

Leicestershire Schools' Forum

DRAFT Notes of the meeting held on Thursday 13 February 2014, 2.00 pm at Beaumanor Hall

Present:

Tim Moralee Alex Green Brian Myatt Suzanne Uprichard Richard Spurr Michael Murphy Bill Nash	Secondary Academy Headteachers
Jean Lewis Julie Kennedy	Primary Academy Governor
David Lloyd Karen Allen Heather Sewell Tony Gelsthorpe	Primary Maintained Headteachers
	Primary Academy Headteacher
David Thomas	Primary Maintained Governors
Jason Brooks	Academy Representative - Special
Alison Deacon (representing Andy Reeve)	Trade Union Representative
Ian Sharpe	CE Representative
	PRU Representative
Louisa Hallam	Early Years PVI provider
Brenda Carson	RC Representative
Nigel Leigh	Post 16 Provider

In Attendance:

Ivan Ould, Lead Member for CYPS

Jenny Lawrence, CYPS Finance Business Partner

Chris Bristow, Interim Head of Strategy, Education of Vulnerable Groups

Observers

Andy Winters, Business Manager, Wreake Valley Academy

Dave Green, Business Manager, Woodbrook Vale High School

1.	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Apologies were received from Lesley Hagger, Gill Weston, Sonia Singleton, John Bassford, Sue Horn, Ed McGovern and Andy Reeve</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2013 were agreed as a true record.</p> <p>Matters Arising</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	
3.	<p>New Membership list</p> <p>Jenny Lawrence reported there were a number of inaccuracies within the current membership list; a revised list would therefore be circulated with the minutes.</p> <p>Jenny explained that the membership list on the website did not contain contact email addresses but asked for permission for email addresses to be circulated amongst Forum members. Agreed: new list with emails to be sent out with the minutes.</p> <p>Jean Lewis asked about Special School representation. Jenny clarified there were 2 Special School representatives - JoAnne Rees was a nominated substitute, not an additional member.</p> <p><u>Decision</u> The Schools' Forum noted the paper.</p>	<p>JL</p> <p>JL</p>
4.	<p>Behaviour Partnership and PRU Update</p> <p>Jenny Lawrence reported that following the last meeting she was pleased to report work had now started with Partnerships around shadow arrangements in the run up to implementation of Cabinet decision to devolve KS3 funding from 28 April. (Paragraph 9), Resource Implications – Jenny stated that those allocations are for a full financial year new arrangements not until 28 April.</p> <p>Brian Myatt reported that Charlie Palmer had previously agreed with the 5 Partnership Chairs that there would be lead-in funding from January, in order to prepare for the infrastructure of KS3 provision for the April transfer. However, Brian was disappointed that Chris Connearn had informed him last week there would not be any funding.</p> <p>Agreed – Jenny to discuss with Chris Bristow and feed back to the 5 Chairs prior to their next meeting on 7 March.</p>	<p>JL</p>

5.

2014/15 Schools Budget

Jenny Lawrence talked through the 2014/15 Schools Budget paper and the following points were noted:-

- Para 11 – Jenny reported that information had now been provided to the EFA and they had come back to declare that 2014/15 formula complies with all the regulations. Draft budgets allocations were released to schools last week.
- Para 14, item 4 – proposal to move early years expenditure into Dedicated Schools Grant. The Local Authority intention is that all early years expenditure should be funded from DSG.
- Para 12 - Richard Spurr asked if the dataset was available. Jenny outlined that reference around age range pupil numbers information had been made available to schools in November. Jenny to look back to see if can release that information on a section by section basis, although Section 251 details budgets all maintained schools, may be a more useful document.
- Para 14 - David Thomas – approval of £2.5M central early years expenditure – can we increase? Jenny - yes budget proposals include this switch.
- Alex Green – funding pupil number growth – would that amount come from the capital allocation rather than taking money from DSG? Jenny - no, wrong sort of money – it is capital money for the provision of pupil places, can not use that for revenue purposes.
- Alex Green – in relation to statutory duties for LA – may well lessen as percentage to match with academy conversion, have less statutory duties so is the percentage retained now less?

Jenny – no, work done through LGA in the run up to 2013/14 budgets to try and identify cost associated with statutory duties. Had to take cost savings from the overall County Council budget.

AGREED: (Paragraph 14) - Recommendation 3 – Funding for the Local Authority in order to meet prescribed statutory duties placed upon it.

AGREED: Recommendation 4 – Funding for Early Years Expenditure.

- Jean Lewis – miscellaneous commissioning budget for Schools Causing Concern – were they reduced or have they remained the same? Jenny confirmed that budget had always been maintained at that level, fewer schools now but work with those schools is increasing.
- Item 3 - Premature Retirement Costs – Alex Green - what does

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that affect? Jenny - overall budget is £2M largely teaching staff in schools that retired, allowed to take early release of pension. DSG cannot meet any new costs, they fall to the Local Authority.

- Jenny reported we are awaiting information of what School Funding Reform 2015/16 will bring. No sight of consultation yet. Expect that to refer to Schools Block of that element, will not touch Early Years or High Needs
- High Needs – this block is based on levels of historic spend. 2014/15 first full year LA funded High Needs places academies and providers FE colleges. This element of settlement is one the EFA continually keep changing. This is a provisional allocation – detail to be received end of March. Post-16 pupils data now more robust – we believe this block is over-estimated.
- Para 17 - Early Years Block now includes funding for extension 40% most deprived 2 year olds, which will be a statutory duty for Local Authorities from September 2014.
- Para 19 – made switch from Schools Block to High Needs Block. One change in settlement is that schools are no longer required to participate in LA Carbon Reduction Scheme. EFA removal of £0.53M of funding yet the budget was £0.45M so this change is not cost neutral at LA level
- David Thomas - High Needs – data suggests final settlement a lot lower – how much lower than £54.1M? Jenny - we think it will go down by about £1.6M - we know nationally fixed pot of money we know number of high needs growing, we have been particularly cautious.
- David Lloyd – Leicestershire’s funding low. Jenny - 2015/16 introduction of Fair Funding Formula, no guarantee that will change funding position. National Fair Funding is saying that it is not going to fund every pupil in every authority at the same rate but to fund pupils with the same need at the same rate irrespective of the authority in which they are educated. Leicestershire low need authority – levels of deprivation, pockets but we won’t trigger a lot of those allocations.
- Mr Ould fed back from an F40 meeting held last Thursday at the Houses of Commons. Mr Ould, as Chair of F40 and Vice Chairs: Nick Bacon, Robin Walker and Nick Harvey wrote to Michael Gove to ask why a deprived child in a non-deprived authority was worth £700 less than similar child in a deprived authority.
- Seem to be struggling with a general lack of understanding about academies understanding that the LA formula is taken to create academy budgets. Message needs to get to schools that any decisions are going to affect mainstream schools and academies.

- Jenny stated that School Formula was unchanged from 2013/14. It was the view of the Working Group and Schools' Forum that we need to take 2014/15 as a period of relative stability.
- Two significant changes: 1 pupil number count for schools affected by age range changes which is funded from a reduction in the ceiling.
- Para 23 – Jenny reported a surprise settlement on school copyright charges – schools will not receive invoices for some copyright now and these will be funded from the Schools Block settlement. There is no inflation added to individual school budgets, therefore remains at flat level.
- Para 26 - 2 formula factors redefined by EFA:
 - Primary prior attainment data
 - Secondary – pupils not achieving level 4 English and Maths to level 4 English or Maths – widened the cohort of pupils eligible.
- Para 27 – formula had to be submitted to EFA by 20 January – estimates for payment of rates for schools now locked into 2014/15 budgets and now cannot change them. Schools will get additional funding but not until 2015/16. Schools for one year only may enter into a deficit situation.
- Para 28 - looked again at rate we remove recoupment for excluded pupils – finance regulations changing – should now be based on levels per pupil led funding. Now calculated average per pupil.
- Para 29 - more anxiety in schools around statutory duty to offer infant free school meals.
- A series of finance briefings held last week – advice to schools is to ignore free school meals offer until further information is received, then more advice/workshops may be held.
- Para 30 - Heather Sewell raised concerns that primary schools may enter into deficit budgets.
- Mr Ould – infant free school meals causes anxiety - how can schools forward plan, issues over insurance. Consider writing re difficult position schools being put in not having sufficient financial data.
- Jean – understood losing all money for free school meals – makes KS2 pupils receive free school meals no one paying. Jenny said there is an allocation in the budget for free school meals, although lower in Leicestershire.

- Jenny - the cost of meals spread evenly across schools, the new formula not allowed to provide formula for any particular function, new basis of charging, created some issues, free infant meals, transport issues have an impact we are thinking around that.
- EFA not started consultation about infant free school meals.

AGREED: Jenny and Tim Moralee to draft a letter outlining concerns - for Schools' Forum to comment before sending to the EFA.

JL/TM

- Pages 32-34 background on Pupil Premium. 2014/15 unit payable increased as have the cohorts entitled to funding. This financial year figures not updated until end of summer term, difficult planning period for schools. Advising schools to try and estimate your value as best you can, cohort of pupils.
 - Julie Kennedy - premium conference recently attended – moved to that fact it would stay but looking at making savings to pupil premium. Looking at ways of reducing expenditure.
 - Age range changes and pupil growth – reported at the last meeting, Secretary of State approved Leicestershire's proposals to age range changes to schools – confirm draft and final – both which cleared all the validation checks at the EFA.
 - Place planning issues – discussed at last meeting. School place planning – due at the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in March. Needs to come out to schools for comment. May mean 2014/15 may be in 2015/16. Budget today makes no financial provision for those changes but holds in reserve. Not considered within this budget.
 - New school places September – we do not get funded until next financial year, but have to provide those places.
 - Age range changes funding come from Dedicated Schools Grant.
 - Mr Ould – issue of provision places – County Council does not determine Section 106 element – district council meeting, put in for £57,000 funding – there is a shortfall of places.
 - 106 money to be used within certain time. Some agreements never started.
- High Needs funding – not hugely significant changes.
- 2014/15 first full financial year that we have these changes –

more confident now about information we have.

- One change in terms of funding arrangements - post 16 pupils and academies – reduced to £10,000 in line with pre-16 funding.
- Early Learning & Childcare – a slight amendment to formula to reflect changes in legislation. Local Authority previously supplemented funding, that is no longer allowed now moved to be purely on Ofsted rating.
- Para 47 – Dedicated Schools Grant reserve – provides information about what is in reserve and what LA proposes for that reserve.
- £1.2M used school rates, and also changes to copyright licencing. Retaining £2.5M sponsorship academy conversion.
All schools moving into sponsorship are issued with a Notice of Concern. Academy sponsors can place significant pressure on schools to shed costs before converting, we need to ensure governing bodies taking right decisions on behalf of the school.
- £2.7M retained for protection for schools that go into age range changes in the future.
- Estimated unallocated of DSG reserve – proposal to roll forward. We are asking Schools' Forum to support the use of the DSG reserve funding.
- David Thomas – notional SEN budget should fund 2 aspects – low cost high incident and element 2 funding. Some LAs providing funding for exceptional SEN costs.
- Jenny –in setting the 2013/14 formula schools did not support LA holding money back. Need to look at moving forward 2015/16 – looking at data, affected by high needs pupils. We used to hold contingency fund for unexpected SEN pupils moving into schools.
- EFA requested information on what the LA would do if schools notional SEN budget did not cover all element 2 costs.
- Jenny said it would not be possible to get something in place until the autumn term at the earliest. We need to collect data from schools. If there is funding we can look for future years. At the moment all funding in the budget (High Needs Block) is allocated. If contingency we can look at it. It will be necessary to revisit SEN funding once the new Education, Health and Care Plans are introduced.
- Mr Ould – will have to keep SEN funding under review.

- Para 48-51 – LA Budget - sets out growth and savings. Proposals taken to Children & Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee and two separate Cabinet reports. At the moment, no proposals to change to County Council proposals.
- LA savings proposals next 4 years – savings are 22% of CYPS overall budget.
- Karen raised concerns regarding £1M savings from Supporting Leicestershire Families Programme – access to Social Care support remains a real concern.
- Supporting Leicestershire Families – Heads are still extremely concerned, do not feel they are getting the support they need.
- Saving proposals are phased over 4 years. .
- Mr Ould – if we get Supporting Families programme right should lead to reduction in number of dysfunctional families, reduction in number of child protection plans - what appears to be a cut will become a natural outcome.
- Brian Myatt – Supporting Families huge success. Disappointed that – different programmes operate in different areas, programme relatively at infancy – still issue – where established working really well and impact memorable will be seen over time.
- Para 54 – Capital Programme – allocation £55M based upon need for LA to deliver additional places, may be in academies, free schools, maintained schools. LA want to use that funding to ensure it delivers the best solution for children in Leicestershire linked to school place planning.
- 2014/15 allocation just over £4M – discussions with academy sponsors have resulted in additional expenditure. The longer it takes academy to become sponsored the risk increases of a large deficit reverting back to the Local Authority.
- Jenny – Local Authorities allowed to set up a diseconomies of scale fund – allowing them to fund empty places if there is a demographic need for school places in the future, but can only do this for good or outstanding schools.

APPROVED - Recommendation 7 – to note the retention of DSG reserve.

- Recommendation 8 - David T –an alternative proposal to recommend looking at schools affected by disproportionate SEN costs and defer decision .

	<p>Jenny – need to look at school funding for the following year, and particularly SEN funding in the light of Education, Health and Care plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would have to withdraw school budgets unless agreement on the process to follow if school notional SEN budgets were insufficient to fund element 2, response was required by the EFA in January which did not give time to discuss with Schools' Forum. <p>AGREED - Recommendation 8 (Paragraph 8) - SEN Notional Budget.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forum members talk to their schools and see what evidence can be identified that shows disproportionate SEN costs, LA has tried to do that before, but found that schools cannot evidence disproportionate level of SEN, and if we were to say that there would be more funding in these instances all schools would claim they were adversely affected. <p>Recommendation 9 - Early Years Single Funding Formula School' Forum noted the payments rates.</p>	
6.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Chris Bristow reported that the SEN & Disability reform will impact over the County Council as a whole, need to look at the impact and to ensure Leicestershire's readiness to implement key changes. A consultant has been engaged to advise Leicestershire on the implementation and he would like to speak to representatives from Schools' Forum on issues around SEND reform.</p> <p>Chris to arrange a brief meeting with Forum members.</p>	CB
7.	<p>Next Meetings:</p> <p>Monday 16 June 2014, 2.00 – 4.00pm Thursday 18 September 2014, 2.00 – 4.00pm</p> <p>at Beaumanor Hall.</p> <p>Ref: CYPs/Shared/Schools Forum/13.02.14</p>	