

LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM
21 APRIL 2022

PRESENT: GAVIN BOOTH (CHAIRMAN)

Amy Stancer (Headteacher, St Giles Nursery School, Lincoln), 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 Slessor (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), Katie Grivil (Head Teacher, Kirkby la Thorpe Church of England Primary Academy), Simon Morley (Head Teacher, Boston West Academy), Josh Greaves (Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Wellspring Academy Trust) (Vice-Chairman), Peter Tomlinson (Diocesan Business and Operations Manager, Diocese of Lincoln), Vicki Locke (Deputy Principal, Boston College) and Julia Merivale (Manager, Trinity Day Nursery)

Officers in attendance:-

Eileen McMorrow (Programme Manager – Children's SEND)
 Elizabeth Bowes (Strategic Finance Manager – Schools Finance Team),
 Mark Popplewell (Strategic Finance Lead – Children's Services),
 Thomas Crofts (Democratic Services Officer)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Daniel Callaghan (Governor – Primary Academies), Stephen Hopkins (Governor – Special Academies) and Lea Mason (Head Teacher – Special Academies).

2 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

For openness and transparency, Jo Slessor declared that she was a member of the trustee board for CIT.

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3 MINUTES OF THE LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM MEETING HELD ON 20 JANUARY 2022

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Lincolnshire Schools' Forum meeting held on 20 January 2022 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made the Forum aware that the previously scheduled items for Schools Broadband Arrangements and Academies and Trust Update were not on the agenda for today's meeting due to the following reasons:

- There had been no changes in position from the previous meeting regarding the Academies and Trusts report.
- Concerning Schools Broadband Arrangements, the Council took the decision to continue to use the emPSN managed network and undertook a process of procuring a new contract for managed connectivity services. This tender had now closed, and submissions were being evaluated.

The Chairman also advised that further elections for seats on the Forum were to be held later in the year.

It was noted that delays in tendering connectivity was of concerning in relation to school broadband provision.

5 BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF SPECIALIST PROVISION: UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report from Eileen McMorrow, Programme Manager, on the implementation of the Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy, approved by Lincolnshire County Council's Executive on 6th November 2018. The Forum was informed of the following in reference to the report:

- The key milestones for the capital programme.
- Completion of new build block at Eresby School experienced some delays due to procurement of fire doors.
- The Horncastle St Lawrence School project experienced some delays due to buildability. It had therefore been determined that a new block would be constructed and the old one demolished.
- Lincoln St Francis School and Gosberton House Academy were the only schemes where works had not yet commenced.
- The capital programme and construction industry faced pressures due to supply chain, market, political, and labour volatilities.
- School Reorganisation Policy

- Workforce developments.
- The new special schools health strategy.
- Specialist Community Led Panels were launched in the summer 2021 in the Boston and South Holland localities and had subsequently been phased in across the other localities.
- The increase of over 500 special school places asserted further pressure on the long-term sustainability of an already stretched High Needs block.

The Forum noted the report and the following comments were received:

- The injection of capital into the high needs block, which was now ahead of schedule, proved to show great foresight.
- There were no long-term delays projected, caused by the pandemic. However, delays were anticipated on individual schemes within the programmed five years.
- The successes of the programme were to be publicised and communications strategies were being reviewed to better raise awareness.

RESOLVED:

That the report and comments be noted.

6 IMPACT OF THE SCHOOLS NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA (2022/23)

Consideration was given to a report from Elizabeth Bowes, Strategic Finance Manager - Schools Finance Team, on the impacts of Schools National Funding Formula for 2022/23. In direct reference to the report the following matters were highlighted:

- Details relating to the per pupil increase in funding for 2022/23 compared to 2021/22 funding levels per pupil for the Primary and Secondary sectors, and 4 schools had triggered the Minimum Funding Guarantee.
- Details relating to the impact of the National Funding Formula in percentage terms for the Primary and Secondary sectors comparing the published budgets between 2021/22 and 2022/23, which reflected latest pupil number and pupil characteristic changes. That 80% of primary schools had received an increase in funding, and in the secondary sector this figure was 88.89%.
- That it was confirmed that mainstream schools will receive additional Supplementary Funding, which was announced in the Autumn 2021 spending review. This represents £15m for Lincolnshire mainstream schools.
- That the continued implementation of the National Funding Formula had been positive for most Lincolnshire schools.
- That all schools had received a Minimum Funding Guarantee of at least 0.5% in per pupil funding.
- That the Education and Skills Funding Agency were consulting on the move towards a 'hard' formula and that Councils could lose local flexibility and decision-making powers in funding.

The Forum noted the report and the following comments were received:

- It would be useful for funding for special schools to be benchmarked against last year's data and fed back to the Forum. It was confirmed that financial modelling had taken place in the determination of special school budgets for 2022/23 following the refinement of formula and engagement with the sector. Analysis shows the financial position compared to the prior year prior to place number and pupil band profile updates. Officers agreed to share this with the sector.
- A funding survey was to be issued next month to special schools in order to assist the LAs plans to understand and quantify these unforeseen costs that were not known at the time of publishing special schools budgets and therefore above the 2022/23 baseline funding level. This will be supported through an in-year budget adjustment through the special schools funding formula.

RESOLVED:

That the report and comments be noted.

7 NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA: GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

Consideration was given to a report from Mark Popplewell, Strategic Finance Lead - Children's Services, on the completion of the reforms to the National Funding Formula. The Forum was informed of the following in reference to the report:

- Local Authorities currently had the ability to set their own 'soft' funding formulas. The Government was now pursuing a move towards a 'hard' national funding formula in order to create a more consistent approach to funding schools across the country.
- The Council had responded to the Government's consultation stressing the importance of local influence and decision making on funding formulas.
- Lincolnshire had already adopted the National Funding Formula in distributing funding to mainstream schools, and so there would be no immediate impact on funding as a consequence of these planned changes.
- Other funding changes proposed by the Government related to Premise factors; School Growth funding, and Central Schools Services funding, which the Local Authority raised concerns with.
- There would be a further consultation on the implementation of these overall reforms later in the year. The Local Authority will continue to engage with the department on these proposals.

The Forum noted the report and it was clarified that the terms 'hard' and 'soft' related to how flexible funding formulas were in terms of local influence and decision making.

RESOLVED:

That the report and comments be noted.

8 LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM - WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED:

That the work programme presented be received.

The meeting closed at 1.54 pm