



REPORT REFERENCE:- **2.0**
 LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM
 7 OCTOBER 2009

PRESENT:

Schools' Members

Ellenor Beighton (Headteacher, Market Rasen, De Aston), John Beswick (Governor, Louth Cordeaux), Tim Bright (Headteacher, Bourne Westfield Primary), St John Burkett (Headteacher, Deeping St James Linchfield County Primary), Martin Connor (Headteacher, North Hykeham North Kesteven School), Stephen Douglas (Headteacher, Cranwell Primary), Michael Follows MBE (Governor, Boston John Fielding Community Special), Anne Grief (Headteacher, Long Sutton Primary), Roger Hale (Headteacher, Caistor Grammar), Simon Hardy (Faith Groups), Linda Hayes (Governor, Ruskington Chestnut Street C of E Primary), Margaret Johnson (Governor, King Edward VI Grammar), Jonathan Maddox (Headteacher, Bourne Grammar), Julie Marshall (Private, Voluntary and Independent early years providers of the free entitlement to early years education), Jeremy Newnham (Headteacher, Caistor Yarborough), Paul Strong (Headteacher, Welton William Farr C of E Comprehensive) and Jennifer Wheeldon (Headteacher, Scothern, Ellison Boulters C of E Primary).

Observer (with speaking rights)

Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell (Executive Councillor for Children's Services including Post 16 Education).

Officials

Children's Services Directorate – Debbie Barnes (Assistant Director of Children's Services), Jez Bailey (ICT Project and Programme Manager), Penny Richardson (Interim Strategic Manager - Inclusion), Penny Lee (Workforce Development Strategy Officer), Matthew Clayton (School Organisation Planning Manager), Tony Warnock (Head of Finance Children's Services), Chief Executives Office – Steve Blagg (Democratic Services Officer).

Apologies for absence:- Terl Bryant (Governor, Stamford Queen Eleanor Technology College), Professor Ken Durrands CBE (Grantham, The Kings), Sarah Jelley (Governor, Nettleham Infants), Malcolm Shore (Headteacher, Grantham St Anne's C of E Primary), Ian Wiles (Headteacher, Lincoln St Faiths C of E Infants), Grahame Killey (Learning and Skills Council), Barbara Peck (Staff Trade Unions) and Peter Duxbury (Executive Director, Children's Services).

In the absence of the Chairman, Terl Bryant, the Vice-Chairman, Michael Follows MBE, took the Chair.

MICHAEL FOLLOWS MBE IN THE CHAIR

18. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 1 July 2009 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to “Barbara Peck (Staff Trade Unions)” being added to the list of attendees and the deletion of the words “Debbie Barnes stated that play schools had accidentally been omitted from the report” in Minute 8.

19. BUY BACK SERVICES FOR SCHOOLS – UPDATE (Minute 4, Forum, 1 July 2009)

The Forum was informed that Mouchel would be recruiting a senior Manager with responsibility for Schools Accounts and that a stakeholder group would shortly be appointed.

20. HIGH DEFINITION (HD) – VIDEO CONFERENCING (VC) UPDATE (Minute 5, Forum, 1 July 2009)

The Forum was informed that Keith Elms, Project Manager for the Lincoln Specialist Schools’ Group, had been tasked with developing HD – VC and that the University of Lincoln had been commissioned to do evaluation of the work. It was noted the first course for further mathematics and law had started.

The Forum would be kept informed of developments.

21. PROPOSAL FOR EARLY YEARS EDUCATION ENTITLEMENT IN MAINTAINED SCHOOLS (Minute 8, Forum, 1 July 2009)

The Forum was informed that there was a need for further consultation in connection with Early Years Education Entitlement which would be incorporated into the Single Funding Formula consultation.

22. SIXTH FORM FUNDING 2009-10 (Minute 10, Forum, 1 July 2009)

The Forum questioned the outcome of Sixth Form Funding 2009-10 stating that there had been a reduction in the number of funded places at certain schools, made comparisons with Academies whose sixth form places had not been capped, stating that the situation was unsatisfactory.

Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell stated that local authorities would assume responsibility for this service from 2011, hoped that local authorities would have more flexibility, that bureaucracy would be avoided and emphasised the need to work with colleges and schools.

The Forum noted that the Information Commissioner had stated that Freedom of Information requests in connection with Academies should be granted and that the matter was currently being considered by the Government.

It was agreed that Grahame Killey should be requested to provide more information about funding of sixth forms to the next meeting of the Forum.

23. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE TO CONTACTPOINT (Minute 11, Forum, 1 July 2009)

Michael Follows MBE stated he had attended a meeting of the ContactPoint Project Board, in place of the Chairman, and that ContactPoint was progressing.

It was noted that the Conservative Party, nationally, had indicated that they would not progress Contactpoint if elected to government.

24. CAF PERFORMANCE (Minute 17, Forum, 1 July 2009)

The Forum noted the high input from the education sector into CAF.

25. SPECIAL EDUCATION - UPDATE

The Forum received a verbal update on special education from Debbie Barnes. A report on the Direction of Travel for special education had been considered and approved at a recent meeting of the Council's Executive. She stated that the report had widened the scope of the funding of special schools review and it was now proposed to do a strategic examination of special education, including funding.

It was agreed that a copy of the report (Direction of Travel) should be sent to members of the Forum with the minutes.

26. 21st CENTURY SCHOOLS- PRESENTATION

The Forum received a presentation from Andy Breckon, on the government's White Paper on 'Your Child, Your School, Our Future; Building a 21st Century Schools' System".

Comments made by the Forum included:-

1. Did the licence for teachers remove the need for Headteachers to be educationalists?
2. Concerns about the new systems of governance and the effects of the 'Warwick Research'.
3. The need for flexibility to be able to transfer funding to primary schools to help to teach children literacy and mathematic skills before entering the secondary sector.

Andy Breckon stated:-

- 1 The regulations had been tightened to ensure that it was mandatory for Headteachers to receive educational training.
2. The proposed funding arrangements did not allow flexibility to enable funds to primary schools but he supported the views of the Forum.
3. Local authorities had not been requested to respond to the consultation.
4. The proposals in connections with the Pupil Guarantee presented serious challenges.
5. The proposals in connection with School Report Cards were being examined especially relating to verification of data and quality control.

6. 'School Accountability' and reporting school attainment on the 'School Report Cards' could have implications for many schools.
7. The proposals to move from the local authority to 'Accredited Providers of Schools' were challenging and not well thought out.
8. The ability to attract governors was becoming a problem and proposals to give governors increased powers presented a challenge.
9. 'Children's Trusts' presented a challenge especially for the commissioning of services for local authorities.

RESOLVED

That the presentation be noted.

27. REDEPLOYMENT SCHEME FOR SCHOOL BASED STAFF

The Forum received a report from Penny Lee on the recently launched Redeployment Scheme for School Based Staff. The scheme was countywide and applied to both teaching and support staff who were at risk of redundancy as a result of a restructure, ill-health or disability.

The Forum sought clarification about:-

1. Teachers on temporary contracts receiving a letter of redundancy.
2. The financial liability for previous service.
3. The second bullet point, page 5 of the policy (when to interview redeployed candidates before internal/external candidates).
4. Teachers suffering ill health and applying for a post at another school.
5. Equal opportunities issues especially disabilities, weighting criteria and changing job descriptions.
6. Effects of the proposals on Foundation Schools.

Penny Lee stated:-

1. She would check the process for temporary contracts with Mouchel.
2. Schools should be aware of the number of years service a teacher had before employing. It was discriminatory to refuse to employ a teacher just because that teacher had many years service.
3. She would clarify the second bullet point on page 5 of the policy in connection with the obligations of Headteachers and Governors about the interviewing process for redeployed candidates.
4. Teachers suffering ill health were referred to Wellwork and if the teacher was not well enough to return to work then alternative vacancies, including Directorates in the Council, would be examined.
5. Equal opportunity issues were addressed in the recruitment procedure with internal vacancies across the whole of the local authority being considered.
6. There was an expectation that Foundation Schools would use the local authority's redeployment scheme to reduce costs.

Debbie Barnes emphasised the main purpose of the redeployment policy was the local authority's duty of care to employees and better use of financial resources, adding that more money spent on redundancies meant less money for schools.

RESOLVED

That the Policy be updated to accommodate the comments made by the Forum and brought back to a future meeting.

28. REVISED SCHOOLS' BUDGET 2009/10

The Forum received a report from Tony Warnock on the revised Schools' Budget for 2009/10. The Dedicated School Grant (DSG) was ring fenced and could only be spent for the purposes outlined in DCSFs' regulations. A revision to the Schools' Budget was necessary each year to reflect, firstly, the final DSG announced by the DCFS in the Summer and, secondly, the DCSF required the local authority to consult with the Forum over its plans to utilise or address any under or over spending on the DSG in the previous financial year.

The report detailed the local authority's plan to use the DSG under spending and the comments of the Forum were sought on each of the proposals.

1. The Forum supported the funding of the commitments from the previous financial year amounting to £3.66m and the shortfall on the DSG for 2009/10 caused by the estimated error amounting to £0.724m.
2. A member of the Forum stated that he had already purchased an IT system to enable children and parents to access certain parts of the schools' IT system. The Chairman stated that it was important for schools to enquire about the implementation of any countywide IT system before going ahead to purchase their own equipment. In this respect, the value of Headteachers becoming members of the ICT Sub Group was emphasised. The Sub Group had responsibility for examining the provision of IT on a strategic basis.
3. The Forum supported the setting aside the balance £0.32m to meet the expected shortfall in the 2009/10 budget for Statements of special educational needs on the undertaking that there would be a reduction in the deficit in the next financial year. The Forum considered this particular request in detail and accepted the complex issues involved.

Officers stated that work was in progress to undertake consultation on additional needs and the current arrangements for statementing.

Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell stated that she supported Penny Richardson's approach adding that this was a mammoth undertaking but there was a need to ensure money was devolved to schools to help those children most in need. She added that there was a need for the local authority to work both with parents and schools on the matter.

The Forum wished to see the local authority address the matter before 2011. There was also a need for improved dialogue between primary and secondary schools on the matter.

Debbie Barnes agreed to bring a report on the matter to the next meeting of the Forum but highlighted that remodelling additional needs was a three to five year change management project.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That the proposals for dealing with the under spending on the 2008/09 DSG representing a one-off sum of money and the revision to the 2009/10 DSG, subject to an undertaking that there will be a reduction in the cost of the Statementing of children with special educational needs in the next financial year, be supported.

29. MEETING BETWEEN THE COUNCIL'S EXECUTIVE AND THE SCHOOLS' FORUM

The Forum agreed that the Council's Executive should be informed that the annual meeting between the Council's Executive and the Schools' Forum should be cancelled this year due to the shortage of any meaningful business to discuss.

30. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The Forum agreed to defer consideration of the following items of business to a meeting of the Forum on 4 November 2009:-

- Item 6 – Financial Management Standards in schools
- Item 7 – School Carry Forwards (2008/09) and National Bench Marking (1999/00 – 2007/09)
- Item 8 – Early Years funding arrangements from 2010/11
- Item 10 – Standards funds 2009/10
- Item 11 – Budget Shares information pack
- Item 13 – Work programme
- Item 16 – Information pack

The meeting closed at 4:50 pm.

RE-CONVENED MEETING OF THE LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM HELD ON 4 NOVEMBER 2009, AT THE COUNTY OFFICES, NEWLAND, LINCOLN

Present: Terl Bryant (Governor, Stamford Queen Eleanor Technology College) (Chairman).

Schools' Members

Ellenor Beighton (Headteacher, Market Rasen, De Aston), John Beswick (Governor, Louth Cordeaux), St John Burkett (Headteacher, Deeping St James Linchfield County Primary), Stephen Douglas (Headteacher, Cranwell Primary), Professor Ken Durrands CBE (Grantham The Kings), Anne Grief (Headteacher, Long Sutton Primary), Simon Hardy (Faith Groups), Linda Hayes (Governor, Ruskington Chestnut St C of E Primary), Paul Hopkins (Governor, Lincoln Monks Abbey Primary), Margaret Johnson (Governor, King Edward VI Grammar), Jonathan Maddox (Headteacher, Bourne Grammar), Julie Marshall (Private, Voluntary and Independent early years providers of the free entitlement to early years education), Jeremy Newnham (Headteacher, Caistor Yarborough), Barbara Peck (Staff Trade Unions),

Heather Steed (Boston Nursery), Paul Strong (Headteacher, Welton William Farr C of E Comprehensive), Jennifer Wheeldon (Headteacher, Scothern, Ellison Boulsters C of E Primary).

Officials

Debbie Barnes – Assistant Director of Children’s Services, Steve Blagg – Democratic Services, Chief Executive’s Office and Tony Warnock - Head of Finance Children’s Services.

Apologies for absence:- Martin Connor (Headteacher, North Hykeham North Kesteven), Michael Follows MBE (Governor, Boston, John Fielding Community Special), Roger Hale (Headteacher, Caistor Grammar), Sarah Jelley (Governor, Nettleham Infants), Ian Wiles (Headteacher, Lincoln St Faiths C of E Infant) and Peter Duxbury (Director of Children’s Services).

31. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT STANDARDS IN SCHOOLS

(NB The report had been omitted from the agenda. It was deferred from the meeting of the Forum on 7 October 2009).

The Forum received a report from Tony Warnock in connection with the latest information with regard to Financial Management Standards in schools (FMIS). More schools had achieved the standard in 2008/09 but there were a significant number of deferrals. All schools were required by law to have reached the standard by 31 March 2010.

Comments made the Forum included:-

- (1) The problems caused by employees who had responsibility for a school’s finances moving to a new post.
- (2) The need to obtain details of an employee’s financial experience before appointing to a post.
- (3) Enquiries about the definition of a deficit budget and what constituted a “light touch”
- (4) The need for the local authority to forewarn schools about the need for prudence because of the economic outlook.
- (5) The need to examine the local funding formula especially because of the increase in fixed costs and the possible need for a major restructuring of schools in view of the economic outlook.
- (6) Schools using the light touch would not be allowed to hold the FMIS.

Tony Warnock responded:-

- (1) The local authority was working closely with those schools with exceptionally large deficits.
- (2) The local authority was aware of those personnel responsible for financial management in schools. Financial management training was provided on a regular and flexible basis to meet the requirements of attendees.
- (3) He explained the “light touch” approach.
- (4) He agreed to report back to the Forum in connection with the suggestion made that before any person was appointed to manage a school’s budget

references were required to support the applicant's application as to financial results/abilities.

- (5) He agreed to the importance of communication with schools on the need for prudence in a period of economic uncertainty.

The Chairman highlighted the importance for communication between the local authority and schools and requested that the Forum was kept regularly informed in a period of uncertainty.

RESOLVED

That the report and action detailed be noted.

32. SCHOOL CARRY FORWARDS (2008/09) AND NATIONAL BENCHMARKING (1999/00 – 2007/08)

The Forum received a report from Tony Warnock in connection with school carry forwards at 31 March 2009 and benchmarking data on the local authority's school balances, and comparison with the East Midlands and England statistics for all educational sectors over the period 1999/00 to 2007/08.

Comments made by the Forum included:-

- (1) The carry forwards were consistently below the East Midlands average and was this because the funding levels were consistently below the East Midlands average?
- (2) It was noted that nursery and special schools had large incomes and surpluses.
- (3) More detail was required in the "note" column in the report to explain reasons for either an overspend or a carry forward.
- (4) The policy in connection with carry forwards should be re-considered to allow schools to accumulate some reserves for contingency purposes.
- (5) The need to examine the local funding formula to take into account fixed costs.
- (6) Was there a cap in place on the number of children who could be statemented?
- (7) Was there a long term strategy to examine the structure of education in Lincolnshire?
- (8) What involvement was there with the NHS in connection with the sharing of costs for special education?

Officers responded:-

- (1) There was a need for schools to have in place robust planning measures to address any deficit.
- (2) There was a duty for local authorities to publish statistics on this matter.
- (3) The local authority closely monitored deficits and carry forwards.
- (4) Explained the monitoring process especially schools with exceptionally high carry forwards or deficits.
- (5) It was noted that the DCSF was reviewing the current carry forward formula and, in the meantime, local authorities had to follow the formula.

- (6) It was noted that special education and in particular the statementing of pupils was being examined. It was agreed that measures were needed to prevent any abuse of the statementing procedure.
- (7) The local authority had established a stakeholder group to examine special educational needs and the group would be meeting soon.
- (8) Reference was made to the local funding formula between primary and secondary schools which had previously been considered by the Forum and was comparable nationally. It was also noted that when the three year funding DSG cycle commenced in 2007/08 the local authority had received low funding.
- (9) Following a review of the local formula some schools had benefitted from additional central government funds. It was unlikely that additional funding would be made available but it was possible that there could be changes to the formula.
- (10) The local authority had asked schools to produce plans to reduce their deficit but the local authority was not able to instruct schools.
- (11) The local authority had not made any attempt to claw any money back from schools but this could be investigated. It was noted that local authorities which had tried to claw money back had experienced problems.
- (12) With regard to long term restructuring of schools, Building Schools for the Future, Federation and Academies had all taken place. Reference was made to the ongoing work being carried out by the Primary Review Panel whose recommendations would be submitted to the local authority's Executive.
- (13) Work was ongoing with the NHS (Joint Commissioning) on shared services with a report back requested.

The Forum requested that Tony Warnock should review the local funding formula.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That Tony Warnock be requested to review the local funding formula.

33. EARLY YEARS FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS FROM 2010/11

The Forum received a report from Tony Warnock on the progress of implementing the new funding arrangements for Early Years providers from 2010/11. Tony Warnock requested that members of the Forum should communicate to their colleagues the impending changes arising from the new funding arrangements.

Comments made by the Forum included:-

- (1) Enquiries about the funding of PVI and maintained schools from the DSG element.
- (2) The ability of maintained schools to charge was welcomed.
- (3) The need to monitor PVIs.
- (4) The impact of the Rose Report.
- (5) The extension of the free entitlement from 12.5 hours to 15 hours per week would need to be met from current funding.

Tony Warnock stated:-

- (1) That the increase of 2.5 additional hours had been funded through the Standards Fund Grant.
- (2) The issues in connection with monitoring of PVI's would be raised with the DCSF.
- (3) The issues in connection with the education of children aged 4 would be examined.
- (4) Emphasised that the exercise was not about the closure of nursery schools even if they were not 100% full.
- (5) It was proposed not to make any changes to the current formula as the government wanted funding stability.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and Tony Warnock be thanked for his contribution.

34. STANDARDS FUNDS 2009/2010

The Forum received a report from Tony Warnock on the local authority's proposal to distribute the balance of the 2009/10 School Development Grant.

Out of the local authority's 2009/10 final School Development Grant allocation of £28.27m there remained an unallocated sum within the main grant of approximately £0.236m. Of this unallocated sum, approximately £0.045m needed to be allocated to Pupil Referral Units, to adjust their initial allocations which were calculated incorrectly due to a misinterpretation of data relating to duly registered pupils. The balance of approximately £0.196m would be allocated to schools in accordance with the guidance issued by the DSCF.

The local authority proposed to distribute the unallocated sum to schools by uplifting their current main School Development Grant allocations by the same percentage, i.e. approximately 1.4%.

RESOLVED

That the proposal to allocate the unallocated sum within the main School Development Grant as detailed in the report, be supported.

35. BUDGET SHARE INFORMATION PACKS

The Forum received a report from Tony Warnock seeking the Forum's support for the local authority's proposal to alter the method by which the majority of the Budget Share information was disseminated to schools each year.

Comments made by the Forum included:-

- (1) The need to make governors aware of the website (www.cfbt.com/lincolnshire). (add the word "governors" in the "search" area and this will take you to the governors website).
- (2) The problems of accessing the website in rural areas.
- (3) The LCCT data exchange was a better site than Assimilate and should be investigated.

- (4) Avoidance of the use of pdf documents.
- (5) Consideration should be given to downloading the information and emailing direct to governors.

Officers responded:-

- (1) Data exchange and LCCT would be examined both by the local authority and the ICT Sub Group.
- (2) The local authority would re-issue the letter in connection with the new proposals.
- (3) All relevant information in connection with the preparation of budgets had now been issued to schools in the budget pack.
- (4) Suggested that the issues in connection with Mouchel's buy back of services should be sent separately to schools.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the proposals to disseminate the budget share information packs with effect from 2010/11 be supported.
- (2) That officers submit a report on those issues raised by the Forum to a future meeting post ICT Group review.

36. WORK PROGRAMME

The Forum received its work programme.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be agreed subject to the following matters being added:-

- (1) Statementing – 27 January 2010.
- (2) Redeployment Scheme – 27 January 2010.
- (3) Criminal Records Bureau costs and changes (Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA)) – financial impact either 27 January 2010 or April 2010.

37. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

27 January 2010 at 2:00 pm at the County Offices, Lincoln.

The meeting closed at 4:25 pm.