



## LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM 5 OCTOBER 2016

### **PRESENT: MARK ANDERSON (CHAIRMAN)**

Joanne Noble (Headteacher, Gainsborough Nursery School), Nigel Sisley JP (Governor, St Francis Community Special School, Lincoln), Vicky Cook (Headteacher, Welbourn Church of England Primary School), Steve Barnes (Head Teacher, The Pilgrim School, Lincoln), Ian Wilkinson (Headteacher, Deeping St James Community Primary School), Geraldine Willders (Head Teacher, St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Grantham) (Vice-Chairman), David Bennett (Governor, Horncastle Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School), James Todd (Chair of Governors, Woodlands Infant & Nursery School, Lincoln), Professor Ken Durrands CBE (Governor, The King's School, Grantham), Nichola Shore (Head Teacher, Banovallum School, Horncastle), Helen Hilton (Head Teacher, Little Gonerby Church of England Infant School), Lea Mason (Executive Head Teacher, Lincolnshire Wolds Federation, Louth), Ian Widdows (Head Teacher, Giles Academy, Old Leake), Helen Stokes (Branch Secretary, UNISON) and Julia Merivale (Manager, Trinity Day Nursery)

Also in attendance: Councillor David Brailsford attended the meeting as an observer

Officers in attendance:-

Andrea Brown (Democratic Services Officer), Gavin Booth (Children's Services Manager - Education Strategy), Mark Popplewell (Head of Finance, Children's Services), Heather Sandy (Chief Commissioning Officer for Learning) and Tony Warnock (Operations and Financial Advice Manager)

### 41 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Mark Anderson be elected as the Chairman of the Lincolnshire Schools' Forum for 2016/17.

### **MARK ANDERSON IN THE CHAIR**

### 42 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Geraldine Willders be elected Vice-Chairman of the Lincolnshire Schools' Forum for the year 2016/17.

43 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Due to the number of new members at the meeting, the Chairman invited all present to introduce themselves to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Jeremy Newnham (Head Teacher, Caistor and Yarborough Academy), James Storr (Governor, The Deepings School), Bridget Starling (Diocesan Education Centre) and Alison Hill (Area Manager, Paper Moon Day Nurseries).

Alison Hill (Area Manager, Paper Moon day Nurseries) was replaced by Julia Merivale (Manager, Trinity Day Nursery) for this meeting only.

Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell also submitted apologies.

44 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

The Vice-Chairman, Geraldine Willders, declared an interest in Item 9 – *De-Delegation of maintained primary school budgets 2017/18 and 2018/19* as her role as Head Teacher of St Mary's Catholic Primary School was one of the Consultant Head Teachers referred to within the report.

There were no other declarations of Members Interests made at this stage of the proceedings.

45 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 APRIL 2016

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Lincolnshire Schools' Forum held on 27 April 2016 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

46 LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM MEMBERSHIP

The Democratic Services Officer advised the Forum that elections had been held during June and July 2016. The position following the election was as follows:-

Appointments

- James Todd (Primary Governor (Maintained));
- Ian Widdows (Secondary Academies);
- Nichola Shore (Secondary Academies); and
- Steve Barnes (Special (Maintained)).

Vacancies

- Secondary Head Teachers (Maintained) – 1 vacancy;
- Pupil Referral Unit – 1 vacancy; and
- Primary Academies – 1 vacancy.

Members were asked to note that no response to the election process had been received from representatives of the Secondary Head Teachers (Maintained) or Primary Academies.

The Forum were also advised that two further resignations had been received from Roger Hale (Head Teacher, Caistor Grammar School), due to his retirement, and Jerry Tucker (Head Teacher, The Acorn Free School, Lincoln). These resignations had generated a further two vacancies:-

- Secondary Academy Head Teacher – 1 vacancy; and
- Alternative Provision Academy – 1 vacancy.

It was reported that there was no intention to conduct a further election at this time. However, the Chairman requested that Members of the Forum actively advise colleagues of the vacancies and encourage expressions of interest. The Senior Democratic Services Officer would be asked to advise Members of future elections once arranged.

RESOLVED

That the update on Members of the Lincolnshire Schools' Forum be noted.

#### 47 SCHOOLS REVENUE FUNDING 2017/18

Consideration was given to a report from Mark Popplewell (Head of Finance, Children's Services) which advised the Forum of the Government's plans for school revenue funding for 2017/18.

The Head of Finance, Children's Services, advised the Forum that the Government would launch the second stage of the fairer funding consultation for schools and high needs in the autumn, to apply from 2018/19 (one year later than planned).

Officers were currently reviewing the DfE's Operational Guide and Technical note to ensure that the Local Authority (LA) was compliant with all aspects in 2017/18. Any significant changes would be reported to the Forum in January 2017.

The Head of Finance, Children's Services guided the Forum through the report.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG): an MFG per pupil value was determined from the prior year budget shares calculation (i.e. no schools could lose more than minus 1.5% of its per pupil funding). The prior year per pupil figure was compared to the new year's funding to determine whether the school was entitled to MFG funding. The lump sum was removed for the purpose of this calculation;
- It was explained that the MFG did not protect a schools total pupil funding but rather the pupil unit value;
- Education Support Grant (ESG): funding of general duties provided funding to the LA in supporting maintained schools, whilst academies received this

funding directly. The Government announced £600m savings nationally on the ESG through the 2015 Spending Review, which would be found from removing general duties funding – from September 2017 this funding source is planned to be removed from LA's by central Government.

#### RESOLVED

That the content of the report be noted.

#### 48 EARLY YEARS NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA

Consideration was given to a report from Mark Popplewell (Head of Finance, Children's Services) which provided a summary of the key points of the Early Years National Funding Formula consultation that is planned to be implemented from April 2017.

The Head of Finance, Children's Services, referred Forum Members to the response from Lincolnshire County Council to the consultation, at Appendix 1 to the report. It was outlined that although the Government explained that it had created the proposals from an evidence-based approach, the consultation lacked the necessary detail to justify the proposals. This included nursery schools having to be included within the universal base rate.

The national living wage planned increase was also highlighted and that it was unclear whether funding would rise annually through the increases (i.e. £9 per hour by 2020), or providers would need to manage the rate increases within the proposed funding rates outlined.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- The future of the nursery schools remained unclear from the consultation document. Nursery schools would be given two years of transitional funding, but further guidance was required beyond that period. The delivery model of nursery schools would need to be reviewed to ensure the models were financially sustainable;
- Funding for functions which supported the sector, such as the training fund, had previously been held centrally within the early years block, and these would be reviewed by the LA with engagement from providers. This would be considered by the Forum in January;
- It was anticipated that outcome of the consultation would be released in the Autumn ready for implementation in April 2017;
- The paper also alluded to the area cost adjustment and whether that would be applied to the mainstream schools formula. It would be speculation at this stage but the second stage of the mainstream schools funding consultation was expected to provide school level detail rather than focussing on the principles of the funding formula.

RESOLVED

That the report and contents be noted.

49 DE-DELEGATION OF MAINTAINED PRIMARY SCHOOL BUDGETS  
2017/18 & 2018/19

The Forum considered a report from Mark Popplewell (Head of Finance, Children's Services) which sought approval from the maintained primary school representatives to the LAs proposals for the de-delegation of certain budgets in 2017/18 and acceptance in principle for those budgets in 2018/19.

In guiding the Forum through the report presented, Mark Popplewell (Head of Finance, Children's Services) made reference to the following:-

- The LA proposed to continue with the reduced de-delegation rates in 2017/18 for maintained primary schools with the remainder of the costs being met from the cumulative underspend; and
- The 2018/19 de-delegation rates would revert back to the original baseline amounts, although the position would be reviewed in October 2017.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- The Forum discussed whether some services, including safeguarding, could form part of the de-delegation process. Officers advised the Forum that Government guidance only allowed for certain services to be considered for maintained school de-delegation with approval from the sector required;
- It was acknowledged that some things were more cost effective to do together but the proposed national funding formula would make this more difficult in future;
- Services included within the budget were an insurance policy for schools to ensure that they were not left in a vulnerable position.

RESOLVED

That support be given by the maintained primary school representatives to the proposal for de-delegation of the budgets for the period 2017/18 and 2018/19.

That the changes would remain as those agreed in the previous year, as set out in the report presented, and that the charges for 2018/19 would be set at:-

Contingency £26.38  
Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education Team £5.44

This would finance:

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| Termination of employment costs              | £0.250m |
| Consultant headteachers                      | £0.292m |
| Exceptional unforeseen costs                 | £0.380m |
| Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education Team | £0.188m |

50 REVISED SCHOOLS BUDGET 2016/17

Consideration was given to a report from Mark Popplewell (Head of Finance, Children's Services) which provided information on the Revised Schools Budget for 2016/17 and sought support for the proposed use of the underspend from 2015/16.

The Head of Finance, Children's Services, guided the Forum through the report presented and made reference to the following:-

- That the underspend carried forward as at 31 March 2016 was £11.052m, which included the £2.966m underspending on centrally held budgets within the DSG. The overall underspend represented c. 10% of the 2015/16 DSG (£497.222m) less the delegated schools budget (£384.578m);
- The financial pressures in the centrally held budgets related to the area of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), namely SEN placements;
- It was highlighted that a thorough review of commitments had taken place and prudent estimates had been made, which totalled £4.826m. This included the additional funding requested for the extension to the current programme of sector-led investment. Details of the commitments were contained within Appendix 2 and 3 to the report presented;
- Proposals for use of the uncommitted sum of £6.226m, it was reported that the LA proposed that the above said sum was not committed but was held as a reserve, as this was considered prudent due to the list of uncertainties outlined within the paper. It was advised that the amount only represented 6% of the 2015/16 DSG (less delegated schools budget);
- The Forum was advised that any views would be taken back to Children's Services Departmental Management Team and Executive Councillor for Children's Services before a final decision was to be made.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- In relation to the uncommitted underspend, it was explained that the reserves would provide added flexibility to respond to emerging pressures, namely SEND placements;
- Inclusive Lincolnshire special schools were being considered with the intention for special schools to meet a broader need of pupils to reduce placements to non-Lincolnshire LA schools, which would control and reduce numbers leaving the county making Lincolnshire's DSG being more cost effective;
- When asked if there was an alternative proposal to the uncommitted underspends, it was explained that the option presented was the only option to ensure that the DSG could be sustainably managed. The Forum was reminded that the DSG was a ringfenced grant which had limitations of use.

**RESOLVED**

1. That the report and content notifying the Forum of the revised Schools Budget for 2016/17 be noted; and
2. That the Local Authority's use of the committee and proposed use of the DSG underspend, as outlined in the report, be supported.

51      FREE SCHOOL FUNDING

Consideration was given to a report from Mark Popplewell (Head of Finance, Children's Services) which provided the Forum with the financial implications for Lincolnshire's Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for mainstream, special and alternative provision free schools being set up in Lincolnshire.

The Head of Finance, Children's Services, referred Members to Appendix 1 of the report (page 48) which provided details of Lincolnshire's response to the Government consultation on changing the mainstream free school funding arrangements. The Government consultation would put greater financial burden on LA's which Lincolnshire was deeply concerned with.

RESOLVED

That the report and contents be noted.

52      SCHOOL CARRY FORWARDS (2015/16)

Consideration was given to a report from Mark Popplewell (Head of Finance, Children's Services) which provided information regarding Lincolnshire maintained schools' carry forwards at 31 March 2016.

The Head of Finance, Children's Services, guided the Forum through the report and Appendix 1. It was acknowledged that the implementation of a new financial system on 1 April 2015 had resulted in a challenging year for all schools. For all sectors, the average carry forward was 6.30% compared to the previous year of 6.19%.

There was thought to be a number of reasons why the carry forward had maintained at this level, namely the uncertainty of the impending National Funding Formula and the financial challenges likely to be faced by schools in the future namely pay cost increases. Challenges with the finance system had also impacted schools with a potential reluctance to spend. It was agreed that schools should prudently hold a reasonable level of reserves to manage fluctuations in funding and costs.

10 schools were reported as having a net overspend (including grants) at 31 March 2016, of which the LA was working with those schools to ensure that appropriate systems were in place and that deficits would be recovered in a timely fashion.

RESOLVED

That the report and contents be noted

53      SCHOOLS FINANCIAL VALUE STANDARD

Consideration was given to a report from Mark Popplewell (Head of Finance, Children's Services) which provided an update on the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS). The SFVS was mandatory for maintained schools and was

intended to assist schools with managing their finances. Governing bodies had formal responsibility for the financial management of schools and the standard was primarily aimed at governors.

The LA was required to submit a statement to the DfE by the 31 May 2016 on the position of Lincolnshire maintained schools submitting the standard by the 31 March 2016. Of all Lincolnshire maintained schools only 14 schools did not submit the standard by the date. The LA would continue to pursue those outstanding returns.

RESOLVED

That the report and contents be noted.

54 ACADEMIES UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report from John O'Connor (Children's Services Manager: Education Support) which provided information on the latest number of academies and pupils in those academies. The Head of Finance, Children's Services, guided the forum through the report.

Further consideration would be given by officers to the presentation of the report to the Forum in terms of outlining whether academies were single academies or part of a Trust arrangement. Transfer to a single academy was no longer possible for maintained schools and the Forum thought that this level of detail would give a better understanding of the demography.

RESOLVED

That the content of the report be noted;

55 LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM - WORK PROGRAMME

Members of the Forum were invited to put forward items for inclusion in future agendas through the Senior Democratic Services Officer.

RESOLVED

That the Work Programme, as presented, be noted.

Professor K J Durrands CBE gave thanks to Mark Popplewell (Head of Finance, Children's Services) for his contribution to the Forum, at recent meetings and those in the future, and asked that the Forum's formal thanks to Tony Warnock (Operations and Financial Advice Manager) be recorded within the minutes, as his predecessor. It was confirmed that Tony had provided tremendous support, dedication and patience to the Forum for a period of approximately 13 years and it was felt appropriate to place formal thanks for this contribution on record.

The Chairman and Members concurred with the comments of Professor Durands and agreed to the request for formal recognition.

56     FUTURE MEETING DATES

Proposed meeting dates for the future were noted on the agenda and Members were asked for their agreement of these dates.

Members agreed to the dates and were asked to ensure that these dates be diarised.

RESOLVED

That the following dates for future meetings of the Lincolnshire Schools' Forum be agreed:-

- Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2017 – 1.00pm;
- Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2017 – 1.00pm;
- Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2017 – 1.00pm; and
- Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2017 – 1.00pm.

The meeting closed at 2.35 pm

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