



REPORT REFERENCE:- **2.0**

LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM
30 JUNE 2010

PRESENT:-

Schools' Members

Ellenor Beighton (Headteacher, Market Rasen, De Aston), John Beswick (Governor, Louth Cordeaux), Teri Bryant (Governor, Stamford Queen Eleanor Technology College), Bill Bush (Headteacher, Grantham, The Phoenix Special), 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), Simon Hardy (Faith Groups), 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), John Poucher (Governor, Boston R C Primary), Malcolm Shore (Headteacher, Grantham St Anne's C of E Primary), Paul Strong (Headteacher, Welton William Farr C of E Comprehensive) and Jennifer Wheeldon (Headteacher, Scothern, Ellison Boulters C of E Primary).

Officials

Children's Services Directorate: Peter Duxbury (Director), Debbie Barnes (Assistant Director) and Tony Warnock (Head of Finance).

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

Also In attendance: Doug Robinson (Team Leader, Sustainability and Climate Change) in connection with minute 7.

Apologies for absence: St John Burkett (Headteacher, Deeping St James Linchfield Primary), Chris Harris (Director, 14-19 Partnership), Sarah Jelley (Governor, Nettleham Primary), Heather Steed (Headteacher, Boston Nursery), Ian Wyles (Headteacher, St Faiths Primary, Lincoln), Roger Hale (Caistor Grammar) and Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell (Executive Councillor for Children's Services including Post 16 Education).

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Teri Bryant be elected Chairman of the Forum to 31 May 2011.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMEN

RESOLVED

That Michael Follows MBE and John Beswick be elected Vice-Chairmen of the Forum to 31 May 2011.

3. WELCOME TO JOHN POUCHER – NEW MEMBER

The Chairman, on behalf of the Forum, welcomed John Poucher from Boston R C Primary School as a new member of the Forum.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 April 2010 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to:

- a) The replacement of “approval” by “agreement” in the penultimate paragraph before the resolution in minute 5.
- b) An additional resolution at minute 58 - “(3) That to allow for unforeseen circumstances and to allow for flexibility to carry forward monies when monies were received late in the financial year”.

5. POST-LEARNER ALLOCATIONS 2010/11- UPDATE (Minute 57, Forum, 21 April 2010)

It was agreed to add the following to the Work Programme:-

1. Transparency in the transfer of funds from the Young Peoples Learning Agency.
2. The effects of the raising of the school leaving age to 18 years in 2015.

6. ACTION TAKEN SINCE THE MEETING OF THE FORUM HELD ON 21 APRIL 2010

The Forum received a paper outlining actions taken in response to the discussions at the meeting of the Forum on 21 April 2010. NOTED

7. SAVING ENERGY AND MONEY IN OUR SCHOOLS

Doug Robinson gave an update on action taken so far in supporting schools in becoming “Sustainable Schools”. The report examined how schools could reduce energy consumption and save money through supporting programmes for automatic (SMART) metering, monitoring and targeting, and the opportunities for investment in renewable technologies.

Doug Robinson highlighted the following:

1. The benefits to both the schools and the local authority budgets of saving energy.
2. The Council was keen to lead by example and schools had a large role to play in reducing emissions.

3. The need for schools to understand their energy consumption by having more robust measures in place.
4. The views of schools were being sought in connection with the introduction of SMART metering and information was tabled about this area which needed to be passed to the School Bursar.
5. It was proposed to work with schools in connection with the energy saving agenda and referred to the "Revolving Fund" in which £200k had been given to schools.
6. Explained the work which needed to be done in connection with investment in solar panels.
7. Emphasised the need for schools to act upon the information provided by SMART meters to save money.

Comments by the Forum included:

1. Schools needed to act upon the advice provided especially in the present economic climate.
2. Examples were given of energy saving measures which had been implemented in schools including applying for grant from the Carbon Trust and use of wind turbines.
3. The need to consider the effects of the fall in energy prices which meant the pay back time would be extended.

Doug Robinson stated that there was a need for schools and the Council to pursue various initiatives in the Council's Carbon Management Plan, the need to give advice to schools about investment in wind and solar energy, the need to examine new technologies in a changing market and the need for robust statistics to allow schools to make the necessary changes in their energy consumption.

Peter Duxbury gave his full support to the actions of Doug Robinson.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the programme for implementing SMART metering, automatic targeting and monitoring be supported.
- (2) That a Sub-Group to support work on the implementation of the programme be established comprising the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen, Jeremy Newnham, Professor Ken Durrands CBE and Simon Hardy and that a report be submitted to a future meeting.

8. EFFECTS OF THE ACADEMIES BILL AND RECENT GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION ON THE DEDICATED SUPPORT GRANT (DSG)

Officers gave details of the various meetings and correspondence in connection with Academies in response to the government's letter to all schools inviting them to become an Academy and agreed to provide information on the current situation to school governing bodies. It was important that all schools carefully considered the advantages and disadvantages of pursuing Academy status.

The Chairman stated that he had circulated a number of questions to the Forum before the agenda had gone out and before the questions and responses by the Department for Education (DfE) had been circulated. He stressed the importance of

ensuring that governing bodies and head teachers received information about the advantages and disadvantages of Academy status.

Comments by the Forum included:

1. The opportunity to use a calculator on the DfE website to allow schools to calculate the money to be received by a school and the local authority.
2. Schools expressing an interest in becoming an Academy did not mean that a school would become an Academy.
3. The importance of governing bodies having the right information before they made a decision.
4. The need to find out the impact on residual schools.
5. The Council's position on Academies.
6. The City of Birmingham was encouraging all of its schools to become Academies and the Council should consult Birmingham.
7. The need for Headteachers and governing bodies to receive regular updates.
8. The DfE website stated that non compliance in connection with the preparation of accounts could lead to criminal proceedings under the Companies Act.
9. The effects of the Comprehensive Spending Review could have serious implications for education and any decision to pursue Academy status should await the outcome of the Review.
10. The need for equal preference for those schools remaining with the local authority.
11. Special schools could not become Academies until September 2011 and were affected by the current funding review.
12. The implications for the cost of providing school transport if an Academy changed its school day.

Officers responded as follows:

1. Explained the situation in connection with the funding of Academies especially funding from the DSG and the funding of services outside of the DSG by the Council, e.g. welfare, music and transport, etc. Just because the new government had stated that Academies could have a share of those costs the Council had not top sliced schools' budgets to meet those costs. It also meant that if the Council stopped providing those services, it would transfer the money to schools to provide those services.
2. The Council had made a commitment to provide the cost of those services outside of the DSG by September 2010 and this information would be sent to schools.
3. The Council's view was that while they had supported the establishment of Academies under the previous government the new proposals were different and the Council was keen to ensure that schools received all of the information to allow them to make a decision. Should it be clear that Academy status was suitable for a school then the Council would support the school's decision.
4. The Secretary of State for Education's views had been sought about the role of the local authority.
5. It was important to ensure the sustainability of the education service and that it was fit for purpose to meet the needs of both schools in and out of local authority control.

6. The effects of schools becoming Academies and the impending cuts in grants to local government had serious financial implications for the Council.
7. Should an Academy wish to change its school day then the additional cost of school transport would have to be met by the school.
(It was noted that this was not the current legal situation but this would be challenged if necessary).

The Chairman thanked members for their contribution to the discussion.

RESOLVED

That Academies be a standing item on the Forum agenda.

9. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INDEPENDENT SAFEGUARING AUTHORITY'S VETTING AND BARRING SCHEME

The report had been withdrawn because the government was re-examining. NOTED

10. ADDITIONAL NEEDS UPDATE

Tony Warnock presented a progress report on Additional Needs and stated that officers had been considering a number of issues that had arisen previously through consultation with Headteachers and governors. The intention was to set up a Working Group in September 2010, comprising members of the Forum and school representatives, to consider their findings and agree a way forward. It was hoped to bring a report to the meeting of the Forum in October 2010 and to consult all schools through Area Headteacher meetings in the Autumn before final decisions were made after the Forum meeting in January 2011.

The following put forward their names to serve on the Working Group:

Eleanor Beighton
Bill Bush
Stephen Douglas
Michael Follows MBE
Anne Grief

John Poucher suggested that the Headteacher of his school had knowledge of this area and the Forum agreed, subject to the Headteacher's confirmation, that she should also be appointed to the Working Group.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That the Working Group comprise Eleanor Beighton, Bill Bush, Stephen Douglas and Michael Follows MBE, and the Headteacher of Boston S Mary's R C Primary School, subject to her confirmation.

11. 2010/11 BUDGET

Tony Warnock presented a report in connection with the 2010/11 budget and stated that the Section 251 (formerly s52) budget statement showed the Council's planned spending on Children's Services for the following financial year.

He responded to comments including that officers were examining the position of those schools which had received a loan and had become an Academy, agreed to keep the Forum informed of the outcome of discussions on the matter and explained the Loan Scheme.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

12. CHILDREN'S TRUST ARRANGEMENTS

Debbie Barnes presented a report on the Children's Trust arrangements.

Michael Follows MBE stated that he had been a representative on the Strategic Partnership since 2006 and had tried to represent the views of the Forum on the Partnership. He stated that the prime function of the Forum was to oversee the allocation of the DSG and he was aware of the commissioning arrangements carried out by the Partnership's Executive. He had posed a number of questions to Peter Duxbury on 11 April 2010 particularly on whether funding was taken from the DSG by the Partnership and had been informed that all of the information would be submitted to the CYPSP meeting on 25 May 2010 but there had been no explanation given to that meeting. He sought the views of the Forum.

Debbie Barnes stated that all Headteachers had been informed about the arrangements for the Children's Trust, the Children's Trust Board had commenced operation in April 2010 and schools now had a statutory role. While the government was examining whether to revoke the legislation in connection with the arrangements there was a statutory duty to participate at the current time. She added that the partnership provided an opportunity for efficiencies to be made; that two Development Days had taken place and that the report today followed on from those two days.

Comments by the Forum included:

1. The Forum was a statutory body and represented the views of governors and teachers who were elected to the Forum and therefore it should be represented on the Board.
2. The Board's Strategic Investment Group (SIG) had a Forum representative and this was welcomed.
3. All agencies represented on SIG were also represented on the Board. The Forum was the exception.
4. The Chairman and Vice-Chairmen wished to see the Forum represented on the Board and that if it could not be represented on the Board then it was their view that the Forum should not be involved at all.
5. School representatives on the Board were welcomed.
6. The importance of having a Headteacher representative on the Board with knowledge of how the Forum worked.

7. The Board should have a Forum representative because of the Forum's responsibilities in connection with the DSG.

Peter Duxbury thanked Michael Follows' MBE for his contribution to the CYPSP and stated that the involvement of a Headteacher on the Board was important because schools were at the centre of the arrangements. The guidance received from government emphasised the need to avoid wasteful bureaucracy and in view of the present economic climate it was important for agencies to be seen to be working together in partnership hence the role of the local authority and the engagement with Academies. The terms of reference of the Board had followed the guidance issued by the government and issues in connection with the DSG would not be hidden with the need for increased transparency in the present economic climate. He stated that the Forum was able to be represented on the Board through the SIG nominating a member to the Board and there was nothing to prevent the Forum asking for an item to be placed on the agenda of the Headteachers' Forum.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the comments be noted.
- (2) That officers report the comments of the Forum to the Board.

13. WORK PROGRAMME

The Forum considered its work programme.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be updated and be a standing item on the agenda.

14. DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Dates and times of future meetings were agreed as follows:

- 13 October 2010
- 26 January 2011
- 27 April 2011
- 29 June 2011 (agm)

All at 2:00 pm in the Council Chamber

(Post Meeting Note

The election of new members to the Forum will take place in April 2011 with the term of office of current members ending on 31 May 2011).

15. INFORMATION PACK

Items in the information pack were noted as follows:

1. CYPSP Minutes – 10 March and 19 May 2010.
2. ICT Sub-Group Minutes – 28 January and 10 June 2010.

The meeting closed at 4.45pm