

Minutes of the Meeting of the Leicestershire Schools' Forum held on Thursday 20th September 2012 at Beaumanor Hall

Present

Tim Moralee – in the Chair

Alex Green	}	Secondary Academy Headteachers
Heather Sewell	}	Maintained Primary Headteachers
David Lloyd		
Jean Lewis	}	Maintained Primary Governors
Tony Gelsthorpe		
David Thomas		
Brenda Carson	}	RC Representative

In attendance: Ivan Ould CC – CYPS Lead Member
 Jenny Lawrence – Finance Business Partner
 Gareth Banks – Clerk to the Forum

1.	<p><u>Apologies</u></p> <p>John Bassford, Graham Bett, Lesley Hagger, Sonia Singleton, Chris Ball, Andrew Munro, John Herbert, Sue Horn, Brian Myatt</p>
2.	<p><u>Minutes & Matters Arising</u></p> <p>Amendment to page 4, paragraph 6: “Still some LAs yet to respond to school funding reform through publishing consultations”</p>
3.	<p><u>School Funding Reform</u></p> <p>Takes account of current LA position in terms of the proposals for the primary and secondary school formula changes required under funding reform. Lots of discussions about where going CYPS Overview and Scrutiny Committee discussed School Funding Reform Update report (Schools' Forum Paper B – 7/9/2012) on Monday 17th September.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Hand-out: Extract of minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</i> <p>Similar conversation had to Forum with no concerns around proposals. Inclusion of outcome of discussion, as well as consultation extension, is main reason for delay in today's report being issued.</p> <p>Appendix 1 shows un-annotated, anonymous responses. Responses split across all proposals. Level at which top up level for high needs pupils most significant split. Based on responses and the danger of special needs places being made more attractive for other LAs, leading to placement shortage for Leicestershire pupils, it is proposed that implement DFE's recommendation of top up funding in excess of £6,000 additional needs.</p> <p>Consultation Q1 – Services to be de-delegated</p> <p>As all but 6 secondary schools will be academies by April 2013, full delegation recommended for this phase, this reduces LACSEG and increases delegated budgets. Primary budgets to be delegated except for:</p>

- Free School Meals
- Licences and subscriptions

These are minor budgets with low funding in 2012/13. If high primary conversion rate in run up to 2014 position may need changing.

Consultation Q2 – Formula mapping

Timescales limited amount of work that could be done.

No major issues raised about basic premise of new formula during briefings and consultations.

Consultation Q3 – Implementation of high needs pupil funding

Most significant change of all proposals and area of most concern amongst schools, particularly around targeted funding, in year changes with pupil migration and LA management of process. LAs have challenged the proposals with specific challenge around the level bureaucracy this change means which also seems at odds with current climate where the DfE wish to see as much funding as possible being delegated to schools. DfE maintaining strong recommendation despite challenges from LAs. Disappointed with move from current delegated system to something that resembling 2003 situation, the current system was introduced as a result of rising costs of SEN and increased pressure for statements. Consultation shows a near 50/50 split in preference between 2 approaches. Consistency needed with geographical neighbours.

The following discussions took place:

Financial situation around SEN funding in Leicester City unclear however money is available in Leicestershire, all local authorities are required under the new system to provide top up funding for high needs pupils.

Will be winners and losers within either of the proposals. Top up level at additional £2,000 for one year only negligible within total school budgets. Most significant impacts around those with enhanced packages.

Lengthy discussion took place around wider issues of SEN funding.

- Issues with consistency in cross border funding where different LAs have different SEN criteria. Arrangements of high needs system should alleviate issue but not completely remove. £6,000 threshold for top-ups consistent with neighbouring authorities.
- LA officers looking at cross-border funding issues through collaboration across authorities. Desire to remove incentive to place children in cost influenced settings. Non-financial issues still in place outside of Forum's remit.
- Children and Families Bill will change SEN landscape.
- TM invited to Scrutiny panel as chair of Forum. Discussed financial aspects within limitations of Forum's remit.

Consultation Q4 – View on formula proposals

Consultation speed and reasons for change outside of LA control. Proposals provide an element of protection for schools.

Some mixed responses on subsidies for small schools. Consultation itself refers to proposals not protecting small schools and need to look to the future for them. The lump sum set at £150,000 actually provides more funding across the board than the small school protection in the current formula.

Consultation Q5 – Boarding provision funding withdrawal and split-site definition

Boarding provision proposals agreed by Forum in 2005 but funding locked in by MFG. Process for change now allows removal.

Current definition of split sites is unworkable, referring to schools sites being more than 200m apart. Irrelevant to special schools due to funding methodology. Represents

minor element of school funding. Creation of secondary split school funding would require scaling back of other funding or shift of elements of resource from primary to secondary.

Conclusions

Following consultation with schools, Leicestershire County Council proposes no change to formula factors presented to Forum on 7th September 2012.

The following discussions took place:

Concerns raised that policy formula factors relating to infant class sizes and ghost funding creates significant number of losers and increases volatility. Small yet significant number of schools potentially facing large reduction in funding which may push breaking of class size limits to avoid deficits.

- Broad view needed within formula development, not just individual schools / development groups.
- Ghost funding doesn't necessarily replicate per pupil funding. Move to lump sum rather than targeted funding.
- Limited number of formula factors mean schools may lose in one area yet gain in another.
- Class sizes and ghost funding not raised as issues at briefing neither through consultation with schools.
- Working group considered impact of June change of stance by DFE on holding money outside of formula for growth and opted to leave in formula. Funding has very wide distribution pattern with varying impacts. More issues historically around sudden loss of ghost funding within long term planning as yearly class sizes change.
- Suggestion that management of class sizes is local issue. Potential for use of mixed year group classes. Formula moves £3.4 million in funding for class sizes in multiples of 30 from targeted to universal funding, allowing greater scope for management and moderation by MFG. Any funding pot created to alleviate losses will theoretically require back into targeted funding.
- Noted that proposals produced by working group commissioned by Forum.
- Exceptions to class size now stay through entirety of KS1.

Discussion took place on future review of formula.

- Limited time at present as formula has to be with EFA by October 31st 2012, hence compressed timescales. Formula cannot be a fit-all but no reason not to review at later date. Financial regulations do not say 2013/14 formula has to be used for as is for 2014/15.
- Individual impacts almost impossible to correlate with school characteristics.
- Desire for concerns to be brought to Cabinet.

Proposal by Chair to review formula after 12 months passed with 6 votes for and 2 against.

- Concern about readmitting formula factors once removed.
- Important that all concerns are taken back to groups across all phases.

Headteacher briefings on funding reform began this week. Biggest area of concern around changes is high need pupil funding, the financial impact which is not moderated by MFG. Timescales do not allow closer look at proportionalities on small schools, deprivation, etc. LA proposals represent best solution available at current time. Schools that benefit in 2013/14 may be different to those benefiting in 2014/15.

Concerns raised over lump sum of £150,000 being given to all schools.

- 7 small schools see reduction compared with current protection funding. Such protection queried given amounts involved.
- Currently £23 million placed into formula for small schools protection. Working group looked at range of models with lump sum value of £90,000 up to DFE limit of £200,000. Modelling showed lowest overall impact at £150,000 with only 7 secondary schools facing a loss. New lump sum places £41 million into formula, of

	<p>which £18 million is for small school protection. No small schools losing out</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No longer able to differentiate schools on size. • Other elements such as swimming pool allowances removed under new formula. • No difference in current small school protection between higher and upper schools. • Small school thresholds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Primary – 180 pupils across all years. ○ Secondary – 180 pupils per year group ○ Not affected by age ranges. <p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools Forum endorses the proposals with one vote against. <i>JL to append extract of minutes to Cabinet report.</i> • Schools Forum approves the proposals for additional delegation to primary schools. • Schools Forum approves the proposals for additional delegation to secondary schools. <p>Proposals given justice in terms of debate. Thanks given to David Thomas for stimulating debate.</p>
6.	<p><u>AOB</u></p> <p><u>Schools Forum Constitution</u></p> <p>Final Schools Forum regulations made available from DFE last week. JL to revise constitution to make it explicit over representations.</p> <p><u>Implementation of Formula</u></p> <p>Thoughts now need to move from look of formula to implementation. Clear that lot of operational thought required around high needs in particular. Forum agrees proposal to assemble working group to consider implementation. <i>Representatives from Forum should contact Jenny Lawrence if they wish to be involved.</i></p> <p><u>Deployment of DSG</u></p> <p>LA required at beginning and end of year is to produce statement for DFE saying Schools Forum have been consulted on deployment of DSG and are aware of LA plans for unallocated DSG. Final settlement received late July. Can only apologise for not bringing report back to Forum advising of final settlement. £560,000 additional DSG received in final settlement. No plan to allocate in current financial year but will use to take forward into 2013/14 settlement. Going back, Forum have had some long hard discussions on in-year allocations. Wish to follow same principles adopted in previous years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement given by Forum
7.	<p><u>Next Meetings</u></p> <p>The proposed date of 19th October 2012 has been removed. This has been replaced by a meeting at 1:30pm on Tuesday 4th December, to be held at Beaumanor Hall.</p>