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Rutland County Council

Catmose Oakham Rutland LE15 6HP

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Minutes of the **MEETING of the SCHOOLS' FORUM** held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HP on Thursday, 22nd September, 2016 at 4.00 pm

PRESENT:

Mrs J Turner (Chair)

Mr B Gale

Mrs S Milner

Mrs M Darlington

Mr S Williams

Ms S Hearth

Mr J Woodhead

Mr S Cox

Mr C Smith

APOLOGIES:

Mr R Shore

Dr T O'Neill

OFFICERS PRESENT:

Mr M Fowler

Ms D Greaves

Mr L Dabin-Williams

Mrs H Fardell (Clerk)

Head of Service Learning & Skills

Services for People
Accountant

Services for People
Accountant

Corporate Support

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr D Wilby

Portfolio Holder for Lifelong Learning

1 MINUTES AND ACTIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Schools' Forum held on 9 June 2016, copies of which had been previously circulated, were confirmed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Item 6 – Mr Fowler advised the Forum that the Council had successfully recruited to the SEN Officer post and Claire McArthur would be taking up this appointment from 3 October 2016.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

3 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

No petitions, deputations or questions were received from members of the public.

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Mrs S Milner joined the meeting at 4.10pm

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4 FUNDING UPDATE

Schools' Forum **NOTED** the content of the Schools Budget 2016/17 Update & Appendix 1 Forecast outturn 2016/17 paper.

5 HIGH NEEDS BUDGET 2016-2017

Mr Fowler advised Schools' Forum that it is likely there will be a SEND inspection in the near future. An internal review of SEND services has been started to identify strengths, weaknesses and initiate strategic planning for the future. An Inclusion Working Group has been established which includes a number of Head Teachers and this Group has already started to meet.

Ms Greaves presented the paper High Needs Funding, which details how the budget is set and that for 2016/17 there is a forecast overspend of £114.1k. Schools' Forum were advised that the Council no longer retains a contingency fund from DSG to cover any overspend. Schools' Forum were asked to consider the options for funding the overspend given in the paper.

During discussion the following was noted:

- It is very early in the academic year and the forecasted overspend may not materialise or be as great as currently anticipated.
- What is best for the individual student must be of paramount importance.
- Parental choice of an in or out of county placement has an impact on costs.
- Whilst numbers of students with additional needs fluctuates each year, schools have to retain experienced staff.
- Unlike previously, it will not be possible to move funds from Schools or Early Years Blocks to cover High Needs expenditure.
- The Council should consider collaboration with neighbouring authorities to deliver services.

Schools' Forum **AGREED** any overspend would be recouped from the 2017/18 schools block allocation as per the agreed funding formula. Ms Greaves advised that it would be possible to advise each school in January/February 2017 of the anticipated amount they would be liable for.

6 GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS AND CONSULTATION ON EARLY YEARS FUNDING 2017-18

Mr Fowler presented the paper Changes to Funding Formula for 2017/18. Schools' Forum **NOTED** the contents and discussed. The following points were made:

- Rutland will be disadvantaged if the Early Years National Funding Formula as currently being consulted on goes ahead. Closing dates for responses to the consultation is 22 September 2016.
- Mrs Darlington advised the Forum that she had spoken with several nursery care providers recently and it was felt that this will negatively impact most nurseries. The minimum wage and introduction of changes to pensions in the future are also a concern.
- Free child care provision is due to rise from 15 hours per week per child to 30 hours.

- Nursery providers may struggle to recruit and retain suitably qualified staff if salaries are restricted.
- The Local Authority has a duty to ensure there are sufficient childcare places but this will be increasingly difficult if private nursery providers withdraw.
- Currently, Rutland has a good reputation for its provision of early years care. There is good capacity generally, places are accessible, but there is an awareness of pressure points such as holiday childcare.

7 COLLABORATIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT BUDGET UPDATE

Mr Fowler advised the Forum that all schools have been graded red, amber or green in terms of requiring improvement. Currently, arrangements are in place for two schools graded red (requiring substantial improvement) that is drawing on the £50k previously set aside for this purpose.

8 ANY URGENT BUSINESS

None received.

9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, 12 January 2017 at 4.00 pm at RCC, in the Council Chamber.

The following additional meeting dates were agreed for 2017:

Thursday 30 March 2017

Thursday 8 June 2017

Thursday 21 September 2017

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The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 5.10 pm.

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