



LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM 11 OCTOBER 2018

PRESENT: GAVIN BOOTH (CHAIRMAN)

Joanne Noble (Headteacher, Gainsborough Nursery School), Nigel Sisley JP (Governor, St Francis Community Special School, Lincoln), Martin Kyle (Head Teacher, St Faith and St Martin's Junior School), Ian Randall (Head Teacher, Reepham Church of England Primary School), Marilyn Bell (Governor, The Fenland Federation), Anthony Stevens (Governor, The Holt Primary School, Skellingthorpe), Michele Anderson (Head Teacher, Spalding High School), David Scott (Head Teacher, Kesteven and Grantham Girls' School), Josh Greaves (Chief Operating Officer, Wellspring Academy Trust), Lea Mason (Executive Head Teacher, Lincolnshire Wolds Federation, Louth), Bridget Starling (Business Manager, Church of England, Diocesan Education Centre), Julia Merivale (Manager, Trinity Day Nursery) and Richard Linnell (President of Lincolnshire NUT).

Officers in attendance:-

Elizabeth Bowes (Strategic Finance Manager, Schools Finance Team), Katrina Cope (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Mary Meredith (Head of Children's Service Manager, Inclusion), Geraldine O'Neill (Lead Consultant - Early Years Entitlement), Mark Popplewell (Head of Finance (Children's Services)), Heather Sandy (Chief Officer for Education) and Tony Warnock (Operations and Financial Advice Manager).

67 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies from absence were received from Professor Ken Durrands CBE (Governor, The King's School, Grantham), Helen Hilton (Headteacher, Little Gonerby Church of England Infant School), Caroline Saxelby (Headteacher, Walton Girl's High School and Sixth Form, Grantham), Martin Shelton (Linkage Community Trust), Helen Stokes ((UNISON), Ian Widdows (Headteacher, Giles Academy, Old Leake), and Mark Woods (Chief Executive Officer, Stamford Welland Academy).

68 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

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

69 MINUTES OF THE LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM MEETING HELD ON 26 JUNE 2018

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Lincolnshire Schools' Forum meeting held on 26 June 2018 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

70 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman advised the Forum that Mark Anderson, Primary Academy Headteacher representative had resigned from the Forum due to work commitments. On behalf of the Forum the Chairman extended his thanks to Mark for his contributions as a member of the Forum and for being an advocate for the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership.

The Chairman highlighted that as a result of Mark leaving the Forum, there was now a Lincolnshire Schools' Forum vacancy on the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Board. The Chairman invited nominations from the Forum for a Lincolnshire Schools' Forum representative on the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Board.

The Forum agreed to the following Lincolnshire School's Forum representative on the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Board.

RESOLVED

That Martin Kyle (Headteacher, St Faith & St Martin C E Junior School, Lincoln) be nominated as the Lincolnshire Schools Forum representative on the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Board.

71 EARLY YEARS FUNDING FORMULA - UPDATE

The Forum gave consideration to a report from Geraldine O'Neill, Lead Consultant – Early Years Entitlement, which provided an update on the proposed 2019/20 funding formula following provider consultation regarding the deprivation supplement; and the implementation of the new inclusion funding process.

The Lead Consultant - Early Years Entitlement guided the Forum through the report, making reference to the background behind the early years funding formula; and that Local Authorities (LAs) were required to have a local universal rate across all types of providers, a mandatory deprivation supplement factor, and had to establish a special education needs inclusion fund.

It was highlighted that the LA had reviewed the governments prescribed supplements and had concluded that it would continue to only use the mandatory deprivation supplement. The report advised that the LA had completed a consultation with providers and schools during the spring term of 2018. It was noted that from the consultation responses, it had become evident that the deprivation supplement was not being adequately monitored by providers, which had the potential of not having the intended impact on outcomes for the most disadvantaged children in Lincolnshire. The report highlighted that the LA would be developing additional reporting tools to develop a best practice framework to support providers to target this funding. The report highlighted on page 36 the three proposals offered to childcare providers for their feedback. The LA considered the feedback from providers, and it was concluded that for 2019/20, the LA would continue to use the same deprivation factor

and deprivation monetary values that were currently in place for 2018/19. Details of the deprivation scores and associated funding were shown on page 37 of the report.

The Forum was advised that the SEN inclusion fund process had been reviewed in 2017, and following the implementation of a pilot, the new process had now been fully rolled out in 2018/19. It was highlighted that the revised approach enabled providers to receive additional funding in a way that was meaningful to them, and provide them with flexibility to work with families to provide an offer above and beyond that which can be met as part of the graduated approach. Once the new process had a full financial year of implementation, the LA would have a better understanding of future budget requirements and further findings. It was highlighted that the outcome of the implementation would be reported to the Schools' Forum at its 24 January 2019 meeting.

The Forum was advised that the government had requested in the statutory guidance that LAs should pay providers on a monthly basis, by September 2018 at the latest. The Forum noted that Lincolnshire had successfully implemented the system for September 2018. The Forum noted that implementation had happened following consultation with the sector, and that extensive training and support had been given to all providers. It was highlighted that the provision of an Early Years Provider Hub ensured accurate up to date claims to be made, ensuring monthly payments to be made.

In conclusion, the Forum was advised that the LA would be reporting back to the Schools' Forum at its 24 January 2019 meeting, to provide an update on the central governments publications and funding levels; the local universal rate for providers in 2019/20; and to also agree the LAs proposals to centrally retained funding.

The Early Years Provider representative extended thanks to Geraldine and her team for all their hard work in implementing the monthly claims process.

RESOLVED

That the Early Years Funding Formula update be noted.

72 NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA FOR SCHOOLS - UPDATE FOR 2019/20

Consideration was given to a report from Mark Popplewell, Head of Finance, Children's Services, which provided the Schools' Forum with a summary of the updates from the Department for Education (DfE) relating to the national funding formula for schools, central school service and high needs for 2019/20.

In guiding the Forum through the report, the Head of Finance, Children's Services made reference to the background behind the national funding formula for schools, details of which were shown on pages 17/18 of the report presented.

The Forum was advised of the main school funding announcements made by the DfE on 25 July 2018. The key points were shown on pages 18/19 of the report.

Particular reference was made to:

- That LAs would continue to determine local formulas to 2020/21. It was highlighted that the original 'soft' transition period was previously due to end in 2019/20;
- The three key aspects of the schools national funding formula:
 - The government would provide for at least a 1% per pupil increase for each notional school allocation in 2019/20 through the national funding formula compared to their 2017/18 baseline. The DfE had introduced a new funding floor factor to enable LAs to mirror the increase of 1% per pupil against 2017/18 baselines;
 - The minimum per pupil funding levels had increased to £3,500 for all primary schools and £4,800 for all secondary schools that had pupil in years 10 and 11;
 - The gains cap had increased so that schools could attract gains of up to 6.09% against their 2017/18 baselines. The DfE had used compounded figures so that underfunded LAs could gain a further 3% on top of the 3% gained in 2018/19.
- Reduction of the primary low attainment factor monetary value to £1,022 (from £1,050);
- That's schools would continue to receive funding based primarily on the preceding October census data;
- That LAs had the flexibility to set the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) between minus 1.5% and plus 0.5% per pupil;
- That the growth funding would be allocated to LAs using a new formulaic method based on lagged growth data, as opposed to LAs setting an agreed budget annually to meet local needs;
- That the LA would continue to be responsible for setting the mainstream school funding formula for all Lincolnshire schools including academies in 2019/20. It was noted that it was crucial that the overall funding delegated to schools was affordable based on the allocation made through the Schools block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) to the LA from central government. It was noted further that there were a number of uncertainties as a result of the use of lagged data in determining the LA Schools block allocation;
- It was highlighted that schools funding levels from 2020/21 would be subject to the decision taken at the next spending review, which would impact the speed schools gained and the downward trajectory of funding for losing schools;
- That the (DSG) would continue to comprise of four blocks: Schools, Central School Services, High Needs and Early Years Block. It was noted that the DSG remained a ring-fenced grant that could only be used in accordance with the School's and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations. It was highlighted that LAs were able to transfer up to 0.5% of their Schools block funding to an alternative block with the agreement of their respective Schools Forum following consultation with all schools and academies. Details relating to the Lincolnshire's School block rates for 2019/20 were shown on page 20 of the report;

- The Forum was advised that the Central School Services block funding covered two distinct elements which were ongoing responsibilities and historic commitments. It was noted that allocations provided by the government for ongoing responsibilities identified Lincolnshire as continuing to have a marginal increase in funding for 2019/20 by 1.3%. It was noted further that the government's expectations relating to historical contracts and other commitments would reduce over time as they reached their end points. It was highlighted that the LA position for broadband provision was outlined in Item 7, which was later in the agenda. The Forum was advised that all schools would continue to receive the core broadband services up to 31 October 2022;
- The Forum was advised that the basic structure of the High Needs national funding formula in 2019/20 was not changing. Figure 5 on page 22 detailed the structure of the High Needs funding formula for LAs. The report highlighted that for 2018/19, Lincolnshire was in receipt of £38 per pupil (or £5.201m) of protection funding; and that Lincolnshire's indicative protection was planned to be £41 per pupil (£5.776m) in 2019/20 and an overall High Needs block increase in funding of £1.232m compared to the current year budget;
- The Forum was advised that the DfE were reviewing hospital education spending and data to develop a new formulaic hospital education factor in the high needs national funding formula, which was designed to better respond to meet the number of patients needing education; and
- The report highlighted that for the Early Year block, Lincolnshire was funded at the 'minimum funding rate' of £4.30 per hour. It was noted that the Early Years block covered the 15 hours 3 & 4 year olds entitlement; the additional hours for working families up to 30 hours; disability access fund; early year's premium and disadvantaged 2 year old funding. It was highlighted that the DfE had confirmed its intention to continue with the 'supplementary funding' until at least 2019/20 for nursery schools, whilst research was undertaken on the cost structure.

RESOLVED

That the National Funding Formula for Schools update for 2019/20 be noted.

73 TEACHERS' PAY GRANT - UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2018

The Forum gave consideration to a report from Mark Popplewell, Head of Finance, Children's Services, which provided the Schools Forum with an update to the government's announcements on the 'teachers' pay grant' covering 2018/19 and 2019/20 financial years.

In guiding the Forum through the report Elizabeth Bowes, Strategic Finance Manager, School Finance Team advised that the Education Secretary had confirmed on the 24 July 2018 the investment of £508m (£187m in 2018/19 and £321m in 2019/20) to fund the pay deal; and that on 14 September 2018 the DfE confirmed the position of the funding to support schools in meeting the cost of the teachers' pay award through the 'teachers' pay grant' covering 2018/19 and 2019/20 financial years.

Details of the 'teachers' pay grant' were shown on page 26 of the report.

It was noted that the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) would be providing further detailed guidance and information. The report highlighted what the ESFA had already confirmed; and that the LA recommended that all schools should undertake prudent financial planning by incorporating potential pay cost increases in future financial years.

It was highlighted that the LA had been following up with the DfE on a number of issues relating to the announcement, particularly on the point of a schools financial planning for future pay awards.

It was highlighted that the LA process would involve a consultation with the Trade Unions in October 2018, on the final pay policy with the intention of publishing the policy in early November 2018 for Community Schools.

In conclusion, it was highlighted that it was unlikely that the pay award would be implemented until December 2018 pay, backdated to 1 September 2018.

During discussion, the Forum raised the following points:-

- Some of the Forum expressed their disappointment with the DfE; as the process had been unhelpful and unclear to schools as to what was being funded;
- One member enquired as to whether national insurance and pension contributions were included. Officers advised that the detail had not been received, but it was expected that these had been incorporated. A further question was asked whether the amount would cover the costs for schools. Officers advised that it was a contribution towards the costs, since the DfE expected schools to finance the first percent as schools had budgeted for a 1% pay rise. The Forum was advised that frustrations had been expressed at a recent Secondary Headteachers briefing; and that there was a will for the County to do a collective response. The Forum was advised further that the Council was content with facilitating the collective response;
- A question was asked as to why primary school teachers would receive less funding. Officers advised that this was as a result of the pupil to teacher ratio. Primary schools had more children per teacher than that of secondary schools; and
- One member highlighted that teachers were worthy of a pay rise; but some frustration was expressed on the impact on children and schools as a result of the pay rise. It was highlighted that some teachers on the main pay scale would not get a real term pay rise.

RESOLVED

That the Teachers' Pay Grant Update report be noted.

74 SCHOOLS BROADBAND SERVICES

The Forum gave consideration to a report from Mark Popplewell, Head of Finance, Children's Services, which provided the Schools Forum with an overview of the schools broadband services for all Lincolnshire schools (including academies) from November 2019 to October 2022.

In guiding the Forum through the report the Head of Finance, Children's Services provided some background information to the broadband arrangements. Details of which were shown on pages 29, 30 and 31 of the report presented.

The Forum was reminded that the Schools Forum agreed annually to retain a central budget to fund schools consolidated broadband offer each January. And, that in 2018/19 the Forum had agreed the schools broadband budget of £1.350m being held in the Central Schools Services Block under 'historic commitments', following the implementation of the national funding formula.

The Forum was advised that 320 Lincolnshire schools received the consolidated broadband offer through the contract with the remaining Lincolnshire schools contracting with an IT provider directly. Details of the broadband service benefits through the contract were shown at the bottom of page 30 and the top of page 31.

It was highlighted that the government's school funding reforms were putting restrictions on LAs in retaining central budgets relating to school costs with the move towards the 'hard' national funding formula. Disappointment was expressed to the approach being adopted by the DfE, as the cost impact on schools of purchasing access to the PSN individually could be considerable, particularly for small and rural schools.

The Forum was advised that the consolidated broadband offer contract would come to an end on 31 October 2022. The Forum was advised that the DfE had confirmed that they would continue to allocate historic commitments in 2019/20 at the same level as 2018/19. The report sought Schools' Forum approval to retain the Central Schools Services Block historic commitment broadband budget in 2019/20, to continue to meet the revenue costs of the central schools broadband services arrangement.

It was highlighted that from government guidance, it was unlikely that historic commitment funding would end in 2020/21 however; funding levels were expected to fall to continue to support the core broadband contract to October 2022. The LA had recommended earmarking £1.350m to cover any potential shortfalls in revenue funding.

The Forum was advised that the direction for travel for schools (post contract) was to have a direct billing relationship with an IT provider, such as EMPSN (rather than it being contracted centrally by the Council), and to meet the costs from their delegated budgets. Reassurance was given that the LA and EMPSN would be working with schools to develop a timeline of events to ensure a smooth transition took place. It was highlighted that this would be a new cost for schools to meet from November

2022; and that preparation for this was very important. It was highlighted that the LA was working with EMPSN to share information with schools to aid their financial planning.

Clarification was given that EMPSN was a broker; and that EMPSN offered good value for money.

A query was raised regarding nursery school funding for 2022. It was highlighted that it was hoped that the nursery schools funding review would ensure appropriate levels of funding was received to continue delivering effective provision.

RESOLVED

1. That support be given to the Local Authority decision to continue securing access to the Public Sector network through a continuation of the existing arrangements delivered to 31 October 2022.
2. That agreement be given to retaining the Central Schools Block (CSSB) historic commitment broadband budget in 2019/20, to continue meeting the revenue costs of the central schools broadband services arrangement.
3. That support be given to the Local Authority proposals to meeting the costs of the central schools broadband services arrangements to 31 October 2022 including earmarking £1.350m from the DSG underspend.

75 REVISED SCHOOLS BUDGETS 2018/19

The Forum gave consideration to a report from Elizabeth Bowes, Strategic Finance Manager, Schools Finance Team, which provided the revised Schools Budget for 2018/19 and sought support for the proposed use of the underspending from 2017/18.

The Forum was advised that a revised Schools Budget was necessary each year to reflect the under or overspending arising on the (DSG) in the previous financial year and adjustment to the DSG once the Early Years figures had been confirmed. The Forum was advised that under (DfE) regulations, the LA had to consult with the Schools Forum over its plans to utilise underspendings, or address overspendings.

The report highlighted that the cumulative underspend carried forward at 31 March 2018 was £12.806m (the underspend reported took into account of the agreed c.£3m one-off delegation to all schools in 2018/19). Details of the net underspendings of £4.151m on budgets in 2017/18 held centrally within the (DSG) were shown in Appendix A to the report.

Appendix B detailed the commitments that were anticipated which totalled £7.462m. The report highlighted that there was likely to be other commitments that could arise during the year within the school arena that the LA would be required to respond to. It was highlighted that the DSG continued to be at the lowest level of underspend for several years.

It was reported that the DfE were continuing to review the four blocks (Schools, Central School Services, High Needs and Early Years block) that make up the DSG. The areas of financial risk relating to the centrally managed budgets included:

Schools block – It was highlighted further that there remained uncertainty for 2019/20 and future years to fulfil the current School reorganisation policy based on the new formulaic approach. It was also noted that the time lag of factors did not take account of current year rises in costs; therefore, such costs would have to be managed within existing funding levels.

Central Schools Services block – It was reported that from 2020/21, the government intended to reduce the historical commitments funding allocations where LAs expenditure had not reduced to support its drive towards the move to a 'hard' national funding formula. It was noted that funding levels for historic commitments from 2020/21 remained unclear.

Early Years block – The Forum was advised that the DfE had confirmed the intention to continue with the 'supplementary funding' until at least 2019/20. It was noted that a government report was planned for later in the year, and that future funding levels remained unclear.

High Need block - The Forum was advised that the DfE had confirmed that planned changes for Hospital Education would not result in LAs seeing a reduction in the hospital education factor amounts in 2019/20; and that from 2020/21 the position remained unclear.

It was highlighted further that there continued to be a growing demand for more specialist support for young people, which was having a material financial impact on the High Needs block. It was highlighted that the SEND strategy had also identified a need to increase special school capacity over the next five years to respond to the increase in demand.

It was highlighted in 2019/20, Lincolnshire would continue to be in receipt of protection funding, the indicative protection was planned to be £41 per pupil (£5.776m) in 2019/20. It was felt that this area remained a financial risk particularly at a time of increasing demands.

The report highlighted that there was an increasing number of LAs now incurring a deficit on their overall DSG account, largely because of overspends on their High Needs block.

The Forum was advised that the LA proposed that the remaining sum was not committed but held in reserves due to the much tighter financial environment, and the financial uncertainties created from the DfE funding changes, the LA needed to be in a position to manage and act prudently and avoid overspending of the DSG.

During discussion, the Forum raised the following points:-

- Whether the £5.3m could be reduced. Officers advised that this was the lowest level the LA had been at; and any lower would create a financial risk going forward; and
- One Forum member enquired what the position would be going forward. Officers advised that at the moment the 2020/21 settlement figure was not known and would form part of the next spending review; and that the LA had various local challenges for example the increase in Higher Needs costs, as the number of children with complex needs was increasing. It was noted that the LA had been putting in strategies to utilise funding more effectively through adopting early intervention strategies (such as Healthy Minds, Behaviour Outreach Support Service), and the development of the SEND strategy, which in time will reduce the number of out of County placements, and the amount of travelling for young people by having local inclusive schools; and
- It was also highlighted that lobbying was taking place to ensure Lincolnshire received fairer funding in the next spending review for all areas of Council funding.

RESOLVED

1. That the Revised Schools Budget for 2018/19 be noted.
2. That the Local Authority proposals for use of the uncommitted sum, as outlined in section five of the report be supported.

76 ALTERNATIVE PROVISION ARRANGEMENTS

Consideration was given to a report from Mary Meredith, Children's Services Manager, Inclusion, which provided the Schools' Forum with an overview of Lincolnshire's current and future alternative provision arrangements.

The Forum were reminded that in September 2016, the (LA) had introduced the Ladder of Intervention, and additional resources for Headteachers seeking to avoid permanent exclusion. It was noted that during 2016/17, the only Alternative Provision available to schools was that provided by Springwell Alternative Academy. It was noted further that in October 2017 this offer was broadened (which was agreed by the Schools' Forum). The Forum was advised that the authority had commissioned Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust (CMAT) to provide 45 work-related places for Y9-11 pupils. The report highlighted that the School CMAT Pathway had been well received by schools and this had been evidenced by a stakeholder evaluation undertaken in June 2018.

It was highlighted that Springwell had worked well with the LA to deliver the Ladder of Intervention and that this had been instrumental in driving down the rate of permanent exclusion of pupils from Lincolnshire schools. Figures shown on page 53 of the report confirmed that most KS 1-3 pupils who accessed intervention placements within Springwell had successfully been integrated back into mainstream schools, following a 16 week placement in the centre.

The Forum noted that the ambitious goal of zero exclusion in Lincolnshire remained work in progress, and that the schools who had engaged in the Ladder had proved that it did provide Headteachers with a viable alternative to permanent exclusion.

Details relating to the current year's arrangements for AP were shown on pages 54 and 55 of the report.

RESOLVED

That the Alternative Provision Arrangements be noted.

77 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 June 2018), there had been five further academy conversions of primary schools and a new school had opened. The report highlighted that the total number of primary academies was now 95 (33.8%) educating 24,562 (42.9%) full time equivalent pupils.

Information relating to the projected six month status of all Lincolnshire State schools was detailed on page 59 of the report presented. The report highlighted that the total number of academies could rise to 166 (45.9%) and 69,125 (66%) pupils for primary and secondary schools respectively. It was noted that five further schools were currently in process to become convertor or sponsored academies.

RESOLVED

That the Academies and Trust update be noted.

78 LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM - WORK PROGRAMME

The Forum gave consideration to its work programme.

RESOLVED

That the work programme presented be noted.

The meeting closed at 2.37 pm

This page is intentionally left blank