

## Oxfordshire Schools' Forum Schools & High Needs Sub-Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 27 February 2018  
1030 - 1300, Unipart Conference Centre, Unipart House, Cowley, Oxford**

<p><b>Present:</b> Tristan Arnison (TA) Kerrie Blaker (KB) Breda Bowles (BB) Sean O'Sullivan (SO) Nicola Partridge (NP) Maureen Thompson (MT) - CHAIR Carole Thomson (CT) – Chair of Forum</p>	<p><b>In attendance</b> Lorraine Wilson (LW) Head, Kingfisher School <u>Oxfordshire County Council</u> Nick Baggett (NB) Sarah Fogden (SFo) Janet Johnson (JJ) Kit Howells (KH) (Clerk)</p>	
<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Apologies and welcome to new Committee member KB</b> Apologies received from Lisa Hughes (LH), Rebecca Saunders (RS), Sarah Steel (SSt). MT welcomed members to the meeting, particularly new member KB.</p>	
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Minutes of Schools &amp; High Needs Committee meeting held 22.6.17</b> The Minutes were approved and signed by the Chair.</p>	
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>Matters arising from 22 June 2017 Minutes - <u>only</u> where these remained unactioned or not on the Agenda</b></p>	
<b>3.1</b>	<p><b>Update on Broadband provision for schools</b> Further update had been received and previously circulated. All the outstanding schools should have broadband provision by the end of March 2018 and KH will request an update then for the Committee.</p>	<b>KH</b>
<b>3.2</b>	<p><b>Trade Union Facilities Scheme</b> NB had contacted all Special and Nursery Schools. Overall, there has been a good response from schools in the County wishing to join the Scheme (including half of the Academies), which has an intended 1 April start. NB is chasing up outstanding responses. The cost is £1.12 per pupil (October 2017 count).</p> <hr/> <p>All other matters arising/action points had been dealt with, actioned or were on the Agenda.</p>	
<b>4.</b>	<p><b>High Needs Funding in Oxfordshire, Special Schools Budgets and funds for support of SEND pupils in mainstream schools</b> Paper 4 previously circulated providing definition of High Needs, children supported under that heading, total amounts of income and expenditure, including capital, DSG allocation, out of county placement costs, independent and non maintained support, Early Years, SEN Inclusion Fund, and post-16 spend in relation to College placements, with all figures being based on the 2017-18 spend. JJ confirmed that Health and Social Care both contribute to the funding for High Needs in</p>	

	<p>the County.</p> <p>The LA continues to work to provide more High Needs places in the County. Recent proposals for expansion include Bardwell and John Watson Schools. New provision will be provided in the next couple of years by the Gallery Trust (ex Iffley Academy Trust ) at Bloxham Grove (on the Warriner site) and, depending on what is specified in the next round of wave bids, several academy trusts are interested in applying for a new Special School in Didcot. There is also spare capacity in the Banbury area which could be utilised to open Bloxham Grove early which is also being pursued Despite increasing number of places, demand remains unmet. There are additional cost problems presented by the recent establishment of new Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools in the local area where parents ask for places and the LA is unable to defend a suitable alternative.</p> <p>For post-16, the LA is working with the three local Colleges to reduce the bureaucracy surrounding High Needs places and review and rationalise the funding across all three colleges. Alongside Adult Social Care, local residential college provision is being explored to prevent the need for high cost independent specialist college placements..</p> <p>The Committee noted that national guidance is provided to LAs on how High Needs funding should be spent; however, this guidance is interpreted differently in different LAs and funds used differently in different LAs. It is not clear, for instance, what support for Early Years SEN is funded by Early Years funding and what by High Needs Block; the importance of having SEN support in Early Years is acknowledged but there is no extra funding with which to do this work and some 'pots' of funding overlap. Some things which might be assumed would be funded from High Needs, eg Educational Psychologists and the SEN casework team are not in fact included. JJ confirmed that benchmarking information is available for LAs to compare spend, but interpretation varies SFO will provide some further clarification of this.</p> <p>A major issue of concern is the lack of flexibility for having proportional funding split between settings across a year if a child moves settings eg from mainstream to Special School, and also with exclusions where the funding does not follow the child. In addition, there should be flexibility to move children with extreme behaviour issues out of mainstream settings into other forms of support and/or receive SEND funding, while awaiting formal assessment and EHCP completion as this process takes far too long during which time all parties experience difficulties in coping due to lack of support.</p> <p>There remain some difficulties in understanding the total spend on Alternative Provision in the County, from the High Needs Block and from elsewhere, and the Committee requested full clarity on where the funding comes from, what it is used to support, the pressures on AP places with the rise in Exclusions, particularly in Primary and what is</p>	<p><b>SFO</b> for next meeting</p>
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	<p>being done to increase available places. This information is needed in order to see the pressures on the High Needs Block and to better understand the whole High Needs picture. More detail will be provided on AP provision (including those children supported who are on the Hospital School roll but not in hospital) and funding in the County, at the next meeting. This issue will also be taken account of in the current High Needs Review.</p> <p>In year fair access funding is currently solely for secondary, but with increasing numbers of exclusions at primary level this is another area for discussion and another pressure on funds.</p> <p>The pressures are more evident in the primary sector; there are also growing pressures in the secondary sector but these do not show up as funding is capped, which means that the schools are picking up the costs out of their basic budgets as more pupils require support.</p> <p>Overall, it is understood that there are increasing pressures on a flat High Needs budget that is already overspent and that the current Review is addressing ways of dealing with this.</p> <p>This subject will return to the next meeting with some further detail as agreed above, and members were encouraged to send detailed questions to JJ and SFo for answer as part of that discussion.</p>	<p><b>JJ/SF to next meeting</b></p> <p><b>JJ/SF for next meeting</b></p>
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>High Needs Review – update</b> Paper 5 previously circulated.</p> <p>An intense 13-week review is currently being undertaken of High Needs pressures. This is alongside the LA’s ‘Fit for the Future Programme’ and the Children’s Transformation Programme and Interim Deputy Director Jo Moxon’s work on learner engagement, attendance and exclusion issues.</p> <p>JJ explained how the projected number of required places has been arrived at, based on demographics and trends, although it is acknowledged this is difficult to predict. The new Bloxham Grove facility will have 100-120 places and c100 places have been added throughout the County during the last 2 years. A new facility in Didcot would provide 100 places. However, these are not enough or coming on stream quickly enough and there remain extreme pressures with associated risks and high costs incurred. The places may also only meet the needs of one or two categories of SEND pupils, with gaps in provision remaining for other categories. The major funding costs for independent non-Maintained sector places would be much reduced if investment was made in increasing Maintained sector places. Colleges are working very collaboratively to ensure equitable funding.</p> <p>It was agreed that a major concern is that Government pressure on schools to ensure high achievement and attainment in Progress 8 and</p>	

	<p>Key Stage 2 SATs, despite the SEND children on roll, means that children who should be in mainstream schools are blocking places in Special Schools which should be taken by children with higher needs. While some schools have resisted this pressure and are very inclusive, this situation remains a serious issue.</p> <p>Further development of, and review of methods of, support for mainstream schools to help them retain their SEND pupils is also required. More resource-based provision being developed although this is taking some time to arrange. The Didcot Den is an example of a partnership of schools working collectively with children remaining on their home school roll. In addition, there must be more support to enable schools to provide their own resources including funding for additional staffing, appropriate curriculum and quality first teaching for these pupils and including more support from the LA for schools not wishing to exclude children. This could include increasing specialist training for mainstream school staff, which would also help staff wellbeing. Information on good sources of training should be shared. It was agreed to discuss the issue of resourcing schools further at the next meeting of this Committee.</p> <p>MT will circulate information from a local Primary School Headteacher, illustrating cases where the school is unable to cope without provision of additional resources and where exclusion is not wanted by the School nor is it the best solution for the children involved.</p>	<p><b>JJ</b> (KH for agenda)</p> <p><b>MT</b></p>
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Growth Fund</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-need for short-term support for schools with falling rolls</li> <li>-need to expand provision in secondary schools</li> </ul> <p>NB provided a verbal update. He noted that it is only possible to provide support for schools where these schools' status is Outstanding or Good but not for schools with standards issues. Additionally, schools can only qualify for growth funding if the LA has been party to discussion and has agreed to create classes to meet basic need pressures.</p> <p>Whilst it is acknowledged that schools must have contingency plans in place, the Committee's concerns about falling rolls included the effect of the County stopping school transport in some areas which has encouraged pupils to travel to schools in neighbouring counties, and the effect of opening new schools without need being provided, such that existing schools in the surrounding area have experienced a drop in number of pupils themselves. Not all the falling rolls issues are related to drop in birth rate.</p> <p>The issue of need to expand secondary schools' provision in some areas also requires addressing.</p> <p>It was agreed that more detailed discussion is required and a member of the Schools Admissions Team will be invited to attend the next</p>	<p><b>MT/NB</b> <b>KH</b></p>

	meeting to answer queries and provide more guidance, to include a longer term provision map so that there is more clarity on viability of schools and the need to work cooperatively in order to put contingencies in place. It is essential that Forum and Schools Organisation are jointly and holistically able to review and plan forward on this issue. It was noted that SFo is attending a DfE Growth Fund meeting next week and will report back.	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Schools Forum Budget - balances</b> Paper 7 previously circulated. It was <b>agreed</b> that balances should be utilised for the improvement of schools and members and officers will bring proposals to the next meeting (5 June) for consideration.  Forum members were reminded to submit travel claims for this financial year before the end of March.	All SHN members KH (agenda)  All SHN members
<b>8.</b>	<b>Items referred by Services &amp; Contracts Committee – None.</b>	
<b>9.</b>	<b>Items for referral to Services &amp; Contracts Committee – None.</b>	
<b>10.</b>	<b>Academy Update (Standing Item)</b> NB's information Paper 11 was tabled. He informed that there was very little conversion activity, with a small number of Primaries converted recently or will convert by end of academic year; two of the three remaining Maintained Secondary Schools will also have converted. Almost 60% of County pupils are now in academy settings with 122 schools converted.  It was noted that the LA has made a commitment to ongoing support to Maintained Schools with Sandra Higgs providing an outline of proposals at the 7 February Forum meeting. The upcoming Heads & Chairs Briefings will provide an opportunity for Maintained Schools to discuss this support in more detail.	
<b>11.</b>	<b>Date of next meeting</b> Tuesday 5 June 1000-1230, to feed into 21 June Schools Forum meeting. Agenda to include: - SF Budget – proposals for use of balances - Growth / Falling Rolls and long term schools' organisation (invite member of Admissions Team to bring info) - Resource-based provision for SEND pupils in mainstream schools - Detail re HN funding areas: Early Years / Alternative Provision - Academy update (Standing Item)  Autumn agenda: Outcome of external review of High Needs	SFo/ NB/ JJ/ MT/ KH  JJ/KH

The meeting closed at 1230  
KH/28.2.18

Signed as accurate (Chair) .....Date