

Minutes of a meeting of the Leicestershire Schools' Forum held at Beaumanor Hall on Monday 25 September 2017 at 2.00 pm

Present

Kath Kelly	Secondary Academies Headteacher
Callum Orr	Secondary Academies Headteacher
Chris Parkinson	Secondary Academies Headteacher
Nick Goforth	Secondary Academies Headteacher
Suzanne Uprichard	Secondary Academies Governor / PRU
Steve McDonald	Secondary Academies Governor
Bill Nash	Secondary Maintained Governor
Karen Rixon	Primary Academy Headteacher
Jane McKay	Primary Academy Headteacher
Jo Blackburn	Primary Academy Headteacher
Jean Lewis	Primary Academy Governor
Heather Hall	Primary Maintained Headteacher
Martin Turnham	Primary Maintained Headteacher
Edy O'Connor	Church of England Representative
Chris Davies	Roman Catholic Representative
Graham Bett	DNCC Representative

In attendance

Jenny Lawrence, Finance Business Partner, Corporate Resources
 Ivan Ould, Lead Member, 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

		Action
1.	<p>Election of Chair and Vice-Chair</p> <p>Whilst not at the meeting the current Chair, Karen Allen, had self-nominated to continue within the role and was elected Chair of the Schools' Forum for the 2017/18 academic year.</p> <p>Nick Goforth was elected Vice Chair of the Schools' Forum for the 2017/18 academic year.</p>	
2.	<p>Apologies for Absence/Substitutions</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Dave Hedley, David Thomas and Karen Allen.</p>	

3.	<p>Minutes and Matters Arising</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 12 June 2017 were agreed as a true and accurate record subject to the following amendment:</p> <p><u>2016/17 School Budget Outturn</u> The sixth paragraph, tenth line should read “Jenny commented that <u>Period 6</u> would be the next stock take of high needs spend for the 2017/18 academic year.</p>	
4.	<p>2016/17 Maintained School Balances</p> <p>Jenny introduced the report which sets out the position with regard to school balances for all schools that were maintained by the local authority on 31 March 2017 and the individual school balances in advance of the national publication by the DfE.</p> <p>Jenny explained that the annual school balance information was produced by the DfE and presented to the Schools’ Forum as the first stage of publication. The figures are for information only and therefore difficult to form a judgement as they are a snapshot in time.</p> <p>Jenny added that the local authority was working with schools in deficit or are forecasting one for 2017/18. Workshops had been arranged for a small group of maintained schools who were projecting an unhealthy position.</p> <p>Martin Turnham commented on the 62 schools who had declining balance reserves, even those with a surplus, that this was indicative of a different situation. Jenny said that some work had been tested out through governor briefings and that schools still need to focus now and in the future.</p> <p>Schools’ Forum noted the position on the 2016/17 school balances for local authority maintained schools.</p>	
5.	<p>2018/19 School Funding</p> <p>Jenny Lawrence introduced a report which sets out a high level analysis of the DfE’s announcement on the introduction of the National Funding Formula (NFF) and the local authority’s approach to its implementation.</p> <p>Jenny reported that the DfE announced in July that the NFF would be introduced in 2018/19 as a ‘soft’ formula i.e. the NFF would be used to generate the DSG for the LA who would then apply its local formula to generate school budgets.</p> <p>The DfE announced on 15 September the detail of the NFF and the formal response to the December consultation. However, the data which the DfE have used to support the notional budget allocations was not known and therefore the local authority was unable to validate against its baseline.</p> <p>The announcement sets out an unchanged structure for the NFF from</p>	

that set out in December. Some changes have been made to the values originally announced such as:

- Increases to the value of the Age Weighted Pupil Units across the board.
- A minimum per pupil funding level.
- All schools to receive a minimum increase of 0.5% per pupil in 2018/19 and 1% in 2019/20.
- The gains cap has been raised to 3% in 2019/20.

The lump sum value of £110,000 remains and the decrease would be included in the protection schools receive.

There are 120 primary schools and 4 secondary schools that are on the minimum increase of 0.5% meaning a difficult few years for those schools and in real terms funding cuts.

Jenny stated that the operation of the MFG was unclear. The July announcement said that this would be set between the minimum and minus 1.5% per pupil. The individual notional allocations are not going to be the budgets schools will receive and add up to less than what the DSG settlement will be.

Nick commented that the NFF projection for secondary schools looks healthy and from cash perspective primary schools will be better.

Jenny emphasised the need to obtain the data from the DfE first as the baseline was important information and the building block to measure the 2018/19 formula against.

Nick asked if the NNF with projection will be the same as the local authority receives. Jenny confirmed it was not.

Nick asked Jenny if she assumed the 2% pay award for some teachers and 1% for other staff would come out of the extra funding. Jenny confirmed it would.

Jenny stated that local authorities are able to transfer 0.5% of total DSG from the Schools' Block (estimated to be £1.8M) and in 2017/18 it was possible to transfer £2.85M from Schools to High Needs without reducing the 2016/17 funding rates for schools due to the fact that headroom was available. The headroom of the settlement will not be there next year and the local authority was not pursuing any transfer.

Following the July announcement the local authority established a working group to look at what the 2018/19 school funding formula could look like. The meeting produced a healthy discussion regarding the constraints. Jenny stated that if no data was received the next meeting would have to be cancelled as the local authority had nothing to work with.

Jenny highlighted two potential areas that would require further consideration in developing the 2018/19 formula: the lump sum and deprivation as outlined in the report.

	<p>Graham Bett asked if the total DSG was more. Jenny said that the DfE driven element of the NFF would guarantee at least 0.5% additional funding per pupil. Graham expressed concern that any advice given to schools to help with their decision making process should be worded with caution. Jenny commented that this message has been given out through Governor Development Service briefings. Kath Kelly asked if the union website would be updated to reflect this. Graham confirmed that it would. N.B. the figures presented on the union website have not been validated against actual funding levels for Leicestershire schools.</p> <p>Jenny said when the information was received from the DfE this would give us the tools for modelling the consultation in November. Nick commented that schools should know their budgets. Jenny said that a change in formula will be part of the consultation. Nick added that the more information received would be better for the following year.</p> <p>Nick raised Graham's concern and asked if the Schools' Forum could assist in any way. Graham commented that the message to schools should be made clear to be cautious. Graham raised the question of where the funding was coming from and had the DfE been written to ask the question. Jenny commented that lots of questions had been asked but the local authority has not asked that specific question. Jane Moore said that the Regional Schools Commissioner needed to be asked the question and Jane would be happy to ask the question direct when she meets with him.</p> <p>Jenny referred to the report and outlined the three high level options for the 2018/19 school funding formula. The information on the modelling will determine which option is the best.</p> <p>Nick asked for clarification how the decision will be made. Jenny said that the working group would recommend a consultation which Schools Forum will be asked to consider in early November (since the meeting this has been arranged for 6 November at 2.00 pm). Consultation is scheduled to be undertaken through November but may be delayed if the DfE did not provide the data.</p> <p>A Forum member asked if the final decision will be public. Jenny confirmed that it would. Following consultation with schools and the Schools' Forum the decision would be for the County Council's Cabinet to make in January prior to submission of the formula to the EFA by 19 January 2018.</p> <p>Schools' Forum noted the high levels analysis of the implications arising from the introduction of the National Funding Formula.</p> <p>Schools' Forum agreed to support the approach taken by Leicestershire County Council to 2018-19 school funding as set out in this report.</p>	
6.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>There was no further business.</p>	

7.	Date of Next Meetings Monday 6 November 2017 (further date agreed following the September meeting to consider the 2018/19 school funding formula consultation) Monday 4 December 2017 Monday 22 January 2018 (provisional) Wednesday 28 February 2018 All dates from 2.00 – 4.00 pm at Beaumanor Hall	
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