



# Rutland County Council

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Minutes of the **MEETING of the SCHOOLS' FORUM** held via Zoom on Thursday, 8th December, 2022 at 4.00 pm

<b>PRESENT:</b>		<b>Representing</b>
1.	Mr B Solly (CHAIR)	Academies
2.	Mr A Menzies	Dioceses
3.	Mrs F Wilce	Maintained Schools
4.	Mrs J Ward	Private, Voluntary & Independent (PVI) Early Years
5.	Mrs S Milner	Academies

<b>IN ATTENDANCE:</b>		<b>Representing</b>
6.	Councillor D Wilby	Portfolio Holder for Education and Children's Services

<b>OFFICERS:</b>		<b>TITLE:</b>
7.	Dawn Godfrey	Strategic Director of Children and Families (DCS), RCC
8.	Gill Curtis	Head of Learning and Skills, RCC
9.	Bernadette Caffrey	Head of Early Help, SEND and Inclusion, RCC
10.	Andrew Merry	Finance Manager, RCC
11.	Jane Narey (CLERK)	Scrutiny Officer

<b>APOLOGIES:</b>		
12.	Mrs A Chambers	Academies
13.	Mr G Morphus	Trade Unions
14.	Mrs K Pullan	Private, Voluntary & Independent (PVI) Early Years
15.	Mr P French	Dioceses
16.	Mr S Cox (VICE CHAIR)	Special Schools
17.	Mr S Williams	Academies

<b>ABSENT:</b>		
18.	Mr C Smith	Academies
19.	Louise Crookenden-Johnson	SEND Capital Programme Manager, RCC

## 1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Alison Chambers, Stuart Williams, Kathryn Pullan, Peter French, Steve Cox, Gary Morphus.

Jo Ward attended the meeting as Kathryn Pullan's representative and Andreas Menzies attended the meeting as Peter French's representative.

## **2 MINUTES AND ACTIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2022 were approved as an accurate record. There were no agreed actions from the previous meeting.

## **3 FINANCE UPDATE**

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

- No changes to funding had been received since the last meeting in September but an update was expected in July 2023.
- The main pressure for the 2022/23 budget continued to be in the High Needs Block with a £1.5 million deficit.
- The SEND Recovery Plan was helping to contain the pressures on the budget but was not reducing the deficit.
- Funding received for the Early Years Block did not match the current spending on 2, 3 and 4 year olds. The January census would determine the Council's funding for Early Years and this would have an impact on the over/underspend in the current budget.
- Funding for the High Needs Block was expected to increase by 6.2% for the 2023/2024 budget.
- Details regarding the funding for the Early Years Block have not yet been published. A small increase in funding was expected but it is not expected to be in line with inflation.
- It was confirmed that the 0.5% transfer of the Schools Fund to the High Needs Block for 2022/23, which had previously been approved by the Schools' Forum, had been transferred.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Schools' Forum:

- a) **AGREED** to continue to transfer the 0.5% to the High Needs Block schools
- b) **NOTED** the contents of the report.

## **4 SEND RECOVERY PLAN**

A report was received from Louise Crookenden-Johnson, SEND Capital Programme Manager and a verbal update was received from Bernadette Caffrey, Head of Early Help, SEND and Inclusion. During the discussion, the following points were received:

- Demand for the SEND and Inclusion Services continued to grow.
- The Inclusion Service had seen increased demand to support children with emotional and social needs and anxiety about attending school.
- Collaboration meetings continued with parents and positive feedback had been received about the new provision at UCC and the new banding matrix.
- The national green paper was still being considered and feedback on the national consultation was expected during the spring of 2023.

- The [Ofsted Area SEND: framework and handbook](#) was published on the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2022. New items included a focus on individual children's experiences and their outcomes as well as a greater focus on SEN support and alternative provision.
- The Local Authority last had an Ofsted SEND inspection in 2017 so they could be inspected again in 2023.
- The DfE 'Delivering Better Value' Programme would begin in January 2023. RCC Officers across SEND, Finance and Business Intelligence had just completed a major data exercise which looked at individual children's plans and provisions going back to 2017, as preparation for this Programme. An update on this Programme would be available to the next Schools Forum meeting.
- The SEND Programme Board would be sending a paper to Cabinet in March 2023 regarding the options available in spending the remaining SEND capital budget from the 2022/23 budget.
- Work on the Early Years Pathway continues with conversations with parents, partners and the community. The next meeting with the Parks and OCE schools' leadership would be on the 12<sup>th</sup> January 2023 to further progress the action plan.

## 5 EHCP BANDING

### A. PARENTAL FEEDBACK

- Two pieces of parental feedback had been received following the discussion regarding EHCP banding at the last Schools' Forum meeting.
- The first was a letter from a parent sent to the Schools' Forum and members have seen this letter and the subsequent response.
- It was confirmed that the new EHCP banding model would not replace the SEND funding or reduce it.
- Members were informed that the Parent Carer Voice and the wider collaborative group had been briefed regarding the EHCP banding and that they had stated that they would be really interested in talking about the provision with the Schools' Forum. It was agreed that Ben Solly and Sharon Milner would attend the next meeting of the collaborative group (17<sup>th</sup> January 2023, 10.00 – 2.00, Wisteria Hotel, Oakham) to brief them on the graduated response and the EHCP banding.
- The second was a direct enquiry via email from a parent to the Chair. He confirmed that he had met with the parent who stated that comments from the Schools' Forum in meetings referred to parents of SEND children rather generically and not always positively. The parent felt that members of the Schools' Forum did not empathise with the challenges faced by the parents and families of SEND children.
- The Chair reminded members that meetings of the Schools' Forum were held in public and asked them to be mindful when referring to the parents, families and staff supporting SEND children.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Schools Forum:

- a) **AGREED** that Ben Solly and Sharon Milner would attend the meeting of the Collaboration Group on Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> January 2023, 10.00 – 2.00 at the Wisteria Hotel, Oakham to brief them on the graduated response and the EHCP banding.

## 6 EARLY YEARS WORKING GROUP

A verbal update was received from Mrs J Ward, representative of the Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) Early Years. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- The Early Years Working Party met on the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022.
- A big discussion was held on how Early Years providers could survive in the current business climate and budget restrictions.
- Nurseries had stated that they were not full to capacity regarding the number of children but were full to capacity with regards to staffing. Recruitment continued to be an issue locally and nationally.
- Work was being done on an Early Years career presentation which would be showed to Rutland secondary schools to promote working within the sector.
- Members were informed that the Head of Learning and Skills and the Early Education and Childcare Lead had met with the Early Years DfE representative and they had requested that he should attend a meeting of the Early Years Working Group.
- It was noted that Edith Weston Academy promoted grandparents coming into the school to support the pupils once training (provided by the school) had been successfully undertaken but it was agreed that this would not be suitable in an early years' environment as specialist training was required.

### RESOLVED

That the Schools Forum:

- a) **AGREED** that the Early Years DfE representative should attend a meeting of the Early Years Working Group – date to be confirmed.

## 7 PUPIL PLACE PLANNING

A verbal update was received from Gill Curtis, Head of Learning and Skills. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- The Annual SCAP Return was being compiled for discussion at the next Schools' Forum meeting.
- The admission process for 2023 had already started.
- A meeting with the DfE admissions and pupil place planning representatives would be held in January 2023 to look at Rutland's in-year admission pressures.
- A discussion would also be held with Lincolnshire County Council to review issues and create possible solutions.
- It was noted that the data received from the Admissions Officer regarding the Ukrainian children within Rutland had been excellent and very informative.

## 8 FORWARD PLAN FOR 2022/23

The Forward Plan was discussed and amended accordingly. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- It was agreed that feedback from the Chair and Sharon Milner, following their meeting with the collaborative group regarding SEND, would be added to the next agenda.

## 9 ANY URGENT BUSINESS

- There would be an item regarding scarlet fever in the Education Bulletin.
- Councillor Wilby and the Chair thanked everyone for their hard work and support and wished everyone a Happy Christmas.

## 10 MEETING DATES

Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023, 4.00 - 5.30 p.m. 4.40 p.m.

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**The Chair declared the meeting closed at 4.40 pm.**

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### SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

No.	Ref.	Action	Person
1.	5	That Ben Solly and Sharon Milner would attend the meeting of the Collaboration Group on Tuesday, 17th January 2023, 10.00 – 2.00 at the Wisteria Hotel, Oakham to brief them on the graduated response and the EHCP banding	<b>Ben Solly and Sharon Milner</b>
2.	6	That the Early Years DfE representative should attend a meeting of the Early Years Working Group – date to be confirmed.	<b>Gill Curtis and Jo Ward</b>