

Schools' Members

Terl Bryant (Governor, Stamford Queen Eleanor) (Chairman)

Ellenor Beighton (Headteacher, De Aston, Market Rasen), John Beswick (Governor, Louth Cordeaux), William Bush (Headteacher, The Phoenix, Grantham), Professor K Durrands CBE (Governor, The Kings, Grantham), Michael Follows MBE (Governor, Boston John Fielding Community Special) (Vice Chairman), Anne Grief (Headteacher, Long Sutton Primary), Roger Hale (Headteacher, Caistor Grammar), Simon Hardy (Faith Groups), Dominic Loyd (Headteacher, Boston Tower Road Primary), Jonathan Maddox (Headteacher, Bourne Grammar School), Jennifer Wheeldon (Headteacher, Ellison Boulters Primary, Scothern), Ian Wilkinson (Headteacher, Deeping St James' Primary),

Apologies received from:- Richard Hardesty (Governor, North Cockerington C of E Primary), Tony Gaskell (Governor, Lincoln Manor Leas Infant), Jeremy Newnham (Headteacher, Caistor Yarborough), Heather Steed (Headteacher, Boston Nursery School), Julie Marshall (representative of Private, Voluntary and Independent Early Year's Providers of the free entitlement to early years education), Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell (Executive Councillor for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning)

Officials

Children's Directorate – Debbie Barnes (Interim Director of Children's Services), Meredith Teasdale (Interim Assistant Director of Children's Services)
Resources Directorate – Tony Warnock (Head of Finance – Children's & Specialist Services),
Performance and Governance Directorate – Catherine Wilman (Democratic Services Officer).

Other Officers Present

Keith Batty – Principal Adviser 11-19, CfBT
Andy Breckon – Assistant Director of Children's Services and Director of CfBT
Doug Robinson – Sustainability and Climate Change Team Leader

32. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2012

Meredith Teasdale updated the Forum on the progress made with the emPSN school broadband:

- The transition to the new arrangement would commence in May 2012 and was to be finished by the end of June 2012;
- Further communication regarding the broadband would be sent to schools shortly;

- Schools would be notified once their transition had taken place.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 January 2012 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

33. ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE

The Forum considered a report which provided updates on activity supporting schools in reducing energy use and bills and meeting Council obligations and commitments.

The Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) was a mandatory emissions trading scheme that aimed to improve energy efficiency and reduce the amount of carbon dioxide emitted in the UK. From April 2010 organisations meeting the criteria (including Lincolnshire County Council) were obliged to participate and monitor emissions and purchase allowances on an annual basis (£12 per tonne in the first phase). Emissions from state-funded schools in Great Britain were included in the scheme through their local authority and this would include all Academies and Foundation Schools.

Doug Robinson addressed the Forum and the following points were noted:

- Following the success of the SCORE pilot (Schools Collaboration on Resource Efficiency), a business plan, to be discussed with Children's Services, would be rolled out to all schools in clusters;
- Eleven schools took part in the pilot and each school saved an average of 30% off their energy bill;
- The Forum discussed the SALIX revolving fund for investment in energy efficiency and it was agreed that a 5-year payback was too long a period. It was felt the Council needed to incentivise the scheme and that a shorter payback of two and a half to three years would be more effective. The Forum agreed to encourage a scheme allowing a sub-three year payback period.

RESOLVED

1. That the Schools' Forum note the report
2. That the Schools' Forum support and encourage a scheme for investment in energy efficiency which allowed for a sub-three year payback period.

34. THE RAISING OF THE PARTICIPATION AGE IN POST-16 LEARNING

Consideration was given to a report which summarised the requirements of the legislation that would raise the age of compulsory participation in post-16 learning. The previous Labour government brought forward legislation which had been incorporated into the Education and Skills Act 2008. It required young people to participate in accredited learning until the end of the academic year in which they turned 17 from September 2013 onwards and until they turned 18 from September 2015 onwards.

During discussion of the item, the following points were noted:

- Details of the implementation for the raising of the participation age were detailed in the report. A four strand approach had been approved by the Lincolnshire 14-19 Strategic Partnership and the County Council;
- The number of 16-18 year olds where it was not known if they were in employment, education or training in Lincolnshire was at its highest in four years but plans to address this were in place;
- The Secretary of State would decide how to enforce the legislation in 2014;
- Employers would be discouraged from employing children without training;
- It was not envisaged that there would be any additional funding for schools for taking on the duty of providing independent career guidance;
- Numeracy and literacy at GCSE level were of a high standard in Lincolnshire;
- The Forum asked Keith Batty to return to a future meeting to provide figures evidencing the maths and English GCSE success rate in Lincolnshire.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

35. ENGLISH BACCALAUREATE

At the previous meeting of the Forum on 25 January 2012, discussion took place around the proposals to support the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). The Forum had asked for further feedback on the value for money of the 2 year programme which was detailed in the report.

During discussion of the report, the following points were noted:

- The EBacc was not a static programme: its aim was about meeting needs; in languages, for example where there was an underperformance in Lincolnshire;
- Work at primary level on engagement would focus on inter school competitions;
- Some activities were being repeated due to popularity, for example Maths Mania;
- It was believed that the EBacc at primary level would sow the seeds for greater retention in later stages of schooling;
- Following consideration of this report, the Forum welcomed the EBacc Programme although its name had caused confusion and did not adequately reflect its objectives;
- It was suggested the Forum receive an update in 6 months' time.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

36. SECTION 251 BUDGET STATEMENT 2012/13

Tony Warnock presented a report which provided the Forum with a copy of the Section 251 budget statement for the 2012/13 financial year.

Discussion took place regarding SureStart Children Centres and it was felt that nurseries were losing custom due to the opening of SureStart centres nearby. The centres were set up to target vulnerable families; however were open to all and tended to attract more affluent families. The centres' target was to attract a mix of people with the aim of peer support. Take-up from vulnerable families differed across the county. It was recognised that in some areas, establishing Centres had resulted in an over sufficiency of child care but this was due to rigid government rules which had been relaxed through the new core purpose.

Financial information from academies was only available through a Freedom of Information request. The Council could only report on the amount top-sliced to academies.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

37. EDUCATION FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT: SCHOOL FUNDING REFORM: NEXT STEPS TOWARDS A FAIRER SYSTEM

A report was considered which alerted the Forum to a recent announcement by the Department for Education regarding further details on the Government's planned school funding reforms.

On 26 March 2012, the Secretary of State announced the Government's next steps in reforming the school funding system. The Local Authority was currently assessing the implications and the key points from this were listed in the report.

It was noted that Tony Warnock would circulate the Local Authority's response to the consultation report to the Forum. Members were asked if they were happy for the Chairman to send the Forum's response on its behalf, however the members requested that they consider the response before submission.

The working group would be reconvened around the third week in June to discuss the implications from the Government's announcement.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

38. DfE CONSULTATION ON IMPROVING THE ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT IN LOCAL AUTHORITY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS

A report was considered which alerted the Forum to a recently published consultation by the Department for Education regarding proposals for improving the financial management assurance system for Local Authority (LA) maintained schools.

It was reported that a response to the consultation would be sent by 11 May 2012 and the Forum would receive an update at the next meeting. Any questions should be directed to Tony Warnock.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

39. SCHOOLS' FORUM WORK PROGRAMME

The Forum considered its work programme for forthcoming meetings.

RESOLVED

That the work programme and all changes made therein be noted.

The meeting closed at 5.05pm.