

Minutes of a meeting of the Leicestershire Schools' Forum held at Beaumanor Hall on Wednesday 20 June 2018 at 2.00 pm

Present

Nick Goforth	Secondary Academies Headteacher
Callum Orr	Secondary Academies Headteacher
Chris Parkinson	Secondary Academies Headteacher
Chris Swan	Secondary Academies Governor
Dave Hedley	Secondary Academies Governor
Suzanne Uprichard	Secondary Academies Governor / PRU
Bill Nash	Secondary Maintained Governor
Jo Blackburn	Primary Academy Headteacher
Jane McKay	Primary Academy Headteacher
Jean Lewis	Primary Academy Governor
David Thomas	Primary Academy Governor
Vanessa Jones	Primary Maintained Governor
Chris Davies	Roman Catholic Representative
Graham Bett	DNCC Representative

In attendance

Ivan Ould, Lead Member, Children and Family Services
 Paul Meredith, Director, 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

		Action
1.	Apologies for Absence/Substitutions Apologies for absence were received from Karen Allen, Kath Kelly, Julie McBrearty, Martin Turnham and Steve McDonald.	
2.	Minutes and Matters Arising The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 28 February 2018 were agreed. Nick Goforth asked the meeting to consider two items of AOB: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers' Pay award 2019/20 • NFF for 2019/20 	

3. 2017/18 Schools Budget Outturn

Jenny Lawrence introduced the report which presents the 2017/18 Schools Budget outturn position and confirms the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Reserve and its intended use.

Jenny referred to the table on page 12 of the report and highlighted the Children in Care overspend. Jenny stated that some of the social care overspend was as a result of additional staff as part of the post-OfSTED action plan. Jenny added that the Early Years Block was underspent due to the unused contingency for the roll out of the 30 hours extended entitlement. There was a minor overspend on SEN which was due to a combination of factors as outlined in the table. The two areas of concern are Children with Medical Needs (increased demand) and Specialist Services to Vulnerable Groups (delay in delivery of savings). The Schools' Block had an overspend of £140,000 which was due to growth funding for extra classes at two new schools – Hallam Fields and Fossebrook.

Jenny reported that the maintained school balances only represent a minor element of the end of year process so therefore it is proposed that this information is not brought to Schools' Forum. Schools' Forum agreed with this proposal.

The Dedicated Schools Grant Reserve for 2017/18 is confirmed as a balance of £2.2m. The High Needs block is overspent by £1.1m as demand for high need services continues to increase. Work continues to take place with schools in order to provide lower cost provision and there is a growing national campaign regarding the insufficiency of funding within the High Needs Block.

The policy of the Government continues to impact on the role and responsibilities of local authorities and schools through policy or funding changes. The funding remains unclear in terms of the National Funding Formula and continuing legislation change in local authority spend.

David Thomas referred to paragraphs 6 and 13 regarding the unused contingency on the early years block and asked which DSG block had contributed to the DSG. Jenny replied that this was not possible as this was within the DSG. Jenny agreed to track this information and add to the minutes (as below).

The three blocks of the DSG were introduced in 2013/14 and £4.9m of reserves were bought forward into the 2013/14 financial year. Since this point the following School Block has contributed £650k to the reserve, early years £2.5m and High Needs has withdrawn £3.8m.

Graham Bett referred to Paragraph 20 and enquired whether there were any alternative options if the spend is not enough in terms of the national funding formula and overall school funding. Jenny said these are not being considered at the moment. Jenny added that the schools' block will remain the schools' block and will continue to go out to schools. There are big issues around the high needs block and is therefore difficult for local authorities to decide on alternative options.

	<p>Graham asked about the planning side with regards to the MTFS requiring the Schools' Budget to be set at the level of DSG with no financial contribution from the Council (paragraph 19). Jenny stated that the report to Schools' Forum in February shared the need for savings over 3 years.</p> <p>The Chair agreed to discuss one of the items for AOB – National Funding Formula for 2019/20. Jenny reported that she had attended an information session with the DfE recently to look at their July announcement. The 2019/20 NFF will be broadly the same as 2018/19. The funding floor will increase to 1% and the gains cap will increase to 6% against 2017/18 baselines. The minimum per pupil funding levels will increase to £3,500 and £4,800 for primary and secondary schools respectively. Jenny added that there is no indication when, or if, a 'hard formula' will be introduced and when. In terms of the premises factors it was still the aim to put into a formula. Mobility calculations still being considered to solve current data issues. Jenny outlined the changes in terms of primary low prior attainment and changes to the minimum per pupil levels for middle schools, KS3 and KS4 schools. Options are being worked on for a future formula allocation to local authorities for school growth funding.</p> <p>Jenny added that there was no indication of 2021 which makes planning for local authorities and schools difficult.</p> <p>Schools' Forum noted the financial outturn for the 2017/18 Schools Budget (paragraphs 4-9)</p> <p>Schools' Forum noted the level of DSG reserve (paragraphs 10-13).</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Revised Scheme for Financing Schools</p> <p>Jenny introduced the report which sets out changes to the content of the Leicestershire Scheme for Financing Schools as a result of a directed revision by the Secretary of State.</p> <p>The Scheme is a statutory document and relates only to maintained schools. All proposed revisions must be presented to the Schools' Forum. Jenny stated that there were significant changes around the local authority loan scheme. The Secretary of State issued a direction which prohibits local authorities from granting loans to a maintained school for the purposes of a deficit budget. No loans currently exist in Leicestershire for this purpose as recovery deficit plans are used.</p> <p>Jenny referred the meeting to the changes effected to the Scheme as outlined in paragraph 7.</p> <p>Schools' Forum (maintained representatives) approved the revised Leicestershire Scheme for Financing Schools</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Position Statement on Funding School Growth</p> <p>Jenny presented the report which sets out the current position locally and nationally in respect of funding school growth.</p>	

Jenny stated that currently there is no revision to the current policy which is attached as Appendix 1. No revision will be made until further guidance is received from the DfE in July on the proposals for 2019/20 school funding.

Jenny outlined the background to the Regulations and what the local authority are expected to fund through the growth policy and what the fund may not be used to support.

Approvals for the current Leicestershire approach to growth are set out in paragraph 12 of the report.

The current policy was adopted in order to support the opening of Fossebrook Primary in September 2016 and a further two schools in September 2017.

Jenny referred to the DfE's published criteria for allocation of growth fund. Jenny added that the current housing developments in Leicestershire are significant and will have a financial implication that will need addressing. The policy will need to be reviewed and engagement with schools will be carried out in the autumn term.

Jean Lewis asked about the increase of numbers of children in special schools. Jenny stated that special schools are not affected by this and it was a different process for high needs places. Discussion took place around the growth within special schools using the capital allocation or increase places. Jane Moore added that through the high needs block work there is an understanding of SEND needs which is to provide good quality places for special schools. Jean Lewis raised concern about the predicative indication of those children going into hospital schools.

Nick Goforth commented that there is a risk to existing schools budgets in terms of the growth fund. Jenny commented that the work to be carried out will assess the financial impact against the expectation of opening dates. If the costs cannot be met from within the current growth provision then it may be necessary to top-slice school budgets which is the approach taken by many authorities..

Suzanne Uprichard asked what happens if the children do not come into schools from new housing developments. Jenny stated that the DfE will fund the school to 30 places and then recoup 30 even if they result in a reduced number in other schools.

David Thomas asked if under a hard NFF local authorities were unable to adjust school budgets to meet the cost of growth what would the approach be. Jenny stated that this was something that would need to be explored and may require conversations with the DfE.

Schools' Forum noted the position as set out in the report.

Schools' Forum commented on the approach and timescale to be followed for a revision of the current policy on funding school growth.

4.	Any Other Business Teachers' Pay Award Nick Goforth asked Jenny if she had any insight into the forthcoming year regarding the pay award. Jenny commented that she had not but agreed to contact HR.	JL
5.	Date of Next Meetings The following meeting dates were agreed: Monday 24 September Monday 26 November All dates from 2.00 – 4.00 pm at Beaumanor Hall	