

Minutes of a meeting of the Leicestershire Schools' Forum held virtually on Microsoft Teams on Tuesday 14th February 2023.

Present

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| John Pye | <u>RC Representative</u> |
| Alison Ruff | <u>Primary Maintained Headteacher</u> |
| Kelly Dryden | <u>Special Schools Academy Representative</u> |
| Liam Powell | <u>Secondary Academy Headteacher</u> |
| Jane Dawda | <u>Primary Maintained Headteacher</u> |
| Ed Petrie | <u>Primary Academy Headteacher</u> |
| Jo Beaumont | <u>Primary Maintained Headteacher (substitute)</u> |
| Deborah Taylor CC | <u>Lead Member for CFS</u> |
| Beverley Coltman | <u>Early Years</u> |
| Martin Towers | <u>Secondary Academies Governor</u> |
| Julie McBrearty | <u>Secondary Academies Headteacher</u> |
| Suzanne Uprichard | <u>PRU Representative</u> |
| Robert Martin | <u>Governor of Menphys</u> |
| Jane Moore | <u>Director of Children and Family Services</u> |
| Alison Bradley | <u>Leicestershire County Council</u> |
| Jenny Lawrence | <u>Leicestershire County Council</u> |
| Rebecca Bodycot | <u>Support to Jane Moore</u> |
| Patrick Grant | <u>Department of Education, Education & Skills Funding Agency</u> |
| Simon Grindrod | <u>Chair of Governors, Hastings High School, Burbage</u> |
| Rebecca Jones | <u>Chair of Governors, Burbage C of E Infant School</u> |
| Val Moore | <u>Chair of Governors, Ravenhurst</u> |

1. Election of Chair & Vice Chair

It was advised that no nominations were received, or volunteers put forward.

The Local Authority cannot chair the meeting.

If a Chair and Vice Chair were not elected today, then decisions necessary to complete school budgets for 2023/24 cannot be made and may result in budgets not being issued in accordance. This may cause issues for the school forum in the future.

The workload for the chair of this meeting holds little difference to that of a member of the forum. There would however be involvement in creating and agreeing the agenda for the meetings and ensuring Forum operates correctly.

Val Moore nominated herself as Chair up until the summer term and Susanne Uprichard and Martin Towers offered to be Vice Chair.

Agreed: Val Moore to be temporary chair and Suzanne Uprichard and Martin Towers to co-vice chair.

2. Apologies for Absences/Substitutions

No apologies or substitutions noted.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 29/09/2022 (previously circulated) and Matters Arising

The minutes from the meeting on 29th September 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. De-Delegation for School Improvements (Maintained School Members Only)

The funding previously given to local authorities to use for school improvement work has now been fully withdrawn by the DfE. The process for de-delegation in 22 /23 has been undertaken as there is the need to maintain the service. The paper sets out a proposal for de-delegation for 2023/24 at a higher rate than 2022/23 which is slightly higher as funding has now been fully withdrawn,

De-delegation means that funding is removed from maintained schools to deliver a service provided by the authority.

De-delegation is not applicable to Academy schools.

The paper has been subject to consultation with maintained schools as set out on page 12 with responses received from the consultation on page 15.

Maintained school representatives are only asked to approve de-delegation of £18 per pupil.

The decision needs to be made to get the information out to schools by the end of school term.

Rebecca Jones stated that they currently pay £11,000, but didn't feel that the service received was worth this amount of money

De-delegation is for maintained schools only. If de-delegation isn't approved, then the local authority would need to reduce support for school improvement.

The decision needed today is for de-delegation to go ahead or not. If the decision was to not go ahead, it is not possible for it to apply to some schools and not others. The decision for Forum is to approve or not, the outcome of that decision will apply to all schools, there is no opt out option.

De-delegation can only be agreed for one year at any one time. If it is needed for 2024 then it would need to come back to a future school's forum for re-approval.

For schools that require support for improvement in terms of Ofsted, if de-delegation were not to be approved this support will remain available

The reason why £9 was taken last year is because the DfE gave half of the funding but now that has completely ceased.

Without funding there will be no support at all from the local authority.

This does not affect maintained nurseries as the single nursery is funded as a special school.

As maintained school representatives, 1 vote disagreed and against the decision and two voted in favour.

Based on a majority vote £18 per pupil de-delegation fee has been agreed.

The list of services set out in the paper was sent to head teachers during the consultation.

Action: Maintained schools to be sent a break down about what services they will receive.

5. Transforming SEND & Inclusion in Leicestershire (TSIL) Update

Alison Bradley presented TSIL Update.

How we are going to achieve the desired outcomes from TSIL and address the significant financial issues is scheduled to be shared with schools.

Newton Europe who are leading the programme are change specialists.

Funding is the High Needs Block (HNB) which funds our responsibility for children with SEND. This is currently overspent. The TSIL programme is about getting things right for children.

We need to look at the HNB to see how children are funded who can't be supported in mainstream schools or need more support in mainstream schools. We need to ensure that the right children are supported at the right time with the right money.

Working is taking place with stakeholders on what this will look like. We are not able to keep up with the pace of demand coming into the department and we are looking at how we can manage this better.

6. 2023/24 Schools Budget

Paragraph 12 – 15 sets out the background sets and context of the budget.

Paragraph 16 – 19 discusses the role of the school's forum in setting the school's budget.

Paragraph 17 notes where decisions need to be made through school's forum regulations.

Para 20 – sets out the schools grant and the areas that are funded and the basis of settlement.

Para 21 – 25 sets out the basic principles behind the school's block settlement which is not as great as it has been in previous years.

Para 26 sets out the schools funding formula.

Para 30 discusses the construction of the schools funding formula.

Funding for 2023/24 is based on the 2021 census. Funding for schools is based on the 2022 census.

This is the first time we have seen an affordability gap. Leicestershire has not been given enough funding to fully fund the national funding formula and we also know this is the case for other authorities.

To move schools from the national funding formula is not an advisable option.

103 schools are protected by minimal funding, and any change in the funding mechanism that reduces their funding will be reinstated by the funding guarantees within the NFF so they cannot be affected by capping and scaling as it would take them below the minimum budget.

Pupil premium will increase by 5% for the new year.

The budget held by the local authority for Schools Growth is separate from the NFF funding and not intended for distribution to schools and meets the revenue costs arising from the opening and expansion of schools.

Paragraph 17 Items for approval, item 2 – this sets out what the funding is and the policy it relates to. This is further referenced in paragraphs 66, 67, and 69 and also gives additional detail about what funding is used for.

This is a separate allocation and is to meet the costs of commissioning and only applies to new schools and expanding schools.

The role of local authority is moving to one of facilitating school funding. The Government sets out the funding and local authorities have little responsibility in school funding and responsibility is decreasing with the movement to the National Funding Formula. Leicestershire County Council are the lowest funded council.

The County Council is in an extremely and difficult financial position, and it is not fair for this pressure to be put on our taxpayers when we are not fairly funded. If we were fairly funded, then we would not be in this position.

Recommendations

1. That Schools Forum approves the retention of the budget to fund future school growth – **Agreed**
2. That Schools Forum approve the retention of the budgets to meet the prescribed statutory duties of the local authority and to meet historic costs – **Agreed**
3. The School's Forum approves the centrally retained early years funding – Agreed
4. That School's Forum supports the continued use of the exceptional premises factor in respect of school that incur rental costs for premises and / or sports facilities and the adjustments made in respect of age range changes – **Agreed**

5. That Schools Forum note the actions taken by the local authority in applying Capping and Scaling to the National funding Formula for the purpose of affordability – **Agreed**
6. That Schools Forum notes the number and average cost of commissioned place for children and young people with High Needs – **Agreed**
7. That Schools Forum notes the Early Years Provider payment rates for 2023/24 – **Agreed**
8. The schools Forum approves the action to be taken in respect of schools where the Special Education Needs (SEN) national budget is insufficient to meet the aggregated value of High Needs funding Element 2 – **Agreed**
9. That Schools Forum note the average per pupil funding to be considered for recoupment for excluded pupils and other purposes - **Agreed**

7. Dates & Times of Future Meetings

The School's Forum is required to meet four times a year and so the next meeting will be in June. JL to meet with the Chair and Co-Vice Chairs to go through school forum. The date of the next meeting to be decided once this meeting has taken place.

8. Any Other Business

None.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next Leicestershire Schools' Forum will be held on Tuesday 13th June 2023 at 14:00.