



REPORT REFERENCE:- **2.0**
 LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM
 27 JANUARY 2010

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

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), Bill Bush (Headteacher, The Phoenix School, Grantham), Martin Connor (Headteacher, North Hykeham North Kesteven School), Stephen Douglas (Headteacher, Cranwell Primary), Professor Ken Durrands CBE (Governor, Grantham, The Kings), 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), Sarah Jelley (Governor, Nettleham Infants), 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), Malcolm Shore (Headteacher, Grantham St Anne's C of E Primary), Heather Steed (Headteacher, Boston Nursery), 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).

Grahame Killey (Learning and Skills Council).

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), Sue Westcott (Assistant Director of Children's Services – Staying Safe), Tony Warnock (Head of Finance Children's Services), James Thomas (Principal Information Officer), Paul Snook (Principal School Improvement Adviser Special Projects);

Chief Executive's Office – Steve Blagg (Democratic Services Officer).

Apologies for absence:- Margaret Johnson (Governor, King Edward VI Grammar) and Ian Wiles (Headteacher, Lincoln St Faith's C of E Infants).

38. MR BILL BUSH - WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Mr Bill Bush, Headteacher, The Phoenix School, Grantham, to the meeting as a new member on the Forum, representing Special Schools.

39. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 1 October and 4 November 2009 (adjourned meeting) be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the word “shortfall” replacing the word “deficit”, in paragraph No. 3, minute 28.

40. ACTIONS ARISING SINCE THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Forum received an update of actions taken in response to the last meeting of the Forum.

Additional matters raised by the Forum included the following:-

Minute 19 - Buy Back Services – Debbie Barnes stated that Mouchel had not, to-date, appointed to the post of Accounts Manager for Schools position. It was agreed that Debbie Barnes would write to Mouchel to enquire when the post would be filled.

Minute 23 - ContactPoint – Debbie Barnes stated that because of political uncertainty in connection with ContactPoint, the pilot was restricted to the West Lindsey area.

Minute 31 – Financial Management Standards in Schools (FMIS) – Tony Warnock stated that audit was expected to report at the end of the financial year on those schools which had met FMSIS. Work was ongoing with schools about overspends. There was an emerging trend in the secondary sector of significant overspends in the financial year 2009/10 and a number of schools had indicated that they anticipated problems in the 2010/11 financial year.

Minute 32 - NHS (Joint Commissioning) on Shared Services – Debbie Barnes provided update on current funding contribution from NHS Lincolnshire. It was agreed that Debbie Barnes would report to a future meeting of the Forum on NHS (Joint Commissioning) on Shared Services progress on joint commissioning.

41. LINCOLNSHIRE VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT – PROJECT MANDATES

The Forum received from Jez Bailey project mandates in connection with (1) Learning Platform Replacement and LSN SSL Gateway Implementation. The reasons for the projects and funding details were explained. Jez Bailey responded to comments by the Forum including that he was prepared to ask for an extension of the deadline for implementation, gave details of access arrangements, explained why the proposals were more advantageous than other systems and emphasised the importance of the ICT Sub-Group in setting ICT strategy.

The Chairman stated that the ICT Sub-Group would meet on 28 January 2010 and that the two projects were on the agenda for consideration. The Chairman stated that

the ICT Sub-Group welcomed attendance of members of the Forum and stated that Jez Bailey was there to listen and provide only those services required by schools.

RESOLVED

(1) That the project briefs be supported and that the ICT Sub-Group be authorised to act on behalf of the Forum in considering the two mandates.

(2) That Jez Bailey approach Becta to ask for extension to the timescale.

42. REDEPLOYMENT SCHEME FOR SCHOOLS' STAFF AND REDEPLOYMENT INCENTIVE FRAMEWORK (Minute 27, Forum, 7 October 2009)

The Forum received a report from Penny Lee on an updated redeployment scheme for schools' staff and redeployment incentive framework following feedback received. The Forum was reminded of the need to reduce redundancy costs because of the financial and human costs involved.

Penny Lee responded to comments from the Forum stating that the scheme would run for a trial period over the financial year 2010/11 and then rolled out thereafter; that accommodation costs could be built into the scheme and that Academies were outside of the scheme.

The Forum agreed that it should receive a further report following the trial period to allow comments to be considered and thereafter the Scheme could be rolled out.

RESOLVED

That the proposal to implement the redeployment scheme for schools' staff and redeployment incentive framework for a trial period over the financial year 2010/11 be supported and that a further report be submitted to the Forum following the trial period.

43. ADDITIONAL NEEDS: NEXT STEPS IN THE DIRECTION OF TRAVEL (Minute 25, Forum, 7 October 2009)

The Forum received a report on "Additional Needs: Next Steps in the Direction of Travel" from Penny Richardson following a request from the Forum to be kept informed of developments.

Sue Westcott stated that the Forum's views were required in particular on the four principles (inclusion, localisation, personalisation and effective resources) that would drive the future of educational provision for children with Additional Needs. She stated that while there would always be the need for some children to be statemented the process required streamlining to ensure schools received funding and bureaucracy reduced. A stakeholder group had been established to examine the process and that it would be important to address the period of transition.

James Thomas presented statistical information to explain the current situation and the thinking behind the proposals. (A copy of the presentation is appended to the minutes).

Comments by the Forum included:-

1. The report was welcomed but was there too much reliance on post codes to reflect deprivation and prior attainment?
2. Use of the Council Tax instead of postal codes was suggested.
3. Had schools been visited to obtain the statistical information?
4. The threshold for free school meals had risen and therefore could affect the statistics.
5. Nursery schools were outside the categories of free school meals and prior attainment.
6. The scheme proposed already operated in the majority of LAs.
7. Impact of the proposals on the budget.
8. The importance of governors and parents having confidence in any new proposals adopted together with monitoring and accountability.
9. The need for clear advice to governors.
10. Measurement of performance data and allocation of funding.
11. The need to consider the emotional demands of high achievers and its impact on funding.
12. The need to consider the children of military families who were already disadvantaged because of having to regularly move location.
13. The unknown impact of falling rolls and the transfer of the responsibilities from the Learning and Skills Council needed to be taken into consideration.
14. Disappointment that no members of the Forum had been involved in the stakeholder group except Bill Bush who had only recently been appointed to the Forum.
15. Lack of feedback from the stakeholder group to governors and Head Teachers.

Officers responded to the comments:-

1. The free school meals factor was not the only indicator taken into account in the calculations. The Audit Commission had emphasised the importance of this factor and most local authorities were using this factor. Postcode data included the whole postcode so was sensitive
2. Meetings would be arranged with Nurseries to discuss the proposals. It was a considered decision not to include nurseries at this stage
3. Any delay in consideration of the proposals by the Forum should not delay unduly the dissemination of information of school budget shares – it would be challenging to implement changes in 2011/12 due to no growth in budget
4. The views of the Forum would have to be sought, and the approval of the Secretary of State, to any changes to the Minimum Funding Guarantee as a result of any removal of School Action Plus and School Action.
5. Officers had attended all Head Teacher groups to discuss the proposals and the groups should have cascaded information down to their colleagues.
6. The concerns expressed by the Forum about the dissemination of information about the proposals would be examined.
7. The reduction in Statements and changes to the system had been ongoing for some time and many Head Teachers and parents had been consulted in 2008.
8. Details of the formula were being examined by officers and would be considered by the Forum.
9. Protection for implementation of the proposals would be restricted in the first twelve months and evaluated.
10. 2009 data would be used in any calculation.

The Chairman stated that it was clear the Forum supported the paper in principle but that they had reservations about the proposals and suggested that a small working group should meet on 9 February 2010 to consider the proposals and make recommendations to the Council. However, following a brief debate the Forum agreed there should be a special meeting of the Forum on 9 February at 2:00 pm to consider impact of the proposals on schools and governing bodies, including details about the transitional arrangements and impact of formula to be used.

Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell stated that the proposals involved substantial change and emphasised the importance of getting it right. She added that the Council hoped to implement the proposals in 2010/11 and that changes would be made if necessary, that the situation would be monitored, that there was a need to react quicker to children with special needs and emphasised the need for all concerned to work together.

RESOLVED

That consideration of the impact of the proposals be deferred to a special meeting of the Forum arranged for 2:00 pm on 9 February 2010 and that, in the meantime, details of the proposals and the report sent to the Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Committee on 22 January 2010 be circulated to all schools and governing bodies and comments sought for consideration at the special meeting.

44. SCHOOL FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS 2010/2011

The Forum received a report from Tony Warnock seeking the Forum's views on school funding arrangements for 2010/11.

Comments made by the Forum included:-

1. Consideration needed to be given to the effects of the increase in NI contributions of 0.5%.
2. Those schools which had gone into deficit would find it difficult to make efficiency savings.
3. The effects of the reduction in capital expenditure on the provision of school kitchens (reduced from 40 to 20).
4. Dialogue was needed in connection with 1:1 funding because there was little flexibility at the moment.
5. There was no pay increase for support staff in the financial year 2010/11.
6. Could budget information be issued to schools earlier?
7. There could be fewer special schools in the future as a result of the changes which could lead to redundancies. Also, the effects might lead to more pupils being excluded.

Tony Warnock responded to comments made by the Forum stating:-

1. Emotional Behavioural Difficulty (EBD) schools existed to prevent more children being sent out of the County.
2. The financial effects of Statementing were well known.
3. Every effort was made to circulate information about schools' budgets at an early stage. However, there was a need to maintain a balance for accuracy purposes.

4. The long term financial planning statement was a useful document for schools.
5. Schools would receive at least a 2.1% per pupil increase in their funding in the 2010/11 financial year. There was no news on the likely increase for non-teaching staff salaries.
6. Academies were exempt from the Freedom of Information Act but requests for information would be considered by central government.
7. Academies' budgets were based on the same funding formula as local authority schools, using the DSG allocated by the LA. They also received additional DCSF grants.
8. 1:1 funding would be examined to see if more flexibility could be provided and the Forum kept informed.
9. There was a 5% carry forward limit for primary schools but this was currently being examined by the DfES.
10. A report was due to be submitted to the Council's Executive on a reduction in the capital programme.
11. The implication of the increase in NI contributions would be examined.
12. Schools with a deficit were a matter of concern to the Council.
13. Money had been set aside for the effects of changes to the Special Education Needs budget. However, the Council's Executive would not be putting money into the DSG because local authorities were expected to face severe reductions in funding in the future.

RESOLVED

That the comments of the Forum, in respect of school funding arrangements 2010/11, be noted.

45. EARLY YEARS FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

The Forum received a report from Tony Warnock providing an update of the DCSFs' proposals for postponing implementation of the new funding arrangements for Early Years providers.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

46. WORK PROGRAMME

The Forum received its work programme.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be noted and updated for future meetings.

47. INFORMATION PACK

The Forum received an information pack and comments were noted on the reports as follows:-

1. CYPSP Minutes – 2 December 2009

The Forum's attention was drawn to minute 33 ("Team around the Child") where the CYPSP had requested a further update in connection to the 25 cases closed due to insufficient agencies being engaged. The Forum agreed that Michael Follows MBE should be asked to raise this matter at the CYPSP as a matter of urgency in view of the need to protect children.

2. English as a Second Language

Noted.

3. 2009/10 Section 52 Benchmarking

It was agreed that this paper should be considered at the next meeting of the Forum.

Concerns were expressed about performance indicators for Lincolnshire particularly bullying. Michael Follows MBE agreed to raise this matter at the CYPSP.

It was noted that Lincolnshire was in the bottom 10% for emotional health. Michael Follows MBE agreed to raise this matter at the CYPSP.

The statistics in connection with surplus primary and secondary school places were noted particularly their effect on the pupil level annual schools census (PLASC).

4. Update On Post 16 Funding

Grahame Killey stated that information in connection with 6th Form budgets was expected to be available on 29 January 2010 and that it was likely there would be winners and losers.

It was agreed to consider Post 16 funding as an early item on the agenda at the next meeting of the Forum.

The Forum noted that this was Grahame Killey's last meeting at the Forum and thanked him for his contribution during his period of office.

48. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

2.00pm on Wednesday 21 April 2010 at the County Offices, Lincoln. (Next ordinary meeting).

The meeting closed at 5:30 pm.