

Minutes of a meeting of the Leicestershire Schools' Forum held at Beaumanor Hall on Thursday, 18 June 2015.

Present

In the chair

Tim Moralee	Secondary Academies Headteacher / PRU
Jean Lewis	Primary Academies Governor
Michael Murphy	Secondary Academies Governor
Suzanne Uprichard	Secondary Academies Governor
Alex Green	Secondary Academies Headteacher
Brian Myatt	Secondary Academies Headteacher
Sonia Singleton	Secondary Academies Headteacher
David Lloyd	Primary Maintained Headteacher
Heather Sewell	Primary Maintained Headteacher
Karen Allen	Primary Maintained Headteacher
David Thomas	Primary Maintained Governor
Tony Gelsthorpe	Primary Maintained Governor
Chris Davies	Roman Catholic Representative

In attendance

Jenny Lawrence, Finance Business Partner, Corporate Resources
Gill Weston, Assistant Director, Education, Learning and Skills
Chris Bristow, Strategic Lead SEND Reform, Children and Family Services

Apologies for absence

Bill Nash	Secondary Academies Governor
Richard Spurr	Secondary Academies Governor
Nigel Leigh	Post 16 Providers
Ian Sharpe	Church of England Representative
Alison Deacon	Joint Consultative Committee

65. Apologies for absence/Substitutions.

Apologies were received from Mr Ivan Ould, Lesley Hagger, Ian Sharpe, Richard Spurr, Bill Nash, Nigel Leigh and Alison Deacon.

Jenny Lawrence reported that Mr Ould was attending an F40 meeting today at Westminster talking to the School's Minister.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

66. Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 23 February 2015 were agreed as a true record subject to an amendment under Any Other Business. The sentence “David Lloyd questioned the closing of Sure Start provision” should read “David Lloyd questioned the reduction in funding”.

Jenny Lawrence referred to first bullet on school growth funding and said she was expecting to bring a policy to the meeting in September.

Karen Allen and Suzanne Uprichard both gave a declaration of interest regarding Agenda item 5 – Oakfield Outreach Traded Service Offer. Karen sits on the Membership Board and Suzanne as the PRU representative.

67. 2014/15 Schools Budget Outturn

Jenny Lawrence introduced the 2014/15 Schools’ Budget Outturn, an annual report to Schools’ Forum, which details the financial position of the Schools’ Budget, sets out the use of reserves and raises issues for the future.

Jenny outlined that the Schools’ Budget at the end of the financial year had an underspend of almost £2.9M. Jenny reported significant issues around Early Years and SEN. SEN was not expected to underspend moving forward as contingency had been used to increase Special School budget for 2016/17. Early Years difficult to predict as it was based on birth data and parental choice.

Jenny referred to the table in Paragraph 9 detailing the use of reserve and reported there had been changes since the Schools’ Budget was set in February. Almost £2.9M unallocated funding in the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) reserve, which Jenny proposed was held for the commissioning of new school places. Costs over next few years estimated to be in the region of £14M - £19M. Jenny confirmed that the Local Authority also receives lagged funding which meant that places are funded for 7 months in advance of receipt of grant.

Jenny highlighted that the Local Authority is proposing no changes to the school funding formula for 2016/17 and added the following points:

- No indication what the new Government policy will be moving forward.
- Comprehensive Spending Review end of year.
- DfE looking at special needs funding. Leicestershire has participated in a research project – initial feedback, but no news from DfE how they are taking that forward.
- Free Entitlement to Early Education for 3 and 4 year olds - will double in 2016/17, DfE reviewing rates to providers.
- 2014/15 more funding to commission school places.

Suzanne Uprichard raised the following questions:

- Paragraph 10 - when schools become academies, does that mean becoming £2.3M?

Jenny responded that £2.1M will be written off which reduces the provision, it is not extra.

- Paragraph 13 – who carries the cost for the 7 month period - is it the Local Authority or schools?

Jenny responded that the Local Authority has to put that funding in before receiving funding from Government.

David Lloyd asked for clarification – Local Authority or schools budget? Jenny responded through Schools' Budget but the Local Authority is responsible for doing it.

Tony Gelsthorpe asked a question on how many schools were required to enter into sponsored academy arrangements? Jenny agreed to find out and include that information in the minutes.

[11 maintained schools have been required to enter into sponsored academy arrangements].

The Schools' Forum noted the paper.

68. Schools Forum Membership Update

Jenny Lawrence reported that Schools' Forum membership was reviewed on an annual basis. For 2015/16 there were no changes required although as there were vacancies, some movement was needed between groups.

Jenny commented that the position with academy conversion was much more stable and therefore do not need to change membership numbers.

Jenny reported that:

- Paragraph 10 sets out that 2 current members could remain but switch between maintained and academies without going through the election process, if Schools' Forum deemed it appropriate.
- Paragraph 11 outlines current vacancies. Various different bodies have been approached to elect representatives.

Jenny reported perceived issues of communication, especially around LSH who continue to feel that the allocation of additional money was not appropriately communicated. Jenny stated that information was publically available, an operational understanding was included in the constitution that members feedback to groups that represent them. Jenny explained that when working with schools on school funding issues in 2013 and 2014 was totally reliant for people to work with the Local Authority over the schools break. Business Managers have communicated that they would like to become members, with the requirement to reflect academy/school split, a third group of school members could make business quite difficult.

Heather Sewell referred to Paragraph 11 and reported that there would be 3 Primary Headteachers required as Ed McGovern was retiring and 1 maintained as David Lloyd was also leaving. LPH had nominated members and there would be no primary headteacher vacancies from September onwards.

Jean Lewis said she was not clear about ALG approach to elect a member. Jenny agreed to seek clarification and report back to Jean.

Karen Allen reported that communication had been discussed at LPH, who felt a challenge that paperwork issued one week before meetings, and requested if the meeting schedule could be planned further in advance in order to arrange LPH meetings to discuss the reports. Jenny agreed to keep a rolling programme of four meetings in advance.

Alex Green commented that communication was a two-way street and was the responsibility of the receiver to engage in that communication. If schools are not getting information then it is not a fault of Schools' Forum. Tim Moralee responded to paragraph 14 that most of the information discussed at these meetings was in the public domain and it was headteacher responsibility to access information. He felt that colleagues need to understand better the workings of the Forum.

Suzanne Uprichard referred to paragraph 12 and asked whether the term of office would always remain 4 years?

Jenny responded that it had always been 4 years from appointment.

AGREED: Schools' Forum supported Paragraph 10 and agreed that:

- **David Thomas switch from maintained primary governor to academy primary governor.**
- **Bill Nash switch from academy governor to fill the vacancy to maintained school governor.**

The Schools' Forum membership list would be updated and re-circulated to Forum members.

69. Oakfield Outreach Traded Service Offer

Gill Weston introduced the report which was for noting. Gill explained that the Traded Service Offer was essentially for primary schools but sits alongside the work with the Behaviour Partnerships in secondary schools.

Gill reported that Oakfield had received a successful inspection a year ago and the removal of behaviour services and changes to behaviour forums in the primary sector resulted in a need to look at interactions and support mechanism in the system, to ensure that the pressure on Oakfield was not increasing and that children are well supported in schools.

The proposal in paragraphs 6 and 7 to develop a Traded Offer to schools, alongside a strong school-to-school support system to ensure children are getting the best possible chance and reducing permanent exclusions. Consultation took place with groups of headteachers to create an Offer which they felt met their needs and was viable and affordable.

In order for the proposal to be viable a percentage of schools are required to take-up the service in order for it to run. Information to go out to schools to obtain an indication of interest, viability to take the service forward to the next academic year. If not enough take up would then have to reconsider.

Karen Allen raised the following points from Oakfield Management Resources Committee:

- One of the strategic risks is that Oakfield is a Local Authority service but also a school, as a service if it was not to be viable and there was a loss, that would have to be picked up by Oakfield. However, if a profit was made, that would have to go back into the 'big pot', Oakfield would not keep profit.

Karen commented this was a very difficult and challenging position to be in.

- Oakfield has appointed a Deputy Headteacher in order to get this service up and running from September 2015.

Tim Moralee referred to Paragraph 18 and commented that buying into the Traded Service may be an issue for primary schools where budgets are so tight.

Karen Allen reported that a pay as you go system had been discussed but this would be too difficult to sustain in terms of staffing.

Brian Myatt reported there had been good evidence in the secondary sector where schools felt they could manage without support, by using their own funding, until they have to deal with one pupil. Once that happens...one student could turn that around, and he therefore advised schools to pay into the service.

Karen Allen reported that LEEP had provided some funding for this year as part of the school to school capacity building.

Jean Lewis raised concerns about the speed of response. Agreed that there needed to be an efficient response to ensure that the right support is available which might require SEN support.

Tony Gelsthorpe asked about the volume and capacity and take up - has any work been done exploring that provision across teaching school alliances? Yes this is part of a system wide approach.

Gill reported one of the successes of the pilot work was linking into Secondary Behaviour Partnerships and the Early Help teams, like Supporting Leicestershire Families. Oakfield not intended to be the only place for support, but enhancing what is already in the system.

David Thomas raised concern about financial issues, based on 63% take up - if some schools are charged £4,000-£5,000 what is the incentive to sign in? Karen reported that timescales were a concern. Based on LPH briefing, 55 returns out of 200 headteachers, 85% said they would buy in to the service, which is a good indication there is a need.

Karen raised a concern from headteachers on the edge of the City where children may require support but Leicestershire does not have the funding from the City.

Tony queried whether there is any differential between different types of primary schools in the area? Are we charging different from mainstream and academies? No, the charges are the same.

Tim commented that this needed to be a piece of joined up thinking between primaries and secondaries so that everyone could see the collective benefit.

70. Education Services Update

Chris Bristow introduced his report on Education Services and gave an update on the current position for Schools' Forum to note.

Chris reported that as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy savings had to be made within the Leicestershire Psychology Service (LPS). An initial saving made of £240,000 with a further saving of £150,000 required in 2016/17. The action plan resulted in industrial action being taken, but had now been suspended for three months. Paragraphs 12-14 future LPH allocations will be coming out as previously, reduction in staffing, inevitable, allocations to schools will be reduced, which clearly has implications for schools.

Chris advised in Paragraph 13 that the Local Authority will no longer be the sole provider of Educational Psychology services given the change in the National SEN Code of Practice since September 2014. The Local Authority are actively working with groups of schools seeking to appoint their own Educational Psychologist in partnership. The Service will be funded to approx. £950,000 to provide statutory work.

Paragraph 14 – conversations underway with schools, about the Traded Offer for work that schools may wish to commission in from the Local Authority's Psychology Service – out now, with continuation of Link Educational Psychology role, this will be the way to formulate and decide what that will look like. Allocations will be based on school by school basis.

About vulnerable groups, school led system, commissioning approach. Also working towards a clear commissioning framework with key performance indicators which will improve the outcomes of all vulnerable children in schools. The Local Authority is looking to develop an improved joined up working of 0-5 years services, a real opportunity to get more co-ordinated approach across children's services and others to improve the Offer for pre-school children who are vulnerable.

There is an issue where children in care placed in residential settings outside the Local Authority, where that residential setting cost is incurred by County Council budget as opposed to the High Needs Block. This will need to be revisited by Schools' Forum in the future.

Karen Allen commented that it was good to know schools can get Educational Psychology reports from elsewhere than LPS, but felt it would be useful to have a list of key information to ensure schools can produce good quality reports that will be accepted by SENA. Chris confirmed that advice to schools would be provided.

An issue was raised regarding capacity of the new Traded Service, before promising schools, the Local Authority must have the capacity to honour that service.

Chris responded that capacity was an issue, staff turnover more than anticipated and have to be realistic. There is a national shortage of Educational Psychologists – Leicestershire is not unique in this.

Jean Lewis - joined up working – paragraph relating to Social Care developing 0-25 services, wonderful extending this to 25, as same time as agencies, Adult Social Care is being slashed to the bone, where is the joined up working.

71. Any other business.

- a) Alex Green announced his resignation from the Schools' Forum with immediate effect. He reflected over the years the Schools' Forum partnership had become great and hoped that future members would focus on future partnership working. He acknowledged that communication is a problem but was not the fault of this group. Alex thanked Forum members for their patience and support for schools over the years and wished colleagues well for the future.

The Chair thanked Alex, as the longest serving of the Headteachers, who always reported back to LSH in great detail.

The Chair thanked David Lloyd also for his longevital service on the Schools' Forum.

Tim Moralee announced that he would be stepping down as Chair from today. He expressed his appreciation to Jenny Lawrence, for her excellent support and for producing papers which are as clear as can be, he thanked Jenny personally as Chair of the Forum and himself as an individual, and wished Schools' Forum members well in the future.

Brian Myatt informed that he would be stepping down as Secondary representative on the Schools' Forum.

Jenny reported there would be a number of new Primary/Secondary representatives and an induction meeting for new Forum members would be arranged after the summer break, before the September meeting.

Gill Weston acknowledged the service and thanked all those stepping down for the work done with Schools' Forum for "running a smooth ship in Leicestershire". Partnership working is the underlying philosophy in Leicestershire.

72. Date of next meeting.

Thursday 10 September 2015
3.00 - 5.00pm at Beaumanor Hall
Induction session aimed at new members

Monday 21 September 2015, 2.00 pm
Thursday 10 December 2015, 2.00 pm
Monday 22 February 2016, 2.00 pm
Tuesday 21 June 2016, 2.00 pm

All the above at Beaumanor Hall

2.00 - 3.30 pm
18 June 2015

CHAIRMAN