

# MINUTES OF MEETING

**Meeting title:** Nottinghamshire Early Years and Schools Forum  
**Date and time:** 14<sup>th</sup> November 2024, 2pm to 4pm  
**Location:** Microsoft Teams – Online

## Membership

*'A' denotes absence*

	Andrew Rossington	Maintained Primary Head Teacher
	Steve Border	Maintained Primary Head Teacher
	Helen Roberts	Maintained Primary Head Teacher – (Vice Chair)
	David Phillips	Maintained Secondary Head Teacher
	Anne Hall	Academy Representative
	Neil Holmes	Academy Representative
	James Macdonald	Academy Representative - (Chair)
A	Neil Robinson	Academy Representative
	Daniel Moore	Academy Representative
	Ella Tuxford	Academy Representative
	Katie Thackery	Academy Representative
	Matt Rooney	Maintained Special School Head Teacher
	Jamie Hutchinson	Academy Special School Head Teacher
	Colin Barnard	Governor Maintained School Representative
A	Andy Palmer	Governor Maintained School Representative
	Amanda Harrison	Governor Academy School Representative
	Laura Gapski	PVI - Early Years Group Member
	Karen Richards	PVI - Early Years Group Member
A	Nigel Frith	Church of England Diocese Representative
A	Louise Knott	14-19 Partnership Representative
A	Joe Jefferies	Trade Union Representative - NASUWT
A	Jo Myers	Trade Union Representative - UNISON

## ***In attendance:***

Peter McConnochie	Director of Education and Inclusion, Children and Families
Gareth Moss	Group Manager, Finance
Steve Hawkins	Senior Finance Business Partner, Children and Families
Karen Hughman	Group Manager, Education Access, Standards and Safeguarding
Cllr Nigel Moxon	Mansfield East
Mark Walker	Group Manager, Trading Standards
Mandy Stratford	Early Years Strategic Manager, Early Childhood Services
Jon-Paul Kirk	Project Manager Transformation Delivery Team
Rachel Livesey	Finance Business Partner, Children and Families Finance
Sarju Sheta	Finance Business Partner, Children and Families Finance
Jason Gooch	Finance Business Partner, Children and Families Finance
Toni Gardner	Assistant Accountant, Children and Families Finance (Clerk)

1.	<p><b>Welcome</b></p> <p>James Macdonald welcomed all members.</p>	
	<p><b>Apologies</b></p> <p>Apologies were received from Neil Robinson, Joe Jefferies Colin Pettigrew, and Irene Kakoullis</p> <p>Apologies accepted.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Minutes – 18<sup>th</sup> Sept 2024</b></p> <p>Page 2 – length of term for Chair and Vice Chair. Action required to see what the constitution states and if whether it is possible to amend.</p> <p>Page 3 – Forum vacancies have not yet been advertised. This is something that requires action as soon as possible.</p> <p>Typing corrections Page 3 There are regular senior officer meetings around children who require these places, which are only bought to these meetings when there is <u>now where</u> else appropriate to place the children. Amendment = There are regular senior officer meetings around children who require these places, which are only bought to these meetings when there is <u>nowhere</u> else appropriate to place the children.</p> <p>Page 4 'The jump in numbers on page 3 for new pupils <u>assessing</u> INM is significant'. Amendment = 'The jump in numbers on page 3 for new pupils <u>accessing</u> INM is significant'.</p> <p>Andrew Rossington – There's a knock on effect which also needs to be <u>consider</u>. Amendment = Andrew Rossington – There's a knock on effect which also needs to be <u>considered</u>.</p> <p>Page 5 allocated to the authority based on <u>terminally</u> headcounts/census. Amendment = allocated to the authority based on <u>termly</u> headcounts/census.</p> <p>Page 6 Peter McConnochie – work/consultation for High Needs Block to be <u>work</u> through initially with this new working group. Amendment = Peter McConnochie – work/consultation for High Needs Block to be <u>worked</u> through initially with this new working group.</p> <p>Page 6 – Consultation Engagement by schools and academies will be discussed at item 3b. An update on the High Level Needs Working Group will be given under item 4, any other business.</p> <p>Minutes approved as accurate after above amendments actioned.</p>	<p><b>ACTION</b></p> <p><b>PMc/TG</b></p> <p><b>TG</b></p>

<p><b>3. 3a 2024-25 DSG Pd6 Budget Monitoring Report.</b></p> <p>Sarju Sheta presented the first part of the paper.</p> <p>James Macdonald – could section 19 interim provisions be explained in more detail.</p> <p>Karen Hughman - this is where the LA must make provision for children who cannot attend school at a particular point in time. It includes children who have been permanently excluded, but largely it's children who cannot attend school for health reasons or because they pose a risk to other children, in terms of a criminal justice situation. The pressure on these places increases when a child can not be placed on a school roll, and though teams work hard to get them to a point where they can be placed on a school roll, there is a period where the LA is having to commission alternative provision or home tuition for them.</p> <p>Sarju Sheta – as mentioned at the last forum we have placed an additional 44 children at St Giles School from September 24 until March 25 at a cost of £722k, this is now shown within the period 6 forecast.</p> <p>Peter McConnochie – a recognition that though there's an overspend here, it's positive in terms of providing both cost effective local spaces and provision with positive outcomes. The additional places provided at St. Giles School is reducing further pressure which would have been substantially higher on our Independently Maintained budget line which is significantly overspent.</p> <p>David Phillips - Section 5 bullet point 3 - Where are the cost pressures in high needs linked to exclusions coming from? Their school had excluded but are carrying all the recharge cost from the authority. Is this not happening across the authority?</p> <p>Peter McConnochie - I have raised this with finance colleagues to check that the forecast includes the recharges.</p> <p>James Macdonald – table on page 2, devolved partnership funding is showing quite a big variance?</p> <p>Sarju Sheta - allocations are given out to secondary partnership schools for expenditure aimed at preventing exclusions. If exclusions happen that money is then given back and used towards EOTAS.</p> <p>Karen Hughman confirmed it's devolved to partnership at both primary and secondary level. If schools then exclude it's recovered from the schools, to cover the cost of exclusion, up to the value which had been devolved to them.</p> <p>Jason Gooch presented the Early Years section of the report.</p> <p>At period 6, the block is forecasting a £397,000 underspend. Majority of that underspend is caused by the difference between how the local authority is funded through the EY block, and how we pay the money on to the sector.</p> <p>Money is paid to the sector based on actual uptake. However, the funding that Nottinghamshire County Council receives is based on, various count dates, and not all entitlements, such as the new entitlements, use the same data.</p> <p>Current forecast has not changed from the September meeting. In the next couple of weeks, the autumn term uptake will be known, forecast will then be updated. It is</p>	<p><b>SS</b></p>
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<p>expected that the uptake is going to be greater than numbers quoted in this paper, particularly for working parents, 2 year olds and under twos.</p> <p>Katies Thackery - How do schools and PVI's apply for the DAF?  Mandy Stratford - <a href="https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/media/23uhude4/daf-eligibility-guidance-for-providers-and-professionals.pdf">https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/media/23uhude4/daf-eligibility-guidance-for-providers-and-professionals.pdf</a></p> <p>James Macdonald - half our reserve gone in a year; colleagues are aware of the pressures on the SEND budget. We know this is not a unique problem, far from it, in fact, we're in a much better position than many local authorities and we do appreciate the work that officers do and the pressures that this budget is under. This is something that we are actively looking at, to discuss further in AOB under high needs working group update.</p> <p><b>RECOMMENDATION/S</b></p> <p>That the Forum:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note the contents of this report - noted.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>3b 2025-26 School Funding Consultation</b></p> <p>There are two documents to this with almost the same title, one is the report outlining the proposals for the formula consultation this year. The 2nd is the consultation document that is going to be put online for all schools to view and inform their decision when they're completing the consultation process.</p> <p>A simpler report than would have been presented mainly because we still have incomplete information from the Department of Education (DfE) on the level of funding that we're going to get through the Dedicated School Grant (DSG) for 2025-26. In previous years the LA would have received notional allocations in July, that allowed for modelling considering all scenarios of how to translate the national funding formula into a local funding formula for the following year. The LA is still waiting for this information, therefore keeping the consultation this year very simple as advised by the DfE for 2025-26.</p> <p>In terms of information received the October 30th budget statement confirmed that there would be a £2.3 billion increase to core schools funding for 2025-26, of which £1 billion was earmarked for high needs. LA still does not know how that's going to translate into each local authorities' allocation.</p> <p>It has been confirmed the following grants will be rolled into the national funding formula for 2025-26. Additional teachers' pay grant, the teachers' pension employer contribution grant and the core schools budget grant.</p> <p>Funding to LAs, will still be using the same principles of a primary unit of funding and a secondary unit of funding derived from the characteristic of primary and secondary pupils on the October 2023 census multiplied by pupil numbers recorded on the October 2024 census, so there will still be some differences in the pupil characteristics between the two census data.</p> <p>In terms of the principles for the consultation for 2025-26, as in previous years, the main principle for Nottinghamshire is that we'll continue to mirror the national</p>	

funding formula as closely as is possible. Due to possible changes in pupil characteristics and premises costs, between the October 23 Census and the October 24 Census, it may be unaffordable for Nottinghamshire to totally mirror the national funding formula. We will therefore consult on two scenarios to enable the formula to be affordable.

These two scenarios are summarised in the table at the top of page two with impact of each scenario.

Modelling has been based on a shortfall of £2M based on past years shortfalls. Model 1 looks to reduce pupil factors and lump sum; this would affect 284 schools. Model 2 looks to introduce a gains cap; this would affect 181 schools.

There was an agreement that the excel modelling worksheet would include the 2<sup>nd</sup> tab showing all schools, so that school were able to compare.

Point 4 of the report details a disapplication request that Nottinghamshire needs to put in for 2025-26. This is a repeat dis-application request that the LA have put in annually since 2020-21 regarding The Minster school's MPP.

Broadly the problem for Minster school is they are a secondary school with a small cohort of children in years three to six. The way the minimum per pupil (MPP) works calculates a minimum per pupil level based on the average MPP per year group, because Minister only has a very small cohort of children in years 3 to 6, around 40 in total, that method of calculating the MPP for The Minister School adversely affects their MPP, in that it receives a much lower level to top up to. The dis-application allows the LA to manually calculate a fair MPP based on pupil numbers in each year group, ensuring The Minster School is funded fairly.

Point 6 at the bottom of page 2 details de-delegation which is funding retained from maintained schools to fund central services, to be accessed maintained schools. The five services that the LA want to de-delegate for 2025-26 are the same 5 services that were de-delegated for 2024-25 and for 2023-24, excluding school improvement.

Consultation to open 20th of November, and close 4th of November, given us time to review the results and present for voting at the next forum on 12th of December. Local funding formula then requires political ratification, in January 2025, to enable submission of the APT to meet submission date.

Peter McConnochie – although a simpler consultation this year, is there still a need for online presentations to ensure highest response rate for the consultation.

Steve Hawkins – will be emailing schools with the link and will send email reminders, will also include on bulletin as per Peter's suggestion.

Email reminders to be investigated with corporate communications for future years to avoid doing this being actioned manually.

Steve Hawkins – notified members that normally the school consultation runs alongside an early years consultation, however there will be no early years consultation this year as the LA does not intend to make any formula changes. Value of factors not yet known.

Mandy Stratford – confirmed the above, this has already been discussed with the early years consultation group. LA have no baseline data as yet; paper will be

coming to the February 2025 meeting where the LA will be in a position to announce our hourly rate.

**RECOMMENDATION/S**

**That the Forum:**

- 1. Offers it views on the options for addressing a possible affordability gap.
- 2. Agrees with the LA submitting a disapplication request for Minster School’s MPP calculation.

Votes for	Votes against	Abstentions
15	0	0

- 3. As representatives of the EY & School forum actively encourage colleagues in the sector / other schools to engage in the consultation.

**3c Scheme for Financing Schools**

Rachel Livesey presented the paper.

The LA scheme for financing must be updated regularly and it’s a document that is for maintained schools only, showing and details the relationship between the local authority and schools.

There is a requirement to consult with all schools, report is to inform member we will be consulting with all maintained schools and consultation will run from Monday for two weeks, given maintained schools the opportunity to review the changes, make any comments which will be bought back to the next Forum in December.

**RECOMMENDATION/S**

**That the Forum:**

- 1. Note the contents of this report - noted.

**3d Catering and Facilities Management Update – Presentation.**

Mark Walker one of the directors in the place department at County Council with a range of responsible services from highways, waste, transport, facilities, and catering management.

Presentation to be sent to all forum members after the meeting.

NCC have engaged with elected members of all parties, extended invites to union representatives back in the spring set up a cross party group as part of our place select committee so that the NCC can be scrutinised, look at the background information and potential solutions.

Cross party recommendations were approved by Cabinet in July 2024.

**TG**

A partner with specialist knowledge that that can bring innovation and find some economies of scale in terms of sharing systems, procedures, and buying power.

The aim is to start running with a new partnership from 1st of September 2025. Current contracts run on a financial year, feedback for a while was to change the contract to an academic year, during this change an opportunity to do this.

Staff are key to this operation and existing staff will be transferring over to the new partnership from the 1st of September 2025, everything possible will be done to make it a smooth move over with as little disruption as possible.

Contracts will be agreed at a similar time as usual, towards the end of the financial year, partnership contracts will be from 1st of September 2025.

To keep the normal process there will be a 5 month agreement 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 to end August 2025 with the County Council, from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025 to end August 2026 the agreement will be with the joint venture partnership, then from the second year onwards, a nine year contract by direct agreement with the partnership.

David Phillips - going out to tender is based upon a specific number of schools, what sort of checks are in place, if schools independently might be looking at setting up their own contracts or moving to a different partner. A fluctuating figure that might affect several schools.

Mark Walker - NCC is providing the data in terms of our current customer base. Any movement spreadsheets are being updated with new information to give an accurate as possible picture of what this business looks like, will continue to do this until the cut-off point.

Gareth Moss – who has been working closely with Mark Walker, NCC is trying to align between supporting schools and making the transition as smoothly and as painless as possible, but also making it commercially attractive. The two bidders that NCC are working with are used to working with schools.

They are taking commercial decisions based on the numbers that NCC expect will be in place from the 1st of September 2025. Contracts are written in a way to enable that a smooth transition, so customers do not see a difference, but also to give them some commercial satisfaction that will make financial sense for them.

James Macdonald – Maybe get an update towards the end of the year after cabinet has made some decisions as it impacts so many young people.

Mark Walker – agreed to the update and advised members that his details are on the presentation should anyone wish to speak to him further.

<p><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>James Macdonald - verbal update HLN working group.</p> <p>Working group has met twice, once in the summer term, again earlier this term. We have a terms of reference draft that will go to the next working group, then will come to full forum on the 12th of December for approval.</p> <p>Want to move forward in particular around the spend on INM's, met with Peter McConnochie to begin to draft a proposal ahead of the next meeting. Aim to look for a person or company to come in, identify reasons for the overspend in particular INM's and to understand the nature of that challenge around the numbers and the finances.</p> <p>Also actively promote inclusivity in the mainstream sector, more children with SEND being in mainstream and thinking about how we can support that transition.</p> <p>Peter McConnochie – the HLN subgroup has a critical role in terms of the ongoing budget monitoring around the high needs block, and the consultation process as we establish the budget for future years.</p> <p>A pie chart been pulled together on the high needs block budget, we now need the same for expenditure. These can then be used to compare and benchmark with other areas. INM budget is threatening to be the same size as our entire special schools budget.</p> <p>As a partnership need to be focused on early intervention and meeting needs in the most cost effective way, but also the most supportive way on outcomes for children and young people.</p> <p>There's a request with finance to break our high needs block down into a manageable way to understand using pie charts that shows where our spend should be and where our spend is, where the areas of underspend and overspend are.</p>										
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Confidentiality</b></p> <p>There were no confidential items.</p>										
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Date and time of next meeting.</b></p> <p>James Macdonald – Next meeting 12<sup>th</sup> December to be held online with Microsoft Teams.</p> <p>Toni Gardner – meeting that was scheduled to be held 5<sup>th</sup> March to be brought forward to the 27<sup>th</sup> of February. The LA have to announce the hourly rate to be paid to providers by 28<sup>th</sup> of February. Early years Consultation group to approve on the 28<sup>th</sup> of February but need to have Forum approval before we can publish the hourly rates.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="146 1850 1334 1962"> <tr> <td>Thursday 12 December 2024</td> <td>2-4pm</td> <td>Microsoft Teams</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Thursday 5 March 2025</td> <td>2-4pm</td> <td>Microsoft Teams</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Thursday 12 June 2025</td> <td>2-4pm</td> <td>In person – Location TBC</td> </tr> </table>	Thursday 12 December 2024	2-4pm	Microsoft Teams	Thursday 5 March 2025	2-4pm	Microsoft Teams	Thursday 12 June 2025	2-4pm	In person – Location TBC	
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