



**Meeting held on Wednesday 19 June 2024 at 2.30pm**

**In the Crosland Suite, Grimsby Town Hall**

**MINUTES**

	<p><b>Attendees</b></p> <p>Alex Allenby (AA), Jane Aukett (JA), Liz Brummer (LB), Kate Cowdroy (KC), Richard Gargon (RG), Wendy Jackson (WJ), Karen Linton (KL), Lorna Pendred (LP), Tracey Richman (TR), Nina Siddle (NS), Laura Smith (LS), Jenni Steel (JS), Justine Wakefield (JW), Neville Wilkinson (NW), Corinne Wilson (CW), Rebecca Wilson (RW).</p>
<p><b>44/24</b></p>	<p><b>Welcome, introductions and apologies.</b></p> <p>JS, recently appointed Director of Education &amp; Inclusion, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. She introduced Nina Siddle as the new Chair of Schools Forum and thanked her for agreeing to take on this role. Neville Wilkinson and Kate Cowdroy, Primary MAT Representatives, and Tracey Richman, EY Representative, were welcomed to the group and a round of introductions took place.</p> <p>Apologies had been received from: Sarah Bate, Ann Hardy, Steve Kernan, Carriane Robson and Rebecca Taylor.</p>
<p><b>45/24</b></p>	<p><b>Chair's Welcome</b></p> <p>NS introduced herself to members as the Chief Financial Officer for HET based in Hull. HET had two sites comprising of 17 schools and in NEL, those schools were Cambridge Park and Bursar Academy. NS provided details of her background having joined HET six years ago. She was also Chair of Hull Schools Forum. In terms of NEL Schools Forum, the membership had been discussed and there were gaps. NS suggested the possibility of doubling-up to address these although this would reduce the membership. In terms of attendance at meetings, NS suggested that if members could not attend, they could have a Proxy attend to represent them at meetings. She requested that members responded to any emails which were circulated. Currently, in NEL there were three Headteachers' conferences a year and newsletters with the Minutes of School Forum meetings circulated. JS stated that there would be a review of the Headteachers' meeting process over the year and representatives from those meetings would be invited to attend Schools Forum.</p>
<p><b>46/24</b></p>	<p><b>Minutes of Previous Meeting of 16 January 2024 and Matters Arising</b></p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2024 were agreed as a true record. There were no matters arising which were not covered by the agenda.</p>
<p><b>47/24</b></p>	<p><b>Update on the DSG – 2023/24 Outturn Position</b></p> <p>Copies had been circulated to members. LB stated that the 2023/24 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Outturn position for this year required noting and approval by members. The DSG was split into four notional blocks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools Block</li> <li>• High Needs Block</li> </ul>

- EY Block
- Central Services Block

There was a small in-year underspend in the Schools Block of £0.4m of which £0.3m related to in-year PAN growth. The High Needs Block showed an in-year overspend of £3m. LB pointed out the £2.7m in-year overspend for agency placements out of area related to education only. Top-up funding for EHCPs and funding arrangements for Special Schools showed an overspend of £0.8m. The out of area overspend and top up funding was high due to increasing demand, it was hoped that work currently being undertaken as part of Delivering Better Value in SEND (DBV SEND) would work towards bringing this block more financially sustainable.

LB stated that when looking at the trajectory of spend within the high needs block over the next 10/15 years, the current forecast position was about £2m lower than originally projected as part of DBV in SEND.

The Central Services Schools Block and Early Years block were on budget. Considering the in-year block outturn positions, general contingency showed a cumulative deficit of £4.0m, increasing to £4.6m if Forum agreed to LB request that the surplus growth of £0.6m be retained for the growth fund. This required approval by members.

RESOLVED: That Forum Members:

- (i) Noted the 2023/24 outturn position
- (ii) Approved the earmarking of the PAN growth fund balance of £0.6m for use in future years in line with the approved growth fund policy.

NS referred to EHCPs and stated that from a schools' perspective, it was interesting to know the speed they were commissioned and the promptness the funding followed. She asked members if they had any comments on the funding and the pace that EHCPs were being commissioned in the first place. KC responded that time scales were difficult and funding was not allocated which affected young children. However, it had improved as the LA were striving to do better. There were issues but the situation had vastly improved and there was a plan in place. KC continued that she did not feel that schools were being "let down" and had more confidence about the situation. NC acknowledged that cash flow could be an issue and it crossed over years. Schools received back income and she asked if there was any experience with this. TR stated that it could be an issue but she could see the timelines were getting smaller. NS stated that there were separate grants through ESFA which were sent to the LA to be passported to Special Schools. She asked if this had been included on the spreadsheet. LB confirmed that this funding was received and passed over to schools. JA stated that it was difficult to work out how they were calculated. NS stated that there was guidance and there was a tool to help with each of the grants and how they were calculated.

**48/24 Update on SEND – DBV; 20-week timeliness;**

Copies of Rebecca Taylor's report had been circulated. LP asked if any progress had been made in the issuing of EHCPs. TR stated that in EY, it was more positive.

RESOLVED: That members noted the information in the report.

49/24

**Update on Childcare Sufficiency – Corinne Wilson and Rebecca Wilson**

CW explained that NELC had been invited to join the pilot for the Financial Incentive Grant. 40 LA's were invited to be part, with 20 receiving funding and the other 20 were a control group without the funding. NELC was one of 20 LA's receiving the grant. The incentive was offered to support recruitment in the sector who were struggling to recruit experienced staff. Potentially, this could bring in £111,962 which would support 74 local EY settings who were eligible. Each successful recruit would receive £1,000. It was hoped to recruit 60 new members of staff. Various activities had been offered to promote and support staff and there had been a recruitment event at the Town Hall attended by a small group of providers. There was a weekly vacancy bulletin in place and the financial incentive was marketed through this. Unfortunately, there had been limited response from the sector. Work had taken place with Job Centre Plus to raise the profile as a job opportunity as well as parents through the lump sum incentive. Regular updates had been received on this and the profile continued to be raised. There had been limited engagement as the number of places available had been capped as less staff were available and managers needing to be in ratio. There had been the first closure of a 71 place private provider setting who could not meet ratios. Three highly skills quality managers had given notice and would be leaving the service. A schedule of activities had been planned in the Job Centre and regular staff recruitment events were held locally. Work was also taking place with the settings to find out who was recruiting and the use of social media.

Early Years Entitlements Expansion

CW advised that from April, more children became eligible for a funded place and all working parents earning an average of between £187 a week and £100,000 a year were now eligible for up to 570 hours of funded childcare per year. This was being rolled out in three phases and was in addition to the current universal offer for all 3 and 4 year olds. In the summer term, over 500 more children had been able to access a funded place this term. The take-up was higher than expected for the first term and it was anticipated that this would further increase.

From a sufficiency point of view, CW stated that she had looked at the projections and for the next academic year across the Borough, sufficient funded places were available but not always in the right place or right age range. An additional 55 part time places may be required in the next financial year if capacity could not be built. From the following year in the move to 30 hours for working parents for 3 year olds, 738 part time places may be needed. Locally, NEL had no revenue funding to support the creation of new places, although some capital had been allocated to be shared between EY and the Wrap Around offer.

In the summer term, 97% of all 3 and 4 year olds had accessed universal funded places, 47% of all 3 and 4 year olds a 30 hour place and 78% of all 2 year olds had accessed a funded place which was more than anticipated with 53% disadvantaged and 47% working families. Over 500 more children had been able to access a funded place this term and it was anticipated that the same number of under 2's would be able to access a funded place from September. The take up had been higher than anticipated and was expected to increase.

NS referred to Wrap Around and asked what work was taking place with the schools' Before and After School Clubs. RW responded that the Wrap Around Childcare programme expectation was to offer childcare to parents from 8.00am to 6.00pm. A Childcare Champion had been appointed and had been in place since the

	<p>beginning of July to work with schools and PVI's to look at what was available and what work was necessary to ensure there was sufficient available. All schools and providers had been contacted and the responses were being gathered. Currently, there were 47 Primary and Junior Schools. There were 21 schools offering Wrap Around Care with a mixture of school and PVI providers offering Breakfast and afterschool Clubs on or off the school site. In September, it was expected that 275 places would be created in NEL from those schools and providers who had expressed an interest in expanding their offer. There was funding available to ensure sustainability for parents to have child care. NS asked if the funding was time limited. RW confirmed that it was; it was a two year programme and NEL were waiting for confirmation of allocation for the first year on satisfaction of the delivery plan. NS asked if RW was confident that NEL would be able to spend this. RW stated that she was optimistic; it was essential to have the demand in place for over two years. NS asked if those schools with private providers were most successful. RW confirmed that they can offer additional childcare during school holidays and it linked with the current HAF offer – parents wanted childcare during the summer holidays and this was provided by private providers as schools were not open. RW stated that she worked with schools to have a slightly longer day to be flexible with parents.</p>
<p><b>50/24</b></p>	<p><b>Education Transport – Karen Linton</b></p> <p>KL explained that she had recently been given responsibility for education transport and wished to provide members with some headline data, the financial implications for which would be discussed at another meeting. Copies of KL's slides are attached to these Minutes.</p> <p>KL stated that it was important to understand the children for whom transport was provided. She explained that in terms of service users, SEN children up to age 16, Post 16 SEN and statutory school children both Secondary and Primary, represented the largest groups. Y8 was the largest group with 130 children followed by Y11 with 121. KL stated that there were huge challenges for education transport and decisions were challenged. Further work was to be carried out and there would be a bigger review across the LA as there was pressure across the budget. There was an increase in the number of children with EHCPs and a significant pressure nationally around EHCPs. NS asked if the budget was within Central Services. KL responded that it was not Dedicated School Grant funded. NS asked for more detailed information around financial pressure and thanked KL for the summary. LB offered to provide this information.</p>
<p><b>51/24</b></p>	<p><b>Any other business</b></p> <p>(i) <u>Working Party</u></p> <p>JS suggested that a High Needs Working Party should meet in the autumn term via TEAMS. NS and KC volunteered to sit on this group. JS stated that she would send out invitations to a wider circulation seeking further volunteers. NS suggested that dates be agreed for the Working Party and for the Minutes of meetings to be circulated to Schools Forum.</p> <p>(ii) <u>Attendance at meetings</u></p> <p>JS requested that members should consider a proxy vote if they could not attend any of the School Forum meetings.</p>

**52/24**

**Date and time of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting would be agreed and emailed out to Members