



LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM 14 JANUARY 2015

PRESENT:

David Bennett (Governor, Horncastle Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School), Graham Burks (Headteacher, Kesteven and Grantham Girls' School), Professor Ken Durrands CBE (Governor, The King's School, Grantham), Christine Horrocks (Principal, Walton Girls' High School and Sixth Form), Jonathan Maddox (Headteacher, Bourne Grammar School), Jeremy Newnham (Headteacher, Caistor Yarborough Academy), Joanne Noble (Headteacher, Gainsborough Nursery School), John Beswick (Governor, Stickney Church of England Primary School), Roger Hewins (Governor, Corringham Church of England Primary School), Patricia Ruff (Headteacher, Dunholme St Chads Church of England Primary School), Ian Wilkinson (Headteacher, Deeping St James Community Primary School), Bridget Robson (Headteacher, Fortuna Primary School, Lincoln), Dave Thompson (Pupil Referral Unit) and Helen Stokes (Branch Secretary, UNISON), Scott Healy (Assistant Headteacher, De Aston School) (Replacement Member) and Michael Pichel-Juan (Governor, John Fielding Community Special School) (Replacement Member).

Also in attendance: Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell (Executive Councillor Adult Care and Health Services, Children's Services), Richard Linnel (Staff Trade Unions) and Ken Rustidge (NUT).

Officers in attendance:-

Debbie Barnes (Executive Director of Children's Services), Keith Batty (Director of Programme, CfBT Education Services), Elizabeth Bowes (Team Leader, Schools Finance Team), Katrina Cope (Team Leader Democratic and Civic Services), Jonas Gibson (Commissioning and Development Manager), Mark Popplewell (Assistant Head of Finance Children's & Specialist Services), Douglas Robinson (Environmental Services Team Leader (Sustainability), Catherine Southcott (Commissioning Officer), Tony Warnock (Operations and Financial Advice Manager) and Jess Smith (Sustainability Project Officer).

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Ellenor Beighton (Headteacher, De Aston School, Market Rasen), Vicky Cook (Headteacher, Welbourn C of E Primary School), Michael Follows MBE (Governor, John Fielding Community Special School, Boston), Roger Hale (Headteacher, Caistor Grammar School), Linda Houtby (Principal and Chief Executive, Grantham College), Craig Miller (Governor, All Saints Church of England Primary School, North Hykeham), Bridget Starling (Business, Manager, Church of England, Diocesan Education Centre) and Richard Thomson (Headteacher, Rauceby Church of England Primary Academy).

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Members were advised that Michael Pichel-Juan (Governor, John Fielding Community Special School, Boston) and Scott Healey (Assistant Headteacher, De Aston School, Market Rasen) had attended the meeting on behalf of Michael Follows MBE (Governor, John Fielding Community Special School, Boston) and Ellenor Beighton (Headteacher, De Aston School, Market Rasen) respectively, for this meeting only.

The Executive Director of Children's Services advised that since the last meeting of the Schools Forum, former Chairman, Terl Bryant had ceased to be a member of the governing body at Stamford Queen Eleanor Community School, and as a result now ceased to be a member of the Schools Forum.

The Director advised further that Terl had since been appointed to the governing body of the Colsterworth Church of England Primary School. It was noted that at the moment there was no vacancy as a primary governor available on the Forum.

Members of the Schools Forum extended their appreciation to Terl for all his work over the years in holding the local authority to account, and it was agreed that a letter of appreciation would be sent to Terl from the Executive Director of Children's Services thanking him for his contribution over the years to the Forum.

Some Forum members enquired as to whether the Rules of Operation could be amended to allow Terl to return and take his place as Chairman. The Executive Director of Children's Services advised that at the moment no vacancy was available for a Primary School Governor and that the local authority was fulfilling their legal obligation being open and transparent with regard to the membership of the Forum.

The Forum agreed that the Executive Director of Children's Services should seek legal advice with regard to amending the composition of the Schools Forum and that the response received should be brought back to the Schools Forum for further consideration.

JOHN BESWICK (VICE-CHAIRMAN) IN THE CHAIR

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 OCTOBER 2014

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Lincolnshire Schools Forum meeting held on 8 October 2014 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declaration of Members interests were made at this stage of the proceedings.

SCHOOL FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS 2015/16

Consideration was given to a report from the Operations and Financial Advice Manager, which briefed the Schools Forum on school funding arrangements for

2015/16; and sought support for the Local Authority's (LA) proposals relating to a number of centrally held budgets, which were detailed in Table three of the report presented.

In guiding the Forum through the report, particular reference was made to:

- The background to the report, the Forum noted that the government was not proposing any major changes to school funding arrangements for 2015/16. Members were also advised of the actions that had taken place since the last meeting, these were detailed at points one to seven on page 20 of the report;
- The impact of the Schools funding announcements made on 18 December 2014. It was noted that the information confirmed that the operation of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) would remain largely unchanged. It was noted that there had been some changes made by Department for Education which included funding for non-recoupment authorities being transferred in to the LA's DSG in 2015/16; the early years block now included the early years' premium for which provisional allocations were announced in October 2014; that the higher needs block for LAs included any increase in places for 2015/16 academic year that had been approved by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) as a result of their 'exceptions' process, and a share of a £47m top-up fund which had been distributed according to the 2-19 aged population of each authority; and that the DfE had extended the list of licences covered by a single national licence;
- It was reported that the Education Support Grant (ESG) would be reduced by £200m from the £1.02bn allocated in 2014/15. It was noted ESG funded the additional responsibilities that academies acquire upon conversion. As a consequence, the general rate funding would fall from £113 to £87 per pupil in 2015/16. It was highlighted that the retained duties rate that LAs receive for all pupils would however remain unchanged at £15 per pupil. The Forum was also advised that in keeping with its stated intention in 2013, the DfE intended to change the protection arrangements for academies, so that their ESG rates converged with those for local authorities. There would be no top-up for academies in the 2015/16 academic year, but revised protection rates would be introduced, which would operate in tapered bands. Academies receiving low levels of ESG would not suffer a reduction of more than 1% of their total funding. However, Academies receiving relatively high ESG could see a fall in their total funding of up to 3%;
- It was reported that there had been small changes to the pupil premium, this had been reported to the Forum at its October meeting, that the government's intention was to introduce from April 2015 a new Early Years Pupil Premium for three and four year olds, with £300 a year being paid for every eligible child who takes up the full 570 hours of free education entitlement;
- A full detail of the 2015/16 DSG allocations were shown on page 22 of the report, but it was reported that there were significant differentials between Lincolnshire's DSG per pupil funding rates and the national average. Lincolnshire's per pupil funding for the schools block had increased by £42.72 from £4,329.10 last year, this was as a result of the government's decision to allocate extra resource in 2015/16 to the 69 least fairly funded LAs. Both local

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and national per pupil rates for early years remained unchanged from last year. Overall, Lincolnshire DSG will increase by 1.6% in 2015/16; and

- The Forum noted that the LA's main proposal for change to the 2015/16 school funding formula related to Statement of Educational Need (SEN) and Band 6 to 8 statements. These proposals had been supported by the Forum on 8 October 2014.

The Schools Forum were advised that the LA took a prudent approach to the setting of central budgets within the DSG, full details of the main changes proposed to DSG central budgets were detailed on pages 23 and 24 of the report, the proposed budgets for 2015/16 were: Broadband for £1.617m; Places in independent schools for non-SEN pupils £0.658m; SEN out of county £7.290m, it was noted that there had been an increase in out of county expenditure, this was as a result of the rise in the number of young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders, presently the County's schools were unable to meet this need; and funding for significant pre-16 growth £2.000m.

Table three of the report presented set out the budgets requiring the Schools Forum approval these were as follows:-

- Funding for significant pre-16 growth - £2.000m;
- Places in independent schools for non-SEN pupils (Stamford Endowed Schools) - £0.658m;
- Broadband - £1.617m;
- Admissions - £0.449m;
- Servicing of the Schools Forum £0.020m;
- Central expenditure from revenue (CERA) - £5.045m; and
- Schools centrally funded termination of employment costs - £0.045m.

The Operations and Financial Advice Manager outlined the financial outlook for schools, the Council and the Schools Forum. Full details were shown on page 26 of the report. Particular reference was made to the fact that there had been a reduction in the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) component in 2015/16 of £33.6m or 26.3% which would leave the Council's 2015/16 RSG at £93.7m, although the Council had identified savings of £30m for 2015/16 it was facing a budget pressure of £29m, most of which related to Adult Care. The Council therefore proposed to use £32m of one-off reserves in 2015/16 as a temporary measure to balance the budget. But further significant permanent savings would have to be found for the period beyond 2015/16 and total savings of c. £90m over the next four year may still be required. The Council's situation had therefore a major bearing on Children's Services; the Directorate had already managed to deliver £30.2m of savings, but it was highlighted that overall the Council faced some very significant challenges beyond 2015/16 which would have a major impact upon Children's Services budgets in future years.

During discussion, the Forum raised the following issues:-

- The increase in the number of out of County placements. It was highlighted that some packages cost £300,000 in the independent sector. It was

highlighted further that in the last weekly report there had been 99 pupils receiving out of county care. The Forum was surprised at the increase in numbers, as three years previous this figure had been reducing. The Executive Director of Children's Services advised that a report pertaining to how the out of County money was being spent would be presented to the next meeting of the Forum; as the funding contribution from health and social care was complicated to understand. Some members enquired as to why Lincolnshire's special schools couldn't have the opportunity to expand to meet the rising need. The Executive Director advised that work was currently ongoing to work jointly in order to invest to save, and so far the special schools that had been approached had not been suitable. Members of the Schools Forum were invited to come forward with any suggestions;

- The budget for Capital Expenditure from the Revenue Account (CERA) included a further 20 year commitment relating to a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract for the building of seven county schools 12 years ago; and
- Use of the Redeployment Officer by academies, it was felt that this service could be used to support academies and should therefore be available to them.

RESOLVED

1. That the report presented be noted.
2. That support be given to the LA's proposals for the setting of central budgets as shown below in Table 3 of the report presented.

OUTREACH SUPPORT SERVICE

Pursuant to Minute number 23 from the meeting held on 8 October 2014, the Schools Forum gave consideration to a report from the Commissioning Officer, which provided an up to date position with regard to Outreach Services.

It was noted that since the October meeting, a number of actions had taken place which included presentations at Primary and Secondary Headteacher briefings across the county; updates to all schools and academies as part of the ongoing stakeholder Consultation plan; consultation meetings with existing providers; the provision of a provider engagement event on the 21 November 2014; and meetings with internal stakeholder. Further details of the project update were available at Appendix A of the report presented.

It was reported that the Provider Engagement Event had received a number of queries all of which were detailed in Appendix B to the report presented.

In conclusion, the Schools Forum was advised that a further progress report would be received at the next meeting. Details of the next steps to be taken were contained on page 31 of the report presented.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

SCHOOL COLLABORATION ON RESOURCE EFFICIENCY (SCORE)
UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report from the Sustainability Team Leader, which provided the Schools Forum with an outline of the spend profile to date and projected profile of the SCoRE Programme including resourcing spends within the operational budget, and spend on boiler room improvements in Lincolnshire schools.

It was reported that the total spend over the programme's lifetime was in line with the original proposal and that there had been more boilers than expected and therefore funds from the revolving fund had been allocated accordingly.

The Schools Forum noted that the SCoRE Programme was available to all schools in Lincolnshire, including academies and that there were three strands to the work programme which included behavioural change; investment in boiler room improvements and support in putting together Action Plans which identify opportunities and support schools to access funding to implement identified long term energy efficiency actions.

It was reported that the successes of the SCoRE had recently been acknowledged when the team received a Green Apple Award, with a Gold Ward in the category of energy reduction in local authorities.

The original proposal had agreed £3.6 million (£400,000 Operational, £2,000,000 Boiler Room investment; and £1,200,000 revolving fund). The spend to date had been allocated to two key areas, the operational budget had been spent employing two graduate SCoRE officers to deliver the programme and one modern apprentice to support the programme, spend in this area was as originally profiled.

The investment in Technology budget was spent on insulation for the valves and flanges of boilers in each school and the installation of boiler optimisation units in each school. Both technologies were proven to reduce gas consumption in schools; insulation by 3%, and boiler optimisation by 10%. Details of spend to date; projected future spend and predicted total spend were detailed on page three of the report presented.

In conclusion, the Forum was advised that SCoRE offered good value for money and encouraged long term sustainable behaviour. It was noted that challenges had been met with solutions and that amendments to the original format of the SCoRE should result in both improved take-up of the programme and increased value for money with regards to investment in technology.

A short discussion ensued, from which the following issues were raised:-

- Whether the revolving fund was open to academies. It was reported that the revolving fund managed internally was match funded by Salix. This revolving fund was not available to academies. It was highlighted that Salix also

operated national funding, which was available to academies. Officers from the Sustainability Team offered their support to any academy to assist them with their application to access this funding. It was clarified that access to the boiler improvements was open to academies and was free; and

- A question was asked as to how much money had been saved. The Forum was advised that this was difficult to define but improvements would help schools save between 8% and 15% of their fuel costs. Some members requested firm figures of what had been saved by those who had taken up the initiatives i.e. what the spend was and how much had been saved as a result of the improvements. The Forum was advised that figures were very hard to quantify as there were too many variables and factors affecting the utility costs in schools.

Detailed at Appendix A was a copy of the SCoRE Programme.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

UNIVERSAL INFANT FREE SCHOOL MEALS

The Schools Forum gave consideration to a report from the Children's Health Programme Manager, which provided an update on the progress of the Universal Infant Free School Meal Offer (UIFSM) in Lincolnshire.

The Operations and Financial Advice Manager presented the report. The Executive Director for Children's Services presented the report and responded to questions raised.

It was agreed that the Operations and Financial Advice Manager would make enquiries about a possible visit by the Environmental Health Officer to the John Fielding Community Special School.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

SECTOR-LED SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT MODEL UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report from the Commissioning Services Manager, which provided a summary of the progress made to co-construct with headteachers an alternative model for monitoring, challenging and intervening with schools and academies. The Council's contract with CfBT Education Trust to provide monitoring, challenge and intervention services was due to end on 31 January 2017, and as a result the Council was starting to engage with schools to ascertain the nature and required capacity for any new school improvement model for Lincolnshire.

The report highlighted the radical change in the education landscape since the contract had been signed and that there was a need to develop in partnership with

schools a future model which aligned itself to best practice, fits the Council's spending powers, and meets the needs of schools whilst ensuring capacity and expertise to enable the Council to meet its statutory duties.

The Executive Director for Children's Services presented the report and advised that lots of work was ongoing and a list of the principal changes being considered were detailed at a. to j. on page 56 of the report presented.

The Executive Director explained that a Task and Finish Group had been set up and that they were looking at best practise elsewhere. It was highlighted that the consensus among the consulted headteachers was that placing them, or their representatives at the heart of decision making in the new system was fundamental. Once information sharing protocols were agreed and terms of reference established, it was anticipated that the Headteacher Board would be the strategic structure for all none finance education matters including best practice, identification and monitoring of schools who needed additional support and addressing strategic issues such as closing the gap. However, this was work in progress but it was hoped that the Board would be able to take over the role of the Schools Causing Concern Officers meeting by September 2016.

The specifics of the model were expected to emerge from workshops involving several hundred headteachers planned for 20 and 21 January 2015 that had been organised by the Headteacher Design and Task Group. Even when the model was determined there would be considerable work that would still be needed to be done before appropriate protocols could be finalised. It was hoped that the new model could be trialled with early implementers throughout 2016. More work was to be done, but a further report would be presented to the Schools Forum in April 2015.

Jeremey Newham volunteered to be the Schools Forum representative on the Task and Finish Group.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted.
2. That Jeremy Newham be the Schools Forum representative on the Task and Finish Group.
3. That a further report be presented to the Schools Forum at its 22 April 2015 meeting.

THE SCHOOL AND EARLY YEARS FINANCE REGULATIONS FOR 2015/16

Consideration was given to a report from the Assistant Head of Finance Children's and Specialist Services, which advised the Schools Forum of the publication of the School and Early Years Finance Regulations for 2015/16.

Members were guided through the report and considered the summary of the changes detailed on page 60 of the report.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS

The School Forum gave consideration to a report from the Team Leader of the School Finance Team, which highlighted the outcome of a recent consultation with maintained schools regarding a proposed amendment to the Scheme for Financing Schools i.e. to increase the carry forward limit for nursery schools from 8% to 10% of budget share.

The Forum were reminded that a report had been received at the 8 October 2014 meeting which had set out the Local Authority's proposal to seek approval from maintained school representatives on the Forum, for which approval was given. As a result, consultation took place just before Christmas and in light of the response received, the LA intended to implement the proposal therefore allowing nursery schools to carry forward 10% of their budget with effect from 31 March 2015.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

2014/15 SECTION 251 BENCHMARKING INFORMATION

Consideration was given to a report from the Assistant Head of Finance Children's and Specialist Services, which advised the Schools Forum of the latest Section 251 benchmarking data published by the DfE in September 2014.

Members were guided through the report and officers responded to questions raised.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

ACADEMIES UPDATE

The Team Leader of the Schools Finance Team presented to the Schools Forum an update on the latest information relating to the number of academies and pupils in academies.

It was highlighted that since the last report three further academies had opened bringing the total number to 121 (33.4%) educating 60,079 (58.5%) pupils, which was an increase of 0.8% of schools and a 1.4% of pupils.

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In total, it was expected that there would be a five further academies by 1 June 2015. This would be an overall increase of 1.4% and bring the total number of academies to 126 (34.8%), academies will then educate 60,770 (59.2%) of Lincolnshire pupils.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

INFORMATION PACK

RESOLVED

That the contents of the information pack be noted.

The meeting closed at 4.05 pm.