

**LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM
24 JANUARY 2019**

PRESENT: GAVIN BOOTH (CHAIRMAN)

Joanne Noble (Headteacher, Gainsborough Nursery School), Steve Barnes (Head Teacher, The Pilgrim School, Lincoln), Marilyn Bell (Governor, The Fenland Federation), Anthony Stevens (Governor, The Holt Primary School, Skellingthorpe), Michele Anderson (Head Teacher, Spalding High School), Professor Ken Durrands CBE (Governor, The King's School, Grantham), Caroline Saxelby (Head Teacher, Walton Girls' High School and Sixth Form), David Scott (Head Teacher, Kesteven and Grantham Girls' School), Mark Woods (Chief Executive Officer, Stamford Welland Academy), Helen Hilton (Head Teacher, Little Gonerby Church of England Infant School), Lea Mason (Executive Head Teacher, Lincolnshire Wolds Federation, Louth), Josh Greaves (Chief Operating Officer, Wellspring Academy Trust), Lynsey Norris and Julia Merivale (Manager, Trinity Day Nursery).

Also in attendance: Ken Rustidge (Staff Trade Unions).

Officers in attendance:-

Michelle Andrews (Service Manager Early Years and Childcare Support), Elizabeth Bowes (Strategic Finance Manager, Schools Finance Team), Katrina Cope (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Eileen McMorrow (Senior Project Officer Specialist Schools Project), Mark Popplewell (Head of Finance (Children's Services)), Heather Sandy (Interim Director of Education) and Tony Warnock (Operations and Financial Advice Manager).

79 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Martin J Kyle (Head Teacher, St Faith & St Martin C E Junior School, Lincoln), Ian Randall (Head Teacher, Reepham C E Primary School), Martin Shelton (Linkage Community Trust), Helen Stokes (Staff Trade Unions) and Ian Widdows (Head Teacher, Giles Academy, Old Leake).

80 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

There were no declarations of members' interest made at this stage of proceedings.

81 MINUTES OF THE LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM MEETING HELD ON 11 OCTOBER 2018

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Lincolnshire Schools' Forum meeting held on 11 October 2018 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

82 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Lynsey Norris (Faith Group representative).

The Chairman advised that James Todd (Primary Parent Governor Representative) had stood down from his position on the Forum. The Chairman extended thanks on behalf of the Forum to James for his contributions as a parent governor representative.

The Forum was advised that there were six vacancies at present; and that arrangements for a future election would be considered.

83 SCHOOL FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS 2019/20

Consideration was given to a report from Elizabeth Bowes, Strategic Finance Manager, Schools Finance Team, which advised the Forum of the school funding arrangements for 2019/20.

Details pertaining to the background behind the implementation of the national funding formula were shown on page 17 of the report.

It was highlighted that the schools revenue funding 2019/20 operational guidance published by the DfE on the 21 December 2018 was available on:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/767607/Operationalguide2019to2020.

Key information contained within the operational guide was detailed on pages 18/19 of the report for the Forum to consider.

It was highlighted that the 2019/20 Dedicated School Grant allocations (DSG) remained a ring-fenced grant which could only be used in accordance with the School's and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations. The Forum was advised that the DSG would continue to be comprised of four blocks: Schools Block; Central School Services Block; Early Years Block; and High Needs Block. (Full details relating to the four blocks were shown on pages 19 to 22 of the report presented). Table 1 on page 19 provided details of Lincolnshire's 2019/20 DSG allocations. It was highlighted that Lincolnshire's schools funding levels were increasing through the national funding formula, which was improving Lincolnshire's position nationally when making comparisons. It was highlighted further that Lincolnshire's primary schools funding overall was 48th lowest out of 150 Local Authorities (LAs) overall, and that Lincolnshire's secondary schools was 56th lowest out of 150 LAs overall. It was noted that the overall Schools Block funding was distributed to all schools through the agreed approach of replicating the national funding formula (subject to affordability).

The Forum was advised of the new formulaic approach to the LA's growth allocation and that this would cover both explicit and implicit growth. Detailed at Appendix A to the report was a copy of the primary and secondary schools reorganisation policies

which allocate funding to schools for planned reorganisation to support the Local Authority's statutory responsibility to provide sufficient school places.

It was reported that within the High Needs block of the DSG, Lincolnshire would be in receipt of £5.776m of protection funding for 2019/20, when comparing the new national funding formula allocation to Lincolnshire's current High Needs block funding level.

It was reported further that pupil premium funding for 2019/20 would be protected at the 2018/19 rates; and that pupil premium allocations for the financial year 2019/20 would be published in June 2019, which would be based on pupil number data from the January 2019 census.

The Committee was advised that the grant for universal infant free school meals continued at a meal rate of £2.30 for the 2019/20 academic year.

The report provided details of the DfE teachers' pay grant to support schools in meeting the cost of the September 2018 pay award. It was reported that the grant supported the cost of the September 2018 teachers' pay award for 2019/20. Details of the rates for 2019/20 were shown at the bottom of page 22 of the report. The Committee was advised that the LA recommended that all schools undertook prudent financial planning by incorporating potential pay cost increases into future financial years.

It was noted that work was underway in calculating the budget allocations for individual schools through the LA pro-forma tool. The report highlighted that the LAs objective was to continue to provide stability in funding for schools whilst maintaining the affordability of the current levels of the DSG. It was noted that the LA remained committed to replicating the national funding formula in 2019/20 with the protection arrangements in place as detailed below:-

- Adoption of the minimum funding level in 2019/20 of £3,500 for primary schools and £4,800 for secondary schools within the funding formula;
- Adoption of 0% MFG per pupil in 2019/20;
- Adoption of the government's funding floor factor for all schools to see a minimum gain of 1.0% per pupil against their 2017/18 baseline; and
- Adoption of the governments percentage cap in pupil-led funding of the maximum of either 6.09% on their 2017/18 baseline or 36% of their remaining gains in 2019/20.

The Committee was advised that as stated in previous years, it was important that the LA took a prudent approach to the setting of central budgets within the DSG. Reasons why a prudent approach was necessary were shown on pages 23/24 of the report.

The Committee was advised further that the LA had conducted its annual review of the DSG central budgets; and that the significant planned changes related to the area of high needs spending. It was highlighted that due to the demand-led nature of the high needs budgets and the growing trend in the demands for more specialist

**LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM
24 JANUARY 2019**

services it required the LA to set prudent budgets to ensure that it was able to respond to the financial challenges from the changing schools landscape and requirements of pupils. It was noted that the LA remained confident that the cost pressures could be managed within the existing funding level, however, the sustainability of the budget going forward would be subject to the future funding settlement for high needs funding from central government.

The report highlighted that DfE regulations contained a number of provisions in relation to the setting of central budgets within the DSG; and as a result of these regulations, tables 2 to 4 detailed within the report set out the budgets requiring Schools' Forum approval for 2019/20. These were:-

- Funding for significant pre-16 growth £3.538m;
- Admissions £0.527m;
- LA Retained Duties for all schools £1.530m;
- Servicing of the Schools' Forum £0.020m;
- Schools Broadband £1.350m; and
- Private Finance Initiative £1.180m.

It was also reported that the former Education Services Grant – General Duties related to the statutory responsibilities LA's hold for maintained schools only, the LA had decided not to retain funding when providing these services, but the LA would continue to review this on an annual basis.

In conclusion, the Committee was advised that the Executive were currently consulting on a single year financial plan for the Council's revenue and capital budgets to take the Council to the end of the four year funding deal from the government. It was highlighted that there was uncertainty around government funding beyond the four year funding deal after 2019/20. It was noted that the Council's total income was £441.707m in 2019/20 and that there was planned expenditure including cost pressures and savings of £460.064m. This created a shortfall of £18.357m, which would be met from the use of one-off reserves.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- The cost of home tuition. Officers unfortunately did not have this figure to hand, but agreed to respond to the requestor outside of the meeting;
- A question was asked regarding the level of reserves. Officers confirmed that there were General Reserves and Volatility Reserves to support the Council however, they could only be used once and would not bridge the anticipated gap in the Council's budget over the next few years; and
- Private Finance Initiative (PFI) – The Forum was advised that this supported the funding commitments for seven schools; and that without this budget, the LA would be unable to finance the on-going costs of the historic contractual commitments. It was highlighted that the PFI arrangements ensured that no school was disadvantaged.

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee extended thanks to officers for the report.

RESOLVED

That the Local Authority's proposals relating to a number of centrally held budgets as detailed on pages 25 to 27 of the report and summarised above be agreed by the Lincolnshire Schools' Forum.

84 EARLY YEARS NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA

The Forum gave consideration to a report from Michelle Andrews, Children's Services Manager, Early Years and Childcare Support, which provided the Schools' Forum with a summary of the Early Years National Funding Formula for 2019/20; and sought agreement relating to the allocation and distribution of the centrally retained budgets.

In guiding the Forum through the report, reference was made to: the background relating to the introduction of the government's Early Years Funding Formula; the National Funding to Local Authorities for Early Years Core Funding; Early Years National Funding Formula requirements to Providers and Schools; and Lincolnshire's Early Years Funding Formula including the local universal base rate per pupil. It was noted that the hourly rate had increased by £0.03 per hour per pupil for 2019/20. It was noted further that the local universal base rate would fund the direct delivery of early year's entitlement.

Reference was also made to the monthly claim process; which Lincolnshire had successfully implemented in September 2018, following consultation with the sector. The Forum was advised that initial feedback from providers had been overwhelmingly positive, as providers now had a live system available to update child attendance, which had assisted with more accurate and timely data sharing on a monthly basis.

The report also provided the Forum with information relating to supplements and the deprivation supplement. It was noted that for 2019/20, the Local Authority would continue to use the same deprivation factor and deprivation monetary values that were currently in place in 2018/19. It was highlighted that the provider survey undertaken had identified 81% of respondents supported the continued use of the government's Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) measure. Table one provided the Forum with information relating to deprivation scores and associated funding.

Page 53 of the report provided details of the SEN Inclusion Fund, a fund that all Local Authorities were required to have for 3 and 4 year olds with special educational needs who were taking up the free entitlements. The Forum was advised that in Lincolnshire the SEN Inclusion Fund had been reviewed in line with the national guidance and was available through an application process.

It was reported that there were currently 224 children accessing the Inclusion Fund. It was therefore essential to maintain funding levels in 2019/20 to take into account any further increase in take-up of the 30 hours.

Pages 54 to 57 provided the Forum with details pertaining to Local Authority Centrally Retained Funding, which in accordance with regulations required Schools' Forum approval. These were:-

- Early Years Entitlement Team £298,276;
- Securing Sufficient, Sustainable Provision £412,716;
- SEND Local Offer £64,874
- EYFS Quality Improvement, Support, Advice £462,960; and
- Workforce & Training Requirements for the Sector £287,360.

Table 2 on page 57 provided the Forum with details relating to Lincolnshire's Early Years Funding Distribution for 3 and 4 year olds; and Table 3 provided information relating to Early Years Funding Distribution.

The report also made reference to: Disability Access Funding; Early Years Pupil Premium, and 2 Year Old Funding (Fluctuation Contingency Fund; Local Authority Centrally Retained Funding and 2 Year Old Hourly Funded Rate).

During consideration of the report, the Forum raised the following points:

- That the consultation regarding the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) demonstrated that monies were being successfully targeted;
- The monthly payment arrangements introduced for providers had made a vast difference to cash flow. Thanks were extended to Officers for all their help; and
- Whether the supplement to maintained nursery schools would continue. Officers confirmed that representations had been made to central government, but as yet no information had been received.

RESOLVED

1. That the Early Years Funding Formula Report presented be noted.
2. That the Local Authority's proposal for centrally retained funding as detailed in the report and summarised above be agreed.

85 BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF SPECIALIST PROVISION: UPDATE

The Forum gave consideration to a report from Eileen McMorrow, Senior Project Officer, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, which provided the Forum with an update on the progress of the Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy.

The report presented briefly outlined the vision for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Education provision to be implemented over the next 5 years, including details of the prescribed alterations to each of the special schools. Attached at Appendix A was a copy of the full approved 'Building Communities of Specialist Provision Together in Lincolnshire Strategy' for the Forum to consider.

The Forum was advised that approval of the exciting and aspirational strategy had been well received both locally and nationally. It was noted that positive reinforcement had been received through the Local Area SEND inspection, along with approval from the DfE. It was highlighted that the strategy would make significant changes to the existing special education provision, creating an integrated and sustainable school system where pupils would be able to attend their nearest special school, confident that their education and health needs could be fully accommodated.

It was highlighted that the strategy would be implemented over the next five years with the final school changes being made in September 2023; and that the Schools' Forum would be provided with regular updates as implementation progressed.

The Forum extended their thanks for the update provided and looked forward to further updates going forward.

RESOLVED

That the Building Communities of Specialist Provision: Update be noted.

86 ACADEMIES AND TRUST UPDATE

The Head of Finance, Children's Services presented the Academies and Trust update report, which provided information on the latest number of academies, pupils in academies and academy trusts.

It was highlighted that since the effective date of the last report (1 September 2018), there had been four further academy conversions of primary schools. The report highlighted that the total number of primary academies was now 99 (35.2%) educating 25,350 (44.3%) full time equivalent pupils.

Information relating to the projected six month status of all Lincolnshire State school detailed on page 112 of the report presented. The report highlighted that the total number of academies could rise to 169 (46.7%) and 71,004 (67.3%) pupils. It was noted that four schools were currently in the process to become converter or sponsored academies.

RESOLVED

That the Academies and Trust update be noted.

87 LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM - WORK PROGRAMME

The Forum gave consideration to its work programme.

It was agreed that the next meeting date of 18 April 2019 should be rescheduled to 4 April 2019.

8

**LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM
24 JANUARY 2019**

RESOLVED

1. That the work programme be received.
2. That the 18 April 2019 meeting date be rescheduled to 4 April 2019.

The meeting closed at 1.53 pm