

**LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM
 15 JANUARY 2014**

PRESENT: TERL BRYANT (CHAIRMAN)

David Bennett (Governor, Horncastle Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School), Ellenor Beighton (Headteacher, De Aston School, Market Rasen), Graham Burks (Headteacher, Kesteven and Grantham Girls School), Professor Ken Durrands CBE (Governor, The Kings School, Grantham), Roger Hale (Headteacher, Caistor Grammar School), Jonathan Maddox (Headteacher, Bourne Grammar School), Joanne Noble (Headteacher, Gainsborough Nursery School), John Beswick (Governor, Stickney Church of England Primary School), Vicky Cook (Headteacher, Welbourn Church of England Primary School), Patricia Ruff (Headteacher, Dunholme St Chads Church of England Primary School), Michael Follows MBE (Governor, John Fielding Community Special School, Boston), Bridget Robson (Headteacher, Fortuna Primary School, Lincoln), Dave Thompson (Pupil Referral Unit), Claire Flavell (14 - 19 Partnership), Councillor Mrs Patricia Anne Bradwell (Executive Councillor Adult Care and Health Services, Children's Services), Mrs Emma Joanne Olivier-Townrow and Helen Stokes (Branch Secretary, UNISON).

Ken Rustidge (Union Representative) attended the meeting as an observer.

Officers in attendance:-

Debbie Barnes (Executive Director Children's Services), Keith Batty (Assistant Director of CfBT Education Services), Katrina Cope (Team Leader Democratic and Civic Services), Tony Warnock (Head of Finance - Children's and Specialist Services) and Denise Hornsey (Programme Officer - Children's Health Team, Public Health).

27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/RESIGNATIONS/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Sharron Close (Primary Governor, Tall Oaks Academy Trust), Roger Hewins (Governor, Corringham Church of England Primary School), Craig Miller (Governor, All Saints Church of England Primary School) and Richard Thompson (Head teacher, Rauceby Church of England Primary School).

Members were advised that Mrs Emma Olivier-Townrow had attended the meeting as replacement member for Mr C Miller (Governor, All Saints Church of England Primary North Hykeham) for this meeting only.

The Forum was also advised that a resignation had been received from John Beaven. The Forum was advised further that an election process would be taking

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place for the aforementioned vacancy, plus 3 further vacancies. It was hoped to get the new members in place before for the next meeting.

28 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 OCTOBER 2013

Confirmation was received that a report concerning how the money for Looked After Children was spent would be presented to the 23 April meeting.

The Forum was advised that in relation to the Local Authority's proposals for use of the 2012/13 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) underspending, that a report was not now necessary, as all members of the Schools Forum would be receiving a copy of a letter shortly, which would explain the allocation per school.

The Forum requested that a report relating to Carbon Management should be presented to the next meeting of the Forum. It was highlighted that this report should include reference as to who now has responsibility for schools' carbon emissions, and provide evidence to demonstrate the value for money and effectiveness of the investment in smart metering.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 October 2013 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to meeting time being amended to read 4:15 pm.

29 SCHOOL FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS 2014/15

Consideration was given to a report from the Head of Finance – Children's & Specialist Services, which provided the Schools Forum with school funding arrangements for 2014/15 and sought support for the Local Authority (LA) proposals relating to a number of centrally held budgets.

The report detailed the following Department of Education's (DFE's) changes for 2014/15:-

- Local Authority's (LA's) were able to introduce a sparsity factor to target funds to avoid small schools becoming unviable;
- Greater flexibility to target the right level of lump sum to primary and secondary schools;
- LA's will be required to allocate a minimum of 80% of their delegated Schools block funding on the basis of pupil characteristics and will have to ensure that a minimum amount is funded for each pupil (£2,000 for primary and £3,000 for Key Stage three and four);
- LA's will provide notional Special Educational Needs (SEN) budgets to their schools on the basis that the schools will meet the first £6,000 of additional support required by a pupil with SEN; and
- That the prior attainment factor would be amended so that instead of pupils qualifying if they failed to achieve level four or higher in English and maths,

funding would be provided if they fail to achieve a level four or higher in English or maths.

Since the last meeting of the School Forum on 9 October 2013, the LA had gone through due process, full details were shown on page 12 of the report presented, and once again there had been significant support for the LA's proposals throughout the process, however a further significant amount of work still needed to be undertaken up to 31 March 2014 before the school budgets could be published.

It was highlighted that DFE guidance had been published on 18 December 2013, which confirmed funding arrangements, details were contained at page 13 of the report presented, the Head of Service made particular reference to:

- That the Early Years block for 2014/15 would use the January 2013 census, but would be updated in 2014/15 for the January 2014 census (5/12ths) and for the January 2015 census (7/12ths);
- That the Higher Needs block allocation for 2014/15 was provisional and could be subject to adjustment as a result of submissions made by the LA on 23 December 2013 and a review of those figures by the DFE;
- A total of £760m additional funding would be provided to enable LA's to secure early learning places for two year olds from lower income households; and
- LA's would no longer be required to administer the carbon reduction scheme on behalf of schools and so LA's Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocations had been reduced by £50.5m to ensure that there was no loss of revenue to the Exchequer.

It was also highlighted that the DFE had announced that the 2014/15 Education Support Grant (ESG) which covered the additional responsibilities that academies acquired upon conversion would be set for LA's at £113.17 per pupil for mainstream schools and £424.38 and £480.98 per place for Pupil Referral Units (PRU's) and special schools respectively. It was noted that the LA would continue to receive £15 per pupil for all county pupils, to cover its retained duties. The minimum per pupil rate for mainstream academies was £140 with the minimum per place rates for PRU's and special academies being £525 and £595 respectively. There was also provision of an additional amount of £2.34bn funding up to 2017, to address the extra places needed for the growing population. This was on top of the £800m previously announced for 2014/15. The government had also confirmed that £150m of capital funding would be provided to improve school kitchen and dining facilities, in order to offer every infant pupil a free nutritious school meal at lunchtime.

A full detail of the 2014/15 pupil premium was detailed on page 14 of the report. It was highlighted that the government still intended to introduce a national funding formula during the next spending review period, to reduce funding differences between similar schools in different areas. Officers advised that the planned consultation had been put back to the spring of 2014.

The report detailed the 2014/15 DSG allocations: Table one identified Lincolnshire's 2014/15 DSG block allocation and table two provided the analysis of the Additions.

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The Schools Forum was reminded of the changes to the 2014/15 formula (these were highlighted on page 15 of the report).

Table three on page 16 of the report identified the main proposed changes to central DSG budgets.

Table four on page 17 provided the Forum with information relating to the proposed budgets for 2014/15 which required Schools Forum decision, which included:-

- Funding for significant pre-16 growth. Based on current commitments and expected growth it was estimated that a prudent budget for 2014/15 was £1.500m, the same amount as budgeted for in 2013/14;
- Places in independent schools for non-SEN pupils. It was reported that without this budget the LA would be unable to meet its contractual liabilities. It was the LA responsibility to make provision for these young people. The proposed budget was £0.930m;
- Early Years proposed budget was £16.298m;
- Broadband, the proposed budget was £1.778m;
- Admissions, It was reported that the proposed budget of £0.449m was the same as that set for 2013/14;
- Servicing of the Schools Forum, again the proposed figure was the same as that set in 2013/14, a figure of £0.020m;
- Carbon reduction commitment, It was highlighted that although there was no longer a need to retain a central budget for this purpose, the LA still had a £0.050m commitment in respect of smart metering;
- Central expenditure from revenue. Without this budget of £5.126m, the LA would not be able to finance on-going costs of historic contractual commitments, the budget proposed was therefore very similar to that proposed in 2013/14; and
- Schools centrally funded termination of employment costs. It was reported that the commitment was for a redeployment officer who would continue to help schools avoid redundancy costs by redeploying staff in other schools wherever possible. The proposed budget was £0.045m.

It was highlighted to the Schools Forum that the budgets proposed were prudent, and that some minor amendments might be necessary, but material changes were not expected. In accordance with established practise, the LA would report to the Schools Forum in April 2014 the final budgets for 2014/15, as set out in the S.251 budget statement which has to be published by 31 March 2014.

The officer highlighted concerns relating to the DFE's plan to review the Higher Need block funding, and advised that any concerns would be reported to the Schools Forum in April.

Overall, the financial outlook for schools, the LA and Children's Services was that there might be an underspending on the DSG in 2013/14, but this sum was expected to be a modest amount. It was expected that over the four year period, the pupil premium will have added £2.5bn to school funding nationally by the end of the year.

The impact of a national fair funding formula on Lincolnshire schools was impossible to determine, but it was highlighted that as one of the lowest funded LA's, the county's share of the national budget might increase. It was highlighted further that indications were that the LA's non-DSG budget could be reduced by over 10% in 2015/16 with further cuts to follow in subsequent years.

The Head of Service advised that the revised proforma for mainstream school budgets was due to be sent to the EFA on 21 January 2014, which would reflect the proposals reported to and subsequently supported by the Schools Forum on 9 October 2013. Briefing Sessions had already been arranged for maintained schools and academies to attend. The mainstream schools budgets (excluding sixth form funding) would be published by the 28 February 2014; and that the Mouchel Finance Team would continue to run budget settings courses for schools in March 2014.

Appended to the report was a copy of the LA Policy on Growth Fund and 2013/14 Commitments.

The Chairman on behalf of the Schools Forum extended his thanks to the Head of Finance – Children's & Specialist Services and his team for all their hard work.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- Notional SEN budgets to schools, on the basis that the school will meet the first £6,000 of additional support required by a pupil with SEN. It was confirmed that this was notionally in the budget and that schools would continue to operate in the same manner;
- Higher Block funding – Members were advised that this information was not available yet, hopefully more information would be out for the end of March 2014;
- Carbon reduction – whose responsibility was it. It was agreed that a report would be received for the April meeting;
- Service premium – It was reported that the information came from data from the schools themselves;
- Support was expressed to the LA's stance on its prudent approach to the setting of central budgets and reference was made to tightening of the LA's non-DSG funding for 2015/16;
- Early Years Provision – Reference was made to the fact that the government extended provision to the 40% most deprived two year olds. Reference was made to transport eligibility and school meals. It was highlighted that there was some flexibility in the budget for two year olds access. It was noted also that by September all Infants would have access to free school meals;
- Admissions – some members felt that £0.449m was quite a large budget. Members were advised that the LA still had a responsibility for admissions across the county and that that this was a reasonable amount to fund that responsibility;
- Serving of the Schools Forum – It was noted that this amount had not been increased; the figure was the same as that presented in 2013/14. The budget

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figure included the cost of running the Forum, timesheets, members expenses and training etc; and

- School centrally funded termination of employment costs – It was highlighted that the £0.045m represented good value for money, as the Redeployment Officer had been very effective, and without the post schools would pick-up significantly greater costs from redundancies than would otherwise be the case.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted.
2. That support be given for the LA's proposals for setting of the central budgets as shown in Table Four of the report presented.

30 THE SCHOOL AND EARLY YEARS FINANCE REGULATIONS FOR 2014/15

The Forum gave consideration to a report from the Head of Finance - Children's & Specialist Services, which provided information on the publication of the School and Early Years Finance Regulations for 2014/15, which had come into force on 1 January 2014.

Appended to the report was a summary of the New Features in the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2013 and the DSG conditions of Grant for the Financial Year 2014/15. Members were guided through the document from which the following points were raised:-

- A question was raised as to whether the forum was compliant with regard to Regulation 3 – Members were reassured that the Forum was compliant; and
- Schedule 3, paragraph 9 - Members were advised that pupils who had been looked after for at least one day would be eligible for the looked after children factor. Some concern was raised as to what strategy schools should have with regard to this matter, some discussion was had as to problems encountered relating to data protection and sharing information. It was agreed that this issue would be included at the next Head teachers' conference.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

31 TEAM AROUND THE CHILD (TAC) PROPOSAL

Consideration was given to a report from the Team Manager for Team Around the Child (TAC), which provided the Schools Forum with a proposal to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of Team Around the Child arrangements in Lincolnshire, and to ensure systems and structures were conducive to continuous improvement on a multi-agency approach. It was reported that the proposal within the report did not

cover wider Early Help developments including the revision of TAC paperwork, as this would be addressed, by the multi-agency Early Help Steering Group.

The Executive Director of Children's Services guided the Forum through the report, bringing their attention to Appendix A which provided the Forum with a briefing as to the Early Help and Team Around the Child in Lincolnshire. The Appendix explained the definition of Early Help and what the Early Help Offer meant for children and families; What was Team Around the Child and how important it was for the Team around the Child to develop and deliver a package of solution focused support to meet the needs identified through the Single Assessment, with a lead professional having been identified to co-ordinate the support and act as the key point of contact for the family and professional/services.

The Executive Director highlighted that there were two areas of concern in relating to Early Help, one was providing administrative support and the other was not getting access to case supervisors for help and support and help manage the risks. The proposal suggested asked for financial support and infrastructure support to enable this to happen.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Administrative and support expectations, Members were advised that it was hoped to implement "Signs of Safety" into TAC arrangements, which would provide smarter methodology. Also it was highlighted that another piece of work going on was in connection with Troubled Families, this would then dovetail into other work going on around the child;
- Administrative support in schools, it was hoped to replace the administrative burden with a legal professional, which would make it easier for schools;
- It was highlighted that there was a need for training professional in schools. It was reported that training would be given around Signs of Safety;
- Responsibility of third sector in the overall welfare of children. The Executive Director asked to be notified in cases when agencies were not taking responsibility through Head teachers; Funding issues surrounding TAC and increasing numbers of cases; and
- Members were reassured that the consultants would have experience safeguarding and managing risk.

The Schools Forum offered their support to the proposal and requested that a further report should be received in three months' time to ensure that things were moving in the right direction.

RESOLVED

In order to address the issues contained within the report and secure good improvements to TAC in Lincolnshire the Schools Forum gave their support to the following actions:-

1. The DSG jointly funds the creation of early Help Consultant posts.

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2. LCC Cost £67,601
3. DSG proposed cost £113,082
4. That these posts will:
 - Ensure all schools and academies have access to advice and guidance on the assessment and management of Early help cases
 - Provide case supervision for school staff to ensure that cases are appropriately risk assessed and managed
 - Provide quality assurance to the TAC process to prevent drift in cases
 - Support the use of reflective and evidence-based best practice across early Help
5. These posts would be able to offer schools based case supervision for up to 224 cases per month, and quality assurance of 50 cases per month. If numbers exceeded these figures, more posts would need to be created.
6. That the Schools' Forum agrees to cease the one-off administrative payment to schools, and supports the establishment of a central administrative function to organise Schools based TAC meetings, type and distribute minutes. The funding identified below would support up to 120 meetings per month. If figures exceed this amount, extra funding would be required.
7. DSG proposed cost: £104,400
8. That a progress report be presented to the Schools' Forum in three months' time.

32 PATHFINDER OUTREACH AND WIDER OUTREACH SUPPORT

Consideration was given to a report from the Assistant Director CfBT Education Services, which provided the Schools Forum with a summary of the arrangements to secure holistic outreach support for mainstream schools with pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) that were put in place as part of the county's SEND Strategy increased locality based provision.

The item had been brought to the Schools' Forum to consider the continuation or otherwise of Pathfinder Outreach, beyond March 2014. It was reported however, as Pathfinder Outreach was only one component of the holistic package of support, members were asked to base their decision on the whole package.

The report provided information as to the effectiveness and value for money of the Pathfinder Outreach support provided by those schools currently in receipt of funding, the effectiveness of the wider offer and the way forward for the future.

During consideration, the Schools' Forum requested that they would support funding for one year to support Pathfinder Outreach and that they would like to receive a further report in six months' time which offered a single option approach, provided a clear direction and offered good value for money.

RESOLVED

That funding be supported for one year to support the Pathfinder Outreach; and that a further report be presented to the Schools Forum in June 2014, which offers a single option approach, provides clear direction and offers good value for money.

33 FREE SCHOOL MEAL ELIGIBILITY

The Schools Forum gave consideration to a report from the Specialist Children's Health Programme Manager – Public Health, which advised that currently in the county there was no direct mechanism to capture and notify those families with children who were entitled to free school meals (FSM). It was reported that a pilot was proposed to be commissioned by Lincolnshire County Council which would see the district councils actively seeking all housing benefit claimants eligible for free school meals and notifying the relevant schools that they have eligible children. The benefits of the pilot would streamline the current system and share the responsibility of seeking those eligible, increase free school meal take up and increase revenue for the county's schools. It was highlighted that the pilot would cost £30,000 to set up and run, but a cross directorate working group was currently in the process of detailing the project and its exact costs.

Some concern was raised as to the data relating to Housing Benefits belonging to Work and Pensions.

The report highlighted that Lincolnshire County Council and Lincoln District (incorporating North Kesteven claimants) would begin a pilot early in 2014. The pilot would test the discrepancies between those claiming housing benefit and eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM) within the District Councils Database and FSM list held by Lincolnshire County Council. The pilot will evidence where the missing children are and enable action to be taken. It was highlighted that it was then the intention to replicate the Lincoln pilot in all seven districts, working with schools in an effort to capture the revenue currently being lost from the county.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted.
2. That support be given to pilot outlined in the report presented.

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34 SCHOOLS FORUM GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE

Consideration was given to a report from The Head of Finance – Children's & Specialist Services, which highlighted to the Schools Forum the latest DfE's Schools Forum Practice Guide.

The report highlighted that the Schools Forum was already compliant with many aspects of the guide, but the report detailed further areas to improve the Forums compliance. These were shown on page 58 of the agenda.

RESOLVED

1. That the report and the LA's proposals for ensuring further compliance with the DfE's guidance be noted.

35 ACADEMIES UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report from the Head of Property and Technology Management, which provided the Schools Forum with the latest information on the number of pupils in academies.

The current position as at 1 January 2014, of pupil figures were detailed on pages 62/63. Overall out of 359 schools (101398 FTE) 250 were Maintained (44419 FTE) and 109 were now Academies (56979 FTE).

The projected six month status of all 359 Lincolnshire Schools (101398 FTE) showed that 248 would be Maintained (44185 FTE) and 111 would be Academies (57213 FTE).

It was highlighted that it was anticipated that the number of sponsored conversions would increase as the government moved its focus to schools that received inadequate Ofsted reports or that those whose assessment results were below floor target. As yet these figures had not been published.

RESOLVED

That the report presented be noted.

36 INFORMATION PACK

RESOLVED

That the work programme enclosed be agreed subject to the inclusion of items highlighted at minute numbers 28 and 31.

The meeting closed at 4.30 pm