



# Rutland County Council

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Minutes of the **EXTRAORDINARY MEETING** of the **SCHOOLS' FORUM** held via Zoom on Thursday, 30th November, 2023 at 4.00 pm

<b>PRESENT:</b>		<b>Representing</b>
1.	Ben Solly (CHAIR)	Academies
2.	Steve Cox (VICE CHAIR)	Special Schools
3.	Craig Charteris	Academies
4.	Gary Morphus	Trade Unions
5.	Lucy Lewin	Private, Voluntary & Independent (PVI) Early Years
6.	Oliver Teasel	Post 16 Provision
7.	Stuart Williams	Academies

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

<b>OFFICERS:</b>		<b>Title</b>
9.	Dawn Godfrey	Strategic Director of Children and Families (DCS), RCC
10.	Kirsty Nutton	Strategic Director of Resources and S151 Officer, RCC
11.	Gill Curtis	Head of Learning and Skills, RCC
12.	Bernadette Caffrey	Head of Early Help, SEND and Inclusion, RCC
13.	Andrew Merry	Head of Finance, RCC
14.	Kulwinder Bola	SEND Improvement Programme Manager, RCC
15.	Jane Narey (CLERK)	Scrutiny Officer, RCC

<b>APOLOGIES:</b>		
16.	Peter French	Dioceses

<b>ABSENT:</b>		
17.	Carl Smith	Academies
18.	Fiona Wilce	Maintained Schools

## 1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Peter French. The Clerk informed attendees that, since the last meeting and following the recent nomination process, Lucy Lewin had joined the Schools' Forum as the new PVI Early Years representative but that Alison Chambers had resigned. Letters requesting member nominations had been sent to Leighfield Primary Academy and Ryhall CofE Primary Academy as they were part of the Discovery Schools Academy Trust and the

Peterborough Diocese Academy Trust respectively and were currently not represented at the Schools' Forum. The closing date for nominations had been the 17<sup>th</sup> November but no nominations had been received.

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Oliver Teasel joined the meeting at 4.05 p.m.

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

The minutes of the meeting held on the 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

### Action 1

*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.*

The Strategic Director of Children and Families confirmed that the action had been completed.

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Gary Morphus joined the meeting at 4.07 p.m.

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### Action 2

*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.*

The Strategic Director of Children and Families confirmed that the action had been completed as a presentation was scheduled for the next meeting.

### Action 3

*It was agreed that an extraordinary meeting of the Schools' Forum would be arranged towards the end of November/beginning of December.*

Action completed.

### Action 4

*It was agreed that the Clerk would email the details from the Early Help Coordinator to all Schools' Forum members for named representatives.*

Action completed.

### Action 5

*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.*

Bernadette Caffrey, the Head of Early Help, SEND and Inclusion informed attendees that the cost of the AET licence, circa £5k, was not included in the DBV programme proposal and grant application, but that investigations were still ongoing regarding possible options that could tie into the Area SENCO roles.

## **3 THE DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (DSG) AND THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) RECOVERY PLAN**

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

- Total budget for the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Recovery projects was £364k and this included the 0.5% (approx. £150k) transferred to the High Needs Block.
- The Schools Support Partnership (SSP) was effectively reducing the number of SSP referrals in the primary provision.
- Termly meetings were being held to establish the SSP model for secondary schools.
- The High Needs Block continued to be the main financial pressure area, with a current deficit of £545k.
- The demand for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) had increased and continued to grow significantly.
- The creation of a Finance Working Group would give the Schools' Forum better oversight of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) so allowing schools to have a greater impact on changing policy at an early stage.

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Kulwinder Bola joined the meeting at 4.16 p.m.

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- It was agreed that Andrew would send Jane wording regarding the Finance Working Group for an email to be sent to all schools on behalf of the Chair requesting volunteers to be members of the Finance Working Group.

**ACTION: Andrew Merry, Jane Narey, Ben Solly**

#### **RESOLVED**

That the Schools' Forum:

- a) **AGREED** to the setting up a Finance Working Group as a sub-group of the Schools' Forum.
- b) **NOTED** the contents of the report.

#### **4 FUNDING FOR TRADE UNION FACILITIES TIME**

- The Clerk informed attendees that the Schools' Forum had received a letter from the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) and the National Education Union (NEU).
- The letter requested that the Schools' Forum approved the de-delegation of funding for trade union facilities time and established a mechanism for Rutland academies to buy into a central fund for trade union facilities time.
- Members could not identify any benefit of having a centrally held fund and noted that it would only entail taking more money out of schools.

#### **RESOLVED**

That the Schools' Forum:

- a) **REJECTED** the de-delegation of funding for trade union facilities time.
- b) **REJECTED** the establishment of a mechanism for academies to buy into a central fund for trade union facilities time.

#### **5 NURTURE HUB AND PRACTICE: UPDATE**

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

- Craig Charteris declared a conflict of interest as Edith Weston Academy was a member of the Brooke Hill Academy Trust of which he as CEO. The Chair noted that he would be exempt from the vote.
- The school had received a grant of £26k capital investment through the DfE Special Provision Capital Allocation, to modify a classroom and create a purpose built outside area to enable children to be effectively supported throughout their school day.
- The school received a yearly revenue budget from the SEND Recovery Plan but additional funding was needed so that more practitioners with Nurture expertise could be provided, which would give the school increased capacity and resources.
- Two Rutland primary schools currently had nurture spaces and the SSP would be inviting all schools to take part in [The National Nurturing Schools Programme](#).

## RESOLVED

That the Schools' Forum:

- a) **NOTED** the updated information on nurturing performance and practice change across the schools.
- b) **APPROVED** an increase in funding to £190k for Edith Weston as the lead school to accelerate and further develop Rutland schools' practice.

## 6 WORK PLAN 2023-2024

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

- The Area SEND Inspection Report would not be discussed at the meeting being held on the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024.

## 7 ANY URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

## 8 MEETING DATES

Thursday, 1 February 2024, 4.00 – 5.30 p.m. via Zoom.

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**The Chair declared the meeting closed at 4.45 pm.**

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## SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

No.	Ref.	Action	Person
1	3	Andrew to send Jane wording regarding the Finance Working Group for an email to be sent to all schools on behalf of the Chair requesting volunteers to be members of the Finance Working Group.	<b>Andrew Merry, Jane Narey, Ben Solly</b>