

Leicestershire Schools' ForumNotes of the meeting held on Monday 16 June 2014, 2.00 pm at Beaumanor Hall**Present**

Tim Moralee Brian Myatt Alex Green Sonia Singleton	Secondary Academy Headteachers
Suzanne Uprichard Richard Spurr Michael Murphy Bill Nash	Secondary Academy Governors
Jean Lewis	Primary Academy Governors
Heather Sewell David Lloyd Karen Allen	Primary Maintained Headteachers
David Thomas	Primary Maintained Governor
Jason Brooks	Maintained Representative – Special
Suzanne Uprichard	PRU representative

In attendance:

Jenny Lawrence, CYPS Finance Business Partner
 Lesley Hagger, Director, Children and Families Service
 Gill Weston, Assistant Director, Education, Skills and Learning
 Chris Bristow, Interim Head of Strategy, Vulnerable Groups
 Harvinder Lidher, Education Funding Agency

Observer

Andy Winter, Business Manager, Wreake Valley Academy

1.	Apologies Apologies were received from Ivan Ould, Nigel Leigh, Tony Gelsthorpe, Ian Sharpe, Alison Deacon, Julie Kennedy, Ed McGovern and Louisa Hallam.	
2.	Minutes The minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2014 were agreed subject to slight amendment to the membership category for those present.	

3.	<p>SEND and Personalisation</p> <p>Chris Bristow gave a verbal report on SEND Reform and Personalisation of budgets and circulated a paper on personal budgets. Chris explained that from 1 September the 'local offer' would be in place. Schools had a responsibility to publish their own SEND advice and information, Leicestershire was currently working with early years' settings, schools and colleges to assist with this. Briefings were underway in schools and information would shortly be sent to schools.</p> <p>Chris added that the EHC Plan covers provision across education, health and care which was similar to a statement of special needs. Consultation with schools on providing top up funding was taking place and the SEN Support Plan would be used to trigger this process in place of a statutory assessment.</p> <p>The conversion of existing statements to an EHC plan was required by April 2018. Chris explained the prioritisation of this process and had spoken with pathfinder colleagues regarding best advice to convene an annual review. The statutory assessment would reduce from 26 weeks to 20 weeks and bureaucracy cut down through SEN support plan being the basis for EHC plan and encouraged personal centred approach where plans are devised and co-produced with the parent by SENCOs supported by practitioners.</p> <p>Chris added that there was more work to be carried out and joint commissioning work to be undertaken.</p> <p>Chris commented that the main discussion today was personalised budgets and referred to the previously circulated paper. Chris outlined how an EHC plan can be requested but said that the resource from education was unknown but that the provision specified in the EHC plan could include funding from the school budget share and schools would be encouraged to personalise the support they provide. The first £6,000 and additional top up funding that this is specified on the EHC plan.</p> <p>A Forum member asked what steps was the Local Authority taking about monitoring and evaluation of this new strategy and what role schools play. Gill commented that the whole SEND project would be reviewed in the first term.</p> <p>Karen Allen asked about the personalised budgets changes in SEND and the deadline for turnaround of assessments being 20 weeks. She added that there seemed to be a growing trend in schools that already have statements and annual reviews taking 8 months to get a decision in order to get more provision. She felt that the reason was a financial</p>	
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	<p>one. Chris stated that the delay was not due to financial reasons but to a staffing shortage for which the solution was being actioned.</p> <p>Chris explained that Leicester City was one of the pathfinder authorities and health colleagues are up to date with this agenda. The key thing was joint commissioning to align the relevant services. There are new requirements for care plans and health care plans and Health need to put together a health care plan.</p> <p>David Lloyd expressed extreme concern regarding child mental health as they not receiving the basic support to get on that ladder to get the help they need for mental health issues. He added that there was not enough support for mental health issues.</p> <p>Lesley Hagger stated that this had been identified for any pathway for CAMHS tiers 1 -4 and had at last been recognised in health. Lesley added that this workstream was being looked at.</p>	
4.	<p>2013/14 Schools Budget Outturn</p> <p>Jenny Lawrence introduced '2013/14 Schools Budget Outturn'. Jenny outlined that the Dedicated Schools Grant Reserve at the end of the financial year had nearly £1.4M sitting in an unallocated element.</p> <p>Jenny referred to the £2.2M current exposure to sponsored academy deficits for which £2.5M was set aside. Forum noted this position. Jenny added that funding was being held for the age range changes in 2015/16 in order to give a level of funding protection (£2.7M in 2014/15 and 2015/16). £1M had been set aside for demographic growth in primary places and other allocations for the continuation of the wind-down of Key Stage 3 provision and the Oakfield action plan.</p> <p>As part of the NNDR exercise across schools, maintained and academies would be fully funded for this. However the EFA would not fund any of the increase that relates to pre-conversion and this would be something the Local Authority would need to fund and is an additional and unexpected call on funding.</p> <p>Schools' Forum need to think about pupil number growth as this would become an issue over a number of years. Jenny said that over the last two years a contingency had been set aside because of changes to the high level needs provision which had been able to provide funding for a number of issues, however this was not a sustainable long term solution to funding growth.</p> <p>Jenny referred to academy provision for deficits and challenging discussions were being entered into with academy sponsors regarding outstanding building work, health and safety work not carried out.</p>	

	<p>It was not appropriate to set a growth fund for 2015/16 but there was a need to link into place strategy.</p> <p>Jenny said that there was no proposal to allocate the contingency. This would be taken into account with the 2015/16 discussion.</p>	
5.	<p>2015/16 School Funding</p> <p>Jenny introduced '2015/16 School Funding' which outlined the Local Authority's response to the DfE's consultation 'Fairer Schools Funding in 2015-16'. The consultation came out in March with a closing date of 30 April 2014. Feedback is expected towards the end of June 2014.</p> <p>Richard Spurr commented that the published figures for the proposed allocation to Leicestershire were based on 2013/14 data which could mean the final figures could be significantly different.</p> <p>David Thomas asked Jenny about the scale back for Leicestershire of £6.3m. Jenny commented that the methodology of the calculation does not take into account that everything is funded through the schools' formula. The extra £202 per pupil was in the allocation of funding to the LA and would not allow for schools to be funded at an additional £202 per pupil.</p> <p>The Schools' Forum noted the paper and acknowledged the analysis at this point for paper C.</p>	
6.	<p>Simplification of Academy Funding</p> <p>Jenny introduced the paper 'Simplification of Academy Funding' which outlined the Local Authority's response to the DfE's consultation 'Simplifying the administration of academies funding'.</p> <p>Jenny outlined the current funding process for how academies received DSG funding and the exceptions to the funding i.e. early converters, studio or free schools. The proposed changes would require the local authorities to treat studio and free schools and non-recoupment academies equally in terms of funding.</p> <p>This would give these providers access to local authority centrally managed schools budgets which would include any funding established within local authorities to fund growth in pupil numbers</p> <p>Richard Spurr asked about pupil estimates and whether this was a financial burden. Harvinder commented that there were lots of changes in Leicestershire and national move to the fair funding formula would have an impact at local level regarding age ranges. He added it was down to the Local Authority to provide growth funding where it is appropriate to do so.</p>	

	<p>Sonia Singleton commented that there were more and more calls on DSG regarding sponsorship. Some of the potential sponsors want problems fixing before they go into sponsorship. Either the Local Authority fix the problems and they sponsor or the sponsors fix the problems and sponsor. This point was mirrored by other Forum members.</p> <p>Discussion took place on the age range changes and potential building work which would require expansion in a few years time. Harvinder commented on the funding arrangements for 2015/16 where you can vary the funding according to numbers.</p> <p>Lesley Hagger said she had a meeting on the 30 June with the Chief Executive and the EFA to discuss how we would work together to make best use of all our resources. Lesley agreed to report back to the next Schools' Forum.</p> <p>The Schools' Forum noted the Local Authority's response to the consultation.</p>	LH
7.	<p>2015/16 School Funding Formula</p> <p>Jenny introduced '2015/16 School Funding' which presents an analysis of the Leicestershire school funding formula and the process and timetable for the development and approval of the 2015/16 school funding formula.</p> <p>Jenny commented that this was difficult to plan as we wanted to make sure the resource was used in the most appropriate way to support an enhanced pupil outcome and get as much equity into the system.</p> <p>Jenny referred to Appendix 1 which was an analysis of the formula factors used by local authorities in their 2014/15 formulae issued by the EFA in February 2014. This information gives a funding formula comparison for Leicestershire against statistical neighbours and the national position.</p> <p>Discussion had taken place with how best Leicestershire should use the additional funding for 2015/16 – appropriate to readdress the balance within the factors. Work on modelling had been carried out. Approval for the 2014/15 age range changes had been received. Criticisms were level of projection too high which also happened in 2014/15. There would be a need to go back and review whether 80% remained appropriate for 2015/16 especially as schools could now plan for the change.</p> <p>Schools Forum supported the approach to be taken by the Authority in allocating additional funding across primary and secondary schools as well as special schools & units and early years providers.</p>	

	<p>Jenny proposed that a Task and Finish Group was established to ensure schools are fully engaged with the local authority in developing the overall approach to school funding in 2015/16 and the development of the funding formula. The Group would assist the development of the proposals to provide challenge to the Local Authority. A number of business managers had been approached to be part of the group and Jenny asked that Schools' Forum nominate members to join the group.</p> <p>The first meeting had been arranged for 26 June 2014 at Beaumanor Hall to start looking at some the issues that are envisaged followed by meetings in July and August.</p> <p>Alex Green, Bill Nash and David Thomas agreed to be part of the Task and Finish Group.</p> <p>The Schools' Forum supported the three recommendations of the report.</p>	
8.	<p>2014/15 membership</p> <p>Jenny reported that the membership was assessed on an annual basis and for 2014/15 no changes were required.</p>	
9.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>There was no further business to discuss.</p>	
10.	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>Thursday 18 September, 2.00 – 4.00 pm at Beaumanor Hall.</p>	