

**Minutes of a meeting of the Leicestershire Schools' Forum held at Beaumanor Hall on Thursday 14 January 2016 at 2.00 pm**

**Present**

Sonia Singleton	Secondary Academies Headteacher
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
Richard Spurr	Secondary Academies Governor
Steve McDonald	Secondary Academies Governor
Bill Nash	Secondary Maintained Governor
Jane McKay	Primary Academies Headteacher
Karen Rixon	Primary Academies Headteacher
Jean Lewis	Primary Academies Governor
David Thomas	Primary Academies Governor
Heather Sewell	Primary Maintained Headteacher
Jo Blackburn	Primary Maintained Headteacher
Karen Allen	Primary Maintained Headteacher
Sue Rath	Primary Maintained Governor
Michael Wilson	Primary Maintained Governor
Tony Gelsthorpe	Primary Maintained Governor
Jason Brooks	Special Maintained Headteacher
Chris Davies	Roman Catholic Representative
Ian Sharpe	Church of England Representative
Catherine Drury	Early Years/PVI Representative

**In attendance**

Jenny Lawrence, Finance Business Partner, Corporate Resources  
Ivan Ould, Lead Member, Children and Family Services  
David Atterbury, Head of Strategy - Education Sufficiency  
Chris Connearn, Head of Strategy - Achievement of Vulnerable Learners  
Chris Bristow – Strategic Lead – Remodelling SEND

		<b>Action</b>
<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Apologies for Absence/Substitutions</b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Lesley Hagger, Nigel Leigh and David Hedley.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Catherine Drury, early years representative.</p> <p>Karen Allen referred to a letter received from an absent member of Schools' Forum which would be addressed later in the meeting. Karen outlined the processes to be followed when unable to attend these meetings and asked colleagues to ensure an appointed substitute attends where possible so that any views/concerns are represented. The Chair reiterated that Schools' Forum meetings are not to discuss individual school issues but about Leicestershire/ phases as a whole.</p>	
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 September 2015 and Matters Arising</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2015 were agreed as a true and accurate record subject to the following amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sonia Singleton's apologies to be recorded under Apologies for Absence.</li> <li>• 2014/15 Maintained School Balances – action point in the third paragraph to be removed.</li> </ul> <p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <p><u>Update on Oakfield Traded Service</u></p> <p>Karen Allen confirmed that the service was still available for schools but was currently funded centrally from LEEP (Leicestershire Educational Excellence Partnership). At present there was no projected date for the Traded Services Offer to be rolled out.</p> <p>Jason Brooks raised concern that special schools currently offer an outreach service to primary and secondary schools and felt this could be a duplication of role.</p> <p>Karen Rixon added that there could be some conflict between some schools offering this service free where others are charging.</p> <p>Chris Connearn reported Lesley Hagger would be meeting with Special School Headteachers about similarities and differences in the</p>	

	<p>outreach behaviour support offer.</p> <p>Chris Bristow reported the Local Authority commission outreach work from special schools and nurseries. Special School Headteachers are undertaking an audit to gain a clearer policy to be reflected on Local Authority Local Offer to gain a better knowledge of what is available and where it can be accessed.</p> <p>Chris Connearn reported Oakfield conversation with primary schools is around accessing all support possible before accessing Oakfield support which is around preventing permanent exclusion and maintaining children in mainstream provision.</p> <p><u>Schools' Forum Self-Assessment</u></p> <p>Karen Allen confirmed that amendments to the self-assessment were required to bring back to a future meeting of the Schools' Forum. Jenny Lawrence said she would aim to re-circulate to members by the end of the month.</p> <p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>a) National Fair Funding Formula Mr Ould reported he was pleased with the response from schools to the petition and understands from Tony Foot (DfE), that the consultation would be released late February/early March although Nicky Morgan suggests sooner. Mr Ould reported that he would be attending a Westminster Forum as a speaker in March.</p> <p>b) Trade Union Facilities Time Karen Allen outlined there had been a lot of discussion previously and asked Schools' Forum for comment. The view was it should remain delegated, only maintained school funding could be de-delegated and with a smaller and smaller pot it does not make sense to hold centrally.</p>	<p><b>JL</b></p>
<p><b>3.</b></p>	<p><b>Policy for Funding School Growth</b></p> <p>Jenny Lawrence informed Schools' Forum that the report had been considered at the last meeting where there had been issues raised over ambiguity within the policy and its financial impact, hence the resubmission to Forum.</p> <p>Jenny explained there were 2 elements to the policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delegated budget – funding newly opening schools from September to March - the Local Authority has no discretion over the time lag within that funding. The LA has no additional funding for this but regulations require this to be provided.</li> </ul>	

- Expansion of primary places need. Growth LA needs to fulfil its supply of school places would cost £21M – the Local Authority must fund statutory £17.5M of that, if not funded, EFA are able to take the Dedicated Schools Grant off the LA if agreement is not reached on a growth funding mechanism.

Jenny outlined the policy itself was unchanged and would continue to be reviewed. The current High Needs overspend was depleting the DSG reserve.

Jenny reported that the new Braunstone primary school would open in September 2016 and the new school in Birstall the following year, therefore a policy needs to be in place as a matter of urgency.

There was a lengthy debate from secondary colleagues who largely felt unable to support the policy because of the proposed 1% reduction in school funding. Jenny stated that the funding reductions in each year were presented for illustrative purposes only and would change subject to when developments started and the rate of house building. The Local Authority was not currently proposing a reduction in school funding as a result of this policy.

Karen Allen reported it was unfortunate that more of the 'real issues' had not come through from the academy financial survey questionnaire. She outlined that whilst academy schools were under no obligation to share their data, it would be useful to have information on their budgets, in order for Schools' Forum to make fair and informed decisions, to see where schools are genuinely struggling and to get a reasonable understanding of the difficulties.

Jenny Lawrence commented that the Local Authority would be willing to work with schools to identify what information was required to pull that together.

Jenny confirmed that the growth in primary schools would inevitably feed into secondary schools. This is about funding new places in the system.

David Atterbury reported primary numbers would reach a peak next year and would start to impact on secondary schools in 3-5 years time. The new schools referred to in the report are as a consequence of new housing and will be designated as Free Schools.

Jenny confirmed that Section 106 money met the capital costs of build, the policy on growth funding is purely to do with the revenue cost of commissioning the places.

Jenny re-emphasised that the table in paragraph 22 was illustrative only, it is known how many new schools will be required based on current housing proposals but there remains uncertainty when these

	<p>will be required (as they are subject to planning applications and build-out rates).</p> <p>Karen Allen referred to letter from David Hedley who had raised concerns regarding the impact of the 1% cut to the AWPU rates for 2016/17, and had asked whether alternative options had been considered and whether representations had been made to the Government/Local Authority.</p> <p>Jenny Lawrence responded that representations had been made to the Government in terms of a meeting between the Director of Children and Family Services and Nicky Morgan MP, where High Needs was the subject of discussion.</p> <p>Mr Ould reported a meeting with Nicky Morgan on 18 December - if growth funding is not resolved, he is responsible to advise Cabinet accordingly. The proposed model brings Leicestershire in line with other authorities. If Forum is unable to resolve a problem like this what message will that send to the Government? He raised concern that do not appear to be able to come to majority or consensus view.</p> <p>David Atterbury explained that there are two types of Free Schools, those established by the LA under the Free School Presumption process and those proposed independently by other organisations. Free Schools are actually a type of academy.</p> <p>The Chair asked the Schools' Forum to take a vote on the principle to approve the policy with a review by the end of the summer term, with a working party to convene to look at the detail of the proposal for 2017/18.</p> <p>12 voted in favour of the policy, 8 voted against and there were 2 abstentions.</p> <p><u>Decision</u> Schools' Forum agreed to adopt the policy on Funding School Growth.</p>	<p><b>JL</b></p>
<p><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b>Academy Financial Survey</b></p> <p>Jenny Lawrence introduced her report and outlined that this links into secondary conversations in terms of secondary school funding, presented to Schools' Forum for information, to obtain a picture particularly in secondary schools where the Local Authority has little financial information.</p> <p>It was agreed to relaunch the survey for Schools' Forum members to give higher profile at LPH/LSH/LSSH meetings.</p> <p>Mr Ould referred to Lord Nash's statement on the future role of local</p>	<p><b>JL</b></p>

	<p>authorities – looks as though the Local Authority will still have a role relative to statutory functions for school place planning, admissions, special educational needs, safeguarding and championing the needs of children.</p> <p>Schools’ Forum noted the paper.</p>	
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>School Funding 2016/17 and Onwards</b></p> <p>Jenny Lawrence introduced her report. Jenny explained that if the role of the Local Authority on school funding was reduced, then this challenges the future role of the Schools’ Forum, which is expected to be part of the consultation. If no local discretion, may want to shift the focus, to working with schools to try to prepare schools for what may be coming in the future.</p> <p>Karen Allen emphasised that by the next meeting on 22 February, there may be more information from Government.</p> <p>Karen also referred to a letter from David Hedley and his comments. Jenny confirmed that the formula is the mechanism for distributing funding to schools which remains unchanged, the reduction is a reduction to the overall resources for school delegated budgets.</p> <p>Jenny Lawrence confirmed that the proposal was a 1% reduction in the AWPU. The Local Authority deadline for response to submit the budget to the EFA was next week, if there is no reduction on AWPU there would be significant reduction in major costs, such as special schools sector and independent core sector.</p> <p>Nick Goforth asked if there was an alternative way to find this money without reducing the AWPU?</p> <p>Jenny reported that the reduction was presented in the High Needs overspend report considered at last Schools’ Forum meeting and this was the proposal.</p> <p>Mr Ould reported he had met with the F40 team in December – still awaiting for DfE to provide figures on SEN. Really sensitive issue and does not know what the final outcome will be.</p> <p>Jason Brooks commented he would not want to see reduction or loss of places at special schools.</p> <p>Jenny Lawrence suggested that Schools’ Forum may wish to set up a cross representative sub group to help shape an action plan to reduce the High Needs spend.</p> <p>It was agreed to discuss this further at the next Forum meeting.</p>	<p><b>Agenda</b></p>

	<p>Callum Orr stated that 1% seems blunt, and asked if this had been calculated carefully?</p> <p>Jenny Lawrence responded that she was happy to take this back to reconsider about how to take this forward. If there is no reduction in AWPU for 2017/18 discussion around growth become more acute. Is it of benefit to delay decisions rather than deal with issues now?</p> <p>Jean Lewis expressed concern regarding the possible reduction of services for SEN which could have a profound effect for the most vulnerable children in Leicestershire. This could mean to keep those schools open, offering places to children out of County.</p> <p>Chris Bristow reported moving towards a charging system for various Specialist Teaching Services. Number of layers, about Personal Budgets, ensuring good graduated response consistent across those services, which would cost schools more. Jenny Lawrence commented that would be met as part of the High Needs costs.</p> <p>Jenny stated it was important how the LA and academies respond to the national funding consultation and agreed to circulate information to Schools' Forum once the consultation was published.</p>	<p>JL</p>
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>a) Kath Kelly referred to academy information regarding budgets and the way trusts operate; in many cases it is a trust budget which does not show in the same way and need to be mindful when collecting information that it may not show an accurate position. Jenny Lawrence suggested a separate conversation with secondary and primary about what data is collected and what the Local Authority use it for.</p> <p>b) Steve McDonald reported in his experience as independent academy, the Local Authority have no responsibility or ability to help. Jenny acknowledged this but emphasised the need to work together to lobby to help the position. This will also give Schools' Forum understanding when making informed decisions.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 4.17pm</p>	
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b>Date of Next Meetings</b></p> <p>Monday 22 February 2016, 2.00 pm at Beaumanor Hall  Tuesday 21 June 2016, 2.00 pm at Beaumanor Hall</p>	