

Minutes of a meeting of the Leicestershire Schools' Forum held at Beaumanor Hall on Monday 12 June 2017 at 2.00 pm

Present

Sonia Singleton	Secondary Academies Headteacher
Kath Kelly	Secondary Academies Headteacher
Callum Orr	Secondary Academies Headteacher
Nick Goforth	Secondary Academies Headteacher
Suzanne Uprichard	Secondary Academies Governor / PRU
Steve McDonald	Secondary Academies Governor
Bill Nash	Secondary Maintained Governor
Karen Rixon	Primary Academy Headteacher
Jane McKay	Primary Academy Headteacher
Kathryn McGovern	Primary Academy Headteacher
David Thomas	Primary Academy Governor
Jean Lewis	Primary Academy Governor
Karen Allen	Primary Maintained Headteacher
Heather Hall	Primary Maintained Headteacher
Jo Blackburn	Primary Maintained Headteacher
Michael Wilson	Primary Maintained Governor
Tony Gelsthorpe	Primary Maintained Governor
Ros Hopkins	Special Maintained Headteacher
Chris Davies	Roman Catholic Representative
Graham Bett	DNCC Representative

In attendance

Jenny Lawrence, Finance Business Partner, Corporate Resources
 Ivan Ould, Lead Member, Children and Family Services
 Jane Moore, Assistant Director, Education and Early Help
 David Atterbury, Head of Service, Education Sufficiency
 Sue Wilson, Service Manager, 0-5 Learning
 Martin Turnham, Primary Maintained Headteacher

		Action
1.	Apologies for Absence/Substitutions Apologies for absence were received from Dave Hedley, Mark Mitchley,	

	<p>Stephen Cotton and Catherine Drury.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p>	
<p>2.</p>	<p>Minutes and Matters Arising</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 9 February 2017 were agreed as a true and accurate record subject to the following amendments:</p> <p><u>Apologies for Absence/Substitutions</u> Heather Sewell should read 'Heather Hall'.</p> <p><u>2017/18 Schools' Budget</u> The fifth paragraph should read "The High Needs transfer is slightly below the estimated £3M at <u>£2.85 million</u>".</p> <p><u>2017/18 Schools' Budget</u> Page 7 – Pupil Premium, second paragraph should read "Mr Ould chaired the recent F40 meeting attended by Nick Gibb, only organisation disagreed with proposals was F40".</p> <p><u>2018/19 Dedicated Schools Grant and Schools National Funding Formula</u> The first paragraph of page 9 should read "Karen Allen commented on high amount allocated to additional factors"</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p>Membership Update</p> <p>Jenny Lawrence introduced a report which sets out actions arising as a result of current membership reaching their term.</p> <p>Jenny reported that in 2016 there were a number of terms of office coming to an end and a decision was made to extend time expired membership by one year. The Association of Leicestershire Governors was previously used as the route to appoint governor representatives but this did not exist anymore.</p> <p>Jenny asked the Forum members if they wish to be re-elected or would members prefer the current membership to continue. Jenny was unsure as to the future role of the Schools' Forum and could look at an alternative method but was asking members to look at the role of the Forum.</p> <p>Callum Orr made the comment that Nigel Leigh represented the FE sector rather than the wider post-16 sector. Jenny said that there was a statutory seat at Schools' Forum for the post-16 provider but acknowledged this area was wide and varied so difficult to represent all views.</p> <p>Karen Allen commented that there did seem to be a mechanism and suggested groups go back to ask how they wanted to be represented.</p> <p>Tony Gelsthorpe commented that he was no longer representing a</p>	

	<p>maintained school. Michael Wilson confirmed he was no longer a governor so his vacancy would come up.</p> <p>Jean Lewis made the comment that the membership roll forward as it was and make a positive effort to go for new election process and to look at a new pattern of representation.</p> <p>Suzanne Uprichard suggested asking Governor Development Service to pick up the governor elections through their weekly bulletin. Jane Moore agreed that the Governor Development Service would pick up the role of the Association of Leicestershire Governors with regard to governor elections onto the Schools' Forum.</p> <p>Karen Allen commented that there are some issues that need decisions on in the absence of a national formula.</p> <p>Kathryn McGovern commented that it would be helpful to have more information who is representing what area.</p> <p>It was agreed that Jenny would speak to Governor Development Service in terms of governors whose expiry date was end of September 2017. Jenny would also inform LPH and LSH for them to take the necessary actions with their groups to secure the appropriate membership from September 2017.</p>	<p>JL</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Extension of Free Entitlement to Early Education</p> <p>Sue Wilson introduced a report on 'Extension of Free Entitlement to Early Education' which provided an overview of the department's work in the implementation of the extended offer to parents of 30 hours free childcare as required by the Childcare Act 2016.</p> <p>Sue explained that estimates for the number of parents in Leicestershire eligible for the extended offer was between 4,500 and 4,900; 4,700 parents actually called in to the service. The DfE had been impressed with the 82% of take up and the opportunities given by Leicestershire to parents.</p> <p>To ensure Leicestershire was ready to implement the extended offer from 1 April, the Early Learning and Childcare Service developed a clear plan with a number of workstreams as outlined in the report. Sue went through the workstreams and explained the work carried out for each of them.</p> <p>Leicestershire had been approached to become an early implementer and implement the extension in April in advance of the statutory requirement from September and 71% of Leicestershire providers would be prepared to offer additional hours. The DfE has praised the quality of the planning and promotional materials. The implementation of the 30 hours provision was funded by participation funding so there was no new risk to LA funding. In spite of challenging timescales good progress had been made in the early implementation of the extended offer for free early education.</p>	<p>SW</p>

	<p>A Forum representative made the comment that there was a suspicion at one point that schools with pre-schools had been left out. Kathryn McGovern said that the funding would not cover the two year in pre-schools even though recognise the need. Kathryn added that a year ago she had invited business people from Early Years to look at private and school providers working together but had not heard anything. Sue Wilson agreed to follow this issue up.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>High Needs Block Inclusion Project</p> <p>Jane Moore introduced a powerpoint presentation report which provided an overview of the High Needs Block Inclusion Project.</p> <p>Jane reported that by the end of 2016/17 the High Needs block budget was overspent by £2.5M which was a reduction from the projected £3.8M. Jane explained the aim of the High Needs Project and outlined its objectives, some of which had now been completed. However, Jane acknowledged that a lot of this work would take time and the key objective was to make sure it led to a sustainable solution.</p> <p>Jane updated the meeting on the work being carried out against the project's workstreams as outlined in the powerpoint. To help guide SEND development the workstreams were being overseen by a newly established SEND Strategy Board. The Board meets every six weeks and had representatives from key stakeholders.</p> <p>Janet reported that savings had already been made through case reviews of pupils in independent provision at key transition points. Jane commented that progress to date was going really well and detailed some of the training and provision being provided.</p> <p>Jane outlined key project risks in particular the financial position and seeking political approvals to change by Cabinet.</p> <p>Jane commented that a SEND inspection of the local authority was highly likely and the department is in the process of writing a plan to prepare for this. Jane updated the meeting on other SEND developments such as changes to the local offer, work being carried out on short breaks, looking at transition and robust conversations being held with health. There was good news that additional capital funding had been received and would be available for the 2018/19 financial year to help develop local provision.</p> <p>David Atterbury reminded representatives that there had been significantly more capital investment to help develop SEND provision, for example, the £11M allocated to the new building for Birkett House in Wigston opening in September. He also commented that changes had been made to the LA developer contributions policy in order to seek Section 106 funds for SEND provision relative to new housing proposals.</p> <p>Graham Bett enquired if the impact of the new area special school had been assessed yet. Jane commented that every initiative was costed. A significant number of children had been taken out of independent</p>	

	<p>provision and placed elsewhere.</p> <p>David advised that the new school will provide additional places helping to future proof against further demand.</p> <p>A comment was made regarding the importance of cross agency working to access services and funding – to get the high needs spend under control.</p> <p>Suzanne Uprichard referred to ASD SEMH provision on page 24 of the paper and asked if this new area special school would specialise in these two areas. Jane explained that further work was in progress with mainstream schools regarding the development of local provision.</p> <p>David said that it was unfortunate that the main thrust of meeting ASD demand based on the MacIntyre bid for a free school had now been withdrawn by MacIntyre and the local authority is now progressing on smaller solutions in mainstream schools/academies schools but it is not to say there may not be another free school bid which is outside the control of the LA.</p> <p>Kathryn McGovern enquired about our ability to negotiate with independent providers, and suggested working through MATs may offer a more suitable solution. Jane said that this was part of the workstream. Both Callum Orr and Heather Hall emphasised the need for a solution to be found soon to help ease the pressure on schools.</p> <p>Karen Rixon emphasised the need for more expansion at primary level for the ASD issue.</p> <p>Jean Lewis enquired if work on the 19-25 provision had stopped. Jane confirmed it has not disappeared but needs to be considered in the context of post-16 education provision which is likely to be a further workstream for the HNIB project.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>2016/17 School Budget Outturn</p> <p>Jenny Lawrence introduced a report which presented the 2016/17 Schools Budget outturn position and confirms the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Reserve and its intended use.</p> <p>Jenny referred to the table on page 38 which indicated overspends and underspends for both the local authority but that overall the DSG was overspent. There was no information on individual schools' budgets, this was being collected for maintained schools but the authority sees no financial data on academies..</p> <p>Jenny referred to the table in paragraph 9 and explained that the DSG grant reserve position was presented at the last Schools' Forum meeting based on the financial forecast at period 9. The table presents the movement from that position which shows a finished year end of £32,000 which was less than originally thought.</p>	

	<p>Jenny outlined paragraph 11 which showed the challenges faced in terms of the High Needs Block budget and whether the current forecasting method worked. The appendix to the report sets out the volume and unit costs of all High Needs budgets.</p> <p>Discussion took place on the Oakfield Graduated Response offer which helps to reintegrate primary pupils with significant SEMH needs into mainstream provision. Karen Allen commented that this approach had reintegrated children back into mainstream instead of going to high cost placements, as they used to, making a saving of £420,000. The meeting noted the overspend for the Specialist Teaching Service was around placements costs with ASD.</p> <p>Kath Kelly referred to paragraph 12 on page 41 and asked if the savings requirement for the high needs block indicated a significant risk on the schools' budgets taking into consideration no financial contribution from the Council. Jenny commented that it was one of the risks on the County Council's register in terms of threat and likelihood and in terms of the £2M DSG reserves this was a difficult one because the local authority have a statutory responsibility to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND yet the funding was provided through grant which did not reflect needs. Kath asked if the current strategy was robust. Jenny commented that Period 3 would be the next stock take although the first real sight of how robust the strategy was would be once all pupil destinations are known at the beginning of the 2017/18 academic year. Jenny said that any changes would be reported to Members and Schools' Forum. Kath asked Jenny whether mid-year projections were available, Jane added that a lot was not predictable especially around staffing – talking about placements or provision. – welcome the challenge on this.</p> <p>Nick Goforth commented about the low level of funding Leicestershire receives from the Government and the need to lobby for more resources.</p> <p>Discussion took place on the current situation regarding the position of the F40 Group and Mr Ould briefed the meeting on this.</p> <p>Sonia Singleton commented that if funding is taken off AWPU there are going to be headteachers across Leicestershire stressing over their financial situation and academies would be issued with notices to improve by the ESFA.</p> <p>Schools' Forum noted the financial outturn for the 2016/17 Schools Budget (paragraphs 4-8).</p> <p>Schools Forum noted the level of DSG reserve and its deployment (paragraphs 9 – 10).</p>	
7.	<p>2018/19 School Funding</p> <p>Jenny Lawrence introduced a report which sets out the expectations in relation to 2018/19 school funding and 2018/19 school funding formula. The report also sets out a proposed new approach from the local</p>	

	<p>authority to develop strategic financial planning in schools.</p> <p>Jenny reported that it was expected that the Department for Education would introduce a national formula in 2018/19. However giving consideration to the General Election announcement this may halt the process of the national funding formula being introduced, if at all. As a result of this it is therefore necessary for the local authority to set its intentions out in terms of the high needs formula. If there was not a national funding formula in 2018/19 the local authority would address this by proposing no change to the current funding formula.</p> <p>With regard to school strategic financial planning Jenny commented that the nationally projected £1bn gap in school funding would be a cost pressure on schools between 8% and 11%. The local authority would be running a series of conferences in the autumn term to bring together a number of professionals to develop a tool kit. Jenny would obviously keep up to date with developments from the Government and respond accordingly.</p> <p>Kath Kelly asked if there was some movement in terms of school funding allocation if we were to move some of the school funding and what would be the timeline to consult. Jenny was unable to give a definite answer but could explore pushing for any changes in 2017/18 but the challenge would be for proposals for consultation as any change would purely redistribute current funding levels and be restricted by the operation of the Minimum Funding Guarantee and ultimately achieve very little.</p> <p>Nick Goforth said that as a group we should be lobbying the Government to put the group's views across to them. It was agreed at the LSH meeting on 23 June a draft letter to parents from heads outlining the funding issues would be put together. Karen Allen commented that this could also be carried out for primary schools through LPH.</p> <p>Schools' Forum noted and commented on the content of the report.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>There was no further business.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>Date of Next Meetings</p> <p>Monday 25 September 2017 Monday 4 December 2017 All dates from 2.00 – 4.00 pm at Beaumanor Hall</p>	