

**Minutes of a meeting of the Leicestershire Schools' Forum held at Beaumanor Hall on Monday 21 September 2015 at 2.00 pm**

**Present**

Kath Kelly	Secondary Academies Headteacher
Nick Goforth	Secondary Academies Headteacher
Mark Mitchley	Secondary Academies Headteacher
Callum Orr	Secondary Academies Headteacher
Suzanne Uprichard	Secondary Academies Governor / PRU
Bill Nash	Secondary Maintained Governor
Jane McKay	Primary Academy Headteacher
Stephen Cotton	Primary Academy Headteacher
Karen Rixon	Primary Academy Headteacher
Jean Lewis	Primary Academy Governor
David Thomas	Primary Academy Governor
Heather Sewell	Primary Maintained Headteacher
Jo Blackburn	Primary Maintained Headteacher
Karen Allen	Primary Maintained Headteacher
Jason Brooks	Special Maintained Headteacher
Simon Kibble	Post 16 Provider (for Nigel Leigh)
Chris Davies	Roman Catholic Representative

**In attendance**

Lesley Hagger, Director, Children and Family Services

Jenny Lawrence, Finance Business Partner, Corporate Resources

Ivan Ould, Lead Member, Children and Family Services

		Action
1.	<p><b>Welcome to New Members</b></p> <p>Jenny welcomed the new members to the first meeting of the Schools' Forum for the 2015/16 academic year. Everyone present introduced themselves to the meeting.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Apologies for absence/Substitutions</b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Ian Sharpe, Sue Rath, Richard Spurr, Michael Wilson, Tony Gelsthorpe and Janet Thompson.</p>	

3.	<p><b>Election of Chair and Vice Chair</b></p> <p>Karen Allen was elected Chair of the Schools' Forum for the 2015/16 academic year.</p> <p>Suzanne Uprichard was elected Vice Chair of the Schools' Forum for the 2015/16 academic year.</p>	
4.	<p><b>Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 June 2015 and matters arising</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2015 were agreed as a true and accurate subject to the deletion of the word PRU against Tim Moralee's name in those present and moved to Suzanne Uprichard's name.</p> <p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <p><u>2014/15 Schools Budget Outturn</u></p> <p>The Secondary Academy representatives asked if the decision to no changes to the school funding formula for 2016/17 was made at the last Forum meeting and did it include the £20M additional money. Jenny commented that no decision was necessary as the local authority was proposing no change to the funding formula for 2016/17 given there was information on the future direction of the government's school funding policy and the future of the national fair funding formula.</p> <p>Karen Allen added that any proposals for 2016/17 school funding was required to be completed by this point with decisions made by October.</p> <p>Kath Kelly asked if the additional money due to come had been built into 2015/16 and into 2016/17, Jenny Lawrence confirmed that it had. Karen Allen commented that there were a lot of discussions on the allocation of the additional funding and the decision was the right route to allocate that money.</p> <p>Jenny commented that it was difficult to pick out any key funding issues affecting secondary schools. A survey to secondary schools on financial data would be undertaken to inform any future school funding decisions. Jenny added that the returns from the survey would be shared with Schools' Forum.</p>	<p><b>JL</b></p>

	<p>David Thomas added that Schools' Forum agreed some principles on the basis of which the application was made and asked if there was any merit in having someone report back as to how near those principles were met and would it be helpful for Schools' Forum to come back with some analysis of what we achieved. Jenny commented that this was possible to do which would link in with what other financial information was collected through the school funding survey</p> <p>The Secondary Academy representatives asked therefore if decisions were made without access to secondary data. Jenny explained how the formula was arrived at and that national benchmarking information was used to compare where Leicestershire was with some other authorities. Jenny stated that the formula was defined with significant secondary school through a high presence in the working groups from the secondary phase and that secondary schools had not responded to the consultation.</p> <p>Karen Allen commented that it was difficult to represent the people they are elected to represent and that all schools needed to engage with the process and be aware of discussions and consultations that are happening.</p> <p>Jenny reported that with regard to reviewing the formula, direction and guidance was expected from the Government at the beginning of December with additional data. It was agreed to put the Funding Formula for 2017/18 onto the next agenda and if needed a working party would be pulled together at the January meeting.</p> <p><u>Oakfield Outreach Traded Service</u></p> <p>Karen Allen informed Schools' Forum that the Leicestershire Primary Outreach Traded Services Offer was due to be rolled out to headteachers. Karen added that it had been positively received and Oakfield required 60% of schools to 'buy-in' to break even otherwise the school would incur charges.</p> <p>Suzanne Uprichard commented that Oakfield had a substantial amount of support and expertise.</p>	<p>JL</p> <p>JL</p>
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5.	<p><b>Schools' Forum Self-Assessment</b></p> <p>Jenny explained that the DfE had issued a Schools' Forum Self-Assessment template to allow local authorities to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their Schools' Forum. The paper sets out the LA's assessment for the Leicestershire Schools' Forum which the meeting was asked to note and comment upon.</p> <p>Jenny commented that one weakness was the election process for academy representation and the need to define more clearly how academy representatives are elected. Forum members made suggested further comments to Jenny on the self-assessment which would be incorporated into the document.</p> <p>Suzanne Uprichard suggested that Governor Development Service send the link to the self-assessment in order for Chairs of Governors to pick this up.</p> <p>It was agreed that Jenny would make the amendments to the self-assessment and to circulate to Forum members to ensure it reflects the conversation held at the meeting.</p>	<p>JL</p> <p>JL</p>
6.	<p><b>2014/15 Maintained School Balances</b></p> <p>Jenny explained that the annual report comes to Schools' Forum detailing maintained school balances for the 2014/15 financial year.</p> <p>Jenny added that the same survey used for secondary academies should be sent out to primary academies.</p> <p>Suzanne asked what was being done about maintained schools in deficit when they have to be sponsored – does the Local Authority have to pick up the deficit? Jenny responded that the Local Authority does have to pick the deficit up for sponsored academies. Deficits in all maintained schools are monitored and depending on the size and reason for the deficit there are a certain set of actions including the issue of Financial Notice of Concern, monitoring and attending meetings of the Governing Body. Jenny added that where schools have a deficit and have to go into sponsorship they are issued with a notice of concern. Karen Allen asked if they would be split into bands. Jenny commented that there was an increase in the 8.1% balance and discussion would take place with some of these schools to find out what the situation is.</p> <p>It was noted that similar information was not published by the DfE and that academy financial statements are so old when they are published they do not provide any meaningful information on the reserves held by academies.</p> <p>The Schools' Forum noted the paper.</p>	<p>JL</p> <p>JL</p>

7.	<p><b>Early Years Call for Evidence</b></p> <p>Jenny informed the meeting that the report sets out the local authority's response to the recent consultation on the cost of providing childcare. Jenny felt it would be useful for Schools' Forum to note how Leicestershire is involved in dealing with funding issues through the Dedicated Schools Grant, in this instance to fund all places for the Free Entitlement to Early Education (FEEE).</p> <p>Jenny outlined the paper and in particular the introduction of the Living Wage and how this would have a huge impact on the childcare sector.</p> <p>Nick Goforth asked if this was the Forum to work together on this issue. Jenny said that some initial modelling on the data had been carried out and the possible impact of this. Jenny was happy to work across a section of schools to ascertain financial implications of this and other issues.</p> <p>Discussion took place on the impact the National Living Wage would have on childcare providers if they were unable to meet the additional wage bill. Lesley commented that this would also have implications on the local authority meeting the sufficiency duty around providing places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds.</p> <p>The Schools' Forum noted the discussions and it was suggested to them that they share school funding concerns with governors and with MPs.</p>	
8.	<p><b>Policy for Funding Schools Growth</b></p> <p>Jenny outlined that the report sets out the proposed Local Authority policy on funding school growth. Jenny explained that where there are new schools, the local Authority is required to fund those pupils and in addition to this, the local authority would provide additional revenue to schools expanding that meet the criteria set out in the policy.</p> <p>Jenny said that the overall impact of per pupil funding for the seven months before pupil funding is reflected in the DSG will be approximately £19.5m leaving a funding gap of £13M. There was one source of grant into the Local Authority and no possibility of a top up from the local authority. Financial planning needs to start to look at how the funding gap will be met. There is no underspend in SEN budgets and therefore discussions will have to take place with schools about top slicing budgets.</p> <p>Jenny referred to the policy which led to discussion regarding the instances where the local authority may make a one off payment to schools. Jenny noted the comments made by the Forum members and it was agreed to bring the policy back to Schools' Forum with amendments for approval. The Schools' Forum also noted the future financial implications for funding school growth.</p>	JL

9.	<p><b>SEN Overspend</b></p> <p>Jenny explained that the report sets out the forecast overspend for special educational needs and the reasons for this overspend. Jenny explained the current system of high needs funding whereby mainstream schools were required to contribute to ‘top up’ the funding and at the time the local authority had delegated the mainstream funding to schools.</p> <p>Jenny outlined that there was a need to understand what was happening in terms of places needed for the future, to have open dialogues with schools if they were meeting the needs of the high needs children and to start looking at alternative ways of making provision.</p> <p>The Schools’ Forum noted the paper and it was agreed that members would discuss issues that have been raised in the paper with their respective groups.</p>	All
10.	<p><b>Scheme for Financing Schools</b></p> <p>Jenny explained that the report presents changes to the Leicestershire Scheme for Financing Schools which are necessary as a result of a directed revision by the Secretary of State for Education.</p> <p>Jenny said that there were no local changes but outlined a revision in two areas. The Schools’ Forum approved the revised Scheme for Financing Schools.</p> <p>Jenny commented that key changes will be communicated to bursars.</p>	
11.	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p><b>a) National Fair Funding Formula</b></p> <p>Mr Ould made the Schools’ Forum aware of the Government’s manifesto pledge to introduce a national funding formula for schools in England. Mr Ould added that MP’s in the F40 group were in receipt of petition forms for parents to complete by 25 October 2015 which would be filtered to schools. Mr Ould agreed to forward information to Forum members and would contact Nicky Morgan in order to be guided by her response to the Loughborough area.</p> <p><b>b) Trade Union Facilities Time</b></p> <p>Jenny made Schools’ Forum aware of its prior decisions to delegate funding for supply cover costs which included trade union facilities time. Lesley Hagger had now received a letter from the trade unions asking for this to be considered again at Schools’ Forum. Jenny commented that as a local authority we are not proposing to go back to schools that the unions have requested this funding to be de-delegated, however it is not</p>	

	<p>possible to de-delegate funding for academies. Jenny asked if it was possible for maintained schools to read the letter and bring it back to the next Schools' Forum meeting for discussion around the benefit of going back. This was agreed.</p>	<p>JL</p>
<p><b>12.</b></p>	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>It was agreed to move the next meeting because of school commitments in December. Therefore the meeting scheduled for <b>Thursday 10 December is cancelled.</b></p> <p><i>Following the meeting it was agreed that the next meeting would be <b>Thursday 14 January 2016, 2.00 – 4.00 pm at Beaumanor Hall.</b></i></p> <p>Further meetings were agreed:</p> <p>Monday 22 February 2016, 2.00 pm at Beaumanor Hall          Tuesday 21 June 2016, 2.00 pm at Beaumanor Hall</p>	

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