

Minutes of a meeting of the Leicestershire Schools' Forum held at Beaumanor Hall on Monday 22 February 2016 at 2.00 pm

Present

Nick Goforth	Secondary Academies Headteacher
Mark Mitchley	Secondary Academies Headteacher
Callum Orr	Secondary Academies Headteacher
Sonia Singleton	Secondary Academies Headteacher
Suzanne Uprichard	Secondary Academies Governor / PRU
Steve McDonald	Secondary Academies Governor
David Hedley	Secondary Academies Governor
Bill Nash	Secondary Maintained Governor
Jane McKay	Primary Academy Headteacher
Stephen Cotton	Primary Academy Headteacher
Karen Rixon	Primary Academy Headteacher
Jean Lewis	Primary Academy Governor
David Thomas	Primary Academy Governor
Heather Sewell	Primary Maintained Headteacher
Jo Blackburn	Primary Maintained Headteacher
Karen Allen	Primary Maintained Headteacher
Tony Gelsthorpe	Primary Maintained Governor
Michael Wilson	Primary Maintained Governor
Jason Brooks	Special Maintained Headteacher
George Capland	Post 16 Provider (for Nigel Leigh)
Chris Davies	Roman Catholic Representative
Isabel Lloyd-Jones	Early Years Provider (for Catherine Drury)
Graham Bett	JCC Representative (for Alison Deacon)

In attendance

Lesley Hagger, Director, Children and Family Services
Jenny Lawrence, Finance Business Partner, Corporate Resources
Ivan Ould, Lead Member, Children and Family Services
Chris Bristow, Strategic Lead – Remodelling SEND
Sue Rath, Primary Maintained Governor (substitute)

		Action
1.	<p>Apologies for absence/Substitutions</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Ian Sharpe, Richard Spurr and Catherine Drury.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes and Matters Arising</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 14 January 2016 were agreed subject to Stephen Cotton, Primary Academy Headteacher to be added to those present.</p> <p>Matters Arising</p> <p>Chris Davies said that as a Forum member representing primary and secondary schools he was seeking clarification with regard to the Chair's partiality and opinions. Karen Allen took this into account and would remain impartial as possible.</p> <p>Graham Bett asked for it to be noted that the view of the Schools' Forum with regard to trade union facilities time was disappointing.</p> <p>Jenny Lawrence clarified that the 1% reduction in AWPU set out in the School growth report was not a proposal but an illustration of overall financial impact.</p>	
3.	<p>Process for Providing Information/Comment When Absent</p> <p>Jenny Lawrence introduced her report to the meeting which sets out the procedure for School Forum Members to provide comment on Schools' Forum business when unable to attend a meeting.</p> <p>Jenny added that the Schools' Forum need to be clear on recognising when groups have active substitutes that they have the right level of representation on the day. The substitute member should be made known to the groups and the Schools' Forum clerk.</p> <p>Schools' Forum noted headteachers' comments that sometimes unexpected circumstances occur in schools and therefore a substitute may not be able to be arranged.</p> <p>Schools' Forum noted the procedure and would consider any actions that are needed within their specific group</p>	All
4.	<p>Charging for Autism Outreach Services</p> <p>Chris Bristow introduced his report to the meeting which sets out the roll out for charging for Specialist Teaching Services. In the first phase it would be the introduction of charging for certain aspects of the Autism Outreach Service.</p>	

Chris Bristow set out the reasons behind the roll out of the charging policy. Chris brought to the attention of the Schools' Forum paragraph 4.3 which sets out the duty of schools under SEND Reform and the understanding of the issue that in Leicestershire some schools received STS support free of charge which led to some inequity in the system. Chris added that schools are required to fund the first £6,000 of a pupil's additional needs.

Chris highlighted paragraph 4.11 which explains that the roll out of the charging policy would be put in place by a period of time for schools to adjust to this change. The current budget would subsidise the cost for the next few years.

Callum Orr asked if the whole approach and charges had been benchmarked. Chris commented that other authorities were carrying out the same approach to this charging policy. Chris added that the policy was underpinned by SEND reform and therefore that resource had to be included. Callum added that schools could look to other authorities to buy in services. Chris was acceptance of the fact that the Local Authority was not the sole provider.

Jean Lewis asked if autism outreach would include other disabilities. Chris said that at this time for autism outreach to become involved the young person would need a diagnosis of Autism. Jean said that there could be an observational diagnosis. Chris said that in the future as schools were buying in the service then the child 'must have a diagnosis of autism' is an area that could be now reconsidered on a case by case basis. Jean asked about the children who have different needs apart from ADHD which were observational. Chris said this may be considered in the future but the Local Authority had tried to ration the Autism Outreach Service only to those children with a diagnosis of autism.

David Thomas asked what the average charge for primary schools was and what might be the extreme. Chris agreed to publish the figures as part of the minutes, see below.

- Cost for LOW = £360, MED =£600, HIGH = £1,169

Callum Orr asked if there a danger of incurring costs. Chris commented this was an opportunity to work with the Autism Outreach Service to provide a person centred approach.

Suzanne Uprichard asked about the funding for pupils at key stage 1/2 that are referred to Oakfield School and key stage 3/4 for pupils who are referred to behaviour partnerships. Chris said that some work had been carried out with Oakfield School and the behaviour partnerships and if the child is in mainstream school with element 3 funding then the funding would go to Oakfield and the behaviour partnerships. Chris added this was happening now on a case by case service.

Graham Bett asked if this charging policy was going to make a profit and contributions to the high needs block. Chris commented that there was no profit percentage but full cost recovery.

Karen Allen asked if the autism outreach service had got the capacity to be able to meet demand. Chris stated that lessons had been learnt by the Psychology Service and staffing levels would be adjusted to meet demand and supply.

Schools' Forum noted the recommendations in the paper.

5. 2016/17 Schools Budget

Jenny Lawrence introduced the report which presents the 2016/17 Dedicated Schools Grant Settlement for Leicestershire and the 2016/17 Schools Budget.

Jenny Lawrence outlined to the meeting that the report brings together the number of reports presented through the 2015/16 financial year and the conversations held.

Jenny highlighted paragraph 20 of the report which outlines the purpose and scope of the School Budget. Jenny added that should approval for the items set out in paragraph 20 not be granted by the Schools' Forum, the local authority would seek adjudication from the Secretary of State as the local authority had no alternative funding source for these historic budgets.

Jenny said that funding for early years was still an estimate as DSG allocations would not be confirmed until January 2017. The Schools' Block Funding had slightly improved but was still quite low. The consultation to establish the government's proposal on 2017/18 school funding and whether the schools funding formula remains with the local authority has not yet been issued. Jenny outlined the significant financial and other pressures within Schools Budget and the services that the DSG funds.

Jenny referred to paragraphs 28 to 41 and in particular paragraph 29. The local authority reconsidered the 1% AWPU reduction which was completed alongside the saving target of £3M in high needs. However the funding gap in SEN budgets was too significant and can only be closed by this action. The formula was required to be submitted to the EFA in January and the EFA has confirmed that the formula EFA appears to comply to the financial regulations.

Jenny outlined the high needs funding issues and the concerns being raised sub-regionally after talking to colleagues.

The DfE have yet to issue a pupil premium settlement for 2016/17 but this was expected in June but has published the per pupil rates.

Jenny highlighted that the DfE have very clearly stated that they expect the ESG general funding rate for both local authorities and academies to be removed over the next 3/4 years.

Jenny referred to the estimated dedicated schools grant reserve of £5.7M.

Jenny reported that high needs for 2016/17 FE places were not fully funded by the EFA and there had been an increased need for places and in particular demand has risen from other local authorities. Local authorities are required to fund places in FE institutions in their area irrespective of where the student resides.

The Chair invited any questions/comments from the Schools' Forum.

Suzanne Uprichard asked if Leicestershire was obliged to fund these students who reside out of Leicestershire. Jenny commented that this was a change in national funding policy and these costs have to be met within the high needs block.

Tony Gelsthorpe asked whether age range change had increased the number of surplus secondary places and that he felt they had had a negative financial impact for the schools concerned.

Jean Lewis asked if there would be a reduction in the £248,000 for the commissioning budget for maintained schools causing concern, whilst the number of maintained schools has reduced overall the number of schools requiring LA support. Lesley Hagger commented there could possibly be a reduction in time as primary schools go in multi academy trusts.

Jean Lewis referred to the new SEND regulations and if there had been any thoughts or outline investigation into SEN budgeting on a needs base rather than a formula base. Jenny Lawrence commented that there was nothing in mainstream formula that reflects SEN money - element of the basic money – notional calculation that really sets out the boundary school funding and local authority funding. Leicestershire were opposed to this approach - £6K encouragement needs higher.

David Thomas referred to Appendix 2 and noted the deprivation section and the reduction in IDACI band 6 and commented that this was amazingly reduced.

Steve McDonald asked if information was available in respect of out-turn expenditure for 2015/16 in relation to age range costs. Jenny said this could be provided following year end and that the report to the Children and Family Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on January 18 set out the 2016/17 capital programmes.

Callum Orr shared with the Forum members that LSH had written to the local authority and EFA regarding the 1% AWPU reduction and asking for a collaborative approach to a long term strategy for managing school budgets over the next few years.

Graham Bett asked what alternatives to the 1% were looked at. Jenny Lawrence commented that there was no other alternative to look at and explained the funding issues faced, AWPU is the only universal funding in schools. Graham commented that money set aside for schools growth could have been reduced as another alternative.

	<p>Sonia Singleton referred to alternatives and asked if it would have been possible for 2016/17 to have a differing figure by decreasing in other area areas.</p> <p>Jenny Lawrence said that the formula had to be submitted to the DfE by mid-January. Jenny added that it was not possible to change anything now for 2016/17 and commented that the focus needs to be on working with schools to prepare for 2017/18.</p> <p>Nick Goforth asked why the high needs costs have risen. Jenny said that volume and costs had risen. Chris Bristow stated that details of high needs place numbers are on pages 61 and 62 of the Forum papers.</p> <p>Schools' Forum approved the retention of budgets to meet the prescribed statutory duties of the local authority. (paragraph 20, item 3). There was one abstention.</p> <p>Schools' Forum approved the centrally retained early years funding of £1.649M (paragraph 20, item 4)</p> <p>Schools' Forum noted the 2016/17 school funding rates (paragraph 30)</p> <p>Schools' Forum noted the number and average cost of commissioned places for children and young people with High Needs (paragraph 49).</p> <p>Schools' Forum approved the action to be taken in respect of schools where the Special Educational Needs (SEN) notional budget is insufficient to meet the aggregated value of High Needs Funding Element 2 (paragraph 50). There were two abstentions.</p> <p>Schools' Forum noted the average per pupil funding to be taken into account for recoupment for excluded pupils (paragraph 51).</p> <p>Schools' Forum noted the payment rates for the Early Years Single Funding formula (paragraph 62).</p> <p>Schools' Forum noted the retention of the Dedicated Schools Grant Reserve and the purposes for which it will be used (paragraph 64).</p>	
6.	<p>2017/18 Funding Preparation</p> <p>Jenny asked for this extra agenda item to be discussed which was agreed.</p>	

	<p>Jenny said that whilst waiting for the Government's announcement regarding the 2017/18 schools funding it would be useful to prepare for the possible decisions and suggested that a working group from Schools' Forum representatives be convened. The working group could get underneath the Leicestershire formula and look at how the Schools would like it to look if there are local choices.</p> <p>Jenny said that the working group would ideally need to be set up by end of March comprising of a couple of secondary and primary representatives, a special school representative and some business managers (with a clear balance across age ranges). Additionally phase specific groups would be brought together to look at primary / secondary issues to feed into the main formula review group</p> <p>Schools' Forum agreed that David Thomas was one of the representatives on the working group and other nominations should be forwarded to Jenny Lawrence.</p>	All
7.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Schools' Forum Self-Assessment</p> <p>Jenny apologised that this should have been on the January Schools' Forum agenda. Jenny added that it had been amended from the comments made at the September meeting with recognising point of time and things would change.</p> <p>Comments were fed through to Jenny and these were noted.</p>	JL
8.	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>Tuesday 21 June, 2.00 – 4.00 pm at Beaumanor Hall.</p> <p>Future dates: Thursday 22 September 2016 Monday 5 December 2016 Thursday 9 February 2017 Monday 12 June 2017 All meeting dates from 2.00 – 4.00 pm at Beaumanor Hall.</p>	