

Dear Colleague

LEICESTERSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM

I would like to invite you to a meeting of the Leicestershire Schools' Forum to be held on **Monday, 12 June 2017, 2.00 pm at Beaumanor Hall, Beaumanor Drive, Woodhouse, Leicestershire** with the room being available from 1.30 pm.

Please see below for the agenda for the meeting.

Yours sincerely

Karen Brown (Tel. 0116 305 6432)
Clerk to Schools' Forum

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AGENDA

<u>Item</u>	<u>Paper</u>
1. Apologies for absence/Substitutions.	
2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 February 2017 (previously circulated) and matters arising.	2
3. Membership Update	3
4. Extension of Free Entitlement to Early Education	4
5. High Needs Block Inclusion Project	5
6. 2016/17 School Budget Outturn	6
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8. Any other business.	
9. Date of next meeting.	

Monday 25 September 2017

Monday 4 December 2017

Both at 2.00 – 4.00 pm at Beaumanor Hall

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Minutes of a meeting of the Leicestershire Schools' Forum held at Beaumanor Hall on Thursday 9 February 2017 at 2.00 pm

Present

Sonia Singleton	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
Stephen Cotton	Primary Academy Headteacher
David Thomas	Primary Academy Governor
Karen Allen	Primary Maintained Headteacher
Martin Turnham	Primary Maintained Headteacher
Michael Wilson	Primary Maintained Governor
Tony Gelsthorpe	Primary Maintained Governor
Chris Davies	Roman Catholic Representative
Jane McKay	Primary Academy Headteacher
Jean Lewis	Primary Academy Governor
Ian Sharpe	Church of England Representative

In attendance

Paul Meredith, Director, Children and Family Services
 Jenny Lawrence, Finance Business Partner, Corporate Resources
 Ivan Ould, Lead Member, Children and Family Services
 Jane Moore, Assistant Director, Education and Early Help

		Action
1.	<p>Apologies for Absence/Substitutions</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Dave Hedley, Jo Blackburn, Mark Mitchley, Kath Kelly, Catherine Drury, Heather Sewell and Callum Orr.</p> <p>Martin Turnham attended on behalf of Jo Blackburn.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes and Matters Arising</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 5 December 2016 were agreed as a true and accurate record.</p>	

	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p><u>Schools' Form Self-Assessment</u> Jenny Lawrence explained that this item was included on today's agenda.</p> <p>David Thomas raised a question regarding the transfer to High Needs Block and the impact on school budgets. Jenny responded in terms of school budgets these were at the same level as for 2016/17. It is difficult to quantify the impact of moving the £2.85m to High Needs as no discussions had been undertaken over how this would have been allocated.</p>	
3.	<p>2017/18 Schools' Budget</p> <p>Jenny Lawrence introduced her report and summarised the recommendations in paragraphs 3 - 10, which would require both noting and decision making by Schools' Forum members.</p> <p>Jenny explained that the Schools Block Education Services Grant which the Local Authority receives for statutory duties was now included in the Dedicated Schools Block.</p> <p>High Needs - Jenny reported that the school funding rate would remain at 2016/17 levels. The Minimum Funding Guarantee will remain at minus 1.5% per pupil for 2017/18.</p> <p>Jenny reported that School Budgets had been submitted and had been declared compliant with the regulations by the Education Funding Agency (EFA).</p> <p>The High Needs transfer is slightly below the estimated £3m at £2.58m in the County Council Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), which will be considered at Cabinet tomorrow and County Council on 22 February.</p> <p>The table in paragraph 30 sets out High Needs pressures to 2018/19. Proposed savings include Placement costs, review of Specialist Teaching Services and other areas funded from High Needs.</p> <p>Paragraph 34 sets out the proposed Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) savings targets.</p> <p>The National Funding Formula for Early Years has been introduced by the DfE from April 2017. Changes to the ways providers receive funding has been subject to a consultation. An increase of 13.5% for Leicestershire will get passed on to providers. 2017 sees the introduction of the Disability Access Fund, giving additional funding for pupils in receipt of National Living Allowance.</p> <p>SEN Inclusion Fund – support for 3 and 4 year olds set up for SEN providers. An increase of £100,000 to reflect the expansion of 15 to 30 hours provision for eligible families from September 2017.</p> <p>Base Rates set out in paragraphs 59 - 60 in terms of 2, 3 and 4 year</p>	

olds.

No changes to the way school budgets are calculated, other than the re-stating of IDACI bands which are led by national changes in data from the EFA.

New rates set for excluded pupils.

No formal notification of Pupil Premium for 2017/18.

It is estimated £2m as free balance within the Schools Grant, which is being held as contingency. Not clear the Local Authority role in terms of school growth once the National Funding Formula is introduced.

Paragraph 63 sets out high level proposals around Local Authority Budget for growth and savings and focus of Capital Programme over the next 2 years.

The following questions were raised:

High Needs Block

Suzanne Uprichard referred to the table on page 19 which indicates that Oakfield was expected to take a reduction of £30,000 in 2017/18 and £50,000 in 2018/19 and asked if that was correct. Jenny responded that those proposed savings were correct.

Suzanne reported back from a recent meeting at Oakfield which concluded that £30,000 plus other savings identified meant could not logically continue but could probably squeeze up to £20,000. Suzanne reported that Alison Bradley the Headteacher was also a Service Manager at the Local Authority and she was expected to spend time at the LA, that time was not reimbursed back into Oakfield. There needed to be clarification whether Oakfield is a service or a school. Concerns regarding decisions had not been made with Oakfield and concerns that it may result in possible safeguarding issues at Oakfield with their most vulnerable children.

Jenny Lawrence responded that a range of savings and opportunities had been identified by service leads within the Local Authority, within the Medium Term Financial Strategy being presented at County Council on 22 February.

Paul Meredith reported that the decision was made on the basis of information provided by officers and was still going through the process of finalising budget. He stated that Oakfield is a very valuable resource, and confirmed it is a school.

Karen Allen commented that Oakfield has 2 separate funding streams – school to school support which is working very effectively but this is the school budget stream and any cut to their budget would have massive implications.

Jane Moore introduced herself as the newly appointed Assistant Director

for Education and Early Help. Jane confirmed that Oakfield was committed and running as a school and the LA was working with Alison Bradley to ensure the retention of the support and services in place.

Martin Turnham commented on the scale of Oakfield savings from the High Needs Block £30,000 - £50,000, and was a short sighted saving and asked if there could be other ways of making savings.

Steve McDonald referred to the use of High Needs budget in paragraph 31, Appendix B and asked if the Independent sector £24m was included in £66m. Jenny clarified yes the Local Authority was looking at all aspects of High Needs spend and driving down costs of those external placements.

Steve McDonald asked how that compared with Ashmount, Forest Way etc? Jenny responded that unit costs were very different and varied on needs, vast range of support children receiving, some required 2:1 support on a 24-hour basis. Average costs are shown in Appendix B.

Nick Goforth commented that if independent places reduced to £57,800 that would cover the £50,000.

Paul Meredith commented that Leicestershire was in a difficult position, already stating impacts, projected overspend £3.8m reduced to £2.3m but still a long way to go.

David Thomas referred to the table in paragraph 30. The overall allocation to Leicestershire is £63.157m and includes all FE, maintained schools and academy funding. Once the EFA have made the County allocation they recoup funding for FE providers who they fund directly, the difference of £1.694m relates to this funding. The figure of £61.463 represents the grant available to the County Council to commission all High Needs services including places at academies.

Karen Allen thanked colleagues on behalf of the Oakfield Management Board that many people agree it is a school, not a service for those children there. Secondly, looks like may re-consider those cuts to Oakfield, and asked if that was still going to happen, could an equivalent saving to Secondary Partnerships budget also be considered.

Jenny Lawrence clarified school funded £10,000 place plus top up funding similar to special schools. Minimum funding does not kick in the same way and works quite differently.

Early Years Block

Suzanne Uprichard referred to paragraphs 36 and 37, Countesthorpe Nursery, which currently receives £6.80 per hour compared to voluntary and independent providers, and asked does that mean it will come out of being a maintained nursery and the £6.80 per hour will reduce? Jenny responded yes, if the proposals are confirmed.

There was discussion regarding the extension of Free Entitlement to Early Education additional hours, which would be a funding issue for

many schools. Jenny Lawrence stated that Early Years funding reflects on the hours being taken. Jenny proposed that a member of the Early Years and Childcare Service attend a future meeting of the Schools' Forum to clarify how they are working with providers to roll out the 30 hours Free Entitlement to Early Education for 3 and 4 year olds. Forum agreed.

Jane Moore reported that Early Years colleagues had been working with the private sector primarily around the changes. Jane assured Primary Headteachers that the team would make contact to discuss the 30 hours in more detail.

Excluded Pupils

Karen Allen asked where that money would go. Jenny confirmed that funding would follow the pupil, whether it was Oakfield or a different school.

Pupil Premium

Jenny confirmed separate allocation, a question to be asked why it should be separate.

Mr Ould reported that Nick Gibb was representing F40 at a round table discussion, only organisation disagreed with proposals was F40. Promised in March has not been delivered in December. F40 members would be meeting in the House of Commons on 20 February. The Government might have to reconsider how pupil premium be delivered. Proposals on the table at the moment – F40 have rejected the proposals can't understand the logistics.

Dedicated Schools Grant Reserve

Tony Gelsthorpe referred to the table in paragraph 61 on School Deficits and Sponsorship. Jenny Lawrence responded there were two different groups of schools converting. Under normal conversion would carry forward deficit and all surplus, but if converting under sponsorship arrangements then school would leave deficit behind with the Local Authority and start afresh. Jenny said where at risk of school deficit coming back to the Authority, the Local Authority will issue a Warning Notice and would expect the school to see their way out of that deficit in time as a maintained school. Jenny clarified the table in paragraph 61 leaves a balance of just over £2m.

The Local Authority Budget

Tony Gelsthorpe referred to paragraph 63 and asked what proportion of the LEEP budget? Jenny clarified that was the total budget.

DECISIONS

Schools' Forum were asked to approve the retention of budgets. Jenny clarified the third bullet point increase 2016/17 – previously Education Services Grant was now included in the Dedicated Schools Grant.

Schools' Forum agreed the recommendations in the report, as set out on page 10.

4.	<p>2018/19 Dedicated Schools Grant and Schools National Funding Formula</p> <p>Jenny Lawrence introduced her report, based on an early analysis what proposals mean and what the National Funding Formula may be if implemented.</p> <p>Jenny reported that Cabinet would be considering proposals at its meeting tomorrow.</p> <p>Two consultations: Local Authority and School Funding 2018/19 High Needs funding</p> <p>The Department for Education will calculate the pupil level elements of DSG and there would be an addition of non-school factors funded at historic cost. 2018/19 the Local Authority will be responsible for setting formula for schools.</p> <p>A 'hard' formula will be implemented in April 2019, the DfE will calculate, local authorities will be removed from decisions on the school funding system.</p> <p>Tony Gelsthorpe asked if that meant School Funding Forum will effectively disappear. Jenny responded there are still some elements of the consultation which suggests discretion of LAs, but would have to consider the role of the Schools' Forum. Paul Meredith commented it could be a different format bringing schools together.</p> <p>Jenny said it was important to note the figures you see are not what budgets will be in 2018/19, they illustrate what 2016/17 budgets would be if the new formula was introduced. Pupil data will change underneath that.</p> <p>Jean Lewis commented that deprivation on area cannot reflect pupils outside catchment coming into school; money doesn't follow them. Jenny reported that IDACI is based on the home address of pupils not the school they attend.</p> <p>A question was raised regarding Sparsity indicator. Based on distance children have to travel to nearest school, does not reflect transport. Leicestershire is expected to receive £306k but there is an £11m reduction in the Lump Sum. Almost impossible to predict.</p> <p>Concern that it may not be possible to fund schools as value in National Funding Formula, if there were increases in the cost of the school factors and pupil growth.</p> <p>Jenny clarified that the National Funding Formula treats academies and maintained schools exactly the same.</p> <p>Jean Lewis referred to special schools that run 4-19 right through and asked does the basic amount given to our schools alter or are they still on flat rate? Jenny responded the National Funding Formula does not</p>
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	<p>affect special schools at all.</p> <p>Karen Rixon commented on high amount allocated towards prior attainment, primary schools by definition, don't get prior attainment. In infant schools that is a third of the children, quite discriminatory and perhaps needs to be clarified. Jenny responded that the LA will be responding to the consultation to say do not agree with the weightings.</p> <p>Nick Goforth commented seems quite a large gap, which questions whether gaps need to be so large.</p> <p>Could be up to £6m loss of High Needs funding, huge concern as a Local Authority.</p> <p>Schools special needs units where per pupil funding will revert back to mainstream funding top up Element funding £6,000 not £10,000, just a technical change.</p> <p>The Local Authority is working through and will be submitting a response to the consultation, which Jenny agreed to share with Schools' Forum members. Jenny advised that Schools' Forum may wish to consider whether they wanted to submit their own response to the consultation which ends on 22 March. Schools' Forum members agreed as there would be a difference of views on particular issues, colleagues to respond on behalf of their school. It was also agreed Schools' Forum Members to urge headteacher groups to respond to the consultation accordingly.</p> <p>Steve McDonald asked if Leicestershire would benefit from extra funding? Jenny responded if the formula was fully implemented, yes.</p> <p>Jenny agreed to convene an informal workshop for all Forum members before the end of the consultation period to tease out any issues in the run up to 2018/19 National Funding Formula proposals.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>a) Schools' Form Self-Assessment</p> <p>Jenny Lawrence referred to the DfE guidance self-assessment toolkit issued for local authorities, which sets out responsibilities and good practice guides looking at the way Schools' Forum works. Jenny asked for any comments or suggestions to be sent to her by the beginning of March.</p> <p>Ian Shape asked for clarification regarding academy schools – 'soft' and 'hard' formula – pro rata or just carry on as now. Jenny responded, as we understand it will impact for maintained from April and academies from September.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Date of Next Meetings</p> <p>Monday 12 June 2017</p>	

	Monday 25 September 2017 Monday 4 December 2017 All dates from 2.00 – 4.00 pm at Beaumanor Hall	
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SCHOOLS FORUM

Membership Update

12 June 2017

Content Applicable to;		School Phase;	
Maintained Primary and Secondary Schools	X	Pre School	
Academies	X	Foundation Stage	
PVI Settings		Primary	X
Special Schools / Academies		Secondary	X
Local Authority		Post 16	
		High Needs	

Purpose of Report

Content Requires;		By;	
Noting	X	Maintained Primary School Members	
Decision		Maintained Secondary School Members	
		Maintained Special School Members	
		Academy Members	
		All Schools Forum	X

1. This report sets out actions arising as a result of current membership reaching their term.

Recommendations

2. That Schools Forum Members take the necessary actions with their constituent groups to secure the appropriate membership from September 2017.

Background

3. The current Schools Forum membership is shown at Appendix 1. Schools Forum members are either elected or appointed for a four year term of office. For 6 members the term of office expired in September 2016;

Jean Lewis	Primary Academy Governor
David Thomas	Primary Academy Governor
Heather Hall	Primary Maintained Headteacher
Karen Allen	Primary Maintained Headteacher
Tony Gelsthorpe	Primary Maintained Governor
Sonia Singleton	Secondary Academy Governor

Given the uncertainty surrounding the introduction of a national funding formula and the role of the Schools Forum within it, Schools Forum agreed that rolling forward membership would be appropriate.

4. The proposals for the National Funding Formula issued by the DfE in March 2016 do not set out any change in function for the Schools Forum and simply states its role would need to be reviewed. Any change in direction from the new governments can't be determined but any immediate change to the role of the School Forum would require a change in primary legislation which would suggest that in the immediate future there will be no change of role.
5. A further membership – Nigel Leigh representing Post 16 Providers reaches its term in October 2017.
6. The following actions need to be taken to update membership as it would not be appropriate to automatically roll membership forward a second time;
 - The Association of Leicestershire Governors will be requested to elect two new academy governors and one maintained school governor whose term of office will commence in September 2017.
 - Leicestershire Primary Heads will be requested to elect two maintained school headteachers whose term of office will commence in September 2017.
 - Leicestershire Secondary Heads will be requested to elect one academy headteacher whose term of office will commence in September 2017.
 - Post 16 providers will be contacted to nominate a member whose term of office will commence in October 2017.
7. One vacancy continues to be present for a Special School Academy Member. Leicestershire Special School Heads are aware of this but feel that one member can adequately represent maintained schools and academies.
8. One vacancy continues to be present for a secondary academy governor. Leicestershire Secondary Heads will be contacted and requested to elect to elect to this membership.
9. Members cease to be eligible for membership if they are no longer able to represent their group e.g. a member has been elected to represent maintained schools and the school in which they perform that role converts to academy status. Members with a term of office that extends past September 2017 are asked to confirm to the Schools Forum Clerk that they remain eligible. Further elections / nominations will be necessary if embers are no longer eligible.
10. For School Members Schools Forum membership is required to be proportional to the number of pupils at each school phase and pupils at maintained schools and academies. No rebalancing of membership is necessary in respect of this for 2017/18 membership.
11. The next meeting of the Schools Forum is 25 September 2017 at which a new Chair and Vice Chair will be elected.

Resource Implications

12. No financial implications arise directly from this report.

Equal Opportunity Issues

13. The election of members in accordance with the Schools Forum constitution will ensure those with an interest in the business of Schools Forum the opportunity to represent the views of their provider group.

Background Papers

Report to Schools Forum – 5 October 2016, Membership Update

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1018&MId=4785&Ver=4>

Officers to Contact

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LEICESTERSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM
2016-17 Academic Year Membership

Area	Name	Position	School	Appointed
Academy - Primary	Jane McKay	Headteacher	Hall Orchard CE Primary	June 2015
	Stephen Cotton	Headteacher	The Pochin School	June 2015
	Karen Rixon	Headteacher	Rendell Primary School	June 2015
	Kathryn McGovern (substitute)	Headteacher	The Meadow Community Primary School	June 2015
	Michael Fitzgerald (substitute)	Headteacher	Lady Jane Grey Primary School	June 2015
	Jean Lewis	Governor	Mountfields Lodge Primary School	September 2012
	David Thomas	Governor	Kirby Muxloe Primary School	September 2012
Academy - Secondary	Sonia Singleton	Headteacher	Gartree High School	September 2012
	Kath Kelly	Headteacher	Beauchamp College	June 2015
	Nick Goforth	Headteacher	Hastings High School	June 2015
	Mark Mitchley	Headteacher	Wigston Academy	June 2015
	Callum Orr	Headteacher	Rawlins Academy	June 2015
	Chris Parkinson (substitute)	Headteacher	Bosworth Academy	June 2016
	Suzanne Uprichard (Vice Chair)	Governor	Countesthorpe Community College	January 2014
	Vacancy	Governor		
	Steve McDonald	Governor	Roundhill Academy	September 2015
	Dave Hedley	Governor	Welland Park Academy	September 2015
Maintained - Primary	Heather Hall	Headteacher	Coalville All Saints CE Primary School	September 2012
	Jo Blackburn	Headteacher	Claybrooke Primary	June 2015
	Karen Allen (Chair)	Headteacher	Burbage Infants	September 2012
	Martin Turnham (Substitute)	Headteacher	Desford Primary School	June 2015
	Michael Wilson	Governor	Thythorn Fields Primary School	September 2015
	Sue Rath (substitute)	Governor	Belvoirdale Primary School	September 2015
	Tony Gelsthorpe	Governor	Hallbrook Primary School	September 2012
Maintained - Secondary	Bill Nash	Governor	Shepshed High/Hind Leys	January 2014
Academy - Special	Vacancy			
Maintained - Special	Ros Hopkins	Headteacher	Birch Wood Area Special School	March 2017
PRU Representative	Suzanne Uprichard		PRU	January 2014
PVI Early Years Representative	Catherine Drury	EY Provider	Langmoor Pre-School	January 2016
PVI Early Years Deputy Rep	Isabelle Lloyd-Jones	EY Provider	Hanbury Kindergarten	January 2016
Post 16 Provider	Nigel Leigh	Principal	Stephenson College, Coalville	October 2013
CE Representative	Edy O'Connor		Leicestershire Diocesan Board	April 2017
RC Representative	Chris Davies	Headteacher	De Lisle Catholic School	September 2014
DNCC Representative	Graham Bett	Unions	ACSL	September 2016

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**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

5th June 2017

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY
SERVICES**

EXTENDED FREE CHILDCARE ENTITLEMENT

Purpose of report

1. This report provides an overview of the department's work in the implementation of the extended offer to parents of 30 hours of free childcare as required under the Childcare Act 2016. The report summarises the progress made by the Early Learning and Childcare Service in delivering the early roll of the extended offer on behalf of Leicestershire as 'an early implementer site'.

Background

Leicestershire Early Learning and Child Care

2. The Local Authority has a duty to secure sufficient high quality childcare provision which supports parents back into work or study (this includes out of schools and holiday provision). The Early Learning and Childcare Service delivers and commissions support to those providers that are judged to be less than good by Ofsted. The service provides advice and guidance to all providers in the county. Currently in Leicestershire 94% of all childcare providers achieve a rating from Ofsted of good or outstanding.
3. In Leicestershire the market is dominated by private, voluntary and independent providers. This means that the role of the Early Learning and Child Care service is critical in positively influencing and shaping the market providers and securing improved outcomes for pre-school children.

4. The Local Authority has a responsibility to administer and monitor the take up of the Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) for eligible disadvantaged 2 years old children. In Leicestershire 80% of eligible children are funded which is above national average of 72%. Take up of free early education available to all 3 and 4 year olds is at 95%.
5. The service also ensures that children in care access their free early education entitlement. The Personal Education Plans (PEP) for pre-school children in the care of the Local Authority describes the action required to ensure that these children progress in their learning. Recent analysis of children's progress demonstrates the significance of early education for young children in care. We know that when young boys (age 3 and 4 years) come into care only 25% of them are working at their age related expectations. However after 6 months of being in care and accessing their free early education entitlement 63% of young boys reached age related expectations.

30 Hour FEEE Entitlement

6. The Childcare Act 2016 has introduced a new statutory requirement for the Local Authority. From September 2017 there must be available an additional 15 hours per week of free childcare for eligible working parents of three and four-year-olds; this essentially doubles the universal entitlement. The 15 hour entitlement for the most disadvantaged two year olds remains in place. The new policy envisages a significant, positive impact on families, helping to give children the best start in life, and making childcare more affordable for parents so that they can take up work or work additional hours.
7. The Local Authority's allocated funding is provided through the Early Years Block within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The funding is based on the January census data completed by providers immediately preceding the financial year and adjusted by the census from the following year. The level of funding for free early education entitlement in Leicestershire is one of the 48 authorities receiving the lowest rate per pupil.
8. In January 2017, the Department for Education invited Leicestershire to become an early implementer site, rolling out the extended entitlement from April 2017 (in advance of the statutory date of September 2017). As part of this arrangement DfE agreed to provide additional resource and practical support to facilitate early implementation.
9. The Children & Families department took the view that an early implementation with DfE support would provide a longer period of introduction in advance of the statutory deadline. Such sizable change to the child care market coupled with ambiguity in relation to both demand and capacity indicated there were likely to be a number of significant challenges to implementation.

Eligibility

10. Estimates for the number of parents in Leicestershire who will be eligible for the extended offer are between 4,500 and 4,900 parents. Eligibility for the additional free entitlement includes households where all parents are working and earning the National Minimum or Living Wage for the equivalent of 16 hours a week **and/or**:

- One/ both parent/s is on leave (parental, maternal etc.)
- One/ both parent/s is on statutory sick pay
- Parents on zero-hours contracts are eligible,
- Parents who are registered as self-employed are eligible,
- Parents are eligible where one parent is employed and the other parent has either: substantial caring responsibilities/ and or disability;
- Foster carers with their own three- and four-year-old children are eligible.

Exclusions:

- Parents who are in training will not be eligible as they can receive other government support.
- An income cap of £100K income has been applied. One or more parents earning over this level will not be eligible.

Implementation Work

12. To ensure Leicestershire was ready to implement the extended offer from 1st April 2017, the Early Learning and Childcare service developed a clear plan with a number of work-streams:

- i) *Sufficiency Analysis*: Since the government announcement of intentions, the Early Learning and Child Care Service has undertaken a number of important consultations with parents and providers. This has helped to gauge sufficiency issues and gaps in order to inform planning. Parents and providers have also been consulted on key elements of the local funding formula, including quality supplements, deprivation supplements and the proposed inclusion fund.
- ii) *Eligibility Checking*: Without the national eligibility checker service in place, the Early Learning Service had to develop a local mechanism to review eligibility. A dedicated telephone line for parents ran from 21st February until 21st April 21 2017. This was supported by the additional funds provided by the DfE.
- iii) *Work with local providers*: Preparation of the market has included:
 - Fortnightly written guidance on businesses preparation
 - Development of new electronic toolkits for businesses
 - Delivery of training to the sector

- Head teacher and governor briefings
- Promotional materials to engage and inform parents
- Materials to support the concept of a 'blended offer'

iv) Partnership Work:

- With National Day Nursery Association to address practical challenges and charging arrangements
- With Childcare Works commissioned by the government to support the implementation nationally.
- Promotional events for the sector to promote partnership approaches in delivery.
- Information for partners.
- Supported a successful DfE capital funding bid £431,547 to create additional market capacity. This will create an additional 94 places by September 2017 in Charnwood, Hinckley, Oadby and Wigston.
- Attendance at national events has enabled Leicestershire to learn lessons from other local authorities and share good practice.

v) Inclusion: All councils are required to establish a local inclusion fund for all 3 and 4 year old children who have special educational needs or disabilities wishing to access the extended offer. This funding is to target those children with lower level need or emerging difficulties. Children with more complex needs and those in receipt of an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) continue to be eligible to receive funding via the 'High Needs Block' of the DSG. Children and Family Services have allocated £200K to create the inclusion fund.

vi) IT development: The local authority must develop mechanisms to validate claims made by providers through the Capita Portal. Leicestershire made a successful bid to DfE to support IT solutions. An award of £20,689.30 towards has now been secured.

vii) Monitoring of impact: The service is actively monitoring the impact of the introduction of the extended offer within Leicestershire. Specifically:

- the potential for an adverse impact on the numbers of vulnerable 2year old children accessing their free entitlement in high quality provision
- the extent to which parents are able to secure an extended offer through one provider
- the extent to which providers make additional charges and how well these are communicated to local parents.
- The extent to which local provision remains of high quality given the increase in the sector workforce which will be required to meet local demand.

Progress to date

13. Since the decision to become an early implementer site, good progress has been made:
 - To date 71% of Leicestershire providers who responded to the latest consultation have indicated that they will provide an extended offer from April. Over half of local providers have indicated their willingness to work in partnership with other providers to enable more parents to take up their entitlement.
 - The Early Learning service has to date dealt with 4,649 parents who have received a unique reference number which they can use at their chosen provider.
 - The DfE have praised the quality of planning and promotional materials produced by the service and these have shared these with other local authorities as examples of good practice.

Resource Implications

14. The rates for provider payments have been considered by the Schools Forum and were approved within the County Councils Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and are funded by DSG.
15. The implementation of the extended 30 hours provision does not add any financial risk to the local authority. There is an inherent risk as local authorities are required to fund providers for the number of hours provided which does not precisely match the allocation of DSG. This financial risk will continue to be managed within the overall budget, Any overall underspend or overspend reverts to the DSG reserve and does not impact the local authority budget.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

16. Advice indicated that no EIHRA was needed as the new statutory duty was not deemed to be a change in policy, but an extension in the funding of hours.

Conclusions

17. Despite very challenging timescales good progress has been made in the early implementation of the extended offer for free early education. The work of the Early Learning and Child Care service has been recognised and praised by the Department of Education with local resources and materials being cascaded for use in other local authorities.
18. Excellent local relationship building work combined with strong communication with the sector has helped to deliver early implementation. Local providers

have demonstrated considerable willingness and flexibility in responding to this significant challenge so quickly.

19. The early implementation of the extended offer means that within Leicestershire there is a growing range of delivery models including opportunities for developing a blended offer for parents where they cannot access 30 hours in one provision.
20. Pro-active and tailored communications with key internal and external partners have successfully promoted the offer to working parents as demonstrated in the level of take up within short timescales.
21. The new inclusion fund will support eligible families to return to work and ensure more children with emerging educational needs have opportunities to access early education.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

23. None.

Officer(s) to Contact

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Assistant Director

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High Needs Block Inclusion Project

Project Overview

Schools Forum, 12 June 2017

Jane Moore, Asst. Director for Education and Early Help

Christine Finnigan, Strategic Lead - SEND

- 2016/17 end of year - £2.5m overspend (reduction from projected £3.8m)
- Nationally in the top eight of LAs using independent provision. In 2016/17 - 366 pupils costing £19.5m (12% of our young people 36% of total cost)
- Key groups in independent provision are higher functioning ASD and SEMH provision
- High Needs Project Board set up to oversee work required

Aim

- To improve the quality and sufficiency of education provision and associated services supporting CYP with SEND and other vulnerable children in the most cost effective way in order to control and reduce the current HNB funding overspend.

Objectives

- Support mainstream schools and settings to develop their SEND provision
- Develop local specialist services to ensure sufficiency of places in high quality specialist provision across a continuum of needs
- Ensure CYP with SEND and their families / carers receive equitable support to meet the correct level of need and improve their outcomes in a cost effective manner whilst giving them a voice in developing services
- Promote inclusion in maintained schools, educating CYP 'closer to home', preventing exclusions and the need to move pupils into high cost placements
- Appropriate controls and monitoring in place to reduce the High Needs Block funding overspend with the longer term aim to bring within budget.
- Ensure the High Needs budget Medium Term Financial savings targets are delivered and are sustainable;

1. Case Planning and Review
2. Specialist Teaching Service
3. Independent Placement Commissioning
4. Sufficiency and Provision
5. Behaviour and Inclusion
6. Children with Medical Needs

WS1 SEN Case Planning and review

- To review the assessment, planning and review processes and pathways to access the SEN element of the high needs block budget, ensuring we are assessing those with the most complex needs

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WS2 Specialist Teaching Service

- Review the STS delivery model to establish a statutory, core and traded service offer focussed on outcomes

WS3 Independent School placements commissioning

- To have a more efficient and cost effective way of sourcing independent placements and managing provider relationship, demonstrating quality and value for money

WS4 SEN Sufficiency and Provision

- To improve the quality and sufficiency of SEND education provision and specialist services by supporting mainstream schools and settings to develop their SEND provision across a continuum of needs

WS5 Behaviour & Inclusion

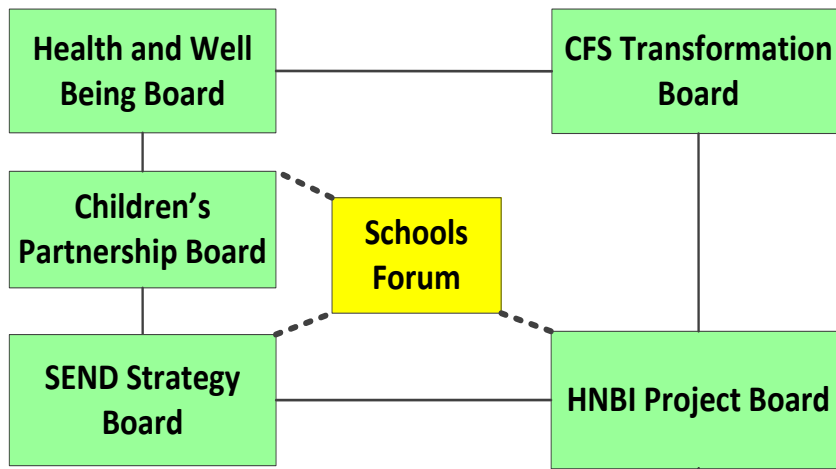
- To support the delivery of behaviour and inclusion support for vulnerable children within schools through strong partnership working, promoting inclusion in maintained schools, preventing exclusions and the subsequent need for high cost placements

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WS6 Children with Medical Needs

- To analyse current and future demand for this cohort and improve the processes and methods of support for these pupils

Project Governance and products



WS1 Case Planning and Review

- 1.1 Eligibility criteria review
- 1.2 Decision Making review
- 1.3 SEND Case reviews

WS2 Specialist Teaching Service review

- 2.1 STS review report
- 2.2 New Delivery Model

WS3 Independent School commissioning

- 3.1 SEND placements commissioning process transfer
- 3.2 New NASS contracts issuing
- 3.3 IPA issuing
- 3.4 New contract management approach

WS4 SEN Sufficiency & Provision

- 4.1 Health Needs Assessment 2016
- 4.2 SEND Sufficiency and Provision Assessment 2017

WS5 Behaviour & Inclusion

- 5.1 Behaviour Partnerships one year extension
- 5.2 Behaviour pathways review
- 5.3 New Behaviour Partnerships SLA (July 2018+)

WS6 Children with Medical Needs

- 6.1 CMN placements commissioning policy
- 6.2 CMN decision making process
- 6.3 CMN demand analysis

- HoS SEND recruited (starts June 2017)
- Interim HoS Education Quality recruited (starts w/c 29/5)
- SEND 'Voice' post under recruitment
- SEND 'request for independent placements' panel in place and meeting fortnightly
- SEND 'request for assessment' panel in place and meeting fortnightly
- EHC facilitators transferred to SENA team
- Additional SENA posts recruited to

- Behaviour Partnerships extension approved
- Case reviews of pupils in independent provision at key transition points (provision cost reduced by £496k)
- Review of CYP in intensive outreach provision started
- Review of YP in specialist post 16 colleges started
- Draft SEND Strategy shared with board membership
- Initial comms messages via Headteacher meetings and Newsletter
- SEND Project Officer recruited (started w/c 27/4)

- SEND development event and agreed steps to improve the quality of EHC assessment, plans and reviews
- Transition plan format under development, this will support improved transition planning
- PATH person centred training taken place (supports improved transition planning)
- New approach to case reviewing communicated (begins Sept 2017)
- Sufficiency and Provision high level data drafted
- 50% Independent School provider contracts returned

- Increase in parental challenge
- Greater financial pressure put on budget from increasing costs and / or non achievement of savings
- Judicial Review
- Lack of capacity across services to support project delivery
- Cabinet agreement not given for changes
- An increase in educational tribunals
- Reputational damage due to negative Media reporting
- Ofsted / CQC SEND inspection visit

Other SEND developments

- SEND Board and Strategy
- Local Offer
- Short breaks
- Transition
- Health
- Social care
- SEN Transport
- Additional capital funding grant - £2m over 3 years
- Inclusion Projects fund
- Develop resource provision³⁵ and hub and spoke model in localities – but needs wrap around, SALT etc
- Inspection Preparation

Any questions?



SCHOOLS FORUM

2016/17 SCHOOLS BUDGET OUTTURN

12 JUNE 2017

Content Applicable to;		School Phase;	
Maintained Primary and Secondary Schools	x	Pre School	x
Academies	x	Foundation Stage	x
PVI Settings	x	Primary	x
Special Schools / Academies	x	Secondary	x
Local Authority	x	Post 16	
		High Needs	x

Purpose of Report

Content Requires;		By;	
Noting	x	Maintained Primary School Members	
Decision		Maintained Secondary School Members	
		Maintained Special School Members	
		Academy Members	
		All Schools Forum	x

1. This report presents the 2016/17 Schools Budget outturn position and confirms the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Reserve and its intended use.

Recommendations

2. That Schools Forum note the financial outturn for the 2016/17 Schools Budget (paragraphs 4 - 8).
3. That Schools Forum note the level of DSG reserve and it's deployment (paragraphs 9 - 10).

2016/17 Schools Budget Outturn

4. The 2016/17 Outturn position for the Children and Young People's Service is summarised in the following table. This table presents both the Local Authority and Schools Budget for completeness but the report presents detail only for the Schools Budget funding blocks.
5. Overall the Schools Budget overspent by £2.4m (Schools Block +£0.2m, Early Years -£0.3m, High Needs +£2.5m) which is summarised in the following table;

	2016/17 Budget	Total (Under) / Over Spend		Schools Block	Early Years Block	High Needs Block	LA Block
	£,000	£,000	%	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
Directorate	814.5	516.7	62%	1.0	2.4	7.9	505.4
Safeguarding Assurance	4,521.5	33.8	0.7%	-	-	-	33.8
Social Care	38,114.9	(655.0)	-1.7%	-	-	-	(655.0)
Targeted Early Help	10,510.6	(430.5)	4.1%	-	-	-	(430.5)
Education Sufficiency	1,390.8	43.2	3.1%	3.7	-	14.0	25.5
5 -19 Learning	2,382.0	(366.3)	15.3%	-	-	-	(366.3)
Education of Vulnerable Groups	7,184.9	329.5	4.6%	-	-	355.2	(25.6)
SEND	54,062.9	1,821.1	3.3%	-	-	1,974.1	(153.1)
0 -5 Learning	23,292.7	96.2	0.4%	-	111.6	-	(15.4)
Commissioning	622.8	(65.8)		-	-	-	(65.8)
Business Support	3,208.7	233.6	-10.5%	228.7	-	-	4.9
Other - DSG	(85,345.6)	(344.6)	-0.4%	0.3	(490.0)	189.9	(44.7)
Total	61,060.9	1,211.8	1.9%	233.7	(376.1)	2,541.1	(1,186.9)

6. The major variances within the School Budget are detailed below;

Service Area	Variance		
	£,000	%	
Early Years Block			
0 -5 Learning	-376	-1.6%	This is a combination of delays in recruitment to posts and movements in the take up of the 2 year old and 3 & 4 year old offer of free early education
High Needs Block			
Special Educational Needs	1,974	3.7%	Increased demand at special schools particularly for pupils with ASD, increased number of students

			within FE provision and shortfall in achieving the required placement savings. A project has been established to reduce expenditure, its work is reported through a separate item on today's agenda
Specialist Services to Vulnerable Groups	362	8.9%	More children with ASD are being supported by alternative providers commissioned through the Autism Outreach Services
Oakfield – Graduated Response	224	n/a	This is a planned investment for the first year of operation of the offer which will have resulted in pupils being supported in primary schools rather than more costly independent provision.
<u>Schools Block</u>	219	n/a	Growth funding funded from the set aside for within the DSG reserves

7. It is not possible to present headline data on the level of school balances until the return of the Consistent Financial Reporting returns due to the local authority in mid-June and the subsequent isolation of balances that may be held on behalf of academies where the financial closedown of the former maintained school accounts has yet to be completed. However initial data suggest that maintained school balances have decreased by c£1m. Whilst school balances may be seen as an indicator of financial health, given the number of schools that have converted to academy status it is not possible to gain an overview of all schools. Schools Forum will receive the full detail of maintained school balances at its meeting in September although the declining numbers of maintained schools reduces the usefulness of this information.
8. The overspend has been met from the DSG reserve, the local authority is unable to support DSG from other resources.

Dedicated Schools Grant Reserve

9. An updated position on the DSG reserve was incorporated into the 2017/18 Schools Budget report presented to Schools Forum on 9 February 2017. This position was based upon the financial forecast at period 9 and identified a balance of £m allocated to meet the deficits of maintained schools entering into sponsored academy arrangements (£) and funding school growth (£), the following table presents the movement from that position;

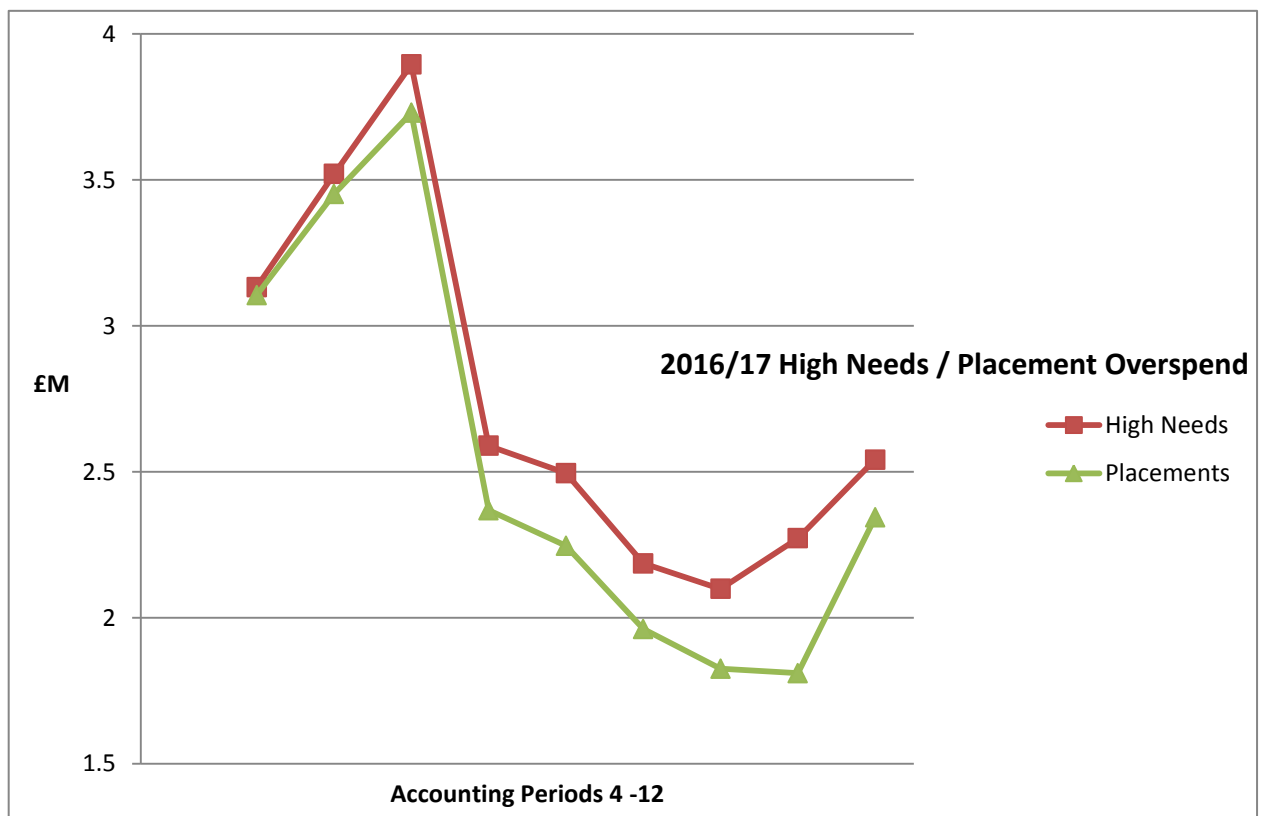
	Estimate £,000	Actual £,000	Variance £,000
Balance Brought Forward	5,321	5,321	-
DSG Overspend	(2,009)	(2,399)	(390)
New School Growth	(150)	(199)	(49)
Rates and other adjustments	-	74	74
School Deficit Reverting to LA	0	(3)	(3)

Balance Carried Forward to 2017/18	3,162	2,794	(368)
Provision For:			
New School Growth	(150)	(250)	(100)
School Deficit Reverting to LA	(1,000)	(500)	500
Balance held as contingency	2,012	2,044	32

10. It should be noted that the DSG reserve has been accumulated from previous years underspends in the high needs and early years blocks. In previous years the transfer of funding from the school block to high needs purely reflected the withdrawal of SEN funding from delegation and the need to make direct payments to schools through element 3 top-up funding. 2016/17 was the first year a transfer between blocks supported wider high needs provision and a further transfer between blocks was implemented for 2017/18.

High Needs Block Inclusion project

11. Overall the overspend on the High Needs Block decreased from projected £3.8m to £2.5m. The nature of the demand led budget and the significant change that occurs as pupil destinations are known at the commencement of the academic year make forecasting difficult. The following chart demonstrates the movement in overspend of both the overall High Needs Block and the significant element within it i.e. placements.



12. Appendix 1 provides details of the performance of all High Needs budgets. This identifies that 157 more placements were required than budgeted. It also shows movement in average unit costs, whilst this varies dependent upon the type of placement the overall average cost =has reduced by £299 per place

The significant risk on the 2017/18 Schools budget remains an overspend on the high needs block. The Councils 2017/18 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) sets out a savings requirement for the high needs block of £1.545m, rising to £2.895m in 2018/19, any further increase in demand and / or cost will increase the savings requirement.

13. The High Needs Block Inclusion project has been established to deliver on a number of work streams to firstly halt any further overspend and secondly deliver long term sustainable services meeting the needs of children and young people. However whilst the funding system does not fully reflect student numbers an inherent budget risk will remain.

Impact of Government Policy for 2018/19 Onwards

14. The MTFS has, and continues to, require the Schools Budget to be set at the level of DSG with no financial contribution from the Council. This requires the local authority to consider future issues that may give rise to a call on DSG and plan accordingly
15. The policy of the new Government can be expected to impact on the roles and responsibilities of local authorities and schools in some manner whether through policy or funding changes. The most significant policy for school funding will be any intentions on the implementation of a national funding formula and the overall level of school funding.

Conclusions

16. The allocation of the DSG reserve will be monitored throughout 2017/18 in line with the monthly budget monitoring process and against the financial implications from any national changes in funding and responsibilities and any changing demand for services.
17. A minimal reserve is retained as a contingency, however addressing the increasing demand and cost of supporting pupils with SEND remains a significant financial risk

Resource Implications

18. All resource implications are contained within the body of the report.

Equal Opportunity Issues

19. There are no equality issues arising directly from this report.

Background Papers

Report to Schools Forum 9 February 2017, 2017/18 Schools Budget February 2015
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1018&MId=4697&Ver=4>

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High Needs Block - 16-17	ACTUAL			Numbers on Roll at March 17			Average unit cost		
SENA Placements	16-17 Budget	16-17 Actual	16-17 Variance	FTE Budget	FTE actual	Diff	Budget	Fcast	Diff
Special Schools	19,971,716	19,906,433	-65,283	1,104	1,155	51	18,090	17,235	-855
HNB - Mainstream Top Ups	5,655,097	6,191,627	536,530	997	1,101	104	5,672	5,624	-48
SEN Alternative Provision	1,026,763	1,130,797	104,033	47	44	-3	21,846	25,700	3,854
SEN Units	4,581,338	4,572,989	-8,349	304	312	8	15,095	14,681	-414
16+ at FE	810,362	931,912	121,550	165	173	8	4,911	5,387	475
16+ at ISP's	1,809,461	1,868,865	59,404	61	66	5	29,663	28,316	-1,347
Independent Schools	20,104,897	19,152,267	-952,630	366	337	-29	54,881	56,832	1,950
Recoupment of non- Leics children costs & Out County	643,217	1,166,379	523,162	85	96	11	12,288	14,602	2,314
Recoupment Budget Mainstream schools for non-Leics children	121,656	20,674	-100,982	26	28	2	9,248	6,488	-2,759
SEN Equipment	73,000	97,694	24,694						
SENA Savings target / unallocated growth	-2,324,227	-996,089	1,328,138						
Behaviour Packages in mainstream	0	114,884	114,884	0	5	new - pt yr	0	22,977	new - pt yr
ASD Packages in mainstream sch	0	0	0						
Maplewell and Birchwood ASD Unit	0	288,997	288,997	0	17	new - pt yr	0	17,000	new - pt yr
Total SEN Placements	52,473,280	54,447,429	1,974,148	3,155	3,334	157	16,633	16,333	-299
Budget for other HNB Cost centres									
Hospital Schools	720,071	733,570	13,499						
Specialist Teaching Service	4,076,454	4,438,257	361,803						
Behaviour Support Partnerships etc	2,054,407	2,054,407	0						
Income from PRU recoupment	-56,000	-62,641	-6,641						
Oakfield School - PRU	782,347	1,005,847	223,500						
Pupil Premium and 16+ net income	-944,944	-981,752	-36,808						
Dedicated Schools Grant - HNB	-61,050,057	-61,020,891	29,166						
DSG Tfr to Academies for HN pupils	8,468,000	8,426,835	-41,165						
ISB Transfer to Academies - HNB	-7,408,000	-7,392,833	15,167						
Apportionments for central costs / management etc	884,442	892,867	8,425						
Grand Total High Needs Block	0	2,541,096	2,541,095						

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SCHOOLS FORUM

2018/19 School Funding

12 June 2017

Content Applicable to;		School Phase;	
Maintained Primary and Secondary Schools	X	Pre School	
Academies	X	Foundation Stage	X
PVI Settings		Primary	X
Special Schools / Academies		Secondary	X
Local Authority	X	Post 16	
		High Needs	

Purpose of Report

Content Requires;		By;	
Noting	X	Maintained Primary School Members	X
Decision		Maintained Secondary School Members	X
		Maintained Special School Members	X
		Academy Members	X
		All Schools Forum	

- This report sets out for Schools Forum the expectations in relation to;
 - 2018/19 school funding
 - 2018/19 school funding formula
- The report will also set out a proposed new approach from the local authority to develop strategic financial planning in schools.

Recommendations

- That Schools Forum note and comment on the content of the report

Introduction

3. It was widely expected that the Department for Education (DfE) would introduce a national funding formula from 2018/19. The December consultation set out an approach which would have changed the manner in which the School Block Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is distributed to local authorities and the way that schools were funded. Schools Forum considered the implications of the proposals at a workshop on 16 March.
4. The announcement of the General Election has halted the progression of the national funding formula. Nationally there has been significant concerns raised on the impact of the proposals and some doubt that the proposals as set out in March would receive approval through the Parliamentary process.
5. Whilst the three major political parties pledged more funding for schools within their manifesto's , it is not expected that until the new Government has formulated its policy in relation to school funding that there will be any further information on the national funding formula. Whilst it is possible that the outcome of the consultation could be set out in the summer for implementation in 2018/19, it is unlikely. It is therefore necessary for the local authority to set out its intentions in relation to 2018/19 school funding to enable schools to plan effectively.
6. Whatever a national funding formula may look like, or when / if it will be introduced, the medium term from 2018/19 will be a challenging time for school financial planning. It is widely recognised that costs are increasing above income, additionally there is a national expectation that schools will need to deliver efficiency savings that may not be possible to achieve through the historic approaches that have been adopted to reduce staffing structures. To successfully meet the financial challenges ahead requires a new approach to financial planning.

2018/19 School Funding

7. Discussions with schools on the proposed national funding formula identified widespread support for movement towards the formula and the favoured approach to 2018/19 funding. With the apparent national widespread concern over the proposals and the General Election it cannot be assumed that the formula as set out or its planned implementation for 2018/19 will be confirmed.
8. The illustrated impact of the proposals, excluding the distribution of funding for school led costs, would have been an additional £0.4m for primary schools and £4.3m for secondary schools in 2018/19. Implementation of the formula would therefore have addressed the low funding for Key Stage 3 within the current Leicestershire formula and would have ensured that Leicestershire would be funded to allow the increase in school level funding. It would also have retained the current primary funding levels whilst increasing those for secondary.

Funding Following the Full Implementation of National Funding Formula – Date Uncertain							
	Number Gaining	Number No Change	Number Losing	Greatest Gain	Greatest Loss	Average Change %	Overall Change £
Primary	75	3	146	+8.1%	-2.8%	0.0%	+£85k
Secondary	48	-	5	+9.1%	-1.4%	+5.1%	+ £8.5m
							+£8.6m
Funding for First Year of Transition - 2018/19							
Primary	75	3	146	+2.6%	-1.4%	+0.2%	+£0.4m
Secondary	48	-	5	+2.9%	-1.4%	+2.6%	+£4.3m
							+£4.8m

9. Whilst the December proposals would have attracted additional funding for Leicestershire schools there have been many lobby groups wishing to see changes to the proposals, ultimately the final formula may be very different to that proposed. Without additional funding it is not possible to move towards that illustrated, nor is there funding to increase any one element of the formula without a reduction in another. Additionally any change would be restricted by the Minimum Funding Guarantee and ceilings on gains which could effectively override any changes.
10. The local authority is not proposing any change to the current funding formula for 2018/19 school funding pending confirmation of the new Governments policy on education and specifically school funding.

2018/19 School Strategic Financial Planning

11. It is apparent that there are significant financial challenges for schools both now and for the future. School funding has not increased in line with increasing costs, particularly pay inflation and the Apprenticeship Levy, additionally academies will see the withdrawal of the Education Services Grant (ESG) from September 2017.
12. The DfE in the March funding consultation set out a clear expectation that schools would be able to deliver efficiency savings of £1bn by 2019/20 the Institute for Fiscal Studies have calculated that the cost pressure on schools is between 7% and 8% by 2019/20 and rising to 11% in 2020/21. This level of pressure cannot be contained within the overall pocket of funding for school budgets without sound financial planning and a vision for the future.
13. Whilst the outcome of the general election will influence the quantum and targeting of school funding for the future. Any increase in funding should not be seen as a solution to the financial issues being reported by schools, strategic financial planning is essential to allow schools to operate in an efficient and sustainable manner.
14. There are also a number of inherent factors that are affecting the financial position of schools and the ability to set balanced budgets, these include;
 - Schools experiencing pupil number growth and incurring costs before the pupils generate additional funding
 - School experiencing reductions in pupil numbers which may result from the impact of age range changes or general demographics

- Uncertainty on the timing and impact on national school funding reform
15. The financial data available to the local authority is limited and relates purely to 124 maintained schools, this cannot give a full picture of the operation on budgets and the financial position across all schools. Early, and incomplete, analysis of maintained school balances shows an overall decrease of c£1m with 101 schools in a better financial position than forecast in their budget plans and 23 schools showing a worsened position.
 16. The overall financial climate increases the importance of robust strategic financial planning within schools and the need to ensure that school leadership focuses upon linking financial planning and school improvement. It is also likely that the historic measure that schools have employed to achieve balanced budgets, largely staffing restructures, are likely to be insufficient to meet the future challenges.
 17. The local authority provides strategic financial support to maintained schools and to academies through a subscription service. It is becoming apparent that the current support offer needs to be developed and in some way relaunched to ensure schools are aware of its presence, but developed to ensure that it in turn develops the skills, knowledge and capacity within schools. It is proposed that this happens through two key strands;
 - Autumn term conferences bringing together a number of professional disciplines to develop strategic planning in schools and set out future options for school structure and management both internally, through MAT's and other collaborative models.
 - The development and maintenance and issue of a toolkit that would develop and bring together materials published by the local authority and other agencies on financial planning and management.
 18. This proposed approach will need to be considered alongside, and set within, a legal framework that delegates responsibility for financial management to governors in maintained schools but also the defined framework within which academies operate set by the DfE.

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