



# Rutland County Council

Catmose Oakham Rutland LE15 6HP

Telephone 01572 722577

Email: [democraticservices@rutland.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@rutland.gov.uk)

Minutes of the **MEETING of the SCHOOLS' FORUM** held via Zoom on Thursday, 5th October, 2023 at 4.00 pm

<b>PRESENT:</b>		<b>Representing</b>
1.	Ben Solly (CHAIR)	Academies
2.	Craig Charteris	Academies
3.	Fiona Wilce	Maintained Schools
4.	Jo Ward	Private, Voluntary & Independent (PVI) Early Years
5.	Oliver Teasel	Post 16 Provision
6.	Peter French	Dioceses
7.	Stuart Williams	Academies
8.	VACANT	Academies (Governors)

<b>IN ATTENDANCE:</b>		<b>Representing</b>
9.	Councillor Tim Smith	Portfolio Holder for Children's Services

<b>OFFICERS:</b>		<b>Title</b>
10.	Dawn Godfrey	Strategic Director of Children and Families (DCS), RCC
11.	Gill Curtis	Head of Learning and Skills, RCC
12.	Bernadette Caffrey	Head of Early Help, SEND and Inclusion, RCC
13.	Jane Narey (CLERK)	Scrutiny Officer

<b>APOLOGIES:</b>		
14.	Steve Cox (VICE CHAIR)	Special Schools
15.	Carl Smith	Academies
16.	Gary Morphus	Trade Unions
17.	Andrew Merry	Finance Manager, RCC
18.	Helen Chester	SEND Capital Programme Manager, RCC

<b>ABSENT:</b>		
19.	Alison Chambers	Academies

## **1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting especially the new members: Mr Oliver Teasel, Head of Harington School who was attending as the Post 16 Provision representative, Mr Craig Charteris, CEO of the Brooke Hill Academy Trust who was

attending as one of the Academies representatives and Councillor Tim Smith, who was the new Portfolio Holder for Children's Services.

The Chair informed members that this was Jo Ward's last meeting and thanked her for all her hard work and support.

Apologies had been received from Steve Cox, Carl Smith, Gary Morphus, Andrew Merry and Helen Chester.

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

The minutes of the meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

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Mr Craig Charteris joined the meeting at 4.04 p.m.

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### **Actions from the Previous Meeting**

#### Action 1

*The Clerk to investigate if the meeting of the Parent Carer Voice Collaborative Group had been held in June and which members of school staff had attended.*

The Clerk informed attendees that the Early Help Coordinator had confirmed that a meeting of the Parent Collaborative Group had been held on the 6th June 2023 at the Wisteria Hotel in Oakham but that no representatives from Rutland schools had been present.

#### Action 2

*Sharon Milner to arrange a meeting of the Rutland headteachers cohort for them to provide feedback regarding the multi-agency guidance.*

No update had been received and Sharon Milner had left the Schools' Forum in July so the action was cancelled.

#### Action 3

*Kathryn Pullan to notify the Clerk of her replacement as the Private, Voluntary & Independent (PVI) Early Years representative.*

The Clerk confirmed that Early Years providers had been contacted requesting nominations for Schools' Forum representatives. The closing date was Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and an update would be provided at the next meeting.

#### Action 4

*The Clerk to write to all schools requesting nominations for representatives for Academies and Academies (governors).*

The Clerk confirmed the action had been completed and Mr Craig Charteris was the new Academies representative.

## **3 ANNUAL ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

- The Clerk informed attendees that one nomination (Ben Solly) had been received for the role of Chair for the academic year 2023-2024 and that two nominations (Steve Cox and Carl Smith) had been received for the role of Vice Chair.

- A subsequent election was held by members and Steve Cox had received the most votes.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Schools' Forum:

- a) **AGREED** that Ben Solly and Steve Cox would be the Chair and Vice Chair respectively of the Schools' Forum for the academic year 2023-2024.
- b) **AGREED** that the two headteachers (Ben Solly and Steve Cox) could hold the positions of Chair and Vice Chair respectively of the Schools' Forum for the academic year 2023-2024.

## **4 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION AND RULES OF CONDUCT**

- The revised constitution had been presented for consultation at the meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2023.
- No comments or suggested amendments had been received from members.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Schools' Forum:

- a) **APPROVED** the Schools' Forum Constitution for the academic year 2023-2024.

## **5 FINANCE UPDATE**

### **A. SCHOOLS' BUDGET 2024-2025**

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

- The Finance Member had sent his apologies for the meeting but asked that any queries were sent to the Clerk for the Finance Manager to respond to.

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Fiona Wilce joined the meeting at 4.16 p.m.

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- Members stated that a Local Authority Finance Officer must be in attendance at all Schools' Forum meetings to answer their financial queries. The Strategic Director of Children and Families confirmed that she would raise the matter with the Strategic Director of Resources.

**ACTION: Dawn Godfrey**

### **RESOLVED**

That the Schools' Forum:

- a) **NOTED** the content of the report.
- b) **AGREED** to continue to transfer the 0.5% to the High Needs Block schools but that a full discussion and a detailed report on the DSG was to be provided by the LA.

## B. FUNDING FOR TRADE UNION FACILITIES TIME

A letter was received from the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) and the National Education Union (NEU) regarding the de-delegation of funding for trade union facilities time. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- The Clerk informed members that the Trade Unions' representative had sent his apologies for the meeting.
- The Schools' Forum was being asked to vote for de-delegation of funding arrangements for supply cover costs.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Schools' Forum:

- a) **AGREED** that a full discussion and a financial decision regarding the delegation of funding for trade union facilities time could not be made without the Trade Union representative and Local Authority's Finance Manager in attendance at the meeting.

## 6 **SEND IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

A verbal update was received from Bernadette Caffrey, Head of Early Help, SEND and Inclusion. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- The SEND Improvement Plan was now changing into the Delivering Better Value (DBV) Improvement Programme
- Rutland was part of Phase 2 of the national DBV Improvement Programme, which would run for the next 18 months to 2 years.
- The aim of the programme was to support local authorities in managing the deficit in their High Needs Block funding.
- Diagnostic exercises had been completed to fully understand the pathways within the SEND service.
- Key workstreams were emerging including:
  - improving strategic data and reporting,
  - accelerating confidence within the county's mainstream education placements for children with EHCP's,
  - building additional resources within the School Support Partnership to avoid specialist placements and
  - improving community/parental support.
- A detailed 'Implementation Plan' had been submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) and Rutland County Council (RCC) had been allocated a grant of £1m to deliver the DBV programme – see attached presentation.
- RCC had remaining capital grant of £1.3m to extend and enhance SEND provision in Rutland.
- The next step would be to request 'expressions of interest' from schools for the key projects with the aim to allocate funding from December 2023 onwards.

- The Head of Early Help, SEND and Inclusion thanked school colleagues for all their hard work and support with the recent area SEND inspection and acknowledged the positive inspection outcome for Rutland.
- The Schools' Forum stated that the transfer of 0.5% from the schools' block to the high needs block began as a temporary measure and requested that a written report should be provided for any future discussion/decision regarding the budget deficit.
- Members agreed that the early investment in children via therapeutic work has been revelatory in Rutland as had the work of the School Support Partnership.
- The Strategic Director of Children and Families proposed a presentation to Schools' Forum members regarding the Delivering Better Value programme and the National Change Programme to give full details regarding SEND and the High Needs Budget deficit.

**ACTION: Dawn Godfrey**

## **RESOLVED**

That the Schools' Forum:

- a) **AGREED** that the Strategic Director of Children and Families would arrange for a presentation to be given regarding the Delivering Better Value programme and the National Change Programme to give full details regarding SEND and the High Needs Budget deficit.

### **A. NURTURE HUB AND PRACTICE: UPDATE**

A report was received from Mrs Penny Rawlings, Head of School at Edith Weston Academy. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- Craig Charteris declared a pecuniary interest as CEO of the Brooke Hill Academy Trust of which Edith Weston Academy was a member.
- As per the Constitution, he was not allowed to vote but this resulted in the meeting of the Schools' Forum not being quorate so a decision could not be taken.
- It was agreed that an extraordinary meeting of the Schools' Forum would be arranged towards the end of November/beginning of December.

**ACTION: Ben Solly/Jane Narey**

## **RESOLVED**

That the Schools' Forum:

- a) **AGREED** that the decision would be deferred to an extraordinary meeting of the Schools' Forum - date and time to be confirmed.

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Stuart Williams and Oliver Teasel left the meeting at 4.56 p.m.

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### **B. SEND PARENT COLLABORATIVE GROUP: UPDATE**

A report was received from Lesley Hawkes, Early Help Coordinator at Rutland County Council. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- Members were asked if anybody would like to join the existing daytime working groups as follows:
  - 1) Understanding Special School Places
  - 2) Ordinarily Available Provision - school staff skills, support and resources
  - 3) Ensuring good Early Years provision for all children (EY rep identified)
  - 4) Aiming High Criteria
- It was noted that the Early Help Service was particularly wanting involvement by school colleagues in the second group – Ordinarily Available Provision.
- It was agreed that the Clerk would email the details from the Early Help Coordinator to all Schools' Forum members for named representatives.

**ACTION: Jane Narey**

## **RESOLVED**

That the Schools' Forum:

- a) **AGREED** to review the details and submit to the Clerk the names of the identified representatives to join the existing daytime working groups in particular the Ordinarily Available Provision.

## **C. AUTISM EDUCATION TRUST**

A verbal briefing was received from the Chair. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- The Autism Education Trust was a national organisation.
- The training license for Rutland was held by Uppingham Community College and Oakham CofE Primary School.
- The schools had jointly trained 425 delegates through the Autism Education Trust's programme.
- The Chair proposed that the cost of the training licence should be phased into the DBV programme.
- The Head of Early Help, SEND and Inclusion confirmed that she would investigate if this was possible and would feedback to the Chair.

**ACTION: Bernadette Caffrey**

## **7 EARLY YEARS WORKING GROUP**

A verbal update was received from Mrs Jo Ward. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- Financial funding audits had been undertaken at some nursery and pre-school settings which had raised some concerns regarding the attendance of external auditors and the duplication of paperwork.
- The Head of Learning and Skills confirmed that the financial funding audit was a check of the Local Authority's processes for funding and was not about nursery or pre-school settings. Information had been sent to settings in advance of the actual audit but the email had come from Peterborough City Council (PCC) as RCC's audit officers were based at PCC and this may have caused some confusion.

- Confirmation of the funding rates for the 2-year-olds was urgently needed by early years' providers so that financial planning post April 2024 could be made.
- Problems regarding staff recruitment continued but this was a national issue and not just specific to Rutland.
- Staff had voiced their disappointment following a recent Ofsted inspection of a Rutland childminding agency which had resulted in an 'inadequate' finding.

## 8 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 School Capacity survey (SCAP) was currently awaiting approval from the Department for Education (DfE).
- The Head of Learning and Skills had recently met with the DfE Pupil Place Planning Advisor, Admissions Advisor and the Regional Advisor for Schools and had continued to highlight the pressures on Rutland secondary schools.

## 9 WORK PLAN 2023-2024

The work plan was reviewed. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- The Head of Learning and Skills confirmed that the annual review of school membership should be reviewed in May and not February.
- Members were requested to send any proposals for agenda items to the Clerk via Democratic Services ([democraticservices@rutland.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@rutland.gov.uk)).

## 10 ANY URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

## 11 MEETING DATES

- An extraordinary meeting would be arranged for late November/early December - date/time to be confirmed.
- The next ordinary meeting of the Schools' Forum would be held on Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024 at 4 p.m.

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**The Chair declared the meeting closed at 5.16 pm.**

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## SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

No.	Ref.	Action	Person
1	5	Members stated that a Local Authority Finance Officer must be in attendance at all Schools' Forum meetings to answer their financial queries. The Strategic Director of Children and Families confirmed that she would raise the matter with the Strategic Director of Resources.	<b>Dawn Godfrey</b>

<b>2</b>	6	The Strategic Director of Children and Families would arrange for a presentation to be given regarding the Delivering Better Value programme and the National Change Programme to give full details regarding SEND and the High Needs Budget deficit.	<b>Dawn Godfrey</b>
<b>3</b>	6 A	It was agreed that an extraordinary meeting of the Schools' Forum would be arranged towards the end of November/beginning of December.	<b>Ben Solly / Jane Narey</b>
<b>4</b>	6B	It was agreed that the Clerk would email the details from the Early Help Coordinator to all Schools' Forum members for named representatives.	<b>Jane Narey</b>
<b>5</b>	6C	The Chair proposed that the cost of the training licence for the Autism Education Trust should be phased into the DBV programme. The Head of Early Help, SEND and Inclusion confirmed that she would investigate if this was possible and would feedback to the Chair.	<b>Bernadette Caffrey</b>