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Meeting: North Northamptonshire Schools Forum

Date: Thursday 17th March 2022

Time: 1.00 pm

Venue: Remote Meeting via Zoom

Agenda			
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<p>Adele Wylie, Monitoring Officer North Northamptonshire Council</p>  <p>Proper Officer 11th March 2022</p>			

This agenda has been published by Democratic Services.

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Next Meeting Date:

25th May 2022

Information on Voting

Every item which requires a decision to be made at a meeting of the Forum will be determined by a majority of the votes of members present and voting on the issue. In the case of an equality of votes the Chair will have a second or casting vote.

School and non school members are eligible to vote on all matters requiring authorisation or approval except:

- a) de-delegation is limited to the specific primary and secondary phase of maintained schools members;
- b) amendments to the school funding formula, for which the voting is restricted by the exclusion of non-schools members, except for PVI representatives; and
- c) retaining funding for statutory duties relating to maintained schools only is limited to maintained primary, secondary, special and PRU members.

It is the responsibility of the forum member to declare their 'disclosable pecuniary interest'. The forum member can make a short presentation at the start of the agenda item and then not participate in the discussions or vote on the item to which their interest is relevant.

Minutes of a meeting of the Schools Forum

Held as a Remote Meeting via Zoom at 1.00 pm on Thursday 10th February 2022

Present:-

Members

James Birkett (Chair)
Sandra Appleby
Rob Hardcastle
Nikki Lamond
Angela Prodger

Paul Wheeler (Vice Chair)
Peter Cantley
Siobhan Hearne
Annabel Moore
Jo Sanchez-Thompson

Also in attendance

David Akinsanya
Ann Marie Dodds
Neil Goddard
Nichola Jones
Kelly Mills
Simon Rielly

Tony Challinor
Charlotte Franks
Jo Hutchinson
Nick Mantle
Yoke O'Brien
Raj Sohal

41 **Apologies for non-attendance, Forum membership changes and declarations of interest**

Apologies were received from Sharon Pinson and Lee Hughes.

42 **Minutes of meeting held on 20 January 2022 and points arising/officer feedback**

RESOLVED that: The minutes of the meeting held on 20th January were agreed as an accurate record.

43 **Early Years Funding**

The Forum considered a report by the Assistant Director for Commissioning and Partnerships, which outlined proposals for the early years funding of non-maintained schools.

The Interim Director for Education clarified that funding was allocated to providers on a formulaic basis. Capital was retained, which had historically been passed to providers, on the basis of additional need. He explained that the non-statutory application for additional high needs funding was not sustainable, within the broader budget. Therefore, officers sought to provide the maximum amount, through the formulaic allocation to providers - hence the 16 pence increase in the base rate and the protection of the 8 pence notional SEND rate. £160k would be put into the inclusion fund, through consultation with the Schools Forum high needs Task and Finish Group.

During discussion, the principal points were noted:

- Regarding the notional SEND funding and the proposal to increase this amount, members of the Forum questioned whether there was protection for settings where SEND needs were disproportionate. One member expressed concern that while the idea of increasing this funding might enable another area of the budget to be bolstered, it could be challenging for some settings to meet the needs of SEN children, with a disproportionate number of pupils requiring specialist support.
- Another member expressed concern that the 4% increase to the base rate of early years funding would not be sufficient to cover increases to National Insurance and pay rises, as settings would not be covered by additional pay grants. The member posited that the early years sector was experiencing an increased level of need.
- The Forum acknowledged that there had been a significant increase in the number of children with special educational needs across North Northamptonshire and recognised funding issues concerning specialist support services. Members queried what work was being done by the local authority to raise such funding issues with central government and lobby for additional funding for specialist support services.
- The Forum queried what the indicative Early Years Block funding allocation, from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), would be for the 2022/23 financial year.
- Regarding Block transfers, members questioned whether it was possible to transfer funding between the Schools Block and the Early Years Block of the DSG.
- One member of the Forum requested additional information regarding the costings of the centrally retained budget, as they suggested that it would be good practice by the local authority to demonstrate significant central expenditure annually, for transparency of information. The member also sought information concerning an increase to the Disability Access Fund and how many families within North Northamptonshire had been able to successfully apply for this fund.
- Regarding the Disability Access Fund, members queried whether the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) informed the Department for Education (DfE) of how many children within North Northamptonshire were in receipt of funding, which then determined the funding allocation received by the local authority
- The Forum queried where surplus allocated capital for the Disability Access Fund would go when applications were not made for the full allocation received by the local authority.

In response, the Assistant Director for Commissioning and Partnerships clarified that:

- Officers proposed a freeze on the notional SEND element and the aim of the consultation was to gather ideas as to how the local authority could assist these settings. The 8 pence rate had been frozen to create a small inclusion fund of

£160k, which would be used in a more targeted way, through the period up until the end of August 2022.

- Funding could not be transferred between the Schools Block and the Early Years Block of the DSG. Only transfers from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block were permitted. However, the local authority would be able to transfer from the High Needs Block to the Early Years Block. While this had been the historical approach taken by the local authority, the High Needs Block was significantly overspent and there existed no remaining resources to transfer. The only funding transfer proposed by Officers for 2022/23 would be from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block.
- Additional information regarding central expenditure would be provided to Forum members.
- There had been issues concerning payment of the early years pupil premium due to the fact that it was based upon data from the DWP, which the local authority did not have control over. He further explained that this was an information issue.
- The criteria for application for the Disability Access Fund was published online. Once applications were made, funding had been awarded. The local authority was not made aware in advance how many children resided within North Northamptonshire, who were eligible for this funding. The allocation received by the local authority was determined by a DfE formula and if surplus funding remained by year-end, it would return to the DfE.

The Interim Director of Children's Services clarified that:

- Regarding specialist support services, the local authority had moved away from a referral system towards a consultation system, which had meant that conversations with families and settings, who required support, were able to begin immediately. Waiting times had halved through this consultation process. Officers also sought to identify an appropriate mechanism whereby conversations could be had with central government representatives, to raise awareness of issues concerning the funding of such services. This would also be raised with the political leadership of North Northamptonshire Council.

The Strategic Finance Business Partner clarified that:

- The DfE had announced a Schools Supplementary Grant, to address the Health and Social Care Levy and increased National Insurance pressures schools would face. Funding allocations from this grant would be announced in Spring 2022.
- The indicative 2022/23 DSG allocation for the Early Years Block would be significantly lower, as child participation rates had decreased across the early years sector. However, a final forecasted estimate would not be available until the January 2022 census had been received.

- DfE guidance stated that the Schools Supplementary Grant would only be payable to public sector employers, which meant that further education colleges, sixth form colleges and independent learning providers, as well as private and voluntary sector early years providers, would not be eligible to receive this funding.
- The Disability Access Fund existed as part of the Early Years Block of the DSG, which was governed by strict eligibility guidance. The local authority's allocation for this funding was calculated depending on set criteria, to then be distributed to eligible providers.

RESOLVED that: The Forum noted the report.

44 Maintained Nursery Supplement

The Forum considered a report by the Interim Director for Children's Services, which outlined the funding of the maintained nursery supplement for North Northamptonshire Council maintained nursery schools, including Croyland, Highfield, Pen Green and Ronald Tree. The proposal put forward in the report sought to distribute funding in line with DfE guidance.

During discussion, the principal points were noted:

- A member of the Forum clarified that due to the Pen Green Centre's unique model and the breadth of its work, both central government and the local authority had previously acknowledged that the Centre should receive core funding, for its integrated model. In addition to this, maintained nursery schools also received supplementary funding, in recognition of their statutory responsibilities.
- Members posited that maintained nursery schools should be funded sufficiently and expressed concern that since the local authority had adopted the single funding formula for early years, there had been a demise in this funding. The Forum recognised that this was a national problem and queried what the local authority had done to support the budgets of maintained nursery schools.
- The Chair of the Forum also acknowledged that there existed a national issue of funding around the maintained nursery sector. He suggested that the maintained nursery supplement should be equitable and distributed equally, based upon participation rates, but also that additional funding would need to be made available, to support additional services provided by early years settings, such as Pen Green.
- The Vice Chair of the Forum stated that clarification from the DfE regarding funding arrangements for the maintained nursery sector would assist the Forum to make an informed decision on this matter.
- One member of the Forum urged colleagues to make contact with maintained nursery schools, to understand the circumstances in which these settings were operating. She posited that this would help both the Schools Forum and local authority to shape its challenge to central government and the DfE.

- Finally, the Chair suggested that the consultation should include the caveat that members' views on the suggested proposals should consider the assumption that DfE guidance would be aligned with the principles of the proposals.

In response, the Interim Director of Children's Services clarified that:

- The local authority received DSG funding, to be distributed in line with central government recommendations. Officers had written to the DfE and asked for detail of any potential additional funding to support the unique structure of Pen Green. She assured Forum members that the local authority continued to pursue an alternative supplementary arrangement, which would set the funding of Pen Green outside of DfE regulations on the DSG.
- It was the local authority's understanding that funding should be distributed in accordance with DfE regulations, which was to be split equally based upon participation rates. If an agreement could be reached with central government concerning the additionality/'special case' of Pen Green, to be funded outside of the DSG, then this capital would be independent from the distribution of the maintained nursery supplement.
- The local authority required assurance that it was following DfE guidance to the letter of the law, regarding the distribution of funding. Officers also sought to ensure transparency of decision-making. She emphasised that North Northamptonshire Council needed to ensure that there would be parity and that settings were funded in line with the spirit of guidance.
- The maintained nursery supplement consultation would go out first to the heads of the maintained nursery schools across North Northamptonshire. The wider consultation would then be made available to the entirety of the sector. Officers would continue to liaise with the DfE and seek guidance. Feedback from the consultation would be compiled into a report, to return to the next meeting of the Schools Forum.

The Strategic Finance Business Partner clarified that:

- The maintained nursery supplement was awarded to the authority by the DfE at a rate of £4.73 an hour and was based upon part time equivalent, which was determined by the participation of children in maintained nursery schools. At the time of meeting, this figure was 346.17 part time equivalents, which equated next year's allocation of £933k. Officers sought to follow the DfE guidance as to how supplementary funding should be distributed amongst maintained nursery schools.

RESOLVED that: The Forum noted the report.

45 Schools Forum Plan

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the item and highlighted the following points:

- The next meeting of the North Northamptonshire Schools Forum would be held on 17th March 2022.

RESOLVED that: The Forum noted the report.

46 Urgent Business

There was none.

There being no further business the meeting closed.

Agenda Item 02 – Appendix A

Mr James Birkett
Head Teacher /Chair of North Northants School Forum
Wollaston School
Northamptonshire
11 Jan 2022

Dear Mr Birkett

I am concerned that the consultation to not fund the Local Authority services for children with disabilities was ill informed to schools as discussed at a recent School Forum for the North. I had not realised from the consultation that this would affect the Specialist Support Service (providing the autism specialists, teachers of the deaf (TOD) and QTVI s and the early years disability team, Portage). They not only offer specialist advice to schools and settings, but to parents to help with home life - which has a knock-on effect to school life. They are extremely well thought of and are incredibly well-used, supporting students to enable them to be ready to learn in school. They provide workshops for parents on puberty, food issues, toileting (for younger children) anger management, and overviews to Autism. Paediatricians within Health Care suggest parents refer themselves to SSS for specialist support.

The Sensory Impairment Service provide the specialist teaching staff and technical support and equipment for our deaf children and those children with visual impairments. These staff are qualified in Braille and BSL. For busy school staff, finding staff qualified at this level, for the salary available, potentially unplanned if the student moved in from another school or county, would be an immense challenge. Having the support of the specialist LA staff is not something to lightly dispose of.

There was some discussion at the School Forum around the effectiveness of the consultation process for this agenda item, and I am concerned that 30+ responses out of 135 schools is not a balanced representation of schools' decisions. I think the impact of choosing not to transfer the funds from the DSG to the LA was not made clear to busy Heads and I wonder if asking if they wanted the % increase or finding their own support services would have given a different reply.

I also think that it would be prudent to have a robust alternative in place before ending the service with the LA for the benefit of those disabled students. Their lives are already disadvantaged. There is always a need to look for innovative ways to move forward but there should be something ready to use before permanently ending an existing route of support.

I do not think the Forum had been fully informed of the impact of this decision and I feel uncomfortable about the number of schools who responded to the difficult to access a consultation which did not make clear the impact this decision would have on the services they use.

I have sent this with every best intention for the disabled children and young people of North Northants.

With kind regards,

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Appendix

Agenda Item 02 – Appendix B - Officers' response to anonymous correspondence

Dear

Thank you for writing to inform me of your concerns about the process that was followed in support of the School's Forums decision making process relating to the Sensory impairment Service (SIS) and Specialist Support Services (SSS)

The purpose of the Forum is to bring together representatives of all schools, academies and early years providers across the area to consider key issues relating to education funding and finance. Where appropriate, this is supported by wider consultation with all stakeholders. This is undertaken in order to better inform discussion and the decision making process.

In this case, the issue for consideration was the way in which the SIS and SSS teams were to be funded in future, not how the service would be provided or if it should be redesigned or withdrawn. The need for, and benefit of, the services provided was recognised and I believe understood by all members of the Forum. In considering the options presented, members focus was on creating a sustainable funding model that met the needs of all schools. The outcome of the consultation process was used to guide these considerations.

The Forum decision has now been enacted through the calculation and distribution of school's budgets. As such it is not possible at this time to revisit the outcome of the meeting. However, I understand your concerns about the members understanding of the implications of this decision and how services will continue to meet pupils needs. Therefore, I will ask that Council officers bring a report to the May meeting of Forum that addresses these issues for members consideration. Should you wish to speak at this meeting to set out your concerns, please let me know.

Thank you again for contacting me.

Yours

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**North Northamptonshire Schools Forum: 17th March 2022
Early Years Funding 2022-2023 Proposal Report and additional Information**

1. Introduction

North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) is required to consult with Schools Forum on the proposed arrangements for the Early Years Funding Formula for Private, Voluntary, and Independent settings (PVI), Childminders and Maintained Nursery Sector (MNS) funded providers.

NNC is committed to supporting and enabling the funded and non-funded Early Years sector to deliver sustainable and high-quality provision within North Northamptonshire. The proposal available within this report has been based on a safe and sound balance of our commitment to passport as much DSG funding to providers, as well as being able to meet our statutory duties as a council in delivering a high-quality service to the Early Years Sector.

2. Schools Forum requirements

This report includes clarity on the following points raised at Extraordinary Schools Forum held 10 February 2022:

- Itemised Central Costs of the two services – Appendix A
- Additional Information regarding 2 Years Old Funding
- Additional Information regarding Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)
- Additional Information regarding Disability Access Fund (DAF)
- Additional Information regarding Deprivation Funding

This updated report is being presented to Schools Forum for the following:

- Approve the 5% retention for central costs from the 3- and 4-year budget only. **Point 2.1**

Table 1 - Proposed rates to providers for 2022-23

Funded Entitlements	2021-22 rates	Change	2022-23 proposed*
2-year-old funding	£5.23 per hour	19p increase	£5.42 per hour
Universal and Extended Entitlement for 3- and 4-year-olds	£3.97 per hour	16p increase	£4.13 per hour
Notional Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) which is Special Educational Needs (SEN) Inclusion Fund (SENIF)	£0.08	Frozen	£0.08 per hour
Deprivation for 3- and 4-year-olds 30% SOA	£0.28 per hour	2p increase	£0.30 per hour

Agenda Item 03

Funded Entitlements	2021-22 rates	Change	2022-23 proposed*
Inclusion Fund – including Notional SEND and Early Years High Needs	£8.00 per hour	Targeted at highest levels of need and budget capped	£160k
Centrally retained budget	5% - £896k	£30k	5% - £926k
Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)	£0.53 per hour	7p increase	£0.60p per hour
Disability Access Fund (DAF)	£615 per child per year	£185 per child per year increase	£800 per child per year

There is no intention to change the current formula funding structure for 2022-23. As per the Department for Education (DfE) /Education Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA) guidance the following are and will be included in the local funding formula for early years settings for 2022-2023:

- 2-year-old base rate
- 3- and 4-year-old Universal and Extended base rate
- Notional Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) (must be spent on SEND before requesting additional SEND support)
- Deprivation payments on IDACI bands under 30%.
- Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)
- Disability Inclusion fund; and
- Disability Access fund (DAF)

3. Centrally Retained Budget 5%

Central Retained Budget is calculated using a formula set by the DfE and it calculates the projected hours and linked income from the DfE.

Funding Entitlement	Draft Proposal 2022-2023
Base Rate for 3 and 4 year olds	£16,623,100.49
Notional SEND	£321,997.10
Inclusion	£160,998.55
Deprivation	£400,000.00
	£17,506,096.15
Central Expenditure	£925,741.67
Sub Total	£18,431,837.82
Contingency	£324,493.48
Total	£18,756,331.31

Therefore, the central budget for 2022-2023 will be £925k (5%) This movement requires approval at Schools Forum via a vote.

The disaggregation of the service into two Services following the unitary split has resulted in a need to increase the centrally retained budget due to increase of costs. **See appendix A**

This will enable North Northamptonshire Council to fully meet its statutory duties as per the Childcare Acts of 2006 and 2016, specifically regarding:

- Statutory Back-office function – analysing claim data, resolving duplicate claims, eligibility checks, payment data and payments
- Statutory Families Information Service and Sufficiency Duty
- Inclusion and SEND services
- *Census Contingency Fund – children claiming outside of Census
- Statutory Audits of Childcare Providers claiming public funds
- Statutory Childcare Sufficiency function
- Statutory Support Service
- Training and Advisory Service

4. Rates to be received by Local Authorities

The increased hourly rates for the Early Years Entitlements for 2-year-olds and 3 and 4-year-olds were announced 25 November 2021 as set out in the [2022 to 2023 early years technical note](#). Funding for the early years entitlements includes:

- Universal Free Entitlement for 3 and 4-year-olds
- Extended Entitlement (30 hours) for 3 and 4-year-olds
- 2-Year-old Funding

The indicative allocations for each local authority for the above funding streams is calculated as follows:

- the number of part-time equivalents (PTEs) taking up the entitlements as recorded on the January 2021 schools, Early Years and AP Census
- multiplied by 15 hours × 38 weeks × local authority's hourly funding rate
- Education Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA) will update these initial allocations in July 2022 based on January 2022 PTE census numbers
- July 2023, based on five-twelfths of the January 2022 PTE census numbers (to cover the April 2022 to August 2023 period), and seven-twelfths of the January 2023 PTE census numbers (to cover the September 2022 to March 2023 period)

This report proposes the hourly rates allocation of funding for *Early Years places for 2-, 3- and 4-year olds received via the Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF) as set by the Department for Education (DfE) through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

Expected Funded Entitlement	2021-2022	2022-2023
2-Year-old base rate	£5.41	£5.62
*Universal and Extended Entitlement for 3- and 4-year-olds	£4.49	£4.66

*It is the expectation of the DfE that the minimum funding floor increase will be £4.61 per hour for the universal and extended funding for 3- and 4-year-olds.

Expected Increases to also be received are:

Expected Funding	2021-2022	2022-2023
Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)	£0.53p	£0.60p
Disability Access Fund (DAF)	£615*	£800

**per eligible child, per year*

As per the DfE/ESFA guidance the following will be included in the funding formula calculation for 2022-2023

- 2-year-old base rate
- 3 and 4-year-old Universal and Extended base rate
- Deprivation payments on IDACI bands under 30%
- DSG Contingency for any unexpected decrease through the year
- *Notional SEND in addition to the base rate

5. Proposed Funding Rates 2022/23

5.1. 3 and 4 year olds

In previous years, the base rate quoted for 3- and 4-year-old provision has included an element for notional SEND, £0.08 of the £4.05 in 2021/22. To provide greater clarity, for 2022/23 it is proposed to separate these amounts more clearly. The expectation of all Early Years Providers is that the Notional SEND should be retained by the setting and used to support children with additional needs. In future, the effective use of the Notional SEND funding will form part of the Early Years Audit process where, upon request, evidence on how the funds have been spent and the impact on the child will be requested. The Notional SEND element is therefore the primary support for children with additional needs in Early Years.

It is proposed the base rate itself is increased from £3.97 per hour to £4.13 per, an increase of slightly over 4%. For clarity, this is separate to the Notional SEND funding set out above. As such, the comparative hourly rate from 2021/22 is an increase from £4.05 per hour to £4.21 per hour.

The Deprivation factor, paid based on postcode, will be increased by £0.02 per hour from £0.28 per hour to £0.30 per hour, an increase of over 7%.

The Inclusion Fund (IF) has previously been used to provide additional, non-statutory, support to settings in meeting identified Special Educational Needs and supporting inclusion. Due to increasing demand, it is projected that the IF will overspend in 2021/22, leading to a deficit being carried forward in the Early Years Block (EYB)

The IF has to date been funded in part through a transfer from the High Needs Block (HNB) element of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The HNB as a whole is also under increasing pressure and

consequently is also projecting an overspend, and consequent deficit to be carried forward, for 2021/22.

To create a resilient and sustainable budget that looks to balance all expenditure within the DSG, whilst still ensuring statutory requirements are met, the Schools Forum agreed at its January 2022 meeting to restrict the non-statutory SEND resources that are available to schools. In addition, a Task and Finish group was established to review the wider issues around High Needs Funding, including in the Early Years Sector. Appropriate representation from the sector will be included in the membership of the group.

For 2022/23 it is clear there will be no resources available to transfer from HNB to EYB and so the IF has reduced funding available. In line with the Forum decision in relation to schools, it is proposed to take a more focussed approach to the delivery of additional, non-statutory, SEND funding. This will look to provide one off resource that support inclusion and allow settings to take action that allows them better meet needs. Applications for this funding will need to demonstrate a lasting impact on the investment of these resources.

In line with the forum decision in relation to schools, these arrangements will be in place until September 2022. Any continuation will be subject to the work of the Task and Finish Group.

5.2 2-Year-old Funding (2YO)

The national funding rate for 2-year-olds is flat rate per hour for all eligible 2-year-olds in North Northamptonshire. Funding allocation for all Local Authorities is based on families who have registered a child's birth who are then in receipt of certain benefits from the Department of Work and Pensions. This information is highly confidential and is not shared with the LA at any point in the eligibility process.

For a family to be eligible for a 2 year funded place, an online check must be made, and an eligible code generated. NNC have an online checking service for families to check eligibility. This online checking services links directly with The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to provide an instant response to the eligibility check.

NNC complete a mailshot to parents/carers who **could be eligible** for a funded place to increase take up. This information is shared with LA's by the Department for Education and has very strict guidelines for use. This information cannot be shared outside of 4 named LA officers and is deleted within 14 days of being downloaded.

NNC are not provided with details of eligible children or eligible families and are reliant on parents/carers using the online checking system to determine eligibility. Once a 2 year funding place has been granted, it does not expire until the child becomes entitled to the Universal Free Entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds, regardless of any change in family circumstances.

There is no change to this process for 2022/2023.

5.3 Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)

The national rate for EYPP is 60 pence per hour per eligible child, up to a maximum 570 hours per year, split across 3 Funding Blocks as set out in the [2022 to 2023 early years technical note](#). The indicative allocation for each local authority is calculated as follows:

- the number of PTEs taking up the EYPP as recorded on the January 2021 schools, early years, and AP censuses.
- Multiplied by 15 hours x 38 weeks x £0.60

For a family to be eligible for EYPP, an eligibility check must be made. NNC have an EYPP Bulk Checker built into the monthly Headcount Return on the provider portal. If a setting submits details of any parent/carer, as part of the payment process these details are bulk checked against a link directly with Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). This provides an instant decision regarding eligibility and prompts payment if eligible.

All data regarding eligibility for EYPP is held directly by DWP. The information is highly confidential and is not shared with the LA at any point. The details of the child in the Provider Portal are given a 'P' marker which denotes eligibility for EYPP.

NNC are not provided with details of eligible children or eligible families and are reliant on parents/carers providing their setting with personal details such as family name, address, and NI number. If the information provided to the setting or information held by the DWP is incorrect, this will negatively impact the eligibility for an EYPP place.

If a child is eligible, payment is then made alongside the main monthly payment run

There is no change to this process for 2022/2023.

5.4 Disability Access Fund (DAF)

The national rate for DAF is £800 per eligible child per year. Allocations are calculated based on Disability Living Allowance (DLA) data from February 2021. These allocations will not change and are final for 2022 to 2023. For each local authority, the total February 2021 DLA claimant count of 3 and 4-year-old children, using data from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), is adjusted to remove an estimated number of children in reception. This gives an estimate of the number of 3 and 4-year-olds eligible to take up DAF in the local authority, which is multiplied by £800 to arrive at the final allocation. On receipt of the 3 and 4 allocations, the LA does the following:

- Allocates 5% for retained items (the maximum that can be retained is 5%)
- Allocates 95% of the budget (called pass through) to the required base rate and supplements (not be greater than 10% of the total allocation within the formula), SENDIF and contingency

DAF funding can be claimed for at any point once a child has become eligible for a Universal 3 and 4 year old funded place. A setting can email the Early Years Funding and Business Compliance Service the child's name and evidence of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for that child and funding will be paid as a lump sum in the next payment run. The DLA must be for the 3 and 4 year old child in a setting and cannot be a sibling or parent/carer

NNC are not provided with details of eligible children or eligible families and are reliant on parents/carers providing their setting with proof of the DLA entitlement before granting DAF.

There is no change to this process for 2022/2023.

5.5 Deprivation Funding

The Deprivation supplement is paid against children who live in one of the 30% Super Output Areas (SOA) in the North Northamptonshire.

NNC, as part of the payment process, undertake a bulk check of the submitted children's postcodes from the monthly Provider Portal. Any child living in a postcode area within the 30%SOA will be assigned the deprivation funding to the hourly rate for that child.

The monthly payment report provides information on children who have been granted the deprivation funding and the amount. For 2021-2022 the amount was 28p per hour per eligible child the proposed amount for 2022/2023 is 30p per hour per eligible child.

NNC are not provided with details children or families living in the 30% SOA and are reliant on parents/carers providing their setting with correct address details each month as part of the headcount submission on the Provider Portal. If the information provided to the setting incorrect, this would negatively impact the eligibility for Deprivation Funding.

If a child is eligible, payment is then made alongside the main monthly payment run

There is no change to this process for 2022/2023

6. Next Steps

Forum to vote on the following points:

1. Approve the 5% retention for central costs from the 3- and 4-year budget only. **Point 2.1**

North Northamptonshire Council updated Early Years Funding Proposal Report 2022-2023

23rd February 2022

Kelly Mills – Early Years' Funding and Business Compliance Service Manager

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North Northamptonshire Schools Forum
Outcomes of consultation on the distribution methodology for the
Maintained Nursery Supplement 2022/23
17th March 2022

1. Introduction

At its extraordinary meeting held on 10th February 2022, the School's Forum received a report relating to the future methodology to be used for the distribution of Maintained Nursery Supplement (MNS) grant. The report recommended, and it was agreed, that a consultation should be undertaken to gather the views of the four Maintained Nursery Schools in North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) all of whom would be directly impacted by any change in methodology.

The consultation has now been completed, (closing date for submissions was 3rd March 2022). This report sets out the responses that have been received and seeks to take the view of Forum on options for the preferred way forward, as a statutory consultee, that will be fed into the Council's decision making process.

2. Background

The MNS grant is provided by the Department for Education (DfE) to support the ongoing provision of the universal offer of 15 hours free nursery education in Maintained Nursey Schools. The guidance in relation to the provision and intended use of the grant can be found here [Early years entitlements: local authority funding of providers operational guide 2022 to 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/early-years-entitlements-local-authority-funding-of-providers-operational-guide-2022-to-2023).

The Indicative 2022/23 Early Years Maintained Nursery School Supplement in the Early Years Block DSG published in December 2021 is derived by taking the 2021/22 supplementary funding rate as the starting point and then uplifting it by 3.47% and rounding to two decimal places. This supplementary funding rate is then multiplied by the 15 hour universal participation hours in the January 2021 census. Adjustments are made later in the financial year when actual participation hours based on January 2022 census are known, with the final allocation determined in July 2023 based on 5 months of the January 2022 census and 7 months of the January 2023 census.

The grant originated in 2017/18 following a change in the funding of early years provision that could have negatively impacted on Maintained Nursery Schools due to the additional costs they have to meet compared to Private, Voluntary and Independent providers, as a result of differing regulatory frameworks for example. At that time the allocation for Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) was adjusted by DfE to reflect additional resources that were provided to the Council through other routes to support the extended offer that was provided in a number the Nursery Schools in the area, including Pen Green, now in North Northamptonshire.

Over time, and as a result of the move to the distribution methodology set out above, the ability to identify the amount of grant received for protection of the universal offer, and the amount for the extended offer has been lost. The DfE are clear that it is now for each Council to decide how best to use the grant to support the ongoing provision of services in their area. Also over this time the DfE have reduced overall amount of grant that of distributed through this route.

As a result of uncertainty around grant allocations, and a commitment to provide stability during the Local Government Review (LGR) process, the 2021/22 allocation for NNC nurseries was based on NCC's 2020/21 grant distribution levels, this resulted in a deficit as the overall quantum for funding reduced by £311k from the estimate of £1.204m to £893k. This deficit is estimated to be reduced by around £200k as part of an adjustment to funding levels that is still to be completed following LGR – the final outturn will not be known until July 2022 and any adjustments will be reflected 2023/24.

The initial split of the former NCC grant was undertaken on the basis of participation levels in line with the DfE grant calculation methodology. As part of the LGR process, it was recognised that this did not reflect actual historic spend patterns and so an adjustment would be required. For 2021/22 there was an agreement for such an adjustment to be actioned. The Council is continuing to work to ensure that historic spend patterns are appropriately reflected in the ongoing split of the grant.

Following the closure of Northamptonshire County Council's 2020-21 accounts, it has been identified that there are carried forward balances available which could be used to support the available MNS grant. The availability and use of these one off resources remain subject to verification by external audit and would have to be the subject of a formal NNC decision making process to offset any future deficit positions.

The NCC distribution methodology used previously to allocate resources to each of the individual Nursery Schools has been broadly based on historic allocations and adjusted to reflect changing grant levels.

The impact of this on the proportional split of grant, as set against levels of participation, the basis on which the grant is allocated to NNC, is as follows:

Distribution of participation hours – vs – distribution of funding

Maintained Nursery School	Participation hours	% hours	Funding award 21/22	% Funding award 21/22
Croyland	4117.33	16	£52,079	4
Highfield	5972.00	23	£64,200	6
Pen Green	9652.00	36	£1,027,620	85
Ronald Tree	6514.33	25	£60,112	5
Total	26255.66	100	£1,204,011	100

The grant has been distributed in 2021-22 as presented and agreed at Northamptonshire County Council's March 2021 Schools Forum as follows:

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Nursery School	2017-18 DSG EYMNSS Devolved Locally	%	2020-21 DSG EYMNSS received from ESFA	%	2020-21 DSG EYMNSS Devolved Locally	Transfer between Nursery Schools	2020-21 DSG EYMNSS Devolved Locally	%
Camrose	£487,455	22%	£213,016	10%	£379,226		£379,226	21%
Gloucester	£77,680	4%	£213,016	10%	£49,694		£49,694	3%
Parklands	£66,608	3%	£106,508	5%	£46,930		£46,930	3%
Whitehills	£69,305	3%	£124,260	6%	£48,615		£48,615	3%
Wallace Road	£68,969	3%	£142,011	7%	£46,659		£46,659	3%
WNC Total	£770,017	35%	£798,811	37%	£571,124	£0	£571,124	32%
Pen Green	£1,167,523	54%	£337,276	16%	£1,042,620	(£15,000)	£1,027,620	58%
Croyland	£78,476	4%	£177,514	8%	£52,079		£52,079	3%
Ronald Tree	£76,075	3%	£266,270	12%	£45,112	£15,000	£60,112	3%
Highfield	£82,528	4%	£195,265	9%	£64,200		£64,200	4%
NNC Total	£1,404,602	65%	£976,325	45%	£1,204,011	£0	£1,204,011	68%
Total	£2,174,619	100%	£1,775,136	82%	£1,775,135	£0	£1,775,135	100%

This budget allocation is as a result of the additional resources historically allocated to the grant for the extended offer. The actual allocation to each Nursery school does not adequately reflect the purpose of the EYMNSS which is to protect the universal 15 hour provision. As a result of this, three of the Nursery Schools are projecting increasing deficits year on year as a consequence of this approach.

The reduced level of participation in 2021/22 due to Covid has led to a reduction in EYMNSS funding received from ESFA contributing to the EYMNSS estimated overspend of around £111k after allowing for the agreed adjustment following LGR.. The overall level of grant now received does not reflect the historic commitments that were made to support the extended offer, and to provide the protection for the 15 hour universal offer which is the purpose of the grant. Further engagement is required with DfE to clarify the impact this will have on services and make the case for additional resources to be allocated to support services to children, young people and their families.

A paper was presented to the School's Forum at its meeting on 10th February 2022 setting out possible ways forward, and proposed a consultation to be undertaken with the Nursery Schools based on three options that could address these issues. The intended outcome of this process was to enable the council to take an informed decision on how it can meet its statutory duty to protect the universal 15 hour provision at its Maintained Nursery Schools as well as reflect the funding for the extended offer which has become absorbed in the "enhanced" supplementary funding rate, whilst ensuring a robust and transparent distribution methodology that is fit for purpose is in place.

At that meeting it was stated in the report that to move away from participation as a methodology for distribution of the grant would require an approved disapplication of regulations by the Secretary of State. Since then, the DfE have confirmed that a disapplication request is not required and the decision around the methodology of the distribution of EYMNSS is at the discretion of the Council. The DfE has confirmed that this does not affect the validity of the consultation that has been undertaken.

As a result of the above, the three options that were set out to Forum, and presented as the basis of the consultation, assumed that there may be a need to move towards participation as the sole distribution methodology over a period of time. As this is now not the case it is possible to review the consultation responses and consider a wider range of options to address the issues set out above.

3. Consultation

The consultation paper presented at the School's Forum on 10th February sought views on three options for the future distribution methodology for MNS grant. These all related to either maintaining the status quo or moving, immediately or over time, towards a distribution based on participation.

The total available to be distributed of £622k was based on the indicative DfE allocation to NNC for 2022/23, £933k less the projected overspend for 2021/22 of £311k.

The options were presented as follows:

Option 1 - Based on participation hours from the Annual Early Years School Census

Nursery	Based on pupil hours Jan 2022	% based on pupil hours Jan 2022	Pupil hours Jan 2022
Croyland Children's Centre and Nursery School	£97,617	16%	4,117
Highfield Nursery School	£141,590	23%	5,972
Pen Green Centre for Children and their Families *	£228,838	37%	9,652
Ronald Tree Nursery School & Children's Centre	£154,448	25%	6,514
Total	£622,493	100%	26,256

Option 2 - Half way House

Nursery	Half Way House	Half Way House
Croyland Children's Centre and Nursery School	£74,699	12%
Highfield Nursery School	£102,711	17%
Pen Green Centre for Children and their Families *	£336,146	54%
Ronald Tree Nursery School & Children's Centre	£108,936	18%
Total	£622,493	100%

Option 3 - Based on 0% MFG for the other 3 nursery schools

Nursery	0% MFG for the other 3 nursery schools	% based on 0% MFG for the other 3 nursery schools
Croyland Children's Centre and Nursery School	£52,079	8%
Highfield Nursery School	£64,200	10%
Pen Green Centre for Children and their Families *	£446,102	72%
Ronald Tree Nursery School & Children's Centre	£60,112	10%

Total	£622,493	100%
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The consultation paper consisted of 4 questions specific to the options above:

- a) Please identify your preferred option for the Maintained Nursery Supplement.
- b) Please outline the reasons for your preference.
- c) Please identify any additional factors that you would wish to be taken into consideration in determining the maintained nursery supplement distribution.
- d) If you wish to suggest an alternative model of funding please include detail that would assist the LA/Schools Forum in understanding the proposal and ensuring compliance with the DfE guidance.

Eight responses were received to the consultation process, these are attached as follows:

Appendix A - Croyland and Highfield Responses

Appendix B – Ronald Tree Response

Appendix C – Overall responses including incomplete questions.

Of the three nurseries that responded, all selected option 2 as their favoured approach of those set out in the paper. Of the other respondents, only one answered this specific question and they selected option 1.

From the text responses received, it is clear that there is broad agreement with the principle of moving towards a transparent and equitable methodology, but also an understanding that in reallocating limited resources this could have a significant impact on individual providers.

A number of specific questions were raised through the consultation process and these have been considered in developing this paper.

1. NNC response to consultation

The options presented through the consultation process assumed that the quantum available for distribution was £622,493, being the NNC allocation for 2022/23 £933,309 less the anticipated deficit carried forward from 2021/22 £310,816. As set out above, a review of the historic NCC distribution of MNS grant showed that the allocation methodology used to allocate budget at LGR did not reflect actual spend.

As such, a reallocation is required that increases the resources available to NNC. This, along with NCC reserves that will be disaggregated to the North could be used to support MNS grant expenditure, means that modelling the distribution based on the total available grant for 2022/23 of £933,309, would be more appropriate.

Throughout this process, the options presented have sought to distribute the full amount of grant forecast to be provided by DfE, adjusted for historic deficits. This approach will continue to be implemented as work is completed to quantify the actual funding that will be available for the 2022/23 financial year.

This remains an indicative modelling of the allocations, as work is ongoing to finalise the impact of these actions, and the use of resources in this way would be subject to formal Council decision making processes.

Based on this approach, options 1, 2 and 3 can be represented as follows:

Option 1 - Based on Participation hours which is the same the basis NNC is funded by ESFA for EYMNSS

Option 1 - Based on Participation hours = the basis NNC is funded by ESFA for EYMNSS

Pupil hours Jan 2022	Nursery	2021-22 Budget Allocation	2022-23 Budget Based on pupil hours Jan 2022	% based on pupil hours Jan 2022	Change from 2021-22 Budget	2020-21 Uncommitted School Reserve Balance
£4,117	Croyland Children's Centre and Nursery School	£52,079	£146,359	16%	£94,280	£(4,888)
£5,972	Highfield Nursery School	£64,200	£212,286	23%	£148,086	£(58,004)
£9,652	Pen Green Centre for Children and their Families *	£1,027,620	£343,099	37%	£(684,521)	£314,362
£6,514	Ronald Tree Nursery School & Children's Centre	£60,112	£231,565	25%	£171,453	£0
£26,256	Total	£1,204,011	£933,309	100%	£(270,702)	£251,470

Option 2 – Based on half way house between participation hours and 0% MFG for the other 3 nursery schools

Option 2 - Half way House between Participation hours and 0% MFG for the other 3 nursery schools

Nursery	2021-22 Budget Allocation	2022-23 Budget Based on Half Way House	Half Way House	Change from 2021-22 Budget	2020-21 Uncommitted School Reserve Balance
Croyland Children's Centre and Nursery School	£52,079	£111,997	12%	£59,918	£(4,888)
Highfield Nursery School	£64,200	£153,996	17%	£89,796	£(58,004)
Pen Green Centre for Children and their Families *	£1,027,620	£503,987	54%	£(523,633)	£314,362
Ronald Tree Nursery School & Children's Centre	£60,112	£163,329	18%	£103,217	£0
Total	£1,204,011	£933,309	100%	£(270,702)	£251,470

Option 3 - Based on 0% MFG for the other 3 nursery schools

Option 3 - Based on 0% MFG for the other 3 nursery schools

Nursery	2021-22 Budget Allocation	2022-23 Budget Based on 0% MFG for the other 3 nursery schools	% based on 0% MFG for the other 3 nursery schools	Change from 2021-22 Budget	2020-21 Uncommitted School Reserve Balance
Croyland Children's Centre and Nursery School	£52,079	£52,079	6%	£0	£(4,888)
Highfield Nursery School	£64,200	£64,200	7%	£0	£(58,004)
Pen Green Centre for Children and their Families *	£1,027,620	£756,918	81%	£(270,702)	£314,362
Ronald Tree Nursery School & Children's Centre	£60,112	£60,112	6%	£0	£0
Total	£1,204,011	£933,309	100%	£(270,702)	£251,470

Based on the outcome of the consultation, and further to discussions with DFE about their expectations, requirements and the history of the grant, a review of these options presented has been undertaken.

Two further options have been developed that does not seek to establish a move towards the grant being distributed on the basis of participation, but looks to ensure that the purpose of the grant is fulfilled, i.e. all nurseries are protected to be able to provide the 15 hour universal provision, and then any available resources are used to support the extended offer delivered by Pen Green.

These further options are based on an estimate of the level of funding required to provide protection for the 15 hour universal offer, being the purpose of the grant, and then allocate further resources to Pen Green to reflect the extended offer. Option 4 gives the 3 maintained other nursery schools a 25% uplift in funding based on 2021/22 allocations. Option 5 provides for a 20% uplift in funding on the same basis. These estimates for the level of uplift reference the ongoing deficits these nurseries are experiencing and the impact of budget pressures on their operating costs.

These two options are modelled as follows:

Option 4 - Based on 25% increase for the other 3 nursery schools to realign budgets towards participation assuming Reserves agreed for use

Option 4 (a) - Based on 25% increase for the other 3 nursery schools to realign budgets towards participation

Nursery	2021-22 Budget Allocation	2022-23 Budget Based on 25% increase to the other 3 Nursery Schools to realign budgets towards participation	% based on 25% increase to the other 3 Nursery Schools to realign budgets towards participation	Change from 2021-22 Budget	2020-21 Uncommitted School Reserve Balance
Croyland Children's Centre and Nursery School	£52,079	£65,099	7%	£13,020	£(4,888)
Highfield Nursery School	£64,200	£80,250	9%	£16,050	£(58,004)
Pen Green Centre for Children and their Families *	£1,027,620	£712,820	76%	£(314,800)	£314,362
Ronald Tree Nursery School & Children's Centre	£60,112	£75,140	8%	£15,028	£0
Total	£1,204,011	£933,309	100%	£(270,702)	£251,470

Option 5 - Based on 20% increase for the other 3 nursery schools to realign budgets towards participation assuming Reserves agreed for use

Option 5 (a) - Based on 20% increase for the other 3 nursery schools to realign budgets towards participation assuming Reserves agreed for use

Nursery	2021-22 Budget Allocation	2022-23 Budget Based on 20% increase to the other 3 Nursery Schools to realign budgets towards participation	% based on 20% increase to the other 3 Nursery Schools to realign budgets towards participation	Change from 2021-22 Budget	2020-21 Uncommitted School Reserve Balance
Croyland Children's Centre and Nursery School	£52,079	£62,495	7%	£10,416	£(4,888)
Highfield Nursery School	£64,200	£77,040	8%	£12,840	£(58,004)
Pen Green Centre for Children and their Families *	£1,027,620	£721,640	77%	£(305,980)	£314,362
Ronald Tree Nursery School & Children's Centre	£60,112	£72,134	8%	£12,022	£0
Total	£1,204,011	£933,309	0%	£(270,702)	£251,470

2. Next Steps

School's Forum are asked to consider the consultation responses and the NNC proposals, set out above and in the attached appendices, and express a preference as to how NNC should proceed. This may be by identifying any of the options set out above as a preference or by asking that further consideration be given to specific identified issues.

This view will be fed in to the NNC decision making process which will be undertaken through a special meeting of the Executive on the 29th March 2022.

3. Finance Issues

The financial issues are as set out in the report.

4. Legal Issues

The legal issues are as set out in the report.

5. Recommendation

School's Forum is asked to consider this report and its appendices and agrees a view to be included in the NNC decision making process in relation to MNS grant for 2022/23.

Report Author:

Your name: Neil Goddard
 Your title: Assistant Director, Education (Interim)
 Email address: neil.goddard@northnorthants.gov.uk

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Please outline the reasons for your preference. - Please outline the reasons for your preference.

We feel it is difficult to take a view on any of the three options proposed without the detailed information and transparency as to how the MNS supplement was allocated across the 9 Nursery Schools for 2021-22 and what part of the £310,000 deficit is based on funding allocated from WNC/where this potential clawback will go? In recent meetings re the funding of our two schools in the West we have had no indication from WNC colleagues that additional funds would be coming back to the West MNS from the North. If there has been an underspend in WNC and the funding has been reallocated to NNC then this funding should stay with the North MNS, so as to provide stability and security for those schools.

We also feel there should be legal confirmation regarding the additional funding for the two integrated centre before considering whether a redistribution formula could be applied and the timescale for this.

Please identify any additional factors that you would wish to be taken into consideration in determining the maintained nursery supplement distribution. - Please identify any additional factors that you would wish to be taken into consideration in determining the maintained nursery supplement distribution.

At the February Schools Forum meeting NNC said that they would check with the DfE whether any funds ringfenced for integrated services were in the MNS supplementary funding block. Have you received confirmation from the DfE on this? Please can this correspondence be shared?

Please can you provide a copy of the disapplication request to the DfE for transparency? Also, you mention Schools Forum making an informed decision. Please can you confirm if Schools Forum or NNC will make the final decision on this proposal?

Point 8. You state that there is a deficit position of £310,816 for MNS supplement, and that the distribution of funds in 2021/2022 (as agreed at NCC Schools Forum in March 21) was greater than funds available through final settlement (as per the table in the document). Please can you present more information on this? What allocation of funds was given to NNC for 2021-22? Of this allocation, what was from DfE and what was from NCC/West Northants Council (WNC) as part of the disaggregation process?

In the table you present an income/allocation of £893,195 for 2021/22.

DSG allocation for West Northants Council for 2021-22 was £732,915, with the five schools only allocated £571,130 by WNC, meaning an additional £161,785 was allocated to WNC which the West MNS did not receive. From correspondence with WNC it has been confirmed there was a transfer to NNC due to the shortfall. Please can you confirm how much was transferred as part of the disaggregation process? And, if WNC did agree a transfer of MNS supplement to the North, please can you also confirm how much of this is being clawed back by WNC?

We are aware that, for the four Nursery Schools in North, this would lead to a shortfall from an expected MNS budget of £1,204,011, but we struggle to make sense of why this is £310,818 if, firstly, the Council allocated the funding to a much greater level, and secondly, if WNC provided additional allocations to offset this shortfall.

Point 9: You state that NNC did not reduce payments scheduled to MNS nurseries in line with reduction in pupil numbers and therefore find a deficit position for 2021/22.

Questions: Why did you allocate the incorrect amounts of funding to the schools in the North for 2021/22? If you had made an error on this part, why are the four Nursery Schools (with already such minimal supplements) now having to see a cut? If the clawback is based on pupil numbers, what happened to the allocation provided by WNC and why has this not reduced the deficit for NNC? Also, if you were aware of the funding being driven purely by pupil numbers/funds no longer being ringfenced for integrated services, why did the Council over-allocate?

Please outline the reasons for your preference. - Please outline the reasons for your preference.

We have chosen proposal two because we know a more equitable, sustainable funding model is needed for all 4 maintained nursery schools to survive and continue to provide quality early years provision to the children in our communities. However, we recognise this can't be done overnight and we do not want to see such an immediate impact on Pen Green. In the longer term, we would like the funding to be shared evenly by participation – as represented by proposal one.

The three smaller MNS have cut all non-essential expenditure completely for the last three years and at Ronald Tree we have undertaken a complicated and stressful staffing restructure to streamline our staff to the bare minimum. Any revenue reserves have been completely used up by year on year 'in year' deficits caused by reductions in the EYMNSS since 2018-19.

At RTN we are in a 'catch 22' situation where, unless our funding is increased, we will not be able to pay our staff, but if we reduce our staff any further, we will not be able to accept all the children on our waiting lists for September, and our funding will be further cut.

The increasing needs of our children, in line with national trends, require a higher level of staffing than the statutory 1:13. At present our staff are over stretched and struggling to provide the exemplary support we believe the various SEND and vulnerable children that we have in our care deserve.

We see RTN as part of a cluster of four NNC MNS who should all be providing the very best early years provision and we have all been proud to be beacons of excellence in the early years. The children attending the MNS are the most deprived and vulnerable children in the county. Indeed, at Ronald Tree 87% of the children have some sort of vulnerability indicator - and many of them have multiple vulnerability indicators – ranging from involvement with social care to coming from very low-income households. Without the benefit of our early interventions many of our children will experience delays with identifying their additional needs, some may never narrow the gap between themselves and their peers at school, and some may remain at risk and unknown to social care.

The Windmill ward in which we are located, has been identified as part of the government's 'Levelling Up' strategy and Ronald Tree have been working with local councillors to raise the profile of our Nursery and recognise the importance of quality early years provision in raising pupil attainment throughout their schooling.

Last year we worked with the University of Northampton to complete a research study of the long-term social impact of our setting:

'Findings indicate that the net effect of the work of RTNS on its community and the well-being of individuals and families is highly beneficial, such that the social impact of RTNS is strong (Centre for Social Impact, 2021). Given the findings, a high level of confidence exists that the study aim - to identify evidence for the social impact Ronald Tree Nursery School provision has on children in an area of high deprivation – was achieved.'

We will email this document separately to AnnMarie Dodds and Jo Hutchinson to share.

Ronald Tree needs the distribution of the EYMNSS to change in order to survive as the only MNS in Kettering. There is no surplus expenditure to cut and whilst over 90% of school income is spent on staff salaries and on costs to maintain our staffing ratios, this is too high a proportion. With additional funding, Ronald Tree could further narrow the gap between our families and national levels in line with the levelling up agenda by increasing our ability to better support and engage families and provide outstanding care for those children who have SEND needs. We would also be able to offer quality CPD to our staff to reflect the changes in the curriculum and diverse needs of the families we work with.

Our underfunding has led to under investment in the maintenance of the grounds and buildings and in the resources for the children for far too long. We need to address this imbalance now before the costs of reparation are too high.

Any sudden cuts to income are very difficult to overcome and at Ronald Tree we have experienced the impact of these cuts over the last few years. We must, therefore support proposal two. This would enable our colleagues at Pen Green to continue, or to wind up satisfactorily, some of the additional work that they do there rather than proposal 1 which would bring all such activities to an immediate close and would present issues in making their staff redundant in an impossible time frame for NJC staff term and conditions. We value the work of all of the maintained nurseries in North Northants and believe they can all thrive if there is parity in the distribution of the EYMNSS

Ronald Tree, Highfield and Croyland all operated as Children's Centres up until 2014 so we understand the value of the work at Pen Green which supports vulnerable children and families too. However in Kettering and Wellingborough we support these vulnerable children and through them, their families, through the provision of the universal entitlement. That provision is at serious risk unless action is taken now. The needs of the 63% of North Northants' vulnerable children attending the MNS in Kettering and Wellingborough – who currently receive only 15% of the funding, must at least equal the needs of children and families in Corby.

Ronald Tree has received substantially less funding than all of the other maintained nursery schools across Northamptonshire for many years. It is time to redress this balance in a fair and transparent way.

Please identify any additional factors that you would wish to be taken into consideration in determining the maintained nursery supplement distribution. - Please identify any additional factors that you would wish to be taken into consideration in determining the maintained nursery supplement distribution.

The EYMNSS has been cut substantially since 2018-19.
From the introduction of the EYMNSS until 2018-2019 Ronald Tree received £76,076.

Ronald Tree have actively supported every initiative the government and the council asked us to, from becoming phase one children centres and offering year round integrated education and care, to prioritising taking funded two year olds and to supporting the 30 hours funding initiative to support parents returning to work. In Autumn 2020 we completed a Diagnostic Tool for the Local Authority and met to discuss every aspect of our income and expenditure to ensure total transparency and to ensure we were as cost effective as possible. We understand not all MNS engaged in this process.

We will continue to work with North Northants council to support the needs of our vulnerable families in Kettering as we have always done. An increased budget could enable us to look more closely at the requirements of our community and have a greater impact regarding the levelling up agenda.

Unbeknownst to the MNS the 30 hours initiative had a negative impact on the EYMNSS because it had a direct negative impact on the number of universal hours claimed at each setting. The first the MNS knew of this was in the Autumn of 2018 when we were advised that the EYMNSS would be cut by the ESFA by 9% in the following year. A disproportionate reduction was made however to try and support Highfield Nursery School which was already in deficit; so Ronald Tree had the EYMNSS cut to £56,822 in 2019-2020 (more than 25%) to account for the underfunding in 2018-19 and going forward into 2019-2020.

There was a reduction in the numbers on roll connected to the 30 hours even though the MNS expanded their overall capacity but this reduction on roll levelled off until Covid; the funding cuts did not. An in year unjustified cut of over £15,000 in 2020-2021 meant Ronald Tree received the lowest amount of EYMNSS funding per child.

This year Ronald Tree received £9.00 per hour supplement for each hour of universal participation. This compares to £10.75 for children at Highfields, £12.65 for children at Croyland and £106.47 for children at Pen Green. Is this fair and equitable? If there is a clear remit for the funding given by government to be used in this way, we would appreciate this information.

Whatever the conclusion of this consultation, we would welcome clarity on the distribution of the EYMNSS and how this is spent and accounted for in different settings. We believe every child in the community should have the same opportunity and would like to understand how the additional money has been distributed and spent.

We understand that some of the figures shared by North Northants may differ slightly from actual take up; however, it is the principle of the parity of funding that needs to be addressed. We spend every penny we receive on the children in our care and are left with no uncommitted balances at the end of the financial year.

In summary the children at Ronald Tree have consistently received less than their share of the EYMNSS allocation as determined by the DFE guidance. The funding being distributed at 5% compared to 25% participation in 2021-2022 is incomprehensible and we have really felt the impact of this.. We are pleased that this has finally been recognised after years of unsustainable reductions.

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North Northamptonshire Schools Forum SEND Update 17th March 2022

1. Purpose of Report

To update the schools forum on the strategic delivery plan that has been developed to improve outcomes for children and young people with additional needs, including Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The delivery plan, which set out three clear priorities, will provide a guide for determining the work of the HNB task, as well as future items for the school's forum.

The three key priorities set out are:

- To support schools in developing local provision by strengthening an early help offer of **SEND health and education local teams around our mainstream schools**
- Reviewing and developing **responsive, flexible and effective local specialist provision** as part of an annual cycle
- Ensuring the governance arrangements for specialist resources are effectively managing demand and need and **responsive to assess and review need**

To do this we are implementing **quality assurance reporting systems** and using these to **drive through improved performance**

1.2 The purpose of the strategy is to put in place a programme that will inform the development of the High Needs budget and the forecast going forward. At the next meeting of the schools forum the forecast budget position for the High Needs Block (HNB) of the Dedicated School Grant (DSG) 2022/23 will be shared alongside an update on the sufficiency report that is underway to inform on the development of current and future SEND needs.

2. Decision(s) recommended

2.1 To note, discuss and comment on the SEND delivery plan to improve the Council's support for children with SEND.

3. Matters for Consideration

3.1 The forum will be aware that the Children & Families Act 2014 introduced major changes for children and young people with SEND and that this has resulted in significant pressure for all LAs nationally, both with the increasing demand for statutory support through Education, Health & Care Plans and also the resultant impact on the DSG High Needs budgets.

3.2 There is an acknowledged problem nationally that the High Needs Block within the DSG is underfunded. Over 80% of local authorities are reporting a High Needs Block deficit and the scale of the shortfall in funding.

3.3 The impact of Covid 19 has also had a significant effect on local authorities and schools.

7. Recommendation

School's Forum is asked to consider this report and accompanying presentation, note and comment on the approach and progress on more effectively meeting SEND needs, and identify any specific areas for a more detailed report to a future meeting

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North Northamptonshire Council



SCHOOLS FORUM

FEBRUARY/MARCH
2022

Groups of Schools model

For the vast majority of children with SEND, they can and should have their needs met in mainstream Settings.

One of our biggest areas for reform is aimed at reforming SEND provision in mainstream settings so that it is easier for schools to access resource without the need for an EHCP and they are incentivised to intervene early. We are exploring a groups of schools model, to put a greater share of budgets in the hands of local School leaders whilst recognising that SEND provision is generally above what an individual school would be able to arrange.

The overarching aims of a groups of schools model is therefore to:-

- Put funding for the majority of children with SEND firmly in the hands of schools to make access to the necessary provision easier, quicker, supporting improved early intervention and consistent high-quality support.
- Promote co-operation and inclusion through a clear funding, incentive and accountability structure which leads to improved financial sustainability, without creating unnecessary complexity or burden.

What are we aiming to achieve

- **Increased confidence, expertise and inclusion within each of the four localities of schools**, through a more highly trained workforce, enhanced support and realignment of resources that are equitably distributed, of high quality and value for money.
- A **local offer** that enables the majority of children and young people to have the same offer as each other and to be **educated with pupils of their own age**, in their **local community school**, which is properly equipped and fit for purpose.
- A system that has **capacity for prevention as well as providing for those young people with the most complex/significant needs**. and is flexible and responsive to needs, with minimum levels of bureaucracy

Our three key priorities:

1. To support schools in developing local provision by strengthening an early help offer of **SEND health and education local teams around our mainstream schools**
2. Reviewing and developing **responsive, flexible and effective local specialist provision** as part of an annual cycle
3. Ensuring the governance arrangements for specialist resources are effectively managing demand and need and **responsive to assess and review need**

To do this we will be putting in place **quality assurance reporting systems** and using them to **drive through improved performance**

- We will be **reconfiguring our specialized teams** to work across the **four localities** to maximise integrated working, embedding individual and locality meetings with all our schools
- We will be working closely with SENCOs and our school improvement team to ensure the graduated approach is firmly embedded, and offering **blended professional development** to support the school workforce and strengthen an **inclusive classroom ethos**.
- We will be **co – producing with our parent carer forum an early help offer** for families to access their local team.

What we are doing: Priority One

Developing Local Provision and Early Help Offer

Principles of the locality integrated team model will be based on:

A needs led system

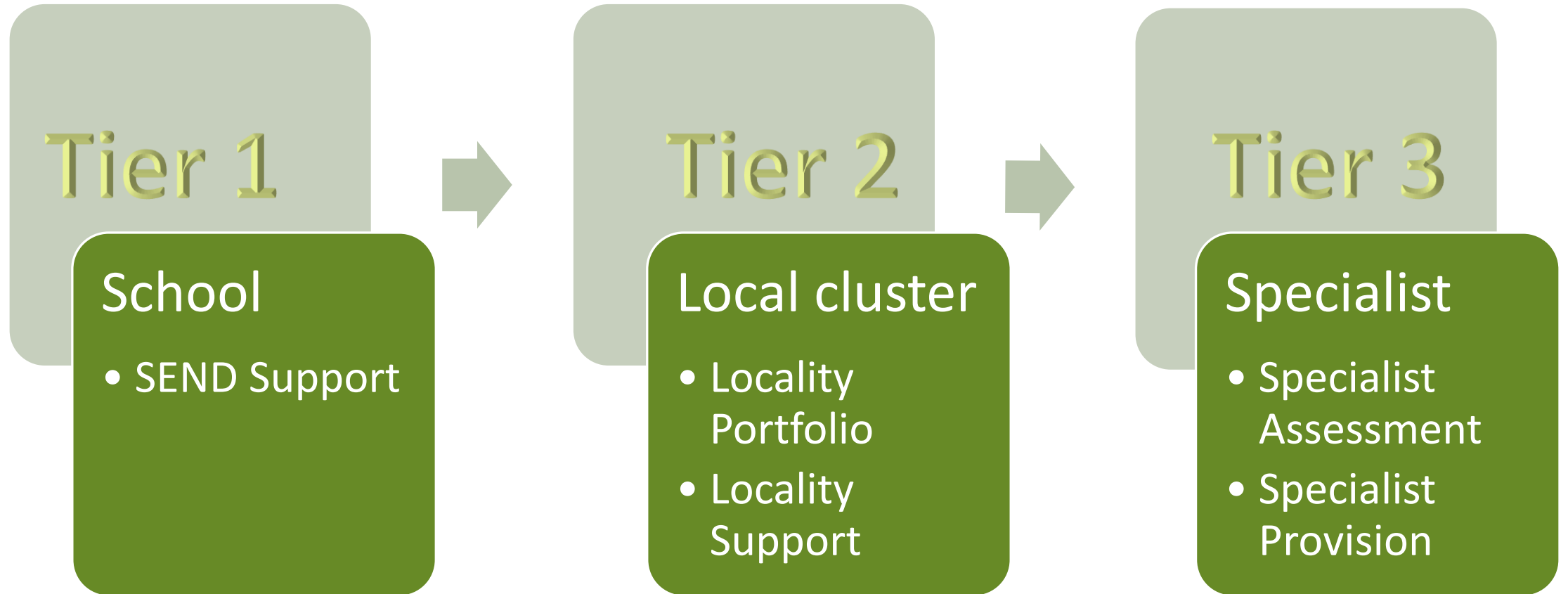
Building resilience

Ownership by the local cluster of schools

Local solutions to local priorities

Support for inclusion so that every school is a good school for pupils with SEND

A Three Tiered Response



Corby

- 1 Beanfield Primary School
- 2 Brigstock Latham's Church of England Primary School
- 3 **Brooke Weston Academy**
- 4 **Corby Business Academy**
- 5 Corby Old Village Primary School
- 6 Corby Primary Academy
- 7 **Corby Technical School**
- 8 Cottingham CofE Primary School Academy Trust
- 9 Danesholme Infant Academy
- 10 Danesholme Junior Academy
- 11 Exeter A Learning Community Academy
- 12 Gretton Primary School
- 13 Hazel Leys Academy
- 14 Kingswood Primary Academy
- 15 **Kingswood Secondary Academy**
- 16 Little Stanion Primary School
- 17 **Lodge Park Academy**
- 18 **Maplefields Academy**
- 19 **Maple Vale Primary School**
- 20 Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Primary School
- 21 **Porters Hall - A Learning Community**
- 22 **Red Kite Academy**
- 23 **Rockingham Primary School**
- 24 St Brendan's Catholic Primary School
- 25 St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, Corby
- 26 Stanion Church of England (Aided) Primary School
- 27 Studfall Infant Academy
- 28 Studfall Junior Academy
- 29 Weldon Church of England Primary School
- 30 Willbarston Church of England Primary School
- 31 Woodnewton- A Learning Community

East Northants

- 32 Alfred Street Junior School, Rushden
- 33 Denfield Park Primary School
- 34 Finedon Infant School
- 35 Finedon Mulso Church of England Junior School
- 36 Glapthorn Church of England Primary School
- 37 Great Addington CofE Primary School
- 38 Henry Chichele Primary School
- 39 Higham Ferrers Junior School
- 40 Higham Ferrers Nursery and Infant School
- 41 **Huxlow Science College**
- 42 Irthlingborough Junior School
- 43 Irthlingborough Nursery and Infant School
- 44 Kings Cliffe Endowed Primary School
- 45 **Manor School Sports College**
- 46 Nassington Primary School
- 47 Newton Road School
- 48 Oundle Church of England Primary School
- 49 Polebrook Church of England Primary School
- 50 **Prince William School**
- 51 Raunds Park Infant School
- 52 Ringstead Church of England Primary School
- 53 Rushden Primary Academy
- 54 South End Infant School
- 55 South End Junior School
- 56 St Peter's Church of England Academy
- 57 Stanwick Academy
- 58 Tennyson Road Infant School
- 59 **The Ferrers School**
- 60 **Rushden Academy**
- 61 Thrapston Primary School
- 62 Titchmarsh Church of England Primary School
- 63 Trinity Church of England Primary School
- 64 Warmington School
- 65 Whitefriars Primary School
- 66 Windmill Primary School
- 67 Woodford Church of England Primary School

Kettering

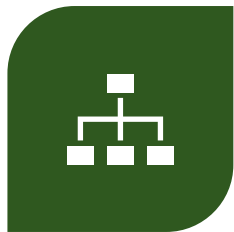
- 68 Barton Seagrave Primary School
- 69 Brambleside Primary School
- 70 Broughton Primary School
- 71 Cranford CofE Primary School
- 72 Geddington Church of England Primary School
- 73 Grange Primary Academy
- 74 Greenfields Primary School and Nursery
- 75 Hall Meadow Primary School
- 76 Havelock Infant School
- 77 Havelock Junior School
- 78 Hawthorn Community Primary School
- 79 Hayfield Cross CofE School
- 80 **Isebrook SEN Cognition & Learning College**
- 81 Isham Church of England Primary School
- 82 **Bishop Stopford School**
- 83 **Kettering Buccleuch Academy**
- 84 **Kettering Park Junior Academy**
- 85 **Kettering Science Academy**
- 86 **Kingsley Special Academy**
- 87 Loatlunds Primary School
- 88 Loddington CofE (VA) Primary School
- 89 Mawsley Primary School
- 90 Meadowside Primary School
- 91 Millbrook Infant School
- 92 Millbrook Junior School
- 93 **Montsaye Academy**
- 94 **Kettering Park Infant Academy**
- 95 Pytchley Endowed C of E Primary School
- 96 Rothwell Junior School
- 97 Rothwell Victoria Infant School
- 98 Rushton Primary School
- 99 **Southfield School for Girls**
- 100 St Andrew's Church of England Primary School
- 101 St Edward's Catholic Primary School
- 102 St. Marys CofE Primary School
- 103 St Mary's CEVA Primary School
- 104 St Thomas More Catholic Primary School
- 105 Compass Primary Academy
- 106 **The Latimer Arts College**
- 107 **Wren Spinney Community School**

Wellingborough

- 108 All Saints CEVA Primary School and Nursery
- 109 Bozeat Community Primary School
- 110 Croyland Primary School
- 111 Earls Barton Primary School
- 112 Ecton Village Primary School
- 113 Freemans Endowed C of E Junior Academy
- 114 **Friars Academy**
- 115 Great Doddington Primary
- 116 Grendon Church of England Primary School
- 117 Irchester Community Primary School
- 118 Little Harrowden Community Primary School
- 119 Mears Ashby Church of England Primary School
- 120 Oakway Academy
- 121 Olympic Primary
- 122 Our Lady's Catholic Primary School
- 123 Park Junior School, Wellingborough
- 124 Redwell Primary School
- 125 **Rowan Gate Primary School - Two Sites**
- 126 Ruskin Infant School
- 127 Ruskin Academy
- 128 **Sir Christopher Hatton Academy**
- 129 St Barnabas Church of England School
- 130 Sywell CEVA Primary School
- 131 The Avenue Infant School
- 132 Victoria Primary Academy
- 133 Warwick Academy
- 134 **Weavers Academy**
- 135 Wilby Church of England Primary School
- 136 Wollaston Primary School
- 137 **Wollaston School**
- 138 **Wrenn School**

Four geographic localities across the borough

Each locality will have an infrastructure:



1) A MANAGEMENT GROUP



2) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT



3) A DECISION MAKING GROUP

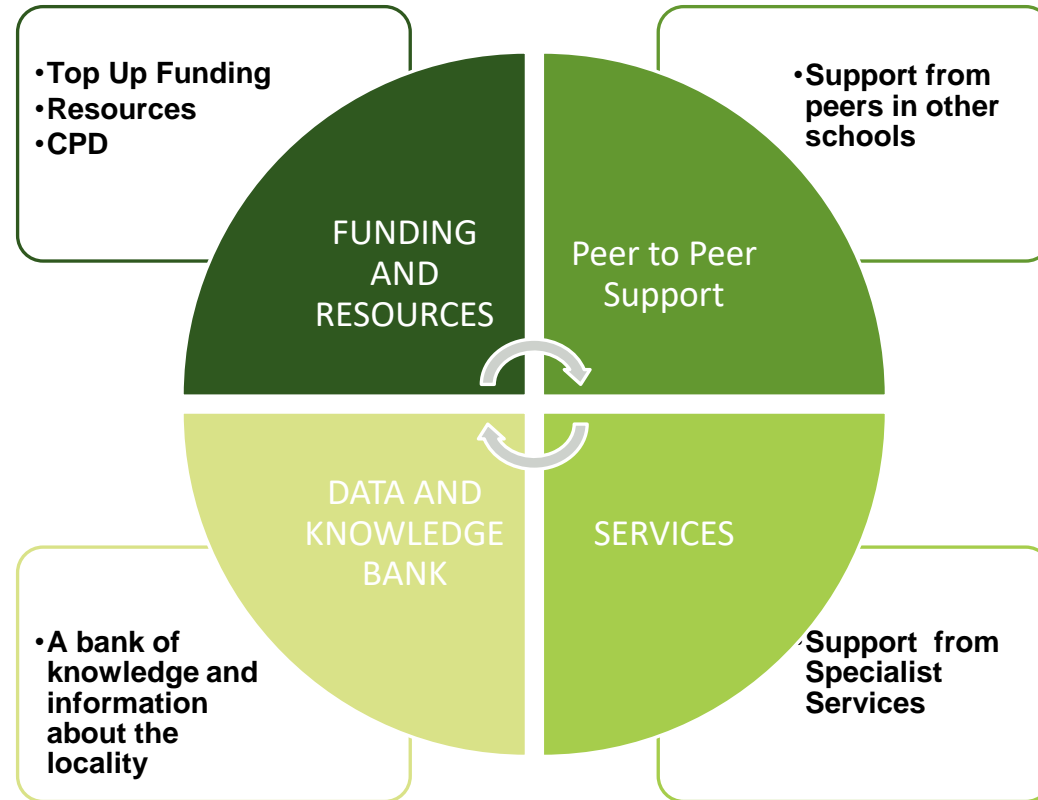


4) A PORTFOLIO OF RESOURCES



5) A BANK OF DATA AND KNOWLEDGE

A portfolio of SEN resources available to each local cluster



Consultation & Planning Meetings

- The local planning meetings are held termly with senior leaders to provide the opportunity to identify areas where the school are stuck and require additional support and advice to ensure the needs of the children are met in their local school

Half Termly SENCO Forums

- The locality wide forum provides the opportunity to develop collaborative working between schools, share good practice, as well as provide solution focused approaches. The network facilitates peer to peer support as well as facilitating consultations with the specialist team.

SEND Termly Family Forum

- The family forums provide the opportunity for the specialist team of professionals to meet with families in the locality. The forum provides a network for families as well as facilitating peer to peer support and supporting parents through a range of advice, support and coaching 3

LOCAL MEETINGS

Support from peers in other schools

Networks

SENCOS

Teaching Assistants

Heads

Specialist Resource Provisions

Developing Centres of Excellence (e.g. ASC, Communication)

Special Schools

Outreach services



SEND Advisory

ASD

Sensory

Cognition and Learning

SEMH

Education Psychology Service

Health

OT

SALT

School Nursing

Up to date information to inform planning and agreeing priorities for the local cluster in relation to:

Exclusions

Type of SEN

Level of SEN (SEN Support and EHC plans)

Age of pupils with SEN

Progress and attainment

Children missing education

**A bank of
SEND
knowledge
and data**

- We will be providing a **sufficiency report outlining the current pattern of provision for our specialist resources** and considering short, medium and longer term priorities
- To do this we will be **working closely with the special school, mainstream schools and key stakeholders to develop special school, specialist mainstream unit and satellite provision** as well as our **outreach provision**.
- We will be strengthening our governance arrangements for specialist provision including the **decision making process** for allocation of resources, the introduction of **service level agreements**, as well as a review of **our funding formulas** to ensure they are fit for purpose
- **We will be reviewing all our children in independent provision** and will be implementing **robust reviewing processes**

What we are doing: Priority Two

Reviewing and Realigning our Current Provision and Processes

- We are reviewing and developing a new operating **model** for our **Special Educational Needs services**, which we intend to have in place by **June 2022**.
- This will include **effective and efficient assessment processes**, as well as the way we **review and quality assure our complex children**
- We are developing and implementing **specialist provision teams across the four local areas of schools** to provide **oversight and monitoring of specialist provision** including special school and unit provision; enhanced funding; home tuition)
- We are currently developing a **quality assurance monitoring and reporting system reporting to the performance board** which will enable the local authority to work with key stakeholders to celebrate what is working well and to support areas that need improvement

What we are doing: Priority Three

Reviewing our governance for allocation and reviewing specialist resources

Our challenges

Special school provision unable to meet the increased number of children and young people referred

Budget - under **considerable pressure** as local special school demand and use of external independent providers is **increasing significantly**.

Specialised services **working in isolation** without responsibility for resource allocation hence **poor financial control**

Lack of strategic oversight for the allocation and quality of specialist provision and resources

Lack of co-production with families, schools and key stakeholders

Little/no transparency with schools of costs of specialised provision or how the money is spent

Processes for assessment wieldy and not working and **performance variable**

A backlog of 58 EHCP out of time assessments are outstanding to ensure statutory compliance

No specific allocation of specialist teams for children with an **EHCP or with identified complex needs** - all SEN case officer led.

Our challenges

The longstanding systemic issues around allocation of resources means the changes in culture and systems will take time to embed the new processes needed

The change in our culture and ways of working to ensure we are co-producing services with our families and schools and capturing and acting on improving families lived experience

Prioritizing really robust and regular communication with all our stakeholders

Closing the gap in the development of integrated approaches with our social care and health partners

IMPACT: What our performance to date is telling us

We have started to make progress in the timeliness of our assessments with an average of 39% completed on time for December and January compared with an average of 13% between September and November

We have reduced the number of out of time statutory assessments currently awaiting completion from 79 to 58 in the last month.

Complaints have reduced from 15 in September to 5 in January 2022

Next Steps

Developing a 'Who is Who' for each of the localities

Developing 'what' your current resources look like in your locality and how we can shape these going forward

Meeting with individual maintained schools and academies to discuss your 'Top Up' funding

Putting in place half termly SENCO forums for the summer term

Identifying a SENCO representative for each local area to work with us

Next Steps – to review the way we spend the High Needs Block:

Developing 'what' the current resources look like for each locality and how we can shape these going forward with school leaders to improve our early help offer

Meeting with individual maintained schools and academies to review 'Top Up' funding

Meeting with special and mainstream schools to increase the tiered specialist provision local authority offer and developing a sufficiency report with proposals going forward

Review our independent sector and the children currently accessing the provision.



Questions?

North Northamptonshire Education Services

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If you have any queries relating to Early Education and Childcare please do not hesitate to contact AnnMarie Dodds.

** Services that will be shared across both the North and West Authorities

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