



## Regulatory and Other Committee

### Open Report on behalf of Martin Smith - Assistant Director for Education

Report to:	<b>Lincolnshire Schools' Forum</b>
Date:	<b>14 January 2021</b>
Subject:	<b>Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Update - Sector Led System of School Improvement</b>

#### Summary:

This report provides the Schools Forum with an update on the work of the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Board and sector-led approach to school improvement.

#### Recommendation(s):

To note the contents of the report.

#### Background

The Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Board (LLP) consists of representative headteachers and senior leaders elected from Lincolnshire schools including primary, secondary, special schools, stand-alone academies and those within Multi-Academy Trusts. There are also co-opted positions with officers of Lincolnshire County Council and other partners including Lincolnshire Teaching Schools Together and the Church of England Lincoln Diocesan Education Board. The LLP is led by Suzanne Scott, Principal of Ellison Boulton Church of England Academy who is currently seconded up to one day a week for this purpose.

The LLPB was set up as part of the sector-led system following the decision of the Executive to cease the funding for a school improvement contract.

The Lincolnshire Learning Partnership's mission is that:

- All children and schools in Lincolnshire are our collective responsibility;
- Every child and school is known, valued and supported to achieve;
- No school is more important than an individual child's needs.

Previously, the Schools Forum supported the local authority proposals to use Dedicated School Grant (DSG) underspends in two separate requests of £0.5m in April 2015 and October 2016. In addition, a further proposal was supported by Schools Forum to fund sector-led school improvement by an additional £0.5m in 2018/19 and 2019/20. To date Schools Forum has allocated £2m to the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Board.

The LLP currently have an approximate balance of uncommitted funds (as of October 2020) of £0.560m.

### **Role of the LLPB**

The role of the LLPB is to:

- Champion learners and leaders to shape their own futures.
- Promote successes, innovation and evidence practice to benefit all.
- Empower schools to meet the needs of their communities.
- Challenge all schools to keep getting better.

The LLPB achieves these aims through monitoring the performance of Lincolnshire schools, commissioning key projects to develop teaching and learning, by promoting school to school challenge and support as well as through ensuring the continual promotion of best practice and the use of evidence-based research.

The LLPB have funded or endorsed the following programmes and projects in partnership with and supported by the Lincolnshire County Council Education Team and other delivery partners.

### **Mobilise**

Mobilise is the largest of the LLP commissions and began in 2016. It uses research to inform practice in schools. Initially the focus was to use research to develop the practice of teaching assistants, in the subsequent years schools had a wider range of research projects to choose from. In 2019-20 the projects included strands focusing on English and mathematics, the development of cognition and thinking, well-being and curriculum design.

The board funded Mobilise to enable it to move to a fully traded mode within three years starting from September 19.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, activity was initially paused when schools formally closed. LCC officers and the Mobilise team worked together to deliver a well-being offer for pupils' return to school.

### **Peer Review/Peer Improvement Pathway**

The foundation of the sector-led approach to school improvement was Peer Review. To support headteachers in being equipped to carry out peer review,

training was provided to all headteachers on how to carry this out successfully. Through this process, we can identify and share excellent practice as well as establish priorities for improvement across the system. This, along with school data and inspection information supports the board in making decisions to support schools.

The LLP Board commissioned further work commencing at the start of the 2019/20 academic year to refresh and invigorate peer review in Lincolnshire schools. This project is called the Peer Improvement Pathway. Similarly to Mobilise, the Peer Improvement Pathway will become a fully traded project available for schools to purchase in January 2021.

### **Annual Conference**

The LLP organises an annual conference to ensure that school leaders in Lincolnshire have access to high quality inspirational speakers, national policy updates and leaders of the sector sharing best practice. In January 2020, 160 delegates attended the conference.

The title of the conference in 2020 was 'Leading Learners; Connecting Communities'. The following feedback was given by delegates:

*'As a new headteacher in Lincolnshire, I wanted to connect. I have done that and happily been inspired!'*

*'Great to hear views of people outside of education – very refreshing'*

*'The best one yet!'*

### **Leadership Briefings**

Leadership briefings have continued to take place three times per year for headteachers and school leaders to ensure they have the most up-to-date information about the Lincolnshire system and national updates to assist them in their role. During the 2018/19, 19/20 academic years over 250 schools attended each round of the briefings.

Feedback from headteachers and school leader continues to be positive and includes:

*'As I am new to Lincolnshire it was all very helpful.'*

*'The Ofsted update was brilliant.'*

*'Many valuable key messages condensed into one meeting as a whole.'*

*'All relevant and well delivered, always clear and concise.'*

In response to the global pandemic and to respond to the needs of Lincolnshire Schools, the LLP working in partnership with the Local Authority, have provided the regular Leadership Briefing content via virtual platforms. The 'LLP and LCC Virtual Offer' has seen a coordinated approach to provide all school leaders with one common offer providing information, updates but also opportunities to engage in school improvement activity; a one stop shop for all key information.

This offer will be maintained throughout the 2020/21 academic year.

## **Governor Partnership Meetings**

Governor briefings take place three times a year following the leadership briefings and ensure that the main critical leaders in schools are provided with the same important information as school leaders. Around 80 delegates attended each round of briefings.

Feedback from governors is positive and includes:

*'A good range [of content] covered and update information is very useful.'*

*'It was superb to meet governors from other schools.'*

For the 2020/21 academic year all Governor Partnership Briefings have been included in the LLP and LCC Virtual Offer with the number of Governors attending the Briefings increasing compared to the running of non-virtual meetings. Over 180 governors attended the autumn briefings.

## **Stronger Governance**

The LLP successfully commissioned the Stronger Governance offer which has been delivered in partnership with the Local Authority, Lincolnshire Teaching Schools, The Lincoln Anglican Diocese and Leaders of Governance.

The offer available in Lincolnshire includes national approved training sessions, e-learning, governor development programmes, guidance on performing Headteacher Performance Management, external reviews of governance and a dedicated governor support service at the local authority.

The first Stronger Governance governor conference was run for the benefit of all Lincolnshire governors in 2019 with the title of Governance for the Future: Lincolnshire and Beyond. A further conference is planned for 2021/22.

## **LeadLincs**

The LLP is keen to invest in the development of leaders and funded 45 places on the LeadLincs programme over a 3 year period which supported aspiring leaders to consider applying for headship. Participants have had sessions on different aspects of headship and support in how to prepare their application and interview practice. The funding has also enabled a session for previous participants to have further leadership training and to work with them to engage them in opportunities for leadership development in the future in Lincolnshire schools.

The Leadlincs programme has been developed to have eight levels and creates a pathway for aspiring school leaders in Lincolnshire at all stages of their career. Schools now purchase programmes directly as required.

## **Caring2Learn**

The LLP supports a wider range of programmes than those that they commission themselves. For example, the LLPB has supported Caring2Learn which is a project to improve outcomes for Lincolnshire's looked after and previously looked after young people, as well as other vulnerable children and young people. The project aims to develop an effective learning and support network and provide innovative training in Restorative Practice and Social Pedagogy for foster carers, education and social care professionals.

### **Confident Choices**

The LLP and LCC have supported the development of Confident Choices which has established networks of schools and partner organisations to develop careers provision across schools in Lincolnshire.

### **Early Years**

The LCC Early Years offer has been enhanced with a focus on curriculum development, reading, writing, assessment and transition to improve outcomes, in particular for the schools where the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is in the bottom 20%. This is being delivered between 2019 - 2022.

### **Small Schools**

LCC established a programme of support for small schools to develop curriculum planning in English and mathematics. This has continued to be supported through the sector in the partnership work with Teaching Schools.

### **LEAP/LAMP/LENS**

These three programmes were established through successful bids to the DfE Strategic School Improvement Fund and covered support for English, mathematics and special educational needs. These programmes continue to be available for schools to purchase and through support from LCC in its contracted work with Teaching Schools.

### **Education Locality Leads**

LCC employed Education Locality Leads continue to engage directly with schools to support, monitor and challenge schools where standards are not strong enough in line with the Strategy for School Improvement.

### **DfE Hub Initiative**

Subject specialist hubs are already established in English, mathematics, science, computing, music and there is also a Research School in Lincolnshire. To ensure schools are aware of the specialist subject-specific advice and training that is on offer, the local authority has started to engage directly with subject-specific hubs so Lincolnshire schools can benefit from DfE funded initiatives. From September 2021, the designation of Teaching Schools and their strategic position nationally

will cease. A number of these functions will move to the Teaching School Hub including initial teacher training and designation of NQTs as well as training for teachers at all stages of their career.

## **One Plan**

The Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Board, Lincolnshire County Council officers, Multi Academy Trust leaders and Lincolnshire Teaching Schools Together reviewed the needs of the sector-led self-improving school system. The strength of partnerships has benefitted the county by providing all schools the opportunity to engage and participate in professional development and school improvement activity. The co-ordinated approach to working in Lincolnshire has enabled an alignment in vision, values and aims of the whole system to create a shared vision of:

- Every learner and school deserves to be known, valued and supported to achieve
- Our focus is on the learner; therefore no school is more important than an individual learner's needs
- All partners will work together relentlessly to unlock our potential and deliver our shared goals.

This shared vision for improvement across the county has led to the development of the 'One Plan', highlighting our shared vision to address priority areas in order to achieve system goals.

Financial resources were agreed and allocated by Lincolnshire County Council and Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Board to develop strategies that will impact on four priority areas:

1. System and infrastructure
2. Great leaders and great teachers
3. Improving the quality of education
4. Wider conditions

The focus of these areas is to ensure that the system works well and works in a way so that every school and every child thrives with outcomes improving at all key stages. This is an exciting next stage of the sector-led system with all partners working to the same shared goals.

The board committed the following amounts of funding in the 19-20 academic year:

- Mobilise 4 - £192k - moving to a traded model
- Peer Improvement Pathway - £85k - moving to a traded model
- Stronger Governance - £8k
- Total £285k

The LLPB is currently working alongside the County Council, Lincolnshire Teaching Schools Together (LTT) and the CEO network (who represent our Multi

Academy Trusts) to review the progress we have made in developing a sector-led system of education provision and school improvement. This will inform the future strategic direction of the board and the role it plays in the system.

The education system in Lincolnshire currently awaits changes to national education policy and guidance particularly the role out of the Teaching School Hub with announcements expected in January 2021. The LLPB will play a full role in both supporting the system also embracing its role to be the 'voice of the system'. The board is performing the essential role of Governance in the education system.

### **Covid-19 Learning**

The pandemic in terms of information management, support and guidance to the system has well and truly put the Local Authority and LLP at the centre of guiding and steering the sector-led system. The pace at which this has occurred has secured and established a belief, trust and desire to be connected to the Local Authority and LLP board to ensure we work together as a collective.

In order to respond effectively to the needs of schools and manage the pandemic, new approaches were established to ensure that the impact on learning was minimised. These included:

- Running LLP Board meetings online and more frequently to ensure sector representation
- Briefings were coordinated and presented in a single virtual offer from LCC and the LLP
- Addition specialist briefings were run for the following groups: Multi Academy Trusts CEO's, primary, secondary and special school leaders to enable bespoke support
- Additional briefings and workshops were delivered by specialists from Public Health, Lincolnshire Recovery Forum and from senior members of staff from the Local Authority
- The Local Authority Education Leads set up locality based support networks for heads to share ideas and support each other through the crisis.

Through this work, we have achieved great successes in terms of attendance in schools being above national comparisons and we have seen the vast majority of schools engage with Locality Leads more than ever before. This needs to be built upon, as we move out of the response and recovery phases, to target our collective energies on school improvement activity.

### **Conclusion**

The LLPB is essential to the education system in Lincolnshire for the role it performs offering challenge to the system whilst working in partnership and collaboration with Lincolnshire County Council and other partners.

In addition to the board's £0.280m existing funding commitments, the County Council has also committed £0.670m to address identified schools needs at a system-wide scale. This has meant that the LLPB has not utilised its remaining

funds of £0.560m at this stage. The LLPB board are aware of the pressure schools leaders are facing due to the pandemic. Adaptions have already been made to the partnership contract to support Lincolnshire schools in recovery from the pandemic with 'Recover Lincolnshire' which covers aspects such as resilience for school leaders and support to get pupils back on track with learning. There is an awareness of not burdening school leaders with further new initiatives at this stage.

A decision not to commit all remaining funds at this point allows the LLPB to act, as required, to maintain the improvements in the sector-led approach once the true impact of Covid-19 is established and the national DfE Hubs initiative has been rolled out.

In summary, the LLPB working with the LA, will consider the impact of the pandemic, the work of Recover Lincolnshire and the use of the Covid-19 Catch Up Premium funding and the National Tutoring Programme, and what additional support schools require to support their recovery and further improve educational outcomes.

### **Consultation**

#### **a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out??**

No

#### **b) Risks and Impact Analysis**

Not applicable.

### **Background Papers**

No background papers, as defined by Part VA of the Local Government Act 1972, were used to a material extent in the preparation of this report.

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