

Leicestershire Schools' Forum
Notes of the meeting held on Thursday 18 September 2014,
2.00pm at Beaumanor Hall

Present

Alex Green	Secondary Academy Headteacher
Suzanne Uprichard Richard Spurr Michael Murphy	Secondary Academy Governors
David Lloyd Karen Allen	Primary Maintained Headteachers
Jean Lewis	Primary Academy Governor
David Thomas Tony Gelsthorpe	Primary Maintained Governors
Ian Sharpe	CE Representative
Heather Stretton	Trade Union Representative
Suzanne Uprichard	PRU Representative
Chris Davies	RC Representative

In attendance:

Jenny Lawrence, Finance Business Partner, Corporate Resources Department
 Lesley Hagger, Director, Children and Family Services
 Gill Weston, Assistant Director, Education, Learning and Skills
 Chris Bristow, Interim Head of Strategy, Vulnerable Groups
 Chris Connearn, Interim Head of Strategy, Education Quality and Vulnerable Groups

1.	<p>Election of Chair and Vice Chair</p> <p>Tim Moralee was elected Chair of the Schools' Forum for the coming academic year.</p> <p>Tony Gelsthorpe was elected Vice Chair of the Schools' Forum for the ensuing year.</p>	
2.	<p>Apologies</p> <p>Apologies were received from Tim Moralee, Ivan Ould, Nigel Leigh, Alison Deacon, Louisa Hallam, Bill Nash, Sonia Singleton, Brian Myatt, Heather Sewell, Sue Horn and Jason Brooks.</p>	
3.	<p>Membership Update</p> <p>Jenny Lawrence reported that she had undertaken an annual review of pupil numbers in school phases to identify whether any changes to Schools' Forum membership for 2014/15 were needed. Jenny confirmed that no changes were required to the 2014/15 membership.</p>	

<p>4.</p>	<p>Minutes</p> <p>The minutes of the meetings held on 16 June 2014 and 5 September 2014 were agreed as accurate and true records.</p> <p>Matters Arising from 16 June 2014 – Lesley Hagger reported that the meeting with Peter Lauener from the EFA held at the end of July, regarding the use of basic need capital allocations had been very successful and will help deliver the priorities identified in the school place planning strategy (which is currently out to consultation).</p> <p>Matters Arising from 5 September 2014 – Tony Gelsthorpe thanked Jenny Lawrence for responding to his question about the cost of funding protection for age range changes.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Oakfield Update</p> <p>Chris Connearn introduced her paper and outlined that Oakfield was primary provision for children at risk of exclusion.</p> <p>At the last Ofsted inspection Oakfield had been judged a good provision on every count.</p> <p>Karen Allen, on behalf of primary headteachers, expressed her thanks to those working at Oakfield for the hard work and commitment to ensuring that the school no longer required special measures and developing behaviour support for primary schools. Karen highlighted that there are still children who require support even though they were not able to access the expertise at Oakfield.</p> <p>David Lloyd acknowledged that this was a challenging and difficult job.</p> <p>Chris Connearn said that the Primary Behaviour Forum purpose is around building capacity in schools, and providing school to school support in the system through schools working together.</p> <p>Lesley Hagger said it was important to ensure this was pulled into Supporting Leicestershire Families work so that the whole family is supported.</p> <p>Jean Lewis asked if there was any suggestion support might translate to training opportunities to mainstream schools.</p> <p>Chris Connearn responded that idea was being developed using expertise from around the County and Oakfield.</p> <p>Suzanne Uprichard – behaviour forums will be a means of starting that pushing out of support, if issues caught early they don't develop and families then feel supported.</p> <p>David Thomas – request to provide additional support January to March – post April 2015 will require full cost from school. Which schools are the Local Authority planning recovery from and what are the chances of getting it?</p>	

	<p>Chris Connearn responded that the Local Authority was looking at developing that model in the consultation and to share the learning. Models will be drawn up, but still at an early stage.</p> <p>Karen Allen – if child presenting these quite extreme behaviours in school the headteacher’s priority for the sake of other children, other families and their reputation. Extra support in classroom often which is very expensive, but not necessarily the answer. Chance for schools to explore effective/efficient ways. If £6.25 per child was delegated in to budget, schools would be prepared to pay.</p> <p>Suzanne Uprichard – this model will address issues early on, for a young person up to 11, if we can overcome their behaviour problems and support the family, this will lead to more productive and useful secondary education, therefore money worth investing.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Chris Connearn for her work.</p> <p>Schools’ Forum agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continuation of the funding arrangement from DSG be carried forward for 2014-15. 2. DSG reserves be used to fund an additional teacher and administrative support from September 2014 to April 2015 	
6.	<p>2013/14 School Balances</p> <p>Jenny Lawrence explained that the annual report comes to Schools’ Forum detailing school balances maintained schools were holding on 31 March 2014 and the 2013/14 financial year.</p> <p>Jenny referred to the table in paragraph 13, numbers of schools holding balances in excess of 5% are increasing as are balances themselves. The Local Authority was looking to try to match performance data to school balances.</p> <p>Follow up work with schools to find out why schools with high balances are holding those balances will be completed.</p> <p>Suzanne Uprichard asked why the Local Authority are proposing to give 7% to primaries who seem to be holding this surplus, when conversations with schools holding those large reserves, they don’t have plans to spend them, no reason to drop in NOR, will they still get the whole amount?</p> <p>Jenny responded that local authorities are not allowed to take school balances into account within the school funding formula. The Local Authority started looking at school funding before school balances were reported by schools, and looked for evidence base and the relative funding position for Leicestershire schools.</p> <p>Richard Spurr asked if there was an analysis of why schools have high balances?</p>	

	<p>Jenny responded that these are the conversations to have with schools. Data was not in until the end of June and takes a while to analyse. This is a piece of work that needs to happen.</p> <p>Lesley Hagger said it was really important to undertake that analysis and look at schools with balances and their performance to gain a good knowledge and understanding.</p> <p>Ian Sharpe reported that those schools that have not got plans, not being analytical.</p> <p>Karen Allen referred to balance control mechanism and asked whether the claw back was ever used?</p> <p>Jenny responded yes.</p> <p>Karen Allen - looking particularly at primary budgets relatively small amounts of money. A child with a particular behavioural difficulty, suddenly having to recruit staff can be the difference between 8% and 10% and can de-stabilise the whole school. 2% can make a huge difference/impact to smaller schools.</p> <p>Jean Lewis – have to look at the large balances and must not mix up large balances with the budget for next year. Need to look at year on year allowance for the children.</p> <p>Suzanne Uprichard – schools given money to teach and provide learning for their children increasingly being asked to justify why schools receive money are not good or outstanding. How many of these schools are not graded one or two?</p> <p>Jenny responded that was one of the performance measures the Local Authority would be looking at, attainment gap and OfSTED judgement.</p> <p>Heather Stretton – there should be a level playing field – EFA not publishing the same information for academies and hoped that would be rectified by the EFA.</p> <p>Schools’ Forum discussed and noted the position of the 2013/14 school balances for Local Authority maintained schools.</p>	
7.	<p>Personal Budgets</p> <p>Chris Bristow introduced his paper. The final approved Code of Practice was issued in July which reiterates the Local Authority’s responsibility to roll out Personal Budgets.</p> <p>The position in terms of education is that the Local Authority offer no Personal Budget as of today, but need to establish a mechanism how the LA can best do that and extend Personal Budget offer to families to get the best possible outcome for our children and young people with SEN and disability.</p>	

	<p>The purpose of the report is to ask Schools' Forum to nominate a member to be part of a working group of headteachers to bring proposals how this could work in reality in Leicestershire.</p> <p>Richard Spurr – Personal Budget money could include Social Care, Education and Health. How do we ensure that a particular individual may decide to spend money depending on their needs?</p> <p>Chris responded that money has to achieve those health outcomes identified by health or other professionals.</p> <p>Karen Allen raised a question on SEND Reform, as she understands from SENCO and PRU School Heads from 1 September schools had to publish their Local Offer in terms of SEN. Understands the Local Authority is yet to publish their Offer and advice SENCOs given was not to produce theirs until have Local Authority Offer to link it to. Has it been published, if not when will it be published?</p> <p>Chris reported that the Local Authority Local Offer was published on 1 September 2014 and was available on the website: www.leics.gov.uk/local_offer. School Offer and template was provided during the summer term for schools to complete and needs to be completed and on school websites by October half term.</p> <p>David Lloyd said the amount of training expected with these huge changes with no extra money was not acceptable.</p> <p>Jean Lewis – NHS continuing care funding and Personal Budgets – what are the limitations on each of these? What about the swap over on Health?</p> <p>Chris stated the current position is Health have to consider Personal Budget if a child has severe or complex care needs, (approx. 20 young people across Leicestershire, Rutland and City). Personal Budget will need to extend from 1 April 2015 and 1 April 2016 for young people with long term complex health conditions. 0-25 agenda needs to consider how those options are offered as a Personal Budget.</p> <p>Heather Stretton asked will children with SEN still be statemented? Chris responded no, EHC plan.</p> <p>Heather asked regarding High Needs Block – will this be used? Chris responded yes, for commissioning places in specialist provision and top up funding.</p> <p>It was agreed that Jean Lewis from Schools' Forum would join the working group of headteachers.</p>	
8.	<p>2015/16 School Funding</p> <p>Jenny Lawrence talked through the key points of her report and explained it had only been possible to table the report and outcome of the consultation late as the consultation closed on 17 September. The</p>	

timeline had been extremely challenging to develop these proposals.

The proposal had been to Schools' Forum twice and the Task and Finish Group 3 times who unanimously supported the principles and the proposals - that all education providers should benefit from additional money but the Local Authority recognise that it is impossible to find a solution that meets every schools individual needs, the proposals provide the best solution for Leicestershire as a whole and will leave schools in a better place to respond to the introduction of a national funding formula.

Jenny stated that this is not a formula review but a basis to distribute the additional funding.

Jenny thanked the Task and Finish Group for their time over the summer to work on formulating proposals.

Jenny said the Local Authority had done as much as possible to alert all schools and academies to the importance of the consultation, but had only received 13 responses. 7 primary (unanimous in favour) and 6 secondary (mixed responses). The Local Authority have proposed no changes to funding age range changes.

It was important to note not all schools can get additional £240 per pupil largely due to the way the minimum funding guarantee works. There are 23 schools who will not see a cash increase. However, they would have seen a 1.5% increase. No school will lose money as a result of these proposals.

It remains the Local Authority's view that the proposals are measured and principled. Schools will benefit from lower levels minimum funding guarantee from the formula.

Anecdotally secondary schools are telling the Local Authority that the proposals are not fair but the consultation outcome does not make this point – the LA feel that there is an alternative proposal which retains principles that Schools' Forum may wish to consider which is to retain 7% AWPU primary school, retain 100% uplift at prior attainment (primary and secondary), retain funding increase early years providers and could provide secondaries with an AWPU increase of 2.75%.

If that option were supported the Local Authority would need to adjust primary and secondary AWPU 2014 data and this would also increase the number of schools remaining on minimum funding guarantee from 23 to 26 schools.

The Chair asked Schools' Forum members whether they would like to adjourn for 30 minutes to allow time for consideration of the issues raised. The Forum decided to continue with the meeting and not adjourn.

David Thomas referred to page 14 alternative proposal and asked whether this was a political proposal?

Jenny responded no, the secondary position was reported by a limited group of secondary schools, the Local Authority are in consultation so took that informal feedback into account when the option was explored around an alternative that kept with those fundamental principles agreed in June.

Richard Spurr said this was an excellent piece of work. The feedback he had received from secondary representatives had been negative, they fully understand the minimum funding guarantee, but the main issue had been around disproportionate increase directed more to primary than secondary.

Jenny responded that the analysis shows basic entitlement funding into all schools for primary is 1.6% lower than in similar authorities, KS3 is 0.5% greater and KS4 1.22% greater.

Karen Allen responded to Richard's questions. This is addressing a long term discrepancy primary have been coping with for a long time.

Jenny said the Local Authority can only take into account the views it receives and had not just provided the formal consultation feedback but also included the email responses received for completeness.

David Thomas, as a member of the Task and Finish Group, expressed his disappointment in the number of consultation responses. The alternative is a fundamental change from the consultation proposal.

Alex Green reported 6th form funding over the last 4 years had been cut significantly beyond any other area, which has a significant impact on secondary. There is a Primary bias, understands why, but important to remember, at every stage secondary colleagues have promoted the primary additional funding, 6th form funding KS5 has never been mentioned. Really would plead to consider latitude if flexibility in system to go for 2.75% centrally retained budgets – should come back to that – look at Schools Block in its totality, how and why it is split.

Jenny responded that DSG given to the Local Authority was for 0-15 year olds, there is no DSG funding for KS5. Jenny clarified 2.75% was not considered by the Working Group. Schools' Forum approves the budgets that are centrally retained in the Schools Block.

Jean Lewis asked for clarification – whether these proposals were for the one year?

Jenny responded no, that they were recurrent and would carry forward 2016/17 and onwards.

Richard Spurr – key points about perception – principle is sound we should be realigning. We should use extra money to readdress the balance. As secondary academy representative must consider 2.75%.

Heather Stretton – understands minimum funding guarantee to

	<p>safeguard schools. Eventually there will be a price per pupil. Proposal of 2.75% only floated last couple of days does not give much time to consider, and there needs to be more time.</p> <p>Jenny responded there was no time, a report was to go to Cabinet on 13 October and papers needed to be issued a week in advance. Minimum funding guarantee has been in place around 11 years introduced designed to ensure the Local Authority did not take more money than they should from the Schools Block, latterly used for ensuring school funding did not fall significantly year on year.</p> <p>Karen Allen asked for it to be confirmed - if were to go for the new proposal of 2.75% - the only disadvantage would be an additional 3 schools retained on minimum funding guarantee?</p> <p>Jenny responded yes, and it would also increase rates going into nursery education and SEN. SEN can be funded from contingency already held. Early Years allocation would increase from £730K to £920K, secondary schools were not supportive of funding going to early years providers.</p> <p>Recommendation 3 - Schools' Forum considered the consultation.</p> <p>That the proposals should be amended – 5 voted in favour.</p> <p>That the proposals should remain – 5 voted in favour, (6 in favour with the final casting vote from the Chairman).</p> <p>The Chairman, considering the work of the Task and Finish Group, therefore agreed not to change the proposal.</p> <p>Recommendation 5 - was agreed.</p> <p>Jenny clarified that the final decision rests with Cabinet on 13 October.</p> <p>David Thomas – AWPU alignment – could that be negative?</p> <p>Jenny responded yes, one example is the rates backdated over a number of years, if call on that increases all AWPU will need to be factored down. Not possible to say whether it could go up or down.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Jenny for doing a tremendous job, given the extremely tight timescale.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Karen Allen raised concern about the capital programme for universal infant meals.</p> <p>Karen reported on the cost of work which had to be undertaken to kitchens which in some cases were not fit for purpose. Karen asked whether the Local Authority had to meet any of the costs, or whether it was to be met centrally?</p>	

	<p>Lesley Hagger suggested that the Director of Corporate Resources be asked to bring a report to a future meeting of Schools' Forum.</p> <p>Ian Sharpe reported on the impact on schools, staff time and budgets for teaching and learning.</p> <p>Jenny Lawrence asked colleagues to let her have any particular case studies that schools can submit to show the impact on their budget.</p> <p>Lesley Hagger said that consideration needed to be given to the Government pledge not to create additional burden.</p>	
10.	<p>Date of Next Meetings</p> <p>Schools' Forum agreed the following dates for future meetings:</p> <p>Thursday 4 December 2014 Monday 23 February 2015 Thursday 18 June 2015 Monday 21 September 2015</p> <p>All the above from 2.00 – 4.00 pm at Beaumanor Hall.</p>	