

Norfolk Schools Forum

Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 22 March 2023 in Cranworth Room
County Hall

09:00 – 12:30 hours

Present:

Adrian Ball, Diocese of Ely Multi Academy
Lacey Douglass
Bob Groome
David Hicks
Carol Jacques
Karen McIntosh, City College (Sub)
Peter Pazitka, SJB CMAT
Joanne Philpott, City of Norwich School
Sarah Shirras, St Williams Primary
Joanna Tuttle, Aylsham High School
Martin White, (Chair) Nebula Federation
Vicky Warnes
Katrina Warren, Unity Education Trust (Sub)
Rebecca Wicks, The Clare School
Jill Wilson (Sub)

Martin Brock
Michael Bateman

John Crowley

Marilyn Edgeley
Dawn Filtress
Sam Fletcher

Nicki Rider

Sara Tough

James Wilson

Representing

Academies
Early Years Representative
JCC
Academies
Maintained Nursery School
16 – 19 Representative
Academies
Academies
Primary Maintained Schools
Secondary Maintained Schools
Primary Maintained Governors
JCC
Alternative Provision
Maintained Special Schools
Primary Maintained Schools

Accountant (Schools, SEND & EY)
Assistant Director, SEND Strategic
Improvement & Early Effectiveness
Assistant Director, Learning &
Achievement
Admin Officer
Finance Business Partner
Interim Assistant Director,
Education Strategy &
Infrastructure
Assistant Director High Needs
SEND
Executive Director Childrens
Services
Director of Quality and
Transformation

Apologies:

Martin Colbourne, City College
Steven Dewing
Mike Grimble, Avenue Junior School
Glyn Hambling, Unity Education Trust
Clare Jones, Boudica Schools Trust
Howard Nelson, Diocese of Norwich

16 – 19 Representative
Academies
Primary Maintained Governors
Alternative Provision
Academies
Diocesan Board of Education

Sarah Porter, The Heart Education Trust
Rachel Quick, The Wherry School
Hayley Ross

Academies
Special School Academy
Special School Academy

draft

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed Helen Bates the new Roman Catholic representative.

Apologies: Rachel Quick, Hayley Ross, Clare Jones, Steven Dewing, Sarah Porter, Glyn Hambling, Mike Grimble, Martin Colbourne, Howard Nelson.

Subs:

Karen McIntosh – 16 – 19 Representative

Katrina Warren – Alternative Provision,

Jill Wilson – Primary Maintained Schools

2. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

Audits

Officers have been looking at how audits could be funded centrally this will go out to consultation and will be brought back to the July meeting.

National Pay Awards: Removal of point 1 from pay scales (update)

Noted that Peter Pazitka responded by email to request for comments.

This will be Option 2 and will go to payroll for April.

3. Strategic Planning: Local First Inclusion Plan (PowerPoint Presentation)

- School and Community Teams (including recruitment)
- Outline of KPIs

This is a standing item to provide regular update on the overall program and deep dive one aspect of the program each meeting. There will be a paper in advance for future meetings.

Context

Members of Schools Forum raised queries/made comments in the following areas:

- *Item 6.3 insufficient progress being made towards the authority reaching and sustaining an in-year balance.* Members said no details on what insufficient would be.

School and Community Plans

Members of Schools Forum raised queries/made comments in the following areas:

- Concerns about recruitment and retention. One person out of an organisation could cause instability.
- Replacements don't exist, trained people not out there wanting to work in schools. These teams won't work if advising people to do things and no staff to respond.
- Negativity from headteachers not about this plan but about the staffing situation in schools
- Job scales are above what we can pay staff.
- You are offering more money for people doing the same job.
- Concerns at last meeting – nothing been done. Need collaboration to move forward.
- Need feedback to overcome perceptions
- Would be good to know how many staff in zones and how many schools that covers. Where are teams going to be based.
- Full teams in some areas, rather than partially staffed across the zones resulting in staff burn-out.
- Special schools, are these pre-determined, are they one of the risks subject to review

In response, the LA provided the following assurances / responses:

- Need to work collectively on how to support you
- There is a big workforce challenge collectively. Thinking of bringing colleagues together to think this problem through from a public sector point of view.
- We are looking at pay-scales and flexibility in job descriptions
- We need to be live to the unintended consequences of schools not having requisite staff to deliver – that then is us not fulfilling our statutory duty – exploration will be really helpful.
- Need to work collectively on how to support you
- We have a Team Manager for each of the zones. Hoping for an equal spread across the workers. We are looking at where we can get the biggest strategic hit- a fully staffed zone. Events planned for summer term to come out and talk to schools about current offer and future plans
- Two of Team Managers out of Ten are coming out of primary schools
- Six Team Managers from Children's Services Five from Education (Two from primary schools, others not impacting on schools) Two from other backgrounds. Will communicate more on the teams as they build up
- Different recruitment approaches - secondments
- The authority is alert to the issue of impact if too many people apply from schools and is able to sequence start dates and talk about backfill.
- Feedback on how to overcome perceptions would be helpful. What communication would look like to help others understand what the thinking is behind the scenes.
- No zone lines break school clusters.
- DfE aware of risks to plan – we can have the two extra schools funded through their capital program- the council is underwriting this. One is ASD one is complex needs.
- Conversations with health – from April there will be a health and care collaborative
- Confirmation from DfE reporting will be tri-annual

Outlines of KPIs

Members of Schools Forum raised queries/made comments in the following areas:

- Recording number of managed moves
- Tribunals
- Suggest a small group of headteachers to talk about what needs to change – could be by zone
- Important no Educate Norfolk no headteacher leaders on Executive Board is an omission.
- Some of the KPIs completely out of our control – If Independent sector needed again could they be more expensive in the future?
- Independent schools coming down in price -would they consider using less qualified staff?

In response, the LA provided the following assurances / responses:

- We will have a range of ways to pick up feedback
- School Leads to look at improvements we have made, important – looking next week at having right groups set up.
- We need to assert that everything is in our control
- Independent schools are subject to Ofsted inspections.

4. Agree 2023-24 Plan

Members noted that most meetings were on a Friday.

Officers said they intended to involve Forum in devising the plan in order to give them greater/prior knowledge of up and coming key decisions.

Venues – members were happy to continue using committee rooms at County Hall as a meeting venue.

Action: It was agreed from January onwards to move two meetings to a Wednesday .

5. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG): Final Pupil variations

Paper to inform Schools Forum of a change to the pupil variations variances for 2023/24 following revision of National Non-Domestic Rates.

No comments.

The paper was for information only.

6. Review 2022-23 Future Meeting Plan

The May meeting will be in the Cranworth Room County Hall. The intention is to book a room at County Hall for the July and future meetings.

7. School Forum Communications

Keen to enhance how we work together and communications in and out of Schools Forum. How to strengthen Forums strategic role – how we can collaborate across all strategic programs. We want to help you share the work of this group across the system. We are suggesting a one or two page strategic briefing after meetings giving key decisions discussed at the meeting. And ask for suggestions from members on how we can enhance working together.

Schools Forum members made the following comments:

- Depends on who the intended audience and what they want to hear. Work loads against intended impacts and someone writing something that people may not read.
- Perception that it will be NCC written – needs to come from Schools Forum not NCC.
- We have a fragmented system – anything to bring this together would be helpful.
- Lot of topics not relevant to Early Years – we could share minutes of EY Reference Group.
- Link to agenda and minutes in MI Sheet.
- Governors difficult to communicate with – newsletter would be helpful.
- We need to think about how we do consultation – roadshow to unpick what is in the consultation.
- Bullet Point memorandum

Officers said they will trial it to see how it goes - it can be Schools Forum branded

8. AOB

Early Years Funding

Schools Forum were given a short PowerPoint presentation to show the impact of the government announcements on Early Years and childcare made in the budget statement. The slides are available on the Schools Forum website these will be updated as more information becomes available.

Schools Forum members made the following comments / responses:

- If we are not able to meet the expectations set out, who is accountable?
- Could NCC set up their own agency?
- What is the rate for funded 2 year olds to un-funded 2 year olds – could have an immediate impact.
- This is a prime opportunity for us to work together

In response, the LA provided the following assurances / responses:

- Sufficiency duty on LA – there are LAs not meeting sufficiency duty currently – and there have been no consequences to that. We do not know the implications for schools if they are unable to meet the expectations around wrap around childcare.
- Officers will consider the agency question
- Urgent for us to work out what demand will be
- Need to do a local analysis

9. Next Meeting

17 May 2023 09:00 – 12:30 the Cranworth Room County Hall