

Minutes of a meeting of the Leicestershire Schools' Forum held at Beaumanor Hall on Monday 4 December 2017 at 2.00 pm

Present

Kath Kelly	Secondary Academies Headteacher
Callum Orr	Secondary Academies Headteacher
Chris Parkinson	Secondary Academies Headteacher
Suzanne Uprichard	Secondary Academies Governor / PRU
Steve McDonald	Secondary Academies Governor
Chris Swan	Secondary Academies Governor
Martin Towers	Secondary Academies Governor
Karen Rixon	Primary Academy Headteacher
Jane McKay	Primary Academy Headteacher
Jean Lewis	Primary Academy Governor
David Thomas	Primary Academy Governor
Heather Hall	Primary Maintained Headteacher
Karen Allen	Primary Maintained Headteacher
Martin Turnham	Primary Maintained Headteacher
Vanessa Jones	Primary Maintained Governor
Chris Davies	Roman Catholic Representative

In attendance

Ivan Ould, Lead Member, Children and Family Services
 Jane Moore, Assistant Director, Education and Early Help
 David Atterbury, Head of Service, Education Sufficiency
 Alison Bradley, Head of Service, Education Quality and Inclusion
 Jenny Lawrence, Finance Business Partner, Corporate Resources

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1.	Apologies for Absence/Substitutions Apologies for absence were received from Paul Meredith, Dave Hedley (Martin Towers substituting), Jo Blackburn, Kathryn McGovern, Catherine Drury, Graham Bett, Nick Goforth and Edy O'Connor.	
2.	Minutes and Matters Arising The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 6 November 2017 were agreed.	

3. 2018/19 School Funding Formula –outcome of consultation

Jenny Lawrence presented an analysis of the consultation outcome to gain final views of the Schools' Forum to inform the recommendations for Cabinet on 9 January 2018. A copy of the consultation unabridged comments submitted by schools during the consultation period were circulated to members of the Forum.

Jenny stated that 95 schools responded to the consultation; 55 primary and 40 secondary.

Two options were presented for Primary Schools and one for Secondary Schools:

Primary Option 1:

To adopt the NFF principles but local variation in respect of prior attainment, lump sum and deprivation.

Primary Option 2:

Move as close to the NFF as possible excluding sparsity.

Secondary Option:

To align to NFF as close as possible excluding the sparsity factor.

Jenny commented that the local authority had replicated what sparsity looked like through the working group. The responses for Option 1 were 42 and for Option 2 were 37. Based on the primary responses only Option 1 was more favourable across Leicestershire schools. Jenny asked the Schools' Forum for any comments.

David Thomas commented that he would go against this formula as it demonstrated a clear benefit from deviation from the formula.

A primary maintained headteacher made it clear he would lose out over this formula and was uncertain if this was a transition to a NFF in two years' time. This was a time risk and 'cliff edge' argument.

Jenny commented that it was impossible to speculate on what year 3 would be as the DfE had not made any information available. Moving on the next steps would be based on the spending review – difficult to know where the cliff edge is, if indeed there will be one. The baseline budget for 2019/20 will be 2018/19 school budgets. There is growing speculation that it will not be possible to implement a hard formula in 2020/21.

Callum Orr asked if Year 3 was near to the NFF or the existing Leicestershire formula. Jenny said that the expectation would be that with a hard formula Year 3 would be the NFF, if a soft formula, it would be the adopted formula for Leicestershire. Mr Ould commented that he had attended a F40/DfE meeting recently and whether the additional £1.6 billion over the next 2 years was baselined would depend on the next spending review.

Following a vote 14 members did not support the Local Authority

proposal to adopt the NFF principles but local variation in respect of prior attainment, lump sum and deprivation for primary schools and there were 2 abstentions.

A Forum member asked what the next stage was. Jenny commented that this was the final stage in consultation. Jane Moore emphasised that if Forum are proposing not to agree with the LA proposal they need to be really clear around the decision and be transparent about the decision the Schools' Forum is recommending.

Jenny referred to the one option for the Secondary Formula. Jenny added there was only one school that triggered sparsity funding but its position at the funding floor resulted in no more funding if included.

Jenny referred to the two areas where it would be necessary to rebalance the Leicestershire formula to ensure it did not exceed the funding available. They were:

- Balance the cost of any pupil characteristic changes in the school sector in which they arise and;

Forum members agreed with the local authority proposal to balance the cost of any pupil characteristic changes in the school sector in which they arise.

- The local authority's intended approach to balance the cost of changes in rent, rates, existing age ranges changes and pupil growth through a universal adjustment to the AWPU rate

A Forum member asked why this does not come from all schools instead of individual schools. Jenny commented that this had been dealt with in the budget and headroom in previous years but this was not possible in the new method of calculating DSG allocations. The Forum discussed this in detail and it was agreed to defer any decision on this due to uncertainty on costs. A more suitable approach would be looked at in the autumn term when costs would be clearer.

Jenny referred to Question 10 which asked about supporting the retention of any DSG surplus in 2018/19 to meet increased cost in 2019/20.

Forum members expressed concern about the level of funding required in 2019/2020 and said that the 2018/19 surplus should be distributed to schools. There was a significant view from the secondary schools that any surplus should be used to support KS3. Jenny commented that any surplus cannot be targeted at KS3 as the floors and ceiling mechanism in the NFF would not allow this. A Forum member asked if this was a 2 year programme or a rolling programme. Jenny commented that information was only available for 2 years. Discussion took place on the number of respondents to the consultation and the classic division of responses. Concern was expressed about the communication mechanism of the consultation.

Jane Moore asked Forum Members to vote on whether they agreed that

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	<p>the LA should use the adjustment in AWPU:</p> <p>Agree: 7 Disagree: 6 Abstained: 3</p> <p>Jane asked Forum members whether they supported the retention of any DSG surplus in 2018/19 to meet increased cost in 2019/20:</p> <p>Agree: 0 Disagree: 14 Abstained: 1</p> <p>A Forum representative commented that members were uncertain about making decisions where the impact arising from them could not be quantified. Suzanne Uprichard expressed concern that there was no organisation governors could refer to. Jenny commented that it was difficult for governors to communicate with their groups. Alison Bradley agreed to speak to Governor Development Service about the communication with governors.</p> <p>The Forum unanimously agreed that the Local Authority should implement the NFF from 2018/19 for both primary and secondary school budgets.</p> <p>It was agreed that in respect of the balancing adjustment for the school led factors this would be revisited at the beginning of the autumn term.</p>	
4.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>There was no further business.</p>	
5.	<p>Date of Next Meetings</p> <p>Wednesday 28 February 2018 at 2.00 pm Dates to be agreed: Wednesday 20 June Monday 24 September Monday 26 November</p> <p>All dates from 2.00 – 4.00 pm at Beaumanor Hall</p>	