

**LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM
 20 JANUARY 2022**

PRESENT: GAVIN BOOTH (CHAIRMAN)

Kyna Adkins (Head Teacher, St Christopher's Special School), Alan Howe (Governor, Sutton on Sea County Primary School), Anthony Stevens (Governor, The Holt Primary School, Skellingthorpe), Callum Clay (Head Teacher, Church Lane Primary School, Sleaford), Catherine Stratton (Head Teacher, Saxilby Church of England Primary School), Michele Anderson (Head Teacher, Spalding High School), Rachel Barrett FCCA (Governor, North Kesteven Academy), Professor Ken Durrands CBE (Governor, The King's School, Grantham), Jo Slesser (Governor, Carres Grammar School, Sleaford), Steve Baragwanath (Executive Principal, University Academy Holbeach), Frances Green MA (Oxon) (Head Teacher, Somercotes Secondary Academy), Simon Pickett (Head Master, The King's School, Grantham), Daniel Callaghan (Governor, Hartsholme Academy), Lea Mason (Executive Head Teacher, Lincolnshire Wolds Federation, Louth), Dr Stephen Hopkins (Trust Chair of Communities Inclusive Trust), Josh Greaves (Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Wellspring Academy Trust) (Vice-Chairman), Peter Tomlinson (Diocesan Business and Operations Manager, Diocese of Lincoln) and Andrew Watts (NEU),

Also in attendance:

attended the meeting as an observer

Officers in attendance:-

Elizabeth Bowes (Strategic Finance Manager, Schools Finance Team), Katrina Cope (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Charlotte Gray (Head of Service – Children's Commissioning), Sara Gregory (Interim Commissioning Manager, Children's), Geraldine O'Neill (Lead Consultant - Early Years Entitlement), Mark Popplewell (Head of Finance (Children's Services)), Martin Smith (Assistant Director for Children's Education), Tony Warnock (Operations and Financial Advice Manager) and Sue Williams (Head of Educational Strategy)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Katie Grivil (Head Teacher, Kirkby la Thorpe Church of England Primary Academy), Vicki Locke (Deputy Principal, Boston College), Julia Merrivale (Manager, Trinity Day Nursery), Simon Morley (Head Teacher, Boston West Academy) and Amy Stancer (Head Teacher, St Giles Nursery School, Lincoln).

2 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

Steve Baragwanath (Executive Principal, University Academy Holbeach) declared an interest in agenda item 11 – Autism and Learning Difficulties Services, as Gosberton House Academy

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was part of the University of Lincoln Academy Trust and had been heavily involved in the delivery of the work and was mentioned in the report presented.

3 MINUTES OF THE LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM MEETING HELD ON 7 OCTOBER 2021

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Lincolnshire Schools' Forum meeting held on 7 October 2021 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed the following newly elected members to the Forum: Alan Howe, Anthony Stevens, Callum Clay, Mrs Kyna Adkins and Vicki Locke.

On behalf the Forum, the Chairman extended his thanks to the following outgoing members of the Forum: Ian Randall, Sarah Wilson and Martin Shelton.

The Forum noted that a further election would be held later in the year.

5 NOMINATION OF A LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM REPRESENTATIVE TO THE LINCOLNSHIRE LEARNING PARTNERSHIP BOARD

RESOLVED

That Lea Mason be nominated as the Schools' Forum representative to the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Board.

6 SCHOOL FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS 2022/23

Consideration was given to a report from Elizabeth Bowes, Strategic Finance Manager, Schools Finance Team, on the school funding arrangements for 2022/23 and agreement was sought by the Forum to the Local Authority's (LA) proposals to a number of centrally held budgets.

A supplementary report had been circulated to the members of the Forum prior to the meeting, which provided a mainstream schools update paper on replicating the National Funding Formula for 2022/23 and the measures to address the affordability gap.

The Forum was advised of the background to the national funding formula; the governments funding intentions for 2022/23, announced on 19 July 2021 and then subsequently updated

on 16 December 2021. It was noted that the Department for Education's (DfE's) 16 December 2021 update had minimal changes to the version published in July. It was highlighted however, that as part of the spending review, the government had announced additional funding to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) to support with unforeseen costs, such as the Health and Social Care Levy. The Forum was advised that the DSG would continue to comprise of four blocks, details of Lincolnshire's 2022/23 DSG allocations announced by the DfE were shown in table 1 on page 21 of the report pack. It was highlighted that Lincolnshire's overall funding levels across the four blocks had increased in 2022/23.

It was reported that the key national funding formula School's block funding updates included: an increase in pupil-led formula factor values by 3%; and that the High Needs block had seen an increase due to the funding floor being set at 8% per head compared to the previous year's funding levels.

The Forum noted that following consultation the methodology for paying rates bills would be changing for all schools and academies. From 2022/23, bills would now be paid by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) direct to the billing authorities on behalf of all maintained schools and academies. It was noted further that guidance was still awaited as to how schools and academies should treat this cost in their financial accounts.

It was highlighted that within the High Needs block, the basic structure of the formula was not changing, and that LAs would be protected under the formula by seeing a minimum increase of 8% per head in 2022/23 compared to the 2021/22 funding baseline level. Details of the allocation for 2022/23 were shown on page 23 of the report. Reference was also made to the growing trend nationally of more young people requiring specialist provision, and that Lincolnshire continued to face significant challenges in establishing a sustainable block going forward. The Forum noted that transformational work was underway, details of which shown on the top of page 24 of the report.

It was reported that within the Early Years block, Lincolnshire continued to be funded on the 'minimum funding rate' which had increased in 2022/23 to £4.61 per hour for early years entitlement.

The Pupil Premium was to continue in the 2022/23 financial year and that funding for 2022/23 would increase in-line with the latest inflation forecasts. These were shown on page 25 of the report.

The Forum noted that the Universal Infant Free School Meals rates for 2022/23 academic had not yet been published.

The Forum was advised that the Autumn spending review had confirmed schools supplementary grant funding for 2022/23. In addition to the DSG, nationally mainstream schools would be receiving an additional grant in 2022/23 worth £1.2bn. It was noted that this grant was being provided in respect of the Health and Social Care Levy, however,

primary and secondary schools could use the grant towards unforeseen costs and other cost pressures.

It was noted that for the DSG School Budget for 2022/23, the LA was proposing to continue replicating the National Funding Formula (NFF) in 2022/23, subject to Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) of +0.5%. The supporting paper explained the overall affordability of £1.927m to replicate the NFF in full (including a +2.0% MFG) would be addressed through adopting the same principles and approach that had been applied in the 2021/22 decision when addressing affordability issues of the Schools block. The following steps were applied: to reduce the growth element of Schools block budget by £1.540m; to continue applying a +0.5% MFG (£0.127m), and the remaining £0.260m from available funds within the Central Schools Services block. The key NFF changes for 2022/23 were shown on page 26 of the report. Appendix A also provided a funding comparison of the NFF factors for 2021/22 to 2022/23.

It was reported that the LA had conducted its annual review of the DSG central budgets, and areas of refinements were focused on the demand-led budgets within the High Needs block. It was noted further that the affordability for all the blocks of the DSG would be finalised over the coming weeks.

Table 2: Budgets requiring Schools Forum decisions – Schools Block; Table 3: Budgets requiring Schools Forum decisions – CSSB ongoing commitments; and Table 4: Budgets requiring Schools Forum decisions – CSSB historic commitments were detailed on pages 29 to 32 of the report. The Forum considered the 3 tables presented.

Reference was made to the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant and the LAs concern for the rationale for the DfE proposal to remove the funding to LAs for the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant for school improvement activities supporting maintained schools. The report highlighted that the DfE had confirmed on 11 January 2022, that following consultation, it intended to press ahead with the reforms.

The Forum was advised that the Council was currently consulting on the budget. Page 33 of the report advised that for 2022/23 the budget was balanced, however, in the following three financial years there would be a financial shortfall. It was highlighted that there were two cost pressures relating to Children's Services, these were Children in Care and Home to Schools Transport. The Forum was advised that transformational activity was taking place on both of these work streams.

The Forum were asked to consider and comment on the main report and supporting report relating to the NFF, and to support the approaches to addressing the affordability to replicate the NFF factors and monetary values for 2022/23 and by applying the +0.5% MFG per pupil, and to support the Central Schools Services block transfer of £0.260m to the Schools block. The Forum was also asked to approve the budgets as detailed in Tables 2 to 4 of the report, accordance with DfE regulations.

The following comments were raised:

- When engagement with special schools and alternative provision would be taking place, so that these sectors could start to plan. The Forum noted that as there were a number of uncertainties at the moment, the LA would be looking to undertake a survey with the specialist sector to identify anticipated needs and areas of concerns for the sectors. Then, once financial modelling work was completed, a decision would be taken as to the timing of when the money would be released. It was noted that the LA would try to build the money into a formula to ensure sustainability over the medium term;
- Clarification was sought with regard page 24, second paragraph, which advised that special schools funding was currently being reviewed and refined and then further down the page reference to the fact that the principles and formula factors would be remaining the same for 2022/23. The Forum noted that the actual funding formula was underpinned by detail, and that these fundamentals were still remaining in place, however the formula factors monetary values were being considered by recognising the inflationary challenges schools were facing and incorporating them in the same way as the mainstream funding formula;
- Some concern was expressed to time lag from when the budget information was released on 28 February 2022, and the impact on schools funding relating to the mainstream 2022/23 NFF being reported on at the April meeting. The Forum was advised that the information was to be reported in April, as this was the next scheduled meeting of the Forum. Officers advised that the information could be shared with the Forum earlier, once the LA had received final approval from the DfE. It was however highlighted that the positive impact of the NFF was that all schools would be receiving an increase in per pupil funding. Officers confirmed that they were happy to share the information with the Forum and recognised the impact for schools and reiterated that part of the process was to seek support from the Forum for the solutions to address the funding gap;
- There was welcome for the reviewing of SEND costs to schools, some concern was however raised regarding hidden costs and the impact that had on schools. An example given was what schools received for an education, health and care plan and what the actual costs were across the county. Also, the amounts schools were actually taking from their main schools budgets to subsidise the provision for children with additional needs. One representative advised that £70,000 of her budget was taken up to pay for the education, health and care plans, in addition to the money received from the LA, and that this had a major impact on her school;
- Clarification was sought regarding the reduction in the schools growth funding budget. The Forum was advised that the schools growth fund was within the Schools block and was funded by a central formula, which looked at previous census returns at an individual school level and where pupil numbers increased it used a multiplier to determine the amount. It was noted that the growth funding and the agreed policies were used to support the LAs school place sufficiency statutory duty, when the LA had asked a school to expand; and
- That it would be useful going forward for tables 2 to 4 to show the historic costs, so that the Forum had an indication of what the budget had been for previous years, so that the Forum could understand the rationale for any increases. Officers advised

the Forum of the 2021/22 budget figures for the central budget activities shown in tables 2 to 4.

The Chairman on behalf of the Forum extended his thanks to Elizabeth Bowes for the presentation.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the Local Authority's proposals relating to a number of centrally held budgets be agreed.
3. That support be given to the approaches to addressing affordability to replicate the National Funding Formula (NFF) factors and monetary values for 2022/23 and by applying a +0.5% Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) per pupil.
4. That support be given to the Central Schools Services block transfer of £0.260m to the Schools block.

7 EARLY YEARS NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA

The Chairman invited Mark Popplewell, Head of Finance – Children's Services, to present the item to the Forum, which provided a summary of the Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF) for 2022/23 and provided details of the funding distribution for early providers.

An amended report had been circulated to members of the Forum prior to the meeting, which corrected details relating to two-year-old funding arrangements.

In guiding the Forum through the report, reference was made to the background behind the early years funding formula; and national funding to LAs for early years core funding.

The Forum was advised that Lincolnshire's overall hourly funding rate was funded at a rate of the minimum funding floor of £4.61. Details of the funding streams were shown on page 40 of the report. It was highlighted that for budget purposes the budget had been set based on the January 2020 pupil census information, prior to the pandemic. It was highlighted that the budget being worked to was £36.889m for three and four-year-old entitlement.

It was reported that as part of the 2021 Spending review, the Government had confirmed the continuation of maintained nursery school supplementary funding throughout the Spending review period, giving the sector a level of certainty for 2022/2023.

The Forum was advised that through the increase in government funding for 2022/23, Lincolnshire's hourly rate for 3 and 4-year-old early years entitlement would increase by £0.16 to £4.20.

The Forum was advised of the background and financial requirements of Deprivation supplement, table 1 provided details of the deprivation scores and associated funding; SEN Inclusion Fund; the Fluctuation Contingency Fund; Local Authority Centrally Retained Funding, details of which were contained on pages 46 -48 of the report; Central Spend – Summary; Disability Access Funding; Early Years Pupil Premium; and Two-Year-Old Funding. It was highlighted that the Two-Year old hourly rate for those most deprived would be increasing by £0.20 to £5.23 in 2022/23, which builds in the government's increase in funding.

In conclusion, the Forum was advised that the Local Authority continued to apply the EYNFF through its hourly rates for three and four-year-olds and for disadvantaged two-year-olds and that it was proposed to increase the hourly rates, as detailed in the report.

The Forum was also asked to approve the LA's proposal for centrally retained funding as detailed in the report.

The Chairman on behalf of the Forum extended his thanks to Mark Popplewell for the presentation.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the LA's proposals for centrally retained funding as detailed in the report be agreed.

8 SCHOOLS SECTOR LED UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report from Sue Williams, Head of Education Strategy, which provided the Forum with an update on changes in the sector led system over the last year, and information about the current position with schools.

Appendix A to the report provided details of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Lincolnshire Outcomes for 2019; Appendix B provided the Key Stage 4 Revised Statistical Release for 2019/2019; and Appendix C provided the key number report for 2019 for the Forum to consider.

In guiding the Forum through the report, reference was made to the Ofsted school inspection outcomes; the refreshed Strategy for School Improvement, which provided for all maintained schools to receive at least one termly visit from their Education Locality Lead, who supported schools to engage and benefit from the Government's range of programmes and funding to support recovery in schools; the work of the Education Team; the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership, it was noted that Catherine Stratton, Headteacher of Saxilby Church of England Primary School had been appointed as the new a new chair for the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Board (LLPB); Funding Commitments of the LLPB (table at the bottom of page 57 of the report provided details of funds agreed by the board for

specific projects); Teaching School Commissioned Support, particular reference was made to the 'Recover Lincolnshire' which focussed on curriculum recovery, particularly in English and mathematics, with specialised programmes for small schools and a project commissioned to support schools in the City of Lincoln, which was around four main aims; the L.E.A.D.; the Teaching School Hub, Lincolnshire, the Forum was advised that one of the teaching schools had been successful in their application to the Department for Education (DfE) as a Teaching School Hub. It was noted that Lincolnshire was a key strategic partner in the new DfE initiative. It was noted further that the Local Authority had an officer on the strategic group for the Teaching School Hub to ensure joined up working across the authority.

The Forum was made aware of the Government's proposal to remove the Local Authority School Improvement and Brokering Grant; a consultation period followed the announcement to which the County Council made a very robust challenge. It was highlighted that on the 11 January 2022, despite challenge from across the country the decision had been made to withdraw the funding with the proposal that maintained schools should fund the gap. It was highlighted that the County Council was meeting the cost of any grant funding changes at this time and would be considering the longer implications of the grant's withdrawal.

The Chairman on behalf of the Forum extended his thanks to Sue Williams for the presentation.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

9 BEHAVIOUR OUTREACH SUPPORT SERVICE (BOSS)

The Chairman invited Sara Gregory, Commissioning Manager – Children's Strategic Commissioning to present the item, which provided an overview of the findings from the review of the Behaviour Outreach Support Service (BOSS); and sought Forum support to recommission a Behaviour Outreach Support Service and to continue its funding from the High Needs block of the DSG.

The Forum noted that the BOSS was currently delivered by Family Action via a contract following a tender process. It was highlighted that the current contract was due to expire on 31 August 2022.

It was noted that a recommendation was being made to the Council's Executive on 8 February 2022 to re-commission BOSS via an open competitive tender, to continue to support the Lincolnshire Strategy and the Lincolnshire Ladder of Behavioural Intervention, to ensure that children and young people were supported to remain in their mainstream education settings and achieve the best possible outcomes, The Forum was advised that the recommissioning of BOSS would be from 1 September 2022 for three years initially, with an option to extend for a further two years.

Details of the findings of the review were contained within the report presented.

During consideration of the item, the Forum raised some of the following comments:

- Lead times for schools to access. The Forum was advised that there was no proposal to change BOSS, and that it would continue to be part of the Lincolnshire Ladder; and therefore there was an expectation that BOSS would work to current times once a referral had been received. Reassurance was given that it was not anticipated that the resource would be reduced under the future intended model. It was also noted that the service specification would include a minimum requirement for staff resources;
- Evaluation process. Confirmation was given that the service would be monitored as part of the contract management process to ensure that it was meeting with demand and that factor would be built into any future contract management;
- Praise was extended to the highly valued BOSS; and that a greater alignment of SEN support was welcomed;
- Access to BOSS by special schools. There was recognition that BOSS was commissioned for mainstream schools and settings. But more was being done through the SEND workforce development service offer and the SEND offer to align them better with particular focus on SEND as to what training offer could be made available to special schools. Officers agreed to explore the matter further; and
- Some concern was expressed to whether this was the right time to be changing the service; and whether there was the possibility of a continuity agreement for an extension to the existing contract. The Forum was advised that the contract could not be extended any further, as this was written in the terms and conditions; and to consider an extension would be an exception to the procurement regulations. The Forum was reassured that it was thought there would be sufficient market interest in the service, it recognised that there was some risk, but the Council was bound by regulations to go out and test the market.

The Chairman on behalf of the Forum extended thank to Sarah Gregory for the presentation.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted and that support be given to support the recommendations to the Council's Executive to continue to fund a future Behaviour Support Service funded from the High Needs block of the Designated Schools Grant.

10 HEALTHY MINDS LINCOLNSHIRE SERVICE

Consideration was given to a report from Sara Gregory, Commissioning Manager – Children's Strategic Commissioning, which provided an update on the Healthy Minds Lincolnshire Service and sought support from the Forum on the future funding recommendations for Healthy Minds Lincolnshire from the High Needs block of the DSG.

The Forum noted that Healthy Minds Lincolnshire was an emotional wellbeing service for Lincolnshire children and young people aged 0 to 19 (25 SEND and/or Care Leaver) experiencing low to moderate emotional wellbeing concerns.

The service had been commissioned by the Council since 1 October 2017 and was provided by Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (LPFT) through a Partnership Agreement made under Section 75 of the NHS Act 2006. It was highlighted that the current agreement was due to end on 31 August 2022. The current annual value of the service was £2m per annum, 50% of which was funded through the Public Health Grant. The Schools' Forum had agreed at its meeting on 1 January 2017 that the remaining 50% of funding would be funded from the High Needs Block of the DSG, to increase staffing capacity and to meet a gap in schools being able to access low to moderate emotional wellbeing/mental health support for pupils who did not meet the criteria for more specialist intervention.

The report referred to the service delivery of Healthy Minds Lincolnshire; the proposal for the future delivery of the service; and information relating to the review of the service.

The Forum was advised of the planned monetary diversion and saving to the DSG starting from September 2022 of the £1m annual investment.

It was noted that a wider review of emotional wellbeing and mental health services for children and young people in Lincolnshire was commencing, which was likely to result in some changes to existing services. It was noted further that engagement with schools and colleges was key to the review; and that work was also being undertaken with LPFT and the Clinical Commissioning Group to ensure that any further funding needed was met from wider expected health investment. It was highlighted that as a system it was important to maximise resources, minimise duplication and to ensure that the expertise of staff working with children and young people, in mental health services were maintained throughout.

During consideration of the report, one member acknowledged the massive impact of being part of the pilot around mental health support had been to some children, who would not have had access to support quite as easily as they had, and that this had made a massive difference in some schools. Appreciation was also extended for all the support that the healthy minds service provided, and to the inclusion of Spalding in a future Wave.

The Chairman on behalf of the Forum extended thanks to Sara Gregory for the presentation.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and that support be given to on the future funding recommendations for Healthy Minds Lincolnshire, from the High Needs Block of the Designated Schools Grant.

The Chairman invited Sara Gregory, Commissioning Manager – Children's Strategic Commissioning to present the item, which provided an overview of the review of the Autism and Learning Difficulties Services (ALD) and sought support from the Forum on the recommendation to re-commission an Autism and Learning Difficulties Service funded from the High Needs block of the DSG.

It was noted that the service had been in place since 2015, following an expression of interest process to Lincolnshire special schools and that the lead provider for the current agreement, on behalf of the Working Team was Gosberton House Academy. It was noted further that the current agreement was due to end on 31 August 2022.

The Forum noted that the service had been considered as part of a wider review of other emotional wellbeing and behaviour outreach support services in Lincolnshire and as part of the SEND Transformation Project and the Building Communities of Specialist Provision Together in Lincolnshire in relation to SEND workforce development.

It was reported that a recommendation was being made to the Council's Executive in February to re-commission a ALD service.

Reference was also made to service performance, needs summary; evidence summary; stakeholder engagement; training and workshops offer; outreach support; and funding recommendations for a future ALD service. It was noted that there was no efficiencies that could be made against the current model due to the majority of the costs being attributed to the ALD Outreach Workers and costs associated with teachers' pay and conditions. It was anticipated that there would be no reduction to the current ALD Outreach Worker staffing resource.

The Forum was asked to support the recommendation to the Council's Executive to continue to fund the service for a further three years initially, with an option to extend for a further two years. It was highlighted that the process would be done by an expression of interest to the Lincolnshire special schools and academies within the Lincolnshire SEND Alliance.

During consideration of the item, thanks were extended for the great service provided; and a query was raised regarding sensory occupational therapists, as these appeared not to be recognised within Lincolnshire and were not commissioned in anyway. Officers agreed to investigate the matter further.

The Chairman extended thanks on behalf of the Forum to Sara Gregory for the presentation.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted, and that support be given to the recommendation to the Council's Executive to continue to fund an Autism and Learning Difficulties from the High Needs block of the Designated Schools Grant.

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The Forum received an update from Mark Popplewell, Head of Finance – Children’s Services, on the latest number of academies and pupils in academies, and academy trusts.

It was noted that since effective date of the last report (1 September 2022), no further schools had become academies. And that using the latest pupil figures, 78,226 (72.5%) FTE pupils were educated in academy schools or 51.8% of schools.

The report highlighted that there were currently no schools going through the process to become convertor or sponsored academies, therefore by 1 July 2022, if the situation continued, the position would remain the same.

Page 129 of the report provided details of academy trusts and active multi-academy trust operating in Lincolnshire.

RESOLVED

That the Academies and Trust update report be noted.

13 LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM - WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED

That the work programme presented be received.

The meeting closed at 2.52 pm