

PRESENT: TERL BRYANT (CHAIRMAN)

Schools' Members

John Beswick (Governor, Cordeaux, Louth), Stephen Douglas (Headteacher, Cranwell Primary), Michael Follows MBE (Governor, Boston John Fielding Community Special), Simon Hardy (Faith Groups), Jonathan Maddox (Headteacher, Bourne Grammar), Jeremy Newnham (Headteacher, Caistor Yarborough), Malcolm Shore (Headteacher, Grantham St Anne's C of E Primary) and Jennifer Wheeldon (Headteacher, Scothern, Ellison Boulters Primary)

Officials

Adults and Children's Directorate – Michelle Andrews (Development Manager, Integrated Children's Services), Jez Bailey (ICT Project and Programme Manager), Debbie Barnes (Assistant Director) and Tony Warnock (Head of Finance), Chief Executive's Office – Steve Blagg (Democratic Services Officer); Mouchel - Marcus Coleman (Accounts Director); Procurement – Anita Hackney (Procurement Manager, Policy and Strategy) and Mark Harvey (Procurement Manager – Operations); Communities Directorate – Doug Robinson (Sustainability and Climate Change Team Leader).

Apologies for absence: Ellenor Beighton (Headteacher, De Aston, Market Rasen), William Bush (Headteacher, The Phoenix, Grantham), Martin Connor (Headteacher, North Hykeham, North Kesteven), Professor Ken Durrands CBE (Governor, The King's, Grantham), Anne Grief (Headteacher, Long Sutton Primary), Roger Hale (Headteacher, Caistor Grammar), John Poucher (Governor, Boston St Mary's Primary), Heather Steed (Headteacher, Boston Nursery), Paul Strong (Headteacher, Welton William Farr C of E Comprehensive), (Martyn Taylor (Headteacher, Thomas Cowley, Donnington) and Julie Marshall (representative of private, voluntary and independent early year's providers of the free entitlement to early years education)

43. INQUORATE MEETING

The Chairman stated that the meeting was inquorate as there were only nine members present, the quorum being ten, and therefore any decisions made today would need to be approved at the next meeting of the Forum. In the meantime, any recommendations of the Forum would be emailed to Forum members to seek their confirmation to enable any necessary action to be taken by officers.

44. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Forum held on 26 January 2011 be agreed as a correct and signed by the Chairman subject to the word "by" being replaced by the word "to" in the second paragraph of minute 33.

44. ACTIONS TAKEN SINCE THE MEETING ON 26 JANUARY 2011

The Forum received a paper listing action taken since the previous meeting of the Forum held on 26 January 2011.

Minute 33 (Review and Reconfiguration of Special Schools and Mainstream Unit Provision – a copy of the report sent to the Council's Executive on 1 March 2011 would be emailed to the Forum by Steve Blagg; the Forum was informed about the funding arrangements for the first phase of reconfiguration of special school provision in the City of Lincoln and Grantham; Tony Warnock stated that the funding arrangements for the reconfiguration of special schools funding had been considered by the Forum at its last meeting and was similar to the approach followed in connection with SEN. Tony Warnock also confirmed that Lincolnshire had been able to maintain school funding with no reduction for 2011/12 whereas other local authorities had needed to apply the minus 1.5% minimum funding guarantee. NOTED.

45. MOUCHEL – SCHOOLS SUPPORT SERVICE UPDATE

Marcus Coleman, Accounts Director, gave a presentation on the support provided by Mouchel to schools. He stated that he wished to hear the views of schools about the services provided by Mouchel, added that the problems with accessing George had now been resolved, stated that there had been some staffing changes which schools needed to be aware of and thanked the Forum for their feedback at the engagement day at Horncastle.

Comments made by the Forum included that Mouchel had improved its services too late and there needed to be clarification between services provided by the County Council and Mouchel.

Marcus Coleman agreed that Mouchel needed to continue to improve its customer services in a competitive environment. NOTED.

46. PROCUREMENT SERVICES FOR SCHOOLS

Alina Hackney and Mark Harvey presented a report and gave a presentation on Procurement Lincolnshire. They emphasised the importance of schools getting value for money in their purchase of services, materials, ensuring that contracts were correct and gave examples of savings which could be made. They welcomed the opportunity of working with schools and wished to set up a working group comprising representatives of the Forum to examine how Procurement Lincolnshire could support schools.

The Forum welcomed the establishment of a working group and requested that details of the group should be circulated to the Forum as soon as possible seeking volunteers to serve on the group in view of the number of absentees at today's meeting.

RESOLVED

That the Forum supports the establishment of a working group to examine procurement practices in schools, comprising between six and eight members of the Forum, and any other school representative, and that the findings of the group be reported to the Forum.

47. FUTURE FOR DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY ACROSS LINCOLNSHIRE

Jez Bailey presented a report on replacement service contracts for schools for digital connectivity across Lincolnshire. He stated that the process was complex as the replacement of the two service contracts coincided with a third initiative to develop a digital strategy for the County which aimed to achieve, amongst others, the best possible Next Generation Broadband access across the county. The report outlined the two different routes to achieve best value for schools, the community and the Council in terms of broadband provision and the Council had commissioned a study to examine the advantages of both approaches.

The Forum agreed that this was a complex area and requested a progress report at its next meeting.

RESOLVED

(1) That in noting the report the Forum expresses its concern at the potential fragmentation of any replacement service contracts for schools for digital connectivity which could leave some schools disadvantaged.

(2) That the IT Sub Group should represent the views of the Forum on this matter and that additional members of the Forum be requested to serve on the Sub Group (Note:- Jennifer Wheeldon volunteered to serve on the Sub Group).

(3) That digital connectivity be considered at the meeting of the Headteachers' Briefings in June 2011.

(4) That a progress report be submitted to the next meeting of the Forum.

48. ENERGY UPDATE (minute 31, Schools' Forum, 26 January 2011)

Doug Robinson presented a report updating the Forum on activity to support schools in reducing their energy use and to meet the local authority's obligations and commitments.

Officers explained the arrangements for schools wishing borrow money to implement energy efficiency schemes and added that schools had an opportunity of coming together to get value for money and to obtain greater efficiency in the use of energy.

The Forum supported the developments in this area.

RESOLVED

- (1) That in respect of automatic metering, monitoring and targeting a progress report, including details of costs and savings, be submitted to the next meeting of the Forum.
- (2) That in respect of Schools' Collaboration on Resource Efficiency (SCORE) the work being undertaken by Doug Robinson be supported in principle.
- (3) That in respect of SCORE, SALIX Revolving Fund and other energy saving work a sub group comprising members of the Forum be established.
(Note:- Jenny Wheeldon, Jeremy Newnham, John Beswick and Michael Follows MBE volunteered their services for this sub group).

49. SCHOOL FUNDING 2011/12 (minute 39, Schools' Forum, 26 January 2011)

(Note:- Terl Bryant declared an interest as his school received grants. He withdrew from the meeting during the discussion and voting thereon. Michael Follows MBE took the chair).

Tony Warnock presented a report on a number of issues relating to school funding for 2011/12, including the key outcomes from the publication of school budget shares for 2011/12; the latest position regarding the publication of S251 and the Central Expenditure Limit; sought the views of the Forum for use of the projected underspending on the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2010/11 and sought assistance from the Forum with the local authority's proposed review of school funding following DfE's decision to streamline a number of grants in to the DSG in 2011/12.

Tony Warnock agreed to provide details of actual spending under the heading "other miscellaneous", of "commitments remain" to the next meeting of the Forum. Steve Blagg agreed to email a copy of the final report to the Council's Executive in connection with school funding, to the Forum.

Comments made by the Forum included the need for more accountability from those schools who received grants particularly about the educational outcome of children because there was concern that some schools received funding but were not improving and requested that a review of grants should be undertaken.

Tony Warnock agreed that the Forum could examine in detail the funding each school received from the DSG. However, the DSG was based on a national formula which was about to be examined by the government.

RESOLVED

- (1) That Tony Warnock provide details of actual spending under the heading "other miscellaneous", of "commitments remain" on the Action Update report to the next meeting of the Forum.
- (2) That Steve Blagg email a copy of the final report to the Council's Executive in connection with school funding to the Forum.
- (3) That those developments identified by the local authority for consideration by the Forum (primary Bacculaureate; secondary Bacculaureate; enhanced SIP work; Olympics legacy) be explained and considered at the next meeting.
- (4) That the establishment of a working group to examine the streamlining of grants and whole school funding formulae be considered at the next meeting of the Forum. (Note:- Jeremy Newnham volunteered to serve on the working group).

50. GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION – (A) SCHOOL FUNDING REFORM: RATIONALE AND PRINCIPLES AND (B) ACADEMIES PRE- 16 FUNDING: OPTIONS FOR THE 2012/13 ACADEMIC YEAR

Tony Warnock presented a report in connection with seeking a response from the Forum to two DfE consultations on (a) School funding reform: rationale and principles; and (b) Academies pre-16 funding: options for the 2012/13 academic year.

RESOLVED

That Tony Warnock prepare responses to the consultations and circulate them to the Forum for comment before they were sent to the DfE.

51. GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON THE SCHOOLS' FINANCIAL VALUE STANDARD (SFVS)

Tony Warnock presented a report seeking a response from the Forum to DfE consultation on the SFVS.

Comments made by the Forum included action currently being taken by the local authority against those schools in deficit, sanctions available to the local authority and local authority auditing practices and follow up action by the DfE.

RESOLVED

That Tony Warnock prepare and submit a response to the consultation to the DfE on behalf of the Forum.

52. CHILDREN'S SERVICES CAPITAL STRATEGY

Michelle Andrews presented a report in connection with the Children's Services' capital programme.

In noting the report comments made by the Forum highlighted that the existing primary strategy had been developed some time ago and might need to be refreshed but recognised the challenge of a local authority led strategy being implemented through autonomous governing bodies. NOTED.

53. WORK PROGRAMME

The Forum received its work programme.
RESOLVED

That the work programme be updated and submitted to the next meeting of the Forum.

54. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

2.00pm on 29 June 2011 at the County Offices, Lincoln (AGM)

55. INFORMATION PACK

The following items had been included in the information pack:-

1. CYPSP Minutes – 19 January and 16 March 2011
2. Financial Management Standards in Schools
3. ICT Provision Minutes – 16 March 2011

56. STEPHEN DOUGLAS AND MALCOLM SHORE – LAST MEETING

The Chairman stated that this was Stephen Douglas and Malcolm Shore's last meeting as they were both retiring as Headteachers and on behalf of the Forum he thanked them for their service to the Forum over many years and wished them health and happiness for the future.

The meeting closed at 5.25pm