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- i. The High Needs budget showed an overspend of £118k for the year 2020/21. This resulted in a total deficit on the DSG reserve for high needs of £576k.
- ii. Great concern was expressed regarding the SEND funding as it was not even covering the Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) costs let alone supporting other children with SEND issues.
- iii. Nominal TA hours would also need discussing as the current rate was not assisting schools. Options needed to be discussed that that may even save money by not using TA's.
- iv. It was agreed that a separate working group would need to be established to discuss the SEND funding and Early Years funding in greater detail.
- v. It was agreed that the working group would need representatives from RCC including Mr A Merry, Ms B Caffrey and Ms L Crookenden Johnson
- vi. It was agreed that Mr R Gooding and Mrs S Milner would determine what was needed from the Local Authority to aid future discussions regarding funding and arrange a meeting of the working group before the summer break or in early September.

ACTION: Mr R Gooding and Mrs S Milner

- vii. Mr Merry stated that money from the central block funding could not be transferred to the high needs funding but that he would double-check the regulations to confirm.
- viii. Mr Merry also confirmed that he would investigate the regulations regarding the early years funding to see if money could be transferred to support the high needs funding.

ACTION: Mr A Merry

AGREED:

- a. The Schools' Forum noted the outturn position for 2019/20 Dedicated Schools Grant
- b. The Schools' Forum noted the forecast position for 2021/22

5 DSG RECOVERY PLAN: UPDATE & SEND: EXTENSION OF CONTRACT

A report was received from Ms Louise Crookenden Johnson that covered agenda items 5 and 6. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- i. The Department for Education (DfE) no longer required formal submission of a recovery plan where the overall deficit exceeded 1%.
- ii. The local authority must:
 - a. Provide information as and when requested by the DfE about its plans for managing its DSG in the 2021/22 financial year.

- b. Provide information as and when requested by the DfE about pressures and potential savings on its high needs budget.
 - c. Meet with officials from the DfE as and when requested to discuss the local plans and financial situation.
 - d. Keep the Schools' Forum regularly updated about the DSG account and plans for handling it, including high needs pressures and potential saving.
- iii. Mr Stuart Williams reported to the group that the work and support provided by the Education Inclusion Partnership (EIP) Co-ordinator, Caroline Crisi was excellent and that her time had been extended to 3 days per week from April 2021.
- iv. The Primary EIP panel had accepted 80 cases since instigation (80 referrals / 69 open / 11 closed for moving out of County or progressing to an EHCP).
- v. The feedback from schools was that the Social Emotional and/or Mental Health (SEMH) teachers had proved to be a great investment in helping underpin inclusionary practice across the Primary network.
- vi. The Secondary phase of the EIP plans were being piloted, the focus for each school had been agreed with the Secondary inclusion leaders and the Coordinator had a plan of action for the forthcoming year.
- vii. It was proposed that a larger portion of the SEND recovery fund be used to support the CIP Coordinator's ongoing work.
- viii. Mr Merry confirmed that the funding rate for the payment of EHCPs was decided/confirmed by the Schools' Forum.
- ix. Mr Williams informed attendees that the recovery plan was not a short-term, quick fix solution. It would be a long-term plan and that progress had been lost due to the pandemic and resulting lockdown.

AGREED:

That the Schools' Forum:

- a. Noted the Recovery Plan priorities set out and the proposed budget for the coming year 2021-2022 and noted and acted on the associated Recovery Plan Risks and Issues Log in Appendix A
- b. Noted the extended Education Inclusion Panel coordination role (and when approved by RCC Cabinet) the plan to move to a direct award of contract.
- c. Noted the shortfall in SEND Secondary education places in forthcoming years and supported and directed the proposed actions to remedy the situation.

6 SCHOOL CAPACITY (SCAP) AND PUPIL PLACE PLANNING

An update was received from Gill Curtis. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- i. Secondary School Admissions – Sept 2021
 - All Rutland resident children have been offered a place at a preferred school
 - At the time of the meeting, all 3 Rutland secondary schools were oversubscribed:
 - Casterton College Rutland – 70 on waiting list / 18 appeals scheduled to be heard on 16 June
 - Catmose College – 18 on waiting list
 - Uppingham Community College – last 2 students on waiting list offered a place

- ii. Primary School Admissions – Sept 2021
- All Rutland resident children have been offered a place at a preferred school
 - The following primary schools are oversubscribed:
 - Catmose Primary School – 8 on waiting list
 - Empingham CE – full but no waiting list
 - Great Casterton CE – 9 on waiting list
 - Leighfield PS, Uppingham – 1 on waiting list
 - Ryhall CE – 9 on waiting list
- iii. In-Year Admissions
- Continued pressure in Year 9 with all 3 secondary schools full

Secondary school admissions – normal round

	September 2021	September 2020	September 2019
Total Rutland resident applications received and processed	377	347	371
Total Rutland resident applications submitted online	356 (94%)	319 (92%)	337 (91%)
1 st preference offers to Rutland residents	349 (93%)	319 (92%)	335 (90%)
2 nd preference offers to Rutland residents	16 (4%)	10 (3%)	16 (4%)
3 rd preference offers to Rutland residents	2 (0.5%)	3 (1%)	1 (0.5%)
No preference met – no alternative offered	10 (2.5%)	15 (4%)	19 (5.5%)
Rutland residents offered one of their preferred schools	367 (97%)	332 (96%)	352 (94.8%)

Primary school admissions – normal round

	September 2021	September 2020	September 2019
Total Rutland resident applications received and processed	344	345	359
Total Rutland resident applications submitted online	333 (96.8%)	314 (91%)	332 (92.5%)
1 st preference offers to Rutland residents	332 (96.5%)	338 (98.0%)	342 (95.3%)
2 nd preference offers to Rutland residents	10 (2.9%)	3 (0.9%)	16 (4.4%)
3 rd preference offers to Rutland residents	1 (0.3%)	1 (0.2%)	0 (0%)
No preference met – no alternative offered	1 (0.3%)	3 (0.9%)	1 (0.3%)
Rutland residents offered one of their preferred schools	343 (99.7%)	342 (99.1%)	358 (99.7%)

7 EARLY YEARS UPDATE

A report was received from Mrs Mary Darlington. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- i. Mrs Darlington confirmed that the Schools' Forum Early Years Working Party had been disbanded following completion of its objectives.
- ii. It was suggested that a new Schools' Forum Early Years Working Group be established with the following objectives:
 - a. To consider and assess how best to resolve the issue of the overspend within the Early Years block reported in the Schools Budget 2016/17 Outturn paper.
 - b. To ensure hourly rates going forward remained affordable with the Early Years block
 - c. To ensure settings remained sustainable and childcare sufficiency was maintained
- iii. The items of funding and SEND funding would be discussed at the first meeting of the new working party group.
- iv. Mr Merry reported that the first meeting would not have an RCC finance representative attending due to a prior engagement, but it was planned that a representative would attend future meetings.
- v. The new working group would report back to the Schools' Forum as the previous working party had.
- vi. Mrs Darlington confirmed that she would attend the Schools Forum meeting in September before retiring.

8 ANY URGENT BUSINESS

- i. Mr R Shore officially tendered his resignation from the RCC Schools' Forum as he would be retiring at the end of July.

9 FORWARD PLAN FOR 2021/22

- i. The forward plan was discussed. No changes were requested.

10 MEETING DATES

- Thursday, 16th September 2021, 4.00 – 5.00 p.m.
- Thursday, 9th December 2021, 4.00 – 5.00 p.m.
- Thursday, 3rd March 2022, 4.00 – 5.00 p.m.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

No.	Ref.	Action	Person
1.	4	Mr R Gooding and Mrs S Milner to determine what was needed from the Local Authority to aid future discussions regarding funding and arrange a meeting of the working group before the summer break or in early September.	Mr R Gooding and Mrs S Milner

2.	4	<p>Mr Merry stated but that he would double-check the regulations to confirm that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. money from the central block funding could not be transferred to the high needs funding b. money could be transferred from the early years funding to support the high needs funding. 	Mr A Merry
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The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 5.11 pm.

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