



LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM 30 JUNE 2022

PRESENT: GAVIN BOOTH (CHAIRMAN)

Amy Stancer (Headteacher, St Giles Nursery School, Lincoln), Kyna Adkins (Head Teacher, St Christopher's Special School), Alan Howe (Governor, Sutton on Sea County Primary School), Anthony Stevens (Governor, The Holt Primary School, Skellingthorpe), Callum Clay (Head Teacher, Church Lane Primary School, Sleaford), Catherine Stratton (Head Teacher, Saxilby Church of England Primary School), Michele Anderson (Head Teacher, Spalding High School), Rachel Barrett FCCA (Governor, North Kesteven Academy), Professor Ken Durrands CBE (Governor, The King's School, Grantham), Jo Slesser (Governor, Carres Grammar School, Sleaford), Steve Baragwanath (Executive Principal, University Academy Holbeach), Frances Green MA (Oxon) (Head Teacher, Somercotes Secondary Academy), Simon Pickett (Head Master, The King's School, Grantham), Katie Grivil (Head Teacher, Kirkby la Thorpe Church of England Primary Academy), Simon Morley (Head Teacher, Boston West Academy), Josh Greaves (Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Wellspring Academy Trust) (Vice-Chairman), Peter Tomlinson (Diocesan Business and Operations Manager, Diocese of Lincoln), Heather Marks (Vice-Principal, Boston College) and Julia Merivale (Manager, Trinity Day Nursery),

Also in attendance:

Jordan Ingram (Education and Skills Funding Agency) attended the meeting as an observer

Officers in attendance:- Elizabeth Bowes (Strategic Finance Manager – Schools Finance Team), Martin Smith (Assistant Director – Children's Education), Tony Warnock (Head of Financial Services), Geraldine O'Neill (Sustainability and Development Manager), Ady Clarke (Education Reorganisation Officer), Angela Lawton (Strategic Finance Manager – Children's Services), Kate Capel (Head of Service for Inclusion) and Thomas Crofts (Democratic Services Officer)

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED:

That Gavin Booth be elected as Chairman of the Lincolnshire Schools' Forum for 2022/23.

2 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED:

That Josh Greaves be elected Vice-Chairman of the Lincolnshire Schools' Forum for 2022/23.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence was received from Amy Stancer, Daniel Callaghan, Callum Clay, Frances Green, Dr Stephen Hopkins, Jo Slessor, Simon Morley, Tony Stevens, Mark Popplewell and Sheriden Dodsworth.

4 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

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

5 MINUTES OF THE LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM MEETING HELD ON 21 APRIL 2022

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Lincolnshire Schools' Forum meeting held on 21 April 2022 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

6 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made the following announcements:

- The Budget Allocation for Early Support Learning provision beyond September 2023 item was deferred to October 2022 so as to accommodate the Council's decision-making timetable concerning their Children with Disabilities service review.
- The Alternative Provision Arrangements item has been deferred so that the whole academic year for 2021/22 could be reflected in the report.

7 LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM - CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report from Elizabeth Bowes, Strategic Finance Manager – Schools Finance Team, on updates to the constitution of the Lincolnshire Schools' Forum. The following was reported:

- The terms of reference remained unchanged since the last update in June 2021.
- The terms of reference were reviewed and updated (where applicable) on an annual basis ready for the new academic year.
- The school membership composition had been reviewed to reflect the June 2022 maintained and academy schools' position, and the composition remained unchanged for 2022/23.

The Forum noted the report and the following comments were received:

- The Memberships reflected a good representation of Lincolnshire schools, but vacancies needed to be filled.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Forum endorse the updated Constitution and Membership document.
2. That the report and comments be noted.

8 SCHOOLS FORUM SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

Consideration was given to a report from Elizabeth Bowes, Strategic Finance Manager – Schools Finance Team, on responses to the Government’s Schools forum self-assessment toolkit, which was reviewed on an annual basis. The following was highlighted:

- Officers had reviewed the current training programme available to new Members, which was to be offered in the autumn term following elections.
- Virtual meetings had been adopted for the convenience of Members across a large rural county. This was to be periodically reviewed.
- Elections were to be conducted at the beginning of the Autumn term.

The Forum noted the report and the following comments were received:

- Existing Members were encouraged to do a refresher course following the election of new Members in the Autumn.

RESOLVED:

That the report and comments be noted.

9 SECTION 251 BUDGETS STATEMENT 2022/23

Consideration was given to a report from Elizabeth Bowes, Strategic Finance Manager – Schools Finance Team, on the Section 251 budget statement for the 2022/23 financial year. The following was reported:

- The information detailed in the report was required to be submitted by all Local Authorities to the DfE for checks by 30 April 2022, and should any amendments be required, it will be updated at a later stage.
- For 2022/23, the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) continued to consist of four blocks – Schools Block, Central Schools Services Block (CSSB), High Needs Block and Early Years Block, each of determined by a separate national funding formula.
- The Schools Block was ring-fenced and the Council was only able to transfer 0.5% of the Schools Block funding to an alternative block with the agreement of the Schools Forum, following consultation with all schools and academies.
- The only block transfer made for 2022/23 related to a £0.260m movement from available monies in the CSSB to the Schools Block to replicate the Government’s schools’ national funding formula factors and monetary values, as supported by the Forum on 20 January 2022. The transfer was required to meet the additional cost from an increase in Free School Meal eligibility due to the pandemic.

- The High Needs block continued to see growth in the demand for more specialist support for young people.
- The Government's SEND Green Paper acknowledged the unsustainable SEND system. Consultation was to close on the 22 July 2022 and the sector were encouraged to respond.
- Key areas of the return detailed on pages 43 and 44 were discussed including the following:
 - 99.81% of the Schools Block was devolved to schools.
 - 96.08% of the Early Years Block was to be allocated to the sector by the end of the financial year.
 - Within the High Needs Block, 75.46% was earmarked to be devolved to Lincolnshire maintained settings.

The Forum noted the report and the following comments were received:

- More detailed reasoning regarding risks and impacts in the report was welcomed.
- Regarding the Free School Meal affordability issue in future years, options included consideration of block transfer into Schools Block, review of Growth funding, modelling the impact of the Minimum Funding Guarantee or reduction in AWPU values. It was highlighted in previous consultations on the formula that there had been no clear steer from schools and academies regarding their preferred option. Reassurance was provided that officers would ensure the most favourable option was delivered by managing the financial impact upon schools.
- The current cost of ensuring SEND placements outside of the county was £11.6m – placements were made on a case-by-case basis.
- Confirmation was provided that the percentages delegated out had slightly increased in comparison to last year.

RESOLVED:

That the report and comments be noted.

10 ANNUAL REPORT ON SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

Consideration was given to a report from Martin Smith, Assistant Director – Children's (Education), on SEND activity both nationally and within the county. The following was highlighted:

- Lincolnshire's High Needs transformation programme work was aimed at ensuring that children and young people were supported as early as possible to avoid their needs escalating. Focus was given to the following areas:
 - Valuing SEND, the Inclusion Toolkit and Local Offer.
 - Workforce development

- Transitions protocol – which provided targeted intervention to support children and young people to step-down from specialist provision to mainstream.
- Ask SALL – Lincolnshire's SEND advice line for SENCo, which launched in September 2020.
- A multi-disciplinary assessment panel was formed in November 2020 to consider requests for EHC Needs Assessments and ensured that practice standards were evidenced.
- Lincolnshire's high needs transformational programme and improved High Needs block financial settlements had supported Lincolnshire's budget position in 2021/22 (£1.964m underspend).
- Whilst Lincolnshire remained above the national average in terms of the numbers of children identified with SEND, there were positive signs of changes in practice that move away from reliance on statutory plans and build on the inclusive practice of many Lincolnshire schools.

The Forum noted the report and the following comments were received:

- Costs had risen regarding independent placements as Lincolnshire special schools lacked capacity. In response, the special school capital programme was increased over capacity by 512 places; however, places were soon anticipated to be oversubscribed.
- Expansions were anticipated to assist issues regarding capacity, but it was recognised more need to be done. Research was currently underway to inform how many more places would be needed for future cohorts.
- Upskilling staff in mainstream settings to be able to accommodate more SEND placements eased some capacity pressures.
- Children were being identified as SEND at progressively younger ages and it was important to recognise that Education, Health and Care plans were not always the first port of call for these children.
- More children had remained in education following the pandemic public health measures.

RESOLVED:

That the report and comments be noted.

11 ANNUAL EARLY YEARS & CHILDCARE REPORT

Consideration was given to a report from Geraldine O'Neill, Sustainability and Development Manager, on the delivery of services to support early years and childcare provision across Lincolnshire. The following was reported:

- The Service's six key areas were outlined to Members, as follows:
 1. Funding and delivery of the Early Years Entitlements for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds.

2. Provision of sufficient and sustainable early years and childcare provision for children aged 0-14 years (18 years for those with SEND).
 3. Delivery of quality provision and educational outcomes for children (within the EYFS framework).
 4. Professional development and workforce training in the early years and childcare sector.
 5. Inclusion funding and SEN advice and support.
 6. Partnership working in relation to school readiness including health and the quality and delivery of Children's Centres.
- With direct reference to the report, the priorities for Early Years and Childcare Support Service during 2021-22 and their outcomes were explained to Members.
 - With direct reference to the report, the priorities for Early Years and Childcare during 2022-23 were outlined to Members.

The Forum noted the report and the following comments were received:

- The recruitment and retention of staff was a significant issue facing Early Years due to low pay in the sector.
- Schools expressed an appetite for collaboration with the Early Years sector.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Forum agree the priorities for 2022-23.
2. That the report and comments be noted.

12 ACADEMIES AND TRUST UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report from Elizabeth Bowes, Strategic Finance Manager – Schools Finance Team, on updates regarding Academies and Trusts. The following was highlighted since the last report:

- No further schools had become academies.
- There were two primary schools seeking to become academies.
- Grantham Harrowby Church of England Infant School and Grantham The National Church of England Junior School joined Lincoln Anglican Academy Trust. Formerly they were in the Harrowby/National Academies Trust. This promoted Lincoln Anglican Academy Trust to the largest trust operating in Lincolnshire with 15 schools.
- There were thirty-four active multi-academy trusts operating within Lincolnshire and a total of 147 Lincolnshire academies that were members of multi-academy trusts.

The Forum noted the report and the following comments were received:

- The report author was to clarify if standalone Academies that became Trusts were represented in the data.

RESOLVED:

That the report and comments be noted.

13 LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM - WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED:

That the work programme presented be received.

The meeting closed at 2.31 pm

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