

Norfolk Schools Forum Meeting Agenda

Date: Friday 26 June 2026

Time: 9am

Venue: Council Chamber, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2UA

| Membership | Organisation | Representing |
|-------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Martin White | Nebula Federation | Maintained Primary Schools |
| Stuart Allen | Mile Cross Primary School | Maintained Primary Schools |
| Stephen Beeson | Norwich Diocesan Board of Education | Diocese Representative |
| Martin Colbourne | City College Norwich | 16-19 Representative |
| David Cousins | Eastern Multi-Academy Trust | Mainstream Academies |
| Steven Dewing | Sapientia Education Trust | Mainstream Academies |
| Lacey Douglass | Freelance Early Years Advisor | Early Years Representative |
| Rachel Edwards | Roman Catholic Church Diocese | Diocese Representative |
| Bob Groome | National Education Union | School Unions |
| Glyn Hambling | Unity Education Trust | Alternative Provision Representative |
| Carole Jacques | Earlham Nursery School | Maintained Nursery Schools |
| Owen Jenkins | Broad Horizons Education Trust | Mainstream Academies |
| Adrian Lincoln | NASUWT | School Unions |
| Natalie Paine | Eastern Learning Alliance | Mainstream Academies |
| Peter Pazitka | St. John the Baptist Multi Academy Trust | Mainstream Academies |
| Joanne Philpott | Ormiston Academy Trust | Mainstream Academies |
| Helen Seath | Creative Education Trust | Mainstream Academies |
| Sarah Shirras | The Hive Federation | Maintained Primary Schools |
| Matthew Smith | Sheringham Woodfields School | Maintained Special Schools |
| Daniel Thrower | Wensum Academy Trust | Mainstream Academies |
| Joanna Tuttle | Aylsham High School | Maintained Secondary Schools |
| Vacancy | Vacancy | Special School Academies |
| Officers | Role | |
| John Crowley | Assistant Director – Intelligence and Education Sufficiency | |
| Samantha Fletcher | Assistant Director – Education Strategy | |
| Dawn Fowler | Assistant Director – LFI Programme and DSG Strategic Lead | |
| Jane Hayman | Director of Belonging and Inclusion | |
| David Oldham | Senior Advisor – Intervention | |
| Nicki Rider | Assistant Director – SEN and Alternative Provision Strategy and Sufficiency | |
| Roger Taylor | Senior Accountant | |
| Alison Toombs | Assistant Director – SEND and Inclusive Practice | |
| Sara Tough OBE | Executive Director of Children’s Services | |
| James Wilson | Director of Strategy and Outcomes | |

**For further details and general enquiries about this Agenda
please contact the Committee Officer:**

Laine Tisdall on 01603 222 053
or email committees@norfolk.gov.uk

1. **Welcome from the Chair**
0900 to 0905
2. **Apologies and Substitutions**
0905 to 0910
3. **Minutes from the meeting held on Tuesday 17 March 2026** **Page 4**
0910 to 0915
4. **Matters Arising**
0915 to 0920
- 4.1 **Action Note from March 2026 Schools Forum meeting** **Page 14**
5. **Strategic Oversight** **Verbal update**
0920 to 0945 (*Information and Discussion*)
Lead Officers: Samantha Fletcher and Dawn Fowler
6. **SEND Reform Plan** **To follow**
0945 to 1015 (*Information and Discussion*)
Lead Officers: Dawn Fowler and James Wilson
7. **DSG Final Outturn and Balances** **To follow**
1015 to 1045 (*Information and Discussion*)
Lead Officer: Dawn Fowler
- Coffee Break**
8. **Preparation for 2027/28 DSG Consultation** **To follow**
1100 to 1130 (*Information and Discussion*)
Lead Officers: Samantha Fletcher and Dawn Fowler
9. **Norfolk Audit Services Annual Audit Report** **Page 15**
1130 to 1145 (*Information and Discussion*)
Lead Officers: Adrian Thompson and Joshua Warnes
10. **Early Years Inclusive Fund (EYIF)** **Page 19**
1145 to 1200 (*Information and Discussion*)
Lead Officer: John Crowley
11. **NSCP Education Designated Safeguarding Partner and Education
Safeguarding Sub-Group Chair Proposal** **Page 23**
1200 to 1215 (*Information and Discussion*)
Lead Officer: Kelly Waters
12. **Review of Schools Forum Constitution** **Page 34**
1215 to 1230 (*Decision*)
Lead Officers: Samantha Fletcher and David Oldham
13. **Schools Forum Regular Update Report** **Page 39**
1200 to 1250 (*Information and Discussion*)
Lead Officer: David Oldham

14. Forward Work Programme
1250 to 1255 (*Information and Discussion*)
Lead Officer: David Oldham

15. Review of Key Messages and Actions
1255 to 1300 (*Information and Discussion*)

16. Any Other Business
1300 to 1315 (*Information and Discussion*)

Fifteen minutes to consider Any Other Business requests from Forum Members, of which due notice has been given. Please note that all Any Other Business requests must be received by the Committee Team (committees@norfolk.gov.uk) by **4pm** on **Wednesday 24 June 2026**.

17. Date of Next Meeting

Martin White
Chair, Norfolk Schools Forum

Date Agenda Published: Thursday 18 June 2026

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Norfolk Schools Forum Minutes

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 17 March 2026 at 9am, Council Chamber, County Hall, Norwich

Present

Martin White (Chair)
Stuart Allen
Stephen Beeson
Martin Colbourne
David Cousins
Steven Dewing
Lacey Douglass
Rachel Edwards
Bob Groome
Glyn Hambling
Carole Jacques
Owen Jenkins
Adrian Lincoln
Peter Pazitka
Joanne Philpott
Helen Seath
Sarah Shirras
Matthew Smith
Daniel Thrower
Joanna Tuttle

Organisation

Nebula Federation
Mile Cross Primary School
Norwich Diocesan Board of Education
City College Norwich
Eastern Multi-Academy Trust
Sapientia Education Trust
Freelance Early Years Advisor
Roman Catholic Church Diocese
NEU
Unity Education Trust
Earlham Nursery School
Broad Horizons Education Trust
NASUWT
St. John the Baptist Catholic MAT
Ormiston Academy Trust
Creative Education Trust
The Hive Federation
Sheringham Woodfields School
Wensum Academy Trust
Aylsham High School

Representing

Maintained Primary Schools
Maintained Primary Schools
Diocese Representative
16-19 Representative
Mainstream Academies
Mainstream Academies
Early Years Representative
Diocese Representative
School Unions
Alternative Provision Representative
Maintained Nursery Schools
Mainstream Academies
School Unions
Mainstream Academies
Mainstream Academies
Mainstream Academies
Maintained Primary Schools
Maintained Special Schools
Mainstream Academies
Maintained Secondary Schools

Substitutes Present

Jake Lawrence for Natalie Paine
Jane Stringer for Rachel Quick

Organisation

Eastern Learning Alliance
The Wherry School

Representing

Mainstream Academies
Special School Academies

Also Present

Samantha Fletcher
Dawn Fowler
Jane Hayman
Jonathan Nice
David Oldham
Nicki Rider
Roger Taylor
Laine Tisdall
Alison Toombs
Sara Tough OBE
James Wilson

Title

Assistant Director – Education Strategy
Assistant Director – LFI Programme and DSG Strategic Lead
Director – SEND and Inclusion
Senior Advisor – Teaching and Learning
Senior Advisor – Intervention
Assistant Director – SEN, Alternative Provision and Sufficiency
Senior Accountant
Committee Officer, Democratic Services
Assistant Director – SEND and Inclusive Practice
Executive Director of Children’s Services
Director of Strategy and Outcomes

1. Welcome from the Chair

- 1.1. The Chair welcomed Forum Members and officers to the meeting.
- 1.2. The Chair welcomed Rachel Edwards, as this was her first meeting as a Member of the Norfolk Schools Forum.

2. Apologies and Substitutions

- 2.1. Apologies were received from Rachel Quick (substituted by Jane Stringer) and Natalie Paine (substituted by Jake Lawrence).

3. Minutes

- 3.1. The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 20 January 2026 were approved as a true record of proceedings.

4. Matters Arising

- 4.1. Officers provided an update on the action note from the January 2026 meeting of the Schools Forum.
- 4.2. The two actions, relating to Falling Rolls and the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), had been followed up with additional information circulated to Forum Members.
- 4.3. The Norfolk Schools Forum **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the update.

5. Strategic Oversight

- 5.1. Officers introduced the report, which provided an overarching strategic perspective on emerging developments relevant to Norfolk's education system, with a focus on developments relating to the Government's Schools White Paper and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) reform programme.
- 5.2. The following key elements were highlighted to the Schools Forum:
 - The commission from the Department for Education (DfE) was received early last week, providing details around the expected contents of the local SEND Reform Plan, along with indicative timelines. It was noted that the timeline for submission, the 19 June 2026, was tight given that the information from the DfE had only just been received, plus the timing of Easter 2026.
 - The DfE expected local authorities and partners to prepare the plan together, with a draft submission to be shared with DfE advisors in May 2026. Further guidance around certain elements of the submission and funding allocations was still awaited.
 - It was highlighted that Norfolk's funding allocation was unknown at present. Officers were working to the assumption that funding would last until the end of the current Parliament. It was still unclear whether the £3.7bn in capital investment for specialist places and inclusion bases was new funding or recycled grants. It was hoped that Spring 2026 would bring further clarity in this area.

5.3. The following point was raised and discussed:

- Peter Pazitka commented that he had attended a Confederation of Schools Trust webinar session, where DfE officers clarified that guidance around the £1.6bn Inclusive Mainstream Fund was expected to be released before Easter. The fund was quantified to be around £50 per pupil per year over the next three years. The funding was to be allocated directly to schools.

5.4. Having provided feedback and reflection to local authority officers on the key topics highlighted, the Norfolk Schools Forum **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the report.

6. **Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring 2025-26**

6.1. Officers introduced the report, which provided an overview of the latest Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) forecasts for the 2025-26 financial year. In addition, a high level view of the changing financial risks relating to the DSG was included, in light of recent announcements from the Government.

6.2. The following key elements were highlighted to the Schools Forum:

- There had been a number of recent positive announcements from the DfE, such as new investments into the system and the Government's pledge to fund up to 90% of local authorities' existing DSG deficits up to the end of the 2025-26 financial year. The remaining 10% of the deficit was to be covered by local authorities. It was hoped this decision would mitigate significant financial risks that local authorities were currently facing.
- While the Government's decision on the DSG deficit was to be welcomed, officers acknowledged this did not entirely resolve the current DSG financial situation. The DfE had not yet clarified arrangements for the next two financial years. At the current rate, Norfolk County Council was forecast to accrue a further c. £200m deficit over the next two years, with a £95m deficit projected for 2026-27. The local authority would have significant interest costs associated with the cashflow implications. There had been indications from the DfE that further support in this area was forthcoming; however, this would not be unlimited.
- It was emphasised that the DSG deficit would not be cleared until the Government had approved the local SEND Reform Plan.
- Local authorities were expected to fund the remaining 10% of the DSG deficit in revenue terms. The exact figure for Norfolk was unknown at present due to the complexities of the decision. It was confirmed that Norfolk County Council's contributions to the former Safety Valve deal did count towards the 10% figure.
- Norfolk County Council's overall finances were still under significant pressure at present. Any deviation from the agreed DSG budget could be seen by the DfE as a local challenge rather than a national one, with a potential reduction in support.

- The June 2026 deadline for submission of the local SEND Reform Plan was critical to the funding of the 90% portion of the DSG deficit. This portion would be paid in Autumn 2026 to local authorities who had made a submission to the DfE by this deadline that the DfE approved. A second submission deadline, just prior to Christmas 2026, was for local authorities who did not have an approved plan by Autumn 2026, resulting in payments not being made until February 2027. This second deadline came with significant risks.
- There had been a slight increase in financial pressure by the end of Period 10 of the 2025-26 financial year, caused by independent placements and Element 3 funding in mainstream schools, following the roll out of the revised model. Transitional education services for children not on a school roll were under pressure due to continued high numbers of pupils in this area. The scale of educational packages for these children were increasing on average to meet their needs, with additional cost pressures resulting from this. Despite increased investment, there had not been an increase in pupils remaining in mainstream settings at present.
- There had been a significant increase across the system for alternative provision requests in Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), both pre and post 16.

6.3. The following points were raised and discussed:

- Owen Jenkins noted that the DfE had not been consistent in their communications, causing additional challenges for officers and schools alike. There was a need to recognise the impact on children. The DfE had recognised some scenarios which required local authorities to increase their DSG deficits around High Needs funding. Guidance from the DfE now expected local authorities to take increased placement costs into account for the 2026-27 financial year, despite there being no equivalent increase in High Needs funding.
- Martin Colbourne stated the system faced three distinct challenges. The cumulative DSG deficit stood at approximately £200m. Once 90% of that was funded by the DfE, this would leave the local authority with a £20m budget gap to be closed. There was a possibility that by the end of the 2027-28 financial year that a further £200m deficit could be accrued, with no clarity on a statutory override at present. In addition, the main priority for 2028-29 was to reduce the annual £95m deficit to zero or a lower deficit figure. An officer stated that the £20m gap was not as high as that as the DfE had agreed to count Norfolk County Council's previous contributions to the Safety Valve deal towards this. It was acknowledged that the potential additional £200m deficit was an issue. There had been hints from the DfE regarding changes to formulas in the future, modifying baselines and benchmarks across the country. Optimism was expressed that these changes could benefit Norfolk.
- The Chair requested clarity as to whether the DfE were funding exactly 90% of the existing DSG deficit or "up to" 90%. Officers clarified that while the wording was "up to 90%", the DfE had not specified exact specifications for submissions. The local authority was working on the assumption that exactly 90% of the deficit would be funded.

- The Chair queried variances in Specialist Resource Bases (SRB) places within the report. An officer clarified the local authority had worked on the basis of the fastest possible commencement dates for all provisions when setting the budget, but with an awareness that they would not all be delivered in that timeframe due to issues outside of the control of officers and schools alike, such as planning permission and school reorganisation arrangements. These issues materialised in some cases. The 2026-27 budget had not been calculated on this assumption, instead on a more realistic basis, with it being acknowledged that this introduced potential extra risk in this area. There was a likelihood that an underspend in SRB places would not materialise in 2026-27 in the same way. A cautious approach was being taken towards financial risks for 2025-26. The assumptions around SRB places were initially made due to expectations in the Safety Valve plan.
- The Chair asked for confirmation regarding the expected occupancy of SRBs. An officer stated that while there would be variances given the circumstances of each child, SRBs were forecast to operate at 80% occupancy.
- Joanna Tuttle commented there had been a significant impact in the secondary sector due to SRBs not coming online as quickly as projected. It was queried whether officers had investigated the reasons behind the reduction of movement out of secondary SRBs given the funding put into Element 3 recently. Officers confirmed that Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 outcomes were being examined, with data being reported to Zone Inclusion Partnerships (ZIPs) in Spring 2026. There was a need to understand pupil movement as they entered secondary education.
- Matthew Smith expressed concern that the figures within the report still accounted for a Schools Block transfer into the High Needs Block, given that it had been decided not to proceed with such a transfer. An officer clarified that the figures related to 2025-26, and that a Schools Block transfer was not happening in 2026-27.
- Matthew Smith requested details on what was working in the DSG plan given the investments in these areas. Officers stated that the DfE's White Paper comprised a set of proposals which Norfolk had already been working towards at the local level. Proposed SEND reforms could potentially be harnessed to refine and build upon the existing strategy in Norfolk. It was acknowledged that the hoped-for shift into mainstream education had not yet been borne out by the data. However, there had been successes, such as an increase in confidence within mainstream schools, targeted interventions keeping children in mainstream settings, and a reduction in exclusions. While there had been delays in the SRB programme, reintegration targets were broadly being met. Zone Inclusion Partnerships (ZIPs) had only just been fully rolled out, but the available data illustrated they were the right concept. It was hoped there could be a greater focus on the involvement of the NHS in the next phase of the strategy, which could see experience from specialist services utilised.

- Sarah Shirras highlighted an issue with the sequencing of the delivery of the SRB at St William's Primary School, noting that the Lead Teacher had been recruited before planning had been approved and had sat without a provision for up to four terms. It was questioned whether there should be a lessons learned exercise to review what had occurred and prevent it from happening in future. , It was clarified that risks such as these were contingent upon the driver for delivery – i.e. speed which meant proceeding at risk in parallel across capital and operational implementation, or sequenced delivery which will mean speed of delivery would be slower. It was emphasised that the staff had been usefully deployed within the programme, supporting other bases and outreach activity and plugging resource gaps elsewhere. Officers confirmed that the Local First Inclusion Project 7 infrastructure already embedded review opportunities within individual schemes and at programme macro level, therefore learning from the scheme at St Williams and elsewhere was already factored and would inform future delivery approaches.
- Martin Colbourne requested sight of the forecast placement numbers for 2026-27 and a comparison between 2025-26. Officers **agreed** these figures could be provided following the meeting.
- Bob Groome queried the impact of the planning process on the SRB programme. An officer acknowledged there were impacts on individual schemes due to the need to consult multiple stakeholders while also ensuring access to green spaces and sports facilities were considered in each application.

6.4. Having considered and commented accordingly, the Norfolk Schools Forum **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the report.

7. **Element 3 Academy Funding (Summer Term)**

7.1. Officers introduced the report, which was produced following guidance issued by Norfolk County Council in February 2026 in relation to the next stage of Norfolk's Element 3 model roll-out. Information relating to the local authority's approach, guidance from the DfE, the view of Academy Representatives, and the potential financial implications of their proposed approach were also included within the report.

7.2. The following key elements were highlighted to the Schools Forum:

- The principles of Norfolk's model for Element 3 were approved 18 months with support from Forum Members.
- Queries were raised around the expected contribution towards Graduated Provision Maps from April 2026 for Academies. It was clarified this did not relate to a change to the Notional SEN formula allocated to academies; instead, this was around contributions agreed in the model to align with the general Notional SEN increase for 2026-27 (1.09%). A query was raised in Autumn 2025 regarding the possibility of protecting academies from additional costs related to the reversal of Schools Block transfers (1.3%).
- From the perspective of the local authority, the issues were thought to be separate, with guidance around Element 3 based around this assumption, in good faith.

- Advice from the DfE was sought in January 2026 in relation to the reversal of the block transfer and consideration took place at Schools Forum, with the local authority supporting protection on the basis that associated additional funds would not be received until September. Further advice was sought in February 2026 following the subsequent query. Their response illustrated that the situation could be seen from both perspectives.
- There were potential financial implications to be considered should a decision be made that Academies did not increase their contributions until September 2026. This would generate an additional c. £2.4m cost pressure on the Schools Block, with a year-on-year implication to be taken into account.
- It was emphasised that Norfolk County Council needed to remain within the budgeted £95m deficit for 2026-27 and attempt to reduce this.
- Officers were seeking the views of the Schools Forum to inform the decision to be taken by the local authority.

7.3. The following points were raised and discussed:

- Owen Jenkins noted there had been changes to the language around Notional SEN contributions in the report.
- Owen Jenkins expressed concern regarding assertions that the issue had not been raised previously. The issue had not been raised as it had been made clear in funding agreements from the DfE that Notional SEN was specifically referenced as an amount. The view from the Confederation of School Trust was that if top-up funding used from allocation as a reference point, then the start point of the financial year was relevant. There was a need for a conversation at the Schools Forum around the potential need to change Notional SEN to align with the start of the academic year, given there was the apparent freedom to do this.
- The Vice-Chair commented that the issues were raised and addressed at the January 2026 meeting of the Schools Forum, with a steer given by Forum Members accordingly. Officers clarified that the January 2026 discussion related to the block transfer element. Two elements of increase to Notional SEN were agreed, these being a 1.3% block transfer and a 1.09% general increase. The changes to real funding would not affect academy budgets until September 2026. The 1.09% general increase was to realign budgets and increasing the percentage of core school budgets into SEND provision.
- The Vice-Chair noted there were existing provision maps against children's need who were currently attending schools. As academy funding commenced in September, the primary issue was whether there would be a financial impact for maintaining levels of provision over the summer and moving forward.
- The Vice-Chair expressed concern regarding transparency, as a c. £2.4m cost pressure on the Schools Block had been stated by officers, but this figure had seemingly been confirmed as c.£3m at the January 2026 meeting of the Schools Forum, with it being recommended to Norfolk County Council's Cabinet to maintain equity for provision. This was the steer given by Forum Members. Officers clarified that the c. £3m cost pressure related to the 1.3% block transfer element.

- Stephen Beeson expressed support regarding the move to cohort funding. However, it was highlighted this made some aspects of Element 3 unclear, as cohort funding was based on academic year provision. Any mid-year school changes would impact upon children. There were also risks around the potential withdrawal of provision if there were any changes to financial boundaries.
- Steven Dewing stated that financial formulas should not change in the middle of academic years, noting there had been a local authority change in 2024 which caused disruption to schools. Concern was expressed that this proposal could cause the same level of disruption. It was important that children be the centre of any decision, rather than it devolving into a battle between academies and maintained schools. Maintaining provision was paramount.
- Joanna Tuttle commented that from a maintained school perspective, the block transfer amount was being received earlier by maintained schools over academies, which was part of Notional SEN. It had been assumed that the impact of the general increase would be felt across the sector together in April. With regard to Graduated Provision Maps, maintained schools were now facing a large increase in Notional SEN which would impact upon secondary provision during 2026. Schools only had a limited timeframe to review the changes. It was unclear how academies were affected from the Notional SEN increase in 2025. Officers clarified that the current model was only brought in during September 2025.
- Rachel Edwards stated that the move to cohort funding had resulted in schools losing previously approved funding, resulting in headteachers making difficult decisions around provision while attempting to balance their budgets. The impact of the changes could potentially see schools ending up in a deficit budget by the end of the current academic year while not meeting the needs of children.
- Daniel Thrower commented that it was increasingly difficult for academies to plan budgets if these could potentially change in the middle of the academic year.
- Sarah Shirras stated maintained schools were experiencing the same scenarios as academies, with budget setting becoming increasingly difficult.
- Sara Tough acknowledged the comments made by Forum Members, emphasising the importance that the sector and Norfolk County Council continued to work together to achieve better outcomes for children. There was a need to achieve a fair decision which was in the interests of everyone in the sector, while committing to reducing budgetary pressures.
- Steven Dewing suggested that any changes be implemented for all schools on 1 September of each year, for consistency across the board and for reasons of fairness. This would potentially provide mitigations for maintained schools to set their budgets. It was acknowledged there were significant pressures on the High Needs Block at present. Officers stated that this was not a straightforward decision given the financial reality at present. The main principles were stability and ensuring there were no differences between maintained school and academies in the implementation of decisions. If the option to defer the increase until September 2026 for academies was taken, this would cause differences due to the varying governance models employed by schools.

- Owen Jenkins stated that Notional SEN was written into academy funding agreements. There was a need to understand how the changes would affect delivery, with the Schools Forum reflecting on all aspects to get as full a picture as possible.
- The Chair emphasised the need to ensure that this issue did not become a battle between academies versus maintained schools.
- Peter Pazitka stated it was important that the final decision be made with input from all parts of the sector. An indicative vote was suggested.
- Owen Jenkins requested clarification on what decision would be taken by the local authority. An officer stated there were three options to be considered, these being applying the changes from April for everyone, a split April/September option to match the different financial planning deadlines for maintained schools and academies, or to move to applying the changes from September for everyone.
- Following an indicative show of hands around the Chamber regarding all three options, the Chair noted that the feeling of the Schools Forum was to move to a September implementation for both maintained schools and academies.

7.4. Having considered the following areas:

- The concerns raised by Academy Representatives
- The views of Forum Members
- The approach taken to identifying deliverable options to reduce expenditure in 2026-27, which would enable the system to remain within the budgeted deficit

The Norfolk Schools Forum **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the report.

8. Pupil Variations 2026-27

8.1. Officers introduced the report, which informed the Norfolk Schools Forum final amendments to pupil variations applied in the local authority's Authority Proforma Tool (APT) submission for 2026-27, following the initial presentation of draft pupil variations at the January 2026 Schools Forum meeting.

8.2. The following key elements were highlighted to the Schools Forum:

- There had been no further variation to pupil numbers within the final APT submission.
- A single adjustment was made to recognise the funding at Cringleford Prep School, regarding guaranteed minimum pupil numbers.

8.3. The Norfolk Schools Forum **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the report.

9. Schools Forum Regular Update Report

9.1. Officers introduced the report, which provided attendance details for the previous three meetings of the Norfolk Schools Forum, along with updates from the Financial Consultative Group, Local Inclusion Partnership, and Early Years Consultative Group.

- 9.2. The following key elements were highlighted to the Schools Forum:
- Meeting attendance was to be reviewed following every fourth meeting .
 - Following Helen Bates standing down from the Schools Forum, Rachel Edwards had now become the Roman Catholic Diocese Representative.
- 9.3. The following point was raised and discussed:
- The Chair queried if the High Needs Block Working Group had managed to appoint a Chair. Officers stated this position was still to be resolved.
- 9.4. The Norfolk Schools Forum **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the report.

10. Forward Work Programme

- 10.1. Officers introduced the report, outlining the current forward work programme for the Norfolk Schools Forum during the 2025-26 academic year.
- 10.2. Meeting dates for the 2026-27 academic year were to be considered and proposed prior to the June 2026 meeting of the Schools Forum.
- 10.3. The Norfolk Schools Forum **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the forward work programme.

11. Review of Key Messages and Actions

- 11.1. An officer provided a summary of the key messages and actions which had arisen during the meeting.

12. Any Other Business

- 12.1. Peter Pazitka stated he had submitted a question regarding whether the SEND bridging fund would continue in 2026-27 and what rules schools needed to assume when budgeting for this. An officer stated the bridging fund was not in place for the last academic year as part of the new Element 3 model, with transition arrangements now being considered.

13. Date of Next Meeting

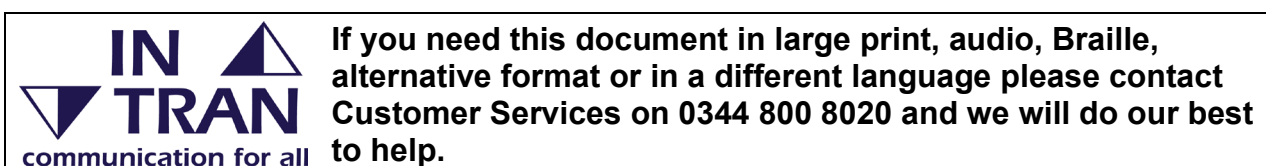
- 13.1. The next meeting of the Norfolk Schools Forum was confirmed for 9am on Friday 26 June 2026, to be held in the Cranworth Room at County Hall.

14. Chair's Closing Remarks

- 14.1. The Chair reminded Forum Members that a workshop session considering the DfE White Paper was due to commence at 11:00 in the Edwards Room at County Hall

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 10:39

**Martin White, Chair
Norfolk Schools Forum**



| Minutes Item No. | Agenda Item | Action | To Do | By Whom | Response |
|----------------------|--|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| 6.3, bullet point 10 | Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring 2025-26 | Martin Colbourne requested sight of the forecast placement numbers for 2026-27 and a comparison between 2025-26. Officers agreed these figures could be provided following the meeting. | Data to be shared with Forum Members | Nicki Rider / Dawn Fowler | A response will be provided ahead of the Forum meeting |

Report to Norfolk Schools Forum

Item No: 9

Report Title: Norfolk Audit Services – Annual Audit Report

Date of Meeting: 26 June 2026

Executive Summary

This report is to update the Norfolk Schools Forum on the internal audit coverage for 2025/26, as well as the planned audit coverage for 2026/27.

The Norfolk Schools Forum is asked to:

- 1. Note the summary of audit coverage for 2025/26; and**
- 2. Consider and comment on audit areas they consider as higher risk to potentially be included in our audit plan for 2026/27.**

1. Summary of audit coverage for 2025/26

- 1.1. During 2025/26, a revised risk-based approach to the internal audit service for Local Authority Maintained (LAM) schools was implemented, following approval through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) consultation in October 2024. More information can be found here: [Dedicated Schools Grant \(DSG\) consultation - Norfolk Schools and Learning Providers - Norfolk County Council](#)
- 1.2. Under this approach, a minimum level of audit coverage is determined using a combination of data analytics and risk assessment, enabling Internal Audit to focus on higher-risk schools and higher-risk topical areas. This represents a shift from a broader traded audit model to a more targeted assurance approach aligned with Schools RAG requirements.

2. School Engagement

- 2.1. During 2025/26, audit coverage included two topical audits:
 - Whistleblowing arrangements at schools – for more information on the findings of this audit please see: [Schools Topical Audit - Whistleblowing - Norfolk Schools and Learning Providers - Norfolk County Council](#)
 - Governance Arrangements at Schools (People and Structure) - for more information on the findings of this audit please see: [Schools Topical Audit - Governance \(People and Structure\) - Norfolk Schools and Learning Providers - Norfolk County Council](#)

- 2.2. In total 50 schools were engaged via questionnaires regarding the two topics with 10 of these schools being selected for a deep dive follow up. A third topic covering business continuity was also completed but this concluded before reaching the stage of school engagement as further guidance is due to be issued to schools.
- 2.3. 8 Schools were visited for a full audit as part of our selection of higher risk schools. A full audit includes a two-day site visit and report provided to the school.

3. Common Control Weaknesses identified

- 3.1. These full audits identified a number of recurring control weaknesses. Common areas (identified in over 25% of reports) requiring improvement included:

1. Expenditure

- We identified at 8/8 schools that purchase orders are not always being raised or authorised for goods and services in line with the Schools' Finance Policy.
- We identified at 6/8 schools that employment status checks for tax purposes are not being completed for individuals engaged by the School.
- We identified at 5/8 schools that purchasing card controls are not operating effectively, including weaknesses in security, reconciliation, and supporting documentation for approval.
- We identified at 3/8 schools that Governor approval for expenditure is not always obtained or clearly evidenced in line with policy requirements.
- We identified at 3/8 schools that quotation and tendering requirements are not always being followed in line with the Schools' Finance Policy.
- We identified at 3/8 schools that staff reimbursements are not consistently authorised in advance or processed in line with policy requirements.

2. Income

- We identified at 5/8 schools that cash income is not consistently recorded, reviewed, or banked in line with policy requirements
- We identified at 3/8 schools that income from lettings or use of school premises is not being administered or controlled in line with policy requirements

3. Governance Arrangements

- We identified at 5/8 schools that business interests for staff and/or governors are not fully declared, recorded, or regularly reviewed.
- We identified at 3/8 schools that Governor training records and/or skills audits are not being maintained.
- We identified at 3/8 schools that Finance Policies are out of date and do not reflect current governance or operational arrangements.

4. Assets

- We identified improvements were needed in the management of asset registers at 7/8 schools with issues including; asset registers not consistently complete or accurate, annual asset checks are not always being carried out or certified, and assets not always adequately security marked.

4. 2025/26 Audit Opinion

- 4.1. The audit coverage for 2025/26 was considered sufficient by the Chief Internal Auditor to support a wider opinion that there is a sound system of internal control for the County Council, in line with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit regulations.

5. Use of DSG Funding

- 5.1. Norfolk Audit Services deployed a mix of Auditor, Senior Auditor and Internal Audit Manager resource to deliver the 2025/26 audit coverage, in line with the revised risk-based approach funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Individual full audits required, on average, 4–6 days to complete, with additional time directed to more complex or higher-risk areas, supporting a proportionate use of audit resource. The two topical reviews undertaken during the year required a combined total of 35 audit days. Additional time was also invested in planning and reporting to ensure that audit activity was effectively focused. All funds allocated from the DSG have been used to provide the audit coverage for 2025/26. Children's Services consider the work has added value.

6. Looking Forward – 2026/27 approach

- 6.1. Audit activity was divided into individual terms in 2025/26 with more resource needed in the summer term to plan the approach. However, to reduce the burden on schools over the Christmas period and at year end, audit activity is planned to be more evenly spread across the year. Full audits of higher risk schools have begun in the summer term and will be spread across the three terms. Eight schools are proposed for the 2026-27 audit plan. The topical audits are scheduled to take place across the Autumn and Spring Terms.

7. Identifying high risk topics for audit

- 7.1. We anticipate that up to three high risk topics are appropriate for each annual plan
- 7.2. Based on our current risk assessment, including a review of audit findings in the year and discussions with key stakeholders, including the Finance Consultative Group, we have two provisional audit topics which are:
 - **Purchasing** – To provide assurance that school purchasing activity is appropriately authorised, follows prescribed procurement routes, and complies with the School Finance Policy and local authority requirements to ensure transparency, value for money, and sound financial management.

- **Cyber Security** - To provide assurance that maintained schools have appropriate cyber security governance, controls, and resilience arrangements in place to protect systems, data, and continuity of education in line with Department for Education (DfE) cyber security standards

7.3. Other potential areas to be considered include:

- Governance Arrangements
- Financial Controls
 - Purchasing
 - Income
- Risk Management
- Resource Management
- Information Technology
- Counter Fraud

8. Recommendations

- 8.1. **Schools Forum are asked to consider and comment on which audit areas they consider as higher risk, to potentially be included in our audit plan for 2026/27.**
- 8.2. Members of the Forum are also welcome to contact Norfolk Audit Services at a later date should any further high-risk topics be identified for consideration.

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained within this paper, please get in touch with:

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Report to Norfolk Schools Forum

Item No: 10

Report Title: Early Years Inclusive Fund (EYIF)

Date of Meeting: 26 June 2026

Executive Summary

The Department for Education (DfE) has introduced a new Inclusive Early Years Fund for 2026–27 as a one-year investment of £47 million nationally to support early years providers to become more inclusive for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This report sets out the purpose of the fund and how we will distribute it in Norfolk.

For information

1. Background

- 1.1 In March 2026, DfE announced the [inclusive mainstream fund](#). As part of this, the inclusive early years fund will provide £47 million of additional early years funding in 2026 to 2027 to support the early years sector to become more inclusive of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Norfolk' anticipated allocation is £537,662.
- 1.2 The fund is intended to:
 - support setting-wide inclusive practice
 - reduce reliance on individual child-based funding applications
 - enable earlier intervention
 - complement, but not duplicate, existing funding streams such as Special Education Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF), Disability Access Fund (DAF) and High Needs funding.

- 1.3 The funding is not linked to individual children and should be used to improve inclusive provision at a whole-setting level, for example through workforce development or making the setting environment more inclusive.
- 1.4 All of the funding is required to be distributed to providers delivering the Government's free early years entitlements. Final allocations will be published in July 2026. These allocations will be final. There will not be any adjustment to the inclusive early years fund allocations.
- 1.5 DfE will calculate the Norfolk allocation from the number of part-time equivalents (PTEs) taking up the 3 and 4-year-olds universal 15 hours entitlement as recorded on the January 2026 schools, early years and alternative provision censuses multiplied by the local authority's PTE rate as provided in the [Inclusive early years fund for 2026 to 2027: methodology](#).
- 1.6 To allow local authorities to provide timely allocations to providers, there is no Government expectation to consult with their Schools Forum on passing on the inclusive early years fund funding to early years providers. As required, the LA have already engaged with providers and shared details of how and when we plan to allocate funding. The LA have discussed the fund, and its distribution, with the Early Years Consultative Group who have guided Norfolk's distribution approach.

2. Funding Approach

- 2.1 The DfE set out principles that must be applied and a recommended approach for local distribution here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-early-years-fund-2026-to-2027/inclusive-early-years-fund-for-2026-to-2027-conditions-of-grant-and-operational-guidance-for-local-authorities#introduction:~:text=Local%20authority%20duties%20in%20making%20payments>
- 2.2 To support providers in adopting setting-wide inclusive practices and intervening early to support children with SEND, DfE require that funding must be provided:
 - upfront
 - without requiring panel or application processes
 - without being tied to individual children
 - in a clear and transparent manner, so that providers understand how allocations have been determined locally, especially when they differ from DfE's suggested route

- 2.3** A number of options for allocating the funding have been considered, including one based on the DfE's proposed approach. Their approach is to fund providers based on the number of 3- and 4-year-olds attending their setting and is based on the PTE number of children present during the Spring 2026 Census. The award is calculated using the PTE, with 75% attributed to a base rate plus 25% on deprivation (an additional factor), and the suggestion is that local authorities consider using this ratio to distribute funding. Deprivation is suggested as a proxy for SEND to avoid differences in thresholds applied in different areas and by different providers.
- 2.4** Alternative operations explored consisted of also including children in receipt of early learning 2-year-olds funding along with the option of taking into account all funding entitlements. In addition, consideration was given to incorporating a minimum payment, so that the amount received was meaningful, and whether funding should be for all providers, or only for ones that met a threshold minimum funding amount. These options were all allowable within the Government Guidance.
- 2.5** Options were shared with the Early Years Consultative Group and, following extensive discussion, their recommendation was that we should opt to award funding to all providers recorded as having children present during Spring who are in receipt of Early Learning funding for 2-year-olds and/or 3- and 4-year-old funding and be open in Autumn 2026.
- 2.6** The agreed methodology is to distribute funding based on funded children in receipt of either the learning funding for 2-year-olds and universal 3- and 4-year-old funding. The LA will distribute the grant as follows:
- A £250.00 base payment to 573 eligible providers to ensure all providers receive a meaningful amount (anticipated total spend £143K)
 - 75% of the remaining funding will be distributed based on Spring Census total PTE numbers (anticipated rate £28.39, total spend £296K),
 - 25% of the remaining funding based on PTE for pupils eligible for the disadvantage supplement (anticipated rate £40.60, total spend £99K).
- 2.7** The estimated average payment to providers will be around £938, the minimum just over £250 and the maximum around £6097.

3. Communications

- 3.1** A phased communication approach has been adopted to ensure clarity for providers:
- May 2026: Communication was issued to providers setting out the funding methodology and indicative allocations
 - By end of August 2026: Final allocations confirmed following DfE confirmation
 - By end of September 2026: Payment will be made to providers as a single lump sum.
- 3.2** Further provider communications will be sent including further DfE guidance on the purpose of the fund and expectations for use.
- 3.3** Providers are expected to use the fund to improve inclusive practice across their provision. This may include:
- purchasing specialist equipment or resources
 - staff training and workforce development
 - adapting environments to improve accessibility
- 3.4** Providers are required to ensure expenditure is clearly documented and funding is linked to improving outcomes for children with additional needs.

4. Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained within this paper, please get in touch with:

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Report to Norfolk Schools Forum

Item No: 11

Report Title: NSCP Education Designated Safeguarding Partner and Education Safeguarding Sub-Group Chair Proposal

Date of Meeting: 26 June 2026

Executive Summary

Working Together to Safeguard Children (March 2026) sets out the importance of education in local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (MASA); this was further reiterated with the Royal Assent of Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 in April 2026. In accordance with the national guidance and legislative framework, Norfolk has established an Education Safeguarding Sub-group to ensure schools play a leading role in our MASA.

To maximise impact and secure sustained, senior representation, Schools Forum is asked to consider the proposal for a 12-month secondment for a senior education leader to undertake the Education Delegated Safeguarding Partner (EDSP) role. This recognises the strategic importance of education's contribution to safeguarding children across Norfolk. Funding for the remainder of 2026-2027 will come from the existing Central Schools Block allocation, with the post included in proposed Central Schools Block funding for 2027-2028.

The post will provide visible, high-level leadership for education safeguarding and ensure that the collective voice of schools and colleges is represented as the fourth statutory safeguarding partner within Norfolk's MASA.

Recommendation:

Schools Forum is asked to comment on the proposal to prioritise existing Central Schools Block allocated funding to support a 12-month secondment for a senior education leader to undertake the Education Delegated Safeguarding Partner role.

1. Background

The participation and active engagement of schools, colleges and other educational settings is critical to ensuring effective safeguarding practice in Norfolk. In response to the publication of *Working Together* in December 2023, Norfolk established an Education Safeguarding subgroup made up of education leaders who agreed to

represent their sectors within the local safeguarding partnership arrangements. *Working Together 2026*, further reiterates the importance of school leadership. The core purpose of the strategic Education Safeguarding group is to make arrangements to ensure the voice of education is represented within Norfolk's MASA as the fourth safeguarding partner. Terms of reference for this group including role descriptors can be accessed here: [link](#)

Norfolk schools demonstrate consistently high safeguarding compliance through Section 175 audits and Ofsted outcomes; however, the current model lacks a single, senior education voice in high-level strategic decision making. National statutory guidance now expects education to be fully embedded within local safeguarding partnership arrangements but the diversity and scale of Norfolk's education system requires coherent, strategic representation. Creating a funded EDSP role will strengthen accountability, improve system influence, and ensure education is fully recognised as an equal partner alongside the local authority, police and health.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 In order to strengthen our local arrangements further, the sub-group has been asked to explore the feasibility of a single representative being nominated to take forward the work of the Education Safeguarding Sub-group and join meetings with the Delegated Safeguarding Partners representing statutory agencies, i.e. the Local Authority, Police and Norfolk & Suffolk Integrated Care Board.
- 2.2 The aim of the Delegated Safeguarding Partner for Education role is to provide visible, high-profile leadership and influence the strategic direction of safeguarding practice so that education is fully recognised locally as the fourth safeguarding partner. In this context, the education sector is defined as mainstream and specialist institutions serving children of statutory school-age up to the end of Year 12 in Norfolk.
- 2.3 The role will collaborate with the Norfolk Safeguarding Children's Partnership (NSCP) Business Unit, Education Safeguarding Team and sector representatives via the Education Safeguarding sub-group to gather the views of the education sector about relevant safeguarding issues.
- 2.4 This role will work with the three Delegated Safeguarding Partners and ensure that the voice, views and safeguarding priorities of the education sector are represented at the highest level within Norfolk's MASA, strengthening the influence of Norfolk's education settings in local safeguarding practice.

3. Key Responsibilities

- 3.1. In line with the proposed job description and terms of reference for the Education Safeguarding Sub-group, the role holder must have sufficient authority to inform, influence and champion the priorities of the NSCP across the education sector and with the DSPs. They will:

- 3.1.1. Represent the education sector at NSCP Partnership Group and meetings of the Delegated Safeguarding Partners to:
- Ensure they are clear on the role and contribution of education settings to multi-agency safeguarding arrangements by sharing the representative views of the education sector collated by the sub-group.
 - Develop reports, presentations and sector feedback leading on updates to the Partnership Group/DSPs
 - Share evidence-based trends or emerging safeguarding risks from the education sector perspective.
 - Share relevant education-based data to inform strategic planning and oversight.
- 3.1.2. Chair the Education Safeguarding Sub-group to:
- Provide a two-way, responsive communication channel between the education settings via the Education Safeguarding Sub-group and the DSPs.
 - Identify and discuss strategic issues being raised by educational establishments and, where required, make suitable recommendations to the DSPs for action.
 - Feedback to the Delegated Safeguarding Partners (Norfolk County Council, Norfolk Constabulary and Norfolk & Suffolk Integrated Care Board) and/or Partnership Group on the implications of decisions and policy changes relating to safeguarding children in and out of education establishments.
- 3.1.3. Chair the Education Safeguarding Sub-group to:
- Provide a two-way, responsive communication channel between the education settings via the Education Safeguarding Sub-group and the DSPs.
 - Identify and discuss strategic issues being raised by educational establishments and, where required, make suitable recommendations to the DSPs for action.
 - Feedback to the Delegated Safeguarding Partners (Norfolk County Council, Norfolk Constabulary and Norfolk & Suffolk Integrated Care Board) and/or Partnership Group on the implications of decisions and policy changes relating to safeguarding children in and out of education establishments.
- 3.1.4. Chair the Education Safeguarding Sub-group to:
- Provide a two-way, responsive communication channel between the education settings via the Education Safeguarding Sub-group and the DSPs.
 - Identify and discuss strategic issues being raised by educational establishments and, where required, make suitable recommendations to the DSPs for action.

- Feedback to the Delegated Safeguarding Partners (Norfolk County Council, Norfolk Constabulary and Norfolk & Suffolk Integrated Care Board) and/or Partnership Group on the implications of decisions and policy changes relating to safeguarding children in and out of education establishments.
- 3.1.5. Support the Education Safeguarding Team to raise the profile of the work of the NSCP with all schools and colleges by providing key updates from the NSCP to education settings via existing DSL networks and leadership forums including termly updates to the Norfolk School Leader Association.
- 3.1.6. The post-holder is expected to attend all scheduled DSP, Partnership Group and Education Safeguarding Sub-group meetings and undertake required preparation for those meetings to fulfil the role by reading all documents, reflecting on the implications for the education sector and agreeing feedback with the Education Safeguarding Sub-group in advance of all meetings.

It is not the role of postholder to provide advice and support to the education sector nor to respond to complaints or concerns about practice.

4. Expected Benefits and Impact

4.1 Funding this role will:

- Strengthen Norfolk's compliance with national safeguarding expectations.
- Provide consistent, senior-level advocacy for education at system-leader level.
- Improve the quality of safeguarding intelligence.
- Reduce fragmentation by creating a single conduit between schools and partnership structures.
- Increase confidence across schools that their safeguarding concerns influence strategic decision-making.

5. Estimated resource requirement

- 5.1. This post is offered as a **secondment opportunity** for up to 20 hours per month for a 12-month period in the first instance. The estimated the hours at 20 per month is based on the requirement that the DSP will be expected to attend:

| Meeting | Frequency | Time per meeting | Total per annum |
|--|--|--|-----------------|
| NSCP Partnership Group | 7 times per year (Mondays 2-4:30pm) | 2.5 hours | 17.5 |
| NSCP Education Safeguarding sub-group meeting | 7 times per year 2 weeks prior to every Partnership Group | 2 hours | 14 |
| Delegated Safeguarding Partners meeting | Bi-monthly | 2 hours | 12 |
| NSCP Leadership Exchange and Learning Events | 2-3 per year | 5 hours | 10-15 |
| Norfolk School Leader Association/sector DSL updates | Termly | 2 hours but variable depending on type of update | 6-10 |
| Reading and preparation time | This role will require extensive reading of papers and preparation prior to DSP and Partnership Group meetings. | 2 hours per month | 24 |
| Supervision | Half-termly offer with independent scrutineer | 2 hours, 6 times a year | 12 |
| Strategic Leadership through Sector Engagement | Structured induction programme followed by planned engagement with relevant education and partnership leadership forums. | 10 hours per month | 120 |

Due to the unique nature of this post, the time and resource requirement is estimated. Following review, funding adjustments may be required accordingly.

5.2. Costs

Estimated monthly costs are dependent on the experience of the Headteacher and the phase and size of their school. They are estimated to range between:

- £1,720.80 – £2,042.60 per month
- £20,649.60 – £24,511.20 per annum

This represents a low-cost, high-impact investment, leveraging existing leadership expertise rather than creating a permanent post.

These costs are based on the following leadership scales:

Group 3 – mainstream, mid-sized primary:

- Point 17 (around mid-point) is £76,772 per annum.
- Hourly rate with on-costs is £86.04
- 20 hours per month with on-costs is £1,720.80 per month.

Group 4 - smaller special needs school or larger sized mainstream primary:

- Point 20 (around mid-point) is £82,654 per annum.
- Hourly rate with on-costs is £92.60
- 20 hours per month with on-costs is £1,852 per month.

Group 5 - larger special needs school or secondary school:

- Point 24 (around mid-point) is £91,158 per annum.
- Hourly rate with on-costs is £102.13
- 20 hours per month with on-costs is £2,042.60 per month.

6. Governance and Accountability

- 6.1 Education Delegated Safeguarding Partner (EDSP) will provide quarterly reports to Schools Forum to evidence progress and impact
- 6.2 Clear role boundaries ensure no duplication with existing Education Safeguarding Team functions.

7. Recommendation

Schools Forum is asked to comment on the proposal to prioritise existing Central Schools Block allocated funding to support a 12-month secondment for a senior education leader to undertake the Education Delegated Safeguarding Partner role.

8. Background Papers

8.1 [Education and Multi-agency Safeguarding Arrangements \(MASA\) - Norfolk Schools and Learning Providers - Norfolk County Council](#)

8.2 Appendix A- Education DSP Job
Description April 2026

9. Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained within this paper, please get in touch with:

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Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership

Delegated Safeguarding Partner for Education

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Department | Education Safeguarding Sub-Group |
| Service | Norfolk Safeguarding Children's Partnership |
| Grade | Dependent on experience of successful candidate |
| Reports to | Tbc |
| Responsible for | Representing the education sector at the NSCP |
| Relevant Job Information | This post is offered as a secondment opportunity for 20 hours per month for a 12-month period in the first instance. |

Job Purpose

The Delegated Safeguarding Partner for Education will provide visible, high-profile leadership and influence the strategic direction of safeguarding practice so that education is fully recognised locally as the fourth safeguarding partner. In this context, the education sector is defined as mainstream and specialist institutions serving children of statutory school-age up to the end of Year 12 in Norfolk.

The role will collaborate with the Norfolk Safeguarding Children's Partnership (NSCP) Business Unit, Education Safeguarding Team and sector representatives via the Education Safeguarding sub-group to gather the views of the education sector about relevant safeguarding issues.

This role will work with the three Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs) - representing statutory agencies, i.e. the Local Authority, Police and Health (Integrated Care Board) - and ensure that the voice, views and safeguarding priorities of the education sector are represented at the highest level within Norfolk's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA), strengthening the influence of Norfolk's education settings in local safeguarding practice.

Context - describes the service provided by the part of the organisation the job is located in and where this job fits in (2-3 sentences).

In response to *Working Together 2026*, an Education Safeguarding Sub-group of the Norfolk Safeguarding Children's Partnership (NSCP) has been established to coordinate education sector-wide engagement. This postholder will chair that group, attend monthly meetings of the NSCP Partnership Group and represent the education sector in meetings with Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs).

The role requires a high degree of professional credibility, independence, and the authority to represent the entire education at a strategic level.

It is not the role of postholder to provide advice and support to the education sector nor to respond to complaints or concerns about practice.

Accountabilities - include **what** is done, to **what** or **whom** and with **what** result.
Typically, 8-10 maximum

1. Represent the education sector at NSCP Partnership Group and meetings of the Delegated Safeguarding Partners to:
 - Ensure they are clear on the role and contribution of education settings to multi-agency safeguarding arrangements by sharing the representative views of the education sector collated by the sub-group.
 - Develop reports, presentations and sector feedback leading on updates to the Partnership Group/DSPs
 - Share evidence-based trends or emerging safeguarding risks from the education sector perspective.
 - Share relevant education-based data to inform strategic planning and oversight.
2. Chair the Education Safeguarding Sub-group to:
 - Provide a two-way, responsive communication channel between the education settings via the Education Safeguarding Sub-group and the DSPs.
 - Identify and discuss strategic issues being raised by educational establishments and, where required, make suitable recommendations to the DSPs for action.
 - Feedback to the Delegated Safeguarding Partners (Norfolk County Council, Norfolk Constabulary and Norfolk & Suffolk Integrated Care Board) and/or Partnership Group on the implications of decisions and policy changes relating to safeguarding children in and out of education establishments.
3. Support the Education Safeguarding Team to raise the profile of the work of the NSCP with all schools and colleges by providing key updates from the NSCP to education settings via existing DSL networks and leadership forums including termly updates to the Norfolk School Leader Association.
4. The post-holder is expected to attend all scheduled DSP, Partnership Group and Education Safeguarding Sub-group meetings and undertake required preparation for those meetings to fulfil the role by reading all documents, reflecting on the implications for the education sector and agreeing feedback with the Education Safeguarding Sub-group in advance of all meetings.
5. In representing the education sector, the post holder must at all times:
 - Demonstrate commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
 - Understand and model appropriate safeguarding behaviours.
 - Maintain suitability for the role and report any issues that may impact ability to represent the sector.

Person specification

| Skills and abilities: | Essential (✓) | Desirable (✓) |
|---|---|------------------|
| <p>Personal and professional senior credibility and ability to build and maintain effective strategic working partnerships with education leaders, partner agencies and other stakeholders.</p> <p>Demonstrable ability and track record of strategic leadership in safeguarding.</p> <p>The ability to understand, interpret accurately and provide a clear overview of the education sector to act in the best interests of children.</p> <p>Excellent communication and diplomacy skills with the ability to influence and persuade partners and sector leaders to effect change, whilst providing appropriate professional challenge.</p> <p>Commitment to inclusive, child-centred, trauma informed and relational practice.</p> | <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> | |
| Knowledge/Experience | Essential (✓) | Desirable (✓) |
| <p>Significant and current experience of senior leadership in education.</p> <p>In-depth knowledge and understanding of relevant statutory guidance and legislation including Keeping Children Safe in Education, the Children Act 1989/2004, and the Working Together to Safeguard Children.</p> <p>Awareness of the current landscape in Norfolk, the impact of local and national policy and the current challenges faced by education settings in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.</p> <p>Experience of Section 175 safeguarding self-assessment process and other relevant quality assurance activity related to safeguarding.</p> <p>Experience of multi-agency working to agree and deliver appropriate safeguarding arrangements for children in line with statutory guidance and best practice.</p> <p>Experience of proactively leading change initiatives in a complex environment.</p> | <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> | |

| Qualifications | Mandatory (✓) | Indicative (✓) |
|---|------------------|-------------------|
| Qualified Teacher Status with substantial leadership experience as a Headteacher who can demonstrate strong knowledge and understanding of safeguarding children. | ✓ | |
| Up to date Designated Safeguarding Lead and multi-agency safeguarding training. | ✓ | |

| |
|---|
| Other Job Information (special factors or constraints and physical requirements or environmental conditions that the job holder will encounter, including how long they last and how often they occur) |
| Appointment will be subject to a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check to assess the suitability of candidates to work with children or other vulnerable groups. |

| |
|--|
| <p>General Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The job description details the main outcomes of the job and will be updated if these outcomes change. • All work performed/duties undertaken must be carried out in accordance with relevant NSCP policies and procedures, within legislation, and with regards to the needs of the diverse community we serve. • Job holders will be expected to be flexible in their duties and carry out any other duties commensurate with the grade and falling within the general scope of the job, as requested by the NSCP. |
|--|

Report to Norfolk Schools Forum

Item No: 12

Report Title: Review of Schools Forum Constitution.

Date of Meeting: 26 June 2026

Executive Summary

The current Schools Forum Constitution was agreed in July 2025.

The Forum's school and academy membership should continue to reflect the profile of education provision across the local authority, ensuring broad and balanced representation.

As part of the annual review of the Schools Forum Constitution, this report considers current membership arrangements, the election of the Chair, and leadership and substitute arrangements for the High Needs Block Working Group. It does not propose any other changes.

Forum members are therefore asked to consider whether the current arrangements for representation, the election of the Chair, and the High Needs Block Working Group remain appropriate.

Schools Forum are asked to:

- Agree to retain 12 mainstream representatives
- Agree to retain the current balance of representation between mainstream maintained schools and academies
- Consider post-16 representation on the High Needs Block Working Group
- Agree to amend TOR for High Needs Block Working Group, to ensure substitutes are from current Schools Forum members
- Review the constitution used over the past year and identify any amendments members consider necessary.

1. Introduction

The current constitution was agreed in July 2025 after a process of consultation and review. Appendix 1 is the current constitution and terms of reference.

2. Membership

2.1. Term of Office

The current term of office is four years, after which members may stand for re-election.

2.2. Review of Membership

The Local Authority is required to regularly review the membership of the Schools Forum in accordance with the Department for Education's operational guidance. This review must also consider representation of mainstream schools based on updated pupil numbers.

2.3. School Forum Structure

The membership of the Schools Forum must reflect the proportion of pupil numbers across different school sectors as specified by the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012. The DfE's guidance, [Schools Forum Operational and Good Practice Guide](#), also outlines the requirements for Schools Forum membership. School members must comprise at least two-thirds of the Schools Forum membership. Primary schools, secondary schools, and academies need to be proportionately represented based on the total number of pupils registered in them.

2.4. School Members

Local Authority Maintained Schools: If the local authority maintains the following types of schools, each should be represented on the Schools Forum:

- Primary Schools
- Secondary Schools
- Special Schools
- Nursery Schools
- Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)

Each group can include Headteachers or their representatives and Governors. The constitution specifies that Primary LA Maintained school representatives must have at least one headteacher and one governor.

Academies:

There must be representation for:

- Mainstream academies, including free schools, University Technical Colleges (UTCs), and Studio Schools.
- Special academies, including free schools.
- Alternative Provision academies, including free schools.

Academy representation is not limited to principals, senior staff, or governors.

2.5. Current Norfolk School Forum Representation

| Position | Total |
|--|-----------|
| School Members | 16 |
| Primary maintained Headteacher | 2 |
| Primary maintained Governor | 1 |
| Secondary maintained school representative | 1 |
| Mainstream academy representatives | 8 |
| Maintained Special School representative | 1 |
| Maintained Nursery School representative | 1 |
| Academy Special school representative | 1 Vacancy |
| AP Academy representative | 1 |
| | |
| Non School Members | 6 |
| 16-19 representative | 1 |
| Early Years PVI representative | 1 |
| C of E Diocesan Rep | 1 |
| Roman Catholic Rep | 1 |
| JCC Primary Rep | 1 |
| JCC Secondary Rep | 1 |

School members currently make up 72.7% of Forum membership, which meets this requirement.

2.6. Mainstream Representation

Based on January 2026 census data, mainstream school representation on the Forum remains broadly proportionate to pupil numbers, based on the proportion of pupil numbers shown below.

| | Number of Pupils | Proportion of total number of pupils (%) |
|---------------------------------|------------------|--|
| Primary Maintained | 25787 | 24.93% |
| Secondary Maintained | 1138 | 1.10% |
| Primary and Secondary Academies | 76478 | 73.95% |
| Total Pupils | 103413 | |

Schools Forum currently has a total of 12 school members for mainstream schools (maintained primary schools, maintained secondary schools and mainstream academies), once all vacancies are filled. A review of the current representation based on the latest mainstream numbers is below.

| Mainstream Forum Representatives | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| | Proportion of total Pupil number % | Proportional number of representatives | Current Number of representatives |
| Primary Maintained | 24.93% | 2.99 | 3 representatives, so this is broadly proportionate |
| Secondary Maintained | 1.10% | 0.12 | 1 representative. There must be at least 1 representative, so current membership is correct. |
| Academies | 73.95% | 8.87 | 8 representatives, so this is broadly proportionate. |

2.7. **Mainstream School Members**

Based on this review of current mainstream membership, the recommendation is to maintain a total of 12 mainstream school members with the current proportion of maintained and academy representation. This will be subject to annual review.

2.8. **Schools Forum are asked to:**

- Agree to retain 12 mainstream representatives
- Agree to retain the current balance of representation between mainstream maintained schools and academies

3. **High Needs Block Working Group**

3.1 The current leadership and membership arrangements for the High Needs Block Working Group are set out in Appendix 2 of the constitution. Forum is asked to consider whether these arrangements should be reviewed.

3.2 The terms of reference provide for post-16 representation on the High Needs Block Working Group. However, there is currently no post-16 representative. Forum is therefore asked to consider how this representation should be secured.

3.3 Forum is asked to consider the proposal that substitutes for the High Needs Block Working Group should be drawn only from current Schools Forum members.

3.4 **Schools Forum are asked to:**

- Consider post-16 representation on the High Needs Block Working Group
- Agree to amend TOR for High Needs Block Working Group, to ensure substitutes are from current Schools Forum members

4. Constitution 2026-2027

4.1 Forum agreed to review the constitution, including its working groups, annually. No changes to the current working groups are proposed beyond those set out in this report. Forum is therefore asked to review the constitution used over the past year and identify any amendments members consider necessary.

4.2 Schools Forum are asked to:

- Review the constitution used over the past year and identify any amendments members consider necessary

5. Recommendations

5.1 Schools Forum are asked to:

- Agree to retain 12 mainstream representatives
- Agree to retain the current balance of representation between mainstream maintained schools and academies
- Consider post-16 representation on the High Needs Block Working Group
- Agree to amend TOR for High Needs Block Working Group, to ensure substitutes are from current Schools Forum members
- Review the constitution used over the past year and identify any amendments members consider necessary.

6. Background Papers

6.1 [DfE - Operational and good practice guide](#)

6.2 [Schools Forum Constitution 2025 -26 \(10\)](#)

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained within this paper, please get in touch with:

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Report to Norfolk Schools Forum

Item No: 13

Report Title: Schools Forum Regular Update Report

Date of Meeting: 26 June 2026

Executive Summary

This report provides Schools Forum with the regular update on membership, group reporting arrangements and recent activity from key partnership and consultative groups. Members are asked to note the current terms of office and identify where their term is due to end within the next two Forum meetings, so that the appropriate recruitment or reappointment process can be started in good time. The report also asks Forum to review whether the groups and sub-committees currently providing regular updates continue to add value, or whether the reporting arrangements should be amended.

Schools Forum are asked to:

- note if their term of office is due to end within the next two Forum meetings
- Consider whether all the groups and sub-committees named should continue to provide regular updates as part of the Schools Forum update report
- Consider whether the groups and sub-committees named should continue to update the forum or whether amendments need to be made

1. Background

Each Schools Forum meeting includes a regular update report covering key matters such as group feedback, representations and Forum membership. Other relevant updates may also be included where needed.

2. Membership

- 2.1.** Claire Hooker of Emneth Nursery School has been nominated as the local authority maintained nursery school representative from September 2026, replacing Carole Jacques.
- 2.2.** Rachel Quick has resigned, leaving a vacancy for the Special School Academies representative. In line with section 2.4 of the constitution, the election process will now apply.

2.3. Bob Groome will step down from Forum in July 2026. Officers will work with the unions to follow their recruitment process and identify a replacement.

2.4. A record of Forum members and their current terms of office is set out below. Members are asked to note if their term of office is due to end within the next two Forum meetings.

Where a member's term of office expires, the appropriate recruitment process shall be commenced.

| Name | Sector Represented | Elected | End of term in office |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|
| Martin Colbourne | 16-19 | 01/07/2022 | Jul-26 |
| Sarah Shirras | Maintained Primary Schools | 01/12/2022 | Dec-26 |
| Martin White | Maintained Primary Schools | 01/12/2022 | Dec-26 |
| Joanna Tuttle | Maintained Secondary Schools | 01/12/2022 | Dec-26 |
| Steven Dewing | Mainstream Academies | 04/01/2023 | Jan-27 |
| Joanne Philpott | Mainstream Academies | 30/03/2023 | Mar-27 |
| Glyn Hambling | Alternative Provision | 30/03/2023 | Mar-27 |
| Daniel Thrower | Mainstream Academies | 01/05/2023 | May-27 |
| Matthew Smith | Maintained Special Schools | 26/01/2024 | Jan-28 |
| Stephen Beeson | Non School Member: C of E Diocese | 26/01/2024 | Jan-28 |
| Lacey Douglass | Early Years PVI | 08/07/2024 | Jul-28 |
| Owen Jenkins | Mainstream Academies | 19/01/2025 | Jan-29 |
| Peter Pazitka | Mainstream Academies | 28/01/2025 | Jan-29 |
| Stuart Allen | Maintained Primary Schools | 28/01/2025 | Jan-29 |
| David Cousins | Mainstream Academies | 01/05/2025 | May-29 |
| Adrian Lincoln | Non School Member: School Unions | 16/06/2025 | Jun-29 |
| Bob Groome | Non School Member: School Unions | 16/06/2025 | Jun-29 |

2.5. The 16–19 representative’s term of office ends in July 2026. In line with the agreed process, the FE colleges in Norfolk were consulted. Following a mini-ballot, support has been confirmed for Martin Colbourne to continue as the current representative for a second four-year term.

2.6. Schools Forum are asked to:

- note if their term of office is due to end within the next two Forum meetings

3. Groups providing summaries to Schools Forum

3.1. The groups and sub-committees listed below currently provide summary updates to Schools Forum through the regular update report:

- High Needs Block Working Group
- Early Years Consultative Group
- Finance Consultative Group
- Local Inclusion Partnership Board

3.2. To ensure that reporting arrangements remain of continuing value to Forum, these are reviewed on an annual basis.

3.3. Schools Forum are asked to:

- Consider whether all the groups and sub-committees named should continue to provide regular updates as part of the Schools Forum update report
- Consider whether the groups and sub-committees named should continue to update the forum or whether amendments need to be made

4. High Needs Block Working Group

4.1. The High Needs Block Working Group have met twice since the last Schools Forum meeting, in April and June.

4.2. The April meeting considered the provisional 2025/26 High Needs Block outturn and the key movements through an update report to the previous forecast paper to Schools Forum in March. Members asked for future reporting to show trends over time, cost growth by provision type and value-for-money context. The group agreed to develop a prioritised programme of deep dives.

- 4.3. The group considered the Element 3 pressure arising from Notional SEN contributions not increasing until September and considered possible mitigations including system wide reduction in demand through more children remaining in, or reintegrating into, mainstream school and not requiring for Transitional Education Services (Section 19 provision) and independent provision. It was acknowledged that these were tangible cohorts for collective action, but a risk remained of insufficient readiness and inconsistent universal offers. Additionally, early work to analysis Element 3 spend across settings has been undertaken identifying significant spend in some secondaries on alternative provision that could provide insight to inform future inquiry to identify if different approaches, including exemplars from other settings, could enable reduction in spend with improved outcomes
- 4.4. Initial consideration was undertaken of the work in progress at the time in relation to developing Norfolk's Experts at Hand offer and the DfE guidance available at the time.
- 4.5. The June meeting was focussed on the draft SEND Reform Plan and an opportunity for the group to provide feedback ahead of the Local Inclusion Partnership meeting to agree the plan for Norfolk. Further detail is provided within the SEND Reform Plan June 2026 report earlier in the agenda.

5. The Local Inclusion Partnership

- 5.1. The Local Inclusion Partnership met on 8 June at an extraordinary meeting to consider the drafted SEND Reform Plan for Norfolk and agree the principles. Further detail is provided within the SEND Reform Plan June 2026 report earlier on this agenda.

6. Finance Consultative Group

- 6.1. Verbal update to be provided in the meeting

7. Early Years Consultative Group

- 7.1. Early Years Consultative Group met in April to consider the approach to distribution of the Early Years Inclusive Funding. Further detail is provided within the Early Years Inclusive Fund paper earlier on this agenda.

8. Recommendations / Action

8.1. Schools Forum members are asked to:

- note if their term of office is due to end within the next two Forum meetings
- Consider whether all the groups and sub-committees named should continue to provide regular updates as part of the Schools Forum update report
- Consider whether the groups and sub-committees named should continue to update the forum or whether amendments need to be made

5.0. Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained within this paper, please get in touch with:

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Norfolk Schools Forum Forward Work Programme – 2026/2027 Academic Year

I – Information and Discussion

D – Decision

| Autumn Term 1 | | Autumn Term 2 | |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| <p>Wednesday 23 September 2026 (Council Chamber, County Hall)</p> <p>Strategic Oversight</p> <p>Provisional DSG Allocations for 2027/28 and Autumn DSG Consultation, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainstream Schools’ Funding Formula • Early Years Funding Formula • Scheme for Financing Schools updates <p>Disapplication Requests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amalgamation Protection • Exceptional Premises Factor <p>Schools Forum Update</p> | <p>I</p> <p>I</p> <p>D</p> <p>I</p> | <p>Wednesday 25 November 2026 (Council Chamber, County Hall)</p> <p>Strategic Oversight</p> <p>High Needs Block financial monitoring report</p> <p>SEND/AP reform (if required based on national publications)</p> <p>Mainstream Schools Autumn DSG Consultation Outcomes and Recommendations for Funding Formula</p> <p>Early Years Autumn DSG Consultation Outcomes and Recommendations for Funding Formula</p> <p>Centrally Retained Decisions Report (includes Growth Fund, Falling Rolls, De-delegation, Central School Services Block)</p> <p>Disapplication Requests (if required)</p> <p>Schools Forum update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports from Working / Consultative groups (as appropriate) • Attendance register – members who have failed to attend for 3 consecutive meetings | <p>I</p> <p>I</p> <p>I</p> <p>D</p> <p>D</p> <p>D</p> <p>D</p> <p>D</p> <p>D</p> |

| Spring Term 1 | | Spring Term 2 | |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| <p>Tuesday 19 January 2027 (Council Chamber, County Hall)</p> <p>Strategic Oversight</p> <p>Final DSG Allocations for 2028/29 and Proposed DSG Budget 2027/28</p> <p>Pupil variations</p> <p>Schools Forum update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports from Working / Consultative groups (as appropriate) | <p>I</p> <p>D</p> <p>D</p> <p>I</p> | <p>Tuesday 27 April 2027 (Council Chamber, County Hall)</p> <p>Strategic Oversight</p> <p>Final pupil variations (only if changed from January)</p> <p>Schools Forum update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports from Working / Consultative groups (as appropriate) | <p>I</p> <p>I</p> <p>D</p> |

Summer Term

Friday 30 June 2027 (Council Chamber, County Hall)

Strategic Oversight

D

Dedicated Schools Grant Outturn

I

Preparation for 2028/29 DSG consultation(s)

I

Annual Audit Report (Norfolk Audit Service)

I

Updates on Scheme for Financing Schools (Financial Regulations)

I

Annual review of constitution, representation and updates

D

Schools Forum update

D

- Nomination of Chair/Vice Chair
- Reports from Working / Consultative groups (as appropriate)
- Review of working groups
- Review of Proportionality and Membership
- Schools Forum meeting dates 2027/28
- Attendance register – members who have failed to attend for 3 consecutive meetings