

Leicestershire Schools' Forum
Notes of the meeting held on Friday 5 September 2014,
10.00 am at Beaumanor Hall

Present

Tim Moralee Brian Myatt Alex Green Sonia Singleton	Secondary Academy Headteachers
Suzanne Uprichard Richard Spurr Michael Murphy Bill Nash	Secondary Academy Governors
Jean Lewis Ed McGovern	Primary Academy Governors
Heather Sewell Karen Allen Tony Gelsthorpe	Primary Maintained Headteachers
David Thomas	Primary Maintained Governor
Jason Brooks	Maintained Representative – Special
Suzanne Uprichard	PRU representative
Ian Sharpe	CE Representative
Louisa Hallam	Early Years PVI provider
Nigel Leigh	Post 16 Provider
Chris Davies	RC Representative

In attendance:

Ivan Ould, Lead Member for Children and Family Services
 Jenny Lawrence, Children and Family Services Finance Business Partner
 Lesley Hagger, Director, Children and Family Services
 Gill Weston, Assistant Director, Education, Learning & Skills
 Chris Bristow, Interim Head of Strategy, Vulnerable Groups
 David Heyes, Children and Family Services

Apologies

Apologies were received from Sue Horn.

1.	2015/16 School Funding Consultation	
	Tim Moralee welcomed everyone to the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to allow Schools' Forum to consider the consultation before 18 September meeting.	

Jenny Lawrence reported challenging timescales for doing this as the final announcement by the DfE was during the summer holidays. A Working Group was set up over the holidays working with and challenging the Local Authority. Jenny thanked colleagues who came along and helped with that work.

Schools' Forum supported the Local Authority's proposals on 16 June and that all educational providers should benefit from additional funding. Used analysis of schools formula, when compared to statistical neighbours.

There were 2 areas agreed to target:

- Primary Age Weighted Pupil Unit – lower than other authorities
- Prior attainment funding – level in Leicestershire in general was low

Proposals are to increase Primary Age Weighted Pupil Unit by 7%, to double the amount of funding paid out by prior attainment. Leaves estimated uplift to the Age Weighted Pupil Unit to all schools 1.5%.

Needed to consider what we should do to realign the modelling for data changes. We have in 2015/16 first time studio schools that need to be funded through the formula. The modelling assumes this will be cash neutral.

Also now have a lot of schools where rates demands have increased. All those changes need to be dealt with in fixed pot of funding.

If data changes the funding will be adjusted by amending the general increase in AWPU of 1.5%.

Proposals themselves only consider the distribution of the additional funding for Leicestershire of £20.5M – proposing no changes to the mechanism to fund age range changes for 2015/16. Also it has been confirmed we do not need Secretary of State approval for funding age range protection 2015/16 – that will carry forward, but we do have to seek approval for the minimum funding guarantee.

Question of what will happen in 2016/17 - we have no idea. Will be a new Government potentially, new spending review, potentially 3 year settlement, potentially moving to national formula.

Mr Ould reported that F40 are in negotiations on monthly basis with DfE officials, assuming increase this year will become part of the budget, until in place they can't be certain of that.

Jenny Lawrence said the consultation paper had been set out in a format to allow schools to get greater understanding of how the schools funding system work. We were very keen to try and make schools understand we are getting additional money in the pupil settlement, but as school level funding values differ for each element of the formula, it is not possible to fund all schools at additional £240 per pupil. Calculation we did based on the funding needed to achieve a minimum increase of £240 per pupil in every school would be

£131M as we have a number of schools so heavily protected by minimum funding guarantee.

Tried to articulate very clearly, there is no requirement for that entire element to be delegated to schools given that the Local Authority holds budgets for things like redundancies, first stage of process is to take that funding out of funding settlement. There is a requirement for Schools' Forum to agree those amounts can be centrally retained.

It is also important to note individual blocks of Schools Grant are not being ring fenced and currently £2M of the Schools Block is used to fund High Needs.

Increased funding will find its way into maintained schools budgets from April 2015 and Academies September 2015.

Proposals also allow 2 other increases. 3.6% base rate nursery education providers. Also increase the amount of funding in special school pot by 3.6%. The Working Group felt we should use average of the secondary school increase, which was 3.6%. This was felt to be fairer than using the higher primary school increase.

Not all schools will receive an increase in budget – 23 schools will remain on minimum funding guarantee and will not receive a cash increase in budget, but will not see a reduction in budget for 2015/16.

Consultation questions – whether proposals we are consulting on seem a reasonable approach and do you agree with the Local Authority proposals. Also allowed some free text so schools can raise any other issues.

A very short consultation timescale – closes on 17 September to bring back to Schools' Forum on 18 September. A paper will be tabled on the day. Cabinet will consider the proposals on 13 October to which must be submitted to the EFA by 31 October.

The purpose of the additional meeting is to engage Schools' Forum in discussion, collect views and ensure that Forum members were using contacts and networks to ensure that schools are aware of and responding to the consultation.

Information went out via Director's newsletter on 1 September and on EIS, a reminder will go out to schools on 8 September.

Questions raised:

Richard Spurr – minimum funding guarantee of £3.3M drops considerably to £0.7M – big deal for individual schools, is that mostly down to the extra money?

Jenny Lawrence responded – it is all down to the extra money, modelling we have done on current year data. Without the additional money schools could be losing 1.5% per pupil. Those 23 schools will not see decrease per pupil.

	<p>Tony Gelsthorpe supported the proposal – actually principled, clear, transparent and can understand them. Quite a few references to age range changes and the mechanism.</p> <p>Tony Gelsthorpe asked if we knew what the cost of protection for age range changes was. Our latest estimate for 2015/16 is £1.9M. This amount is covered by the funds set aside for protection in the Dedicated Schools Grant Reserve.</p> <p>The meeting concluded at 10.30am.</p>	
2.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>There was no further business to discuss.</p>	
3.	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>Thursday 18 September, 2.00 – 4.00 pm at Beaumanor Hall. Apologies received from: Mr Ould and Tim Moralee. Tony Gelsthorpe to chair the meeting.</p>	