

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

SCHOOLS FORUM

6 November 2019

PRESENT:

School Representatives

Mr E Gibbs (Chair), Mr B Lawrance, Mr P Raspin, Ms S Thomas, Mr A West and Mrs D West

Academies Representatives

Mr D Flowitt, Miss Z Bidmead and Mrs T Norriss

Non Schools Representative

Mr M Lochran

PVI Representatives

Mrs M Drury and Mrs C Williams

Executive Elected Members

Cllr. D Rose

Observers

Ms P Whittaker

Local Authority Officers

Ms T Elliott (Strategic Lead – Servicedesk), Mr D Chaplin (Head of Access and Inclusion), Ms R Maughan (Specialist – Commercial), Ms J Frost (Education Inclusion Lead Officer), Ms C Griffiths (Sufficiency and Contracts Officer) and Mrs A Dawson (Democratic Services – Secretary to the Forum)

The meeting was quorate.

The forum met at Melior Community Academy, Scunthorpe.

868 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Mr R Biglands and Ms L Norris.

869 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS – The Chair welcomed members and thanked Miss Bidmead for hosting the meeting at the Academy.

870 MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING DATED 19 June 2019 - Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2019, having been printed and circulated amongst the members, be taken as read and correctly recorded, and be signed by the chair.

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871 **MATTERS ARISING**

Item 866 Future agenda items – Ms Elliott advised that Mrs Flintoff had been unable to prepare a report on Service Level Agreements for data services but would do so for the next meeting in January 2020.

872 **MEMBERSHIP UPDATE** – Ms Elliott advised that there had been two resignations received previously and one just prior to the meeting. Mrs A Hewson had retired as head teacher of Eastoft CE Primary School and Mrs C Randall, head teacher of Kirton Lindsey Primary School and Mrs J Fullwood, head teacher of Scunthorpe CE Primary School, had resigned due to other commitments. Therefore three maintained primary representatives were now required.

There was also a vacancy for a secondary academy representative due to the retirement of Mr J Sellars from The Axholme Academy. Miss Z Bidmead advised that a representative was currently being sought from secondary academy head teachers.

Resolved – That the Secretary contacts Mrs C Lloyd, Chair of the Primary Consortium, to seek nominations for primary representatives.

873 **FINAL DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (DSG) AND UPDATED SCHOOLS BUDGET 2019/20** – Ms Maughan presented the report.

In July 2019/20 the Department for Education announced the final allocations for 2019/20, including changes to the high needs and early years block. The balance of funding had increased, although this was not an unexpected change.

Adjustments had been made to the high needs block in respect of imports and exports of high needs pupils between councils and deductions for high needs places in academies, free schools and colleges.

The Early Years block had been updated taking into account the January 2019 pupil count.

No changes had been made at this time to the schools or central services blocks which were determined using the October 2018 school census and as such were finalised in December 2018.

It was proposed to use the additional early years DSG to increase the early years' budgets to take account of the changes in part time equivalent (PTE) pupil numbers as detailed in the early years report.

Any adjustments to the high needs overall budget would be made, if necessary, following the financial outcomes of the service review.

Resolved – (a) That the changes to the Dedicated Schools Grant since January 2019 be noted, and (b) that the carry forward of the remaining DSG resources to 2020/21 be supported.

874 **EARLY YEARS – DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT** – Ms C Griffiths presented the report on behalf of Mrs N Raines.

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The Early Years Dedicated Schools Grant for each financial year was revised based on three census counts. The revised funding allocation for the 2019/20 financial year had been published and there was an increase in funding of £463,000.

Two year olds were eligible for a maximum of 15 hours funded early learning and care where their family circumstances meant that they were in receipt of benefits, or where the child was in or had left the care of the council, was in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or the child had an education, health and care plan.

All three and four year olds were entitled to a maximum of 15 hours funded early education each week. Children with parents in employment could also be eligible for an additional 15 funded hours.

Provider payments were determined using the Early Years Single Funding Formula comprised of a base rate and a number of supplements. Early Years Pupil Premium was a ring fenced allocation, paid as a supplement to children that met the free school meal eligibility criteria or were in the care of a council, or had left care.

Resolved – That the position for the current financial year and the revised funding allocation for Early Years for 2019/20 be noted.

875 DEDICATED SCHOOL GRANT (DSG) HIGH NEEDS FUNDING – Mr D Chaplin and Ms J Frost presented the report.

A previous report was considered at the June 2019 meeting on DSG outturn figures for 2018/19 detailing a number of actions undertaken to reduce High Needs challenges. The report updated the recommendations and actions.

The Access and Inclusion Review had taken slightly longer to complete than anticipated, however, staff had already been designated into certain roles and it was hope the review would be complete by the end of the month.

Mr Chaplin updated on new provision in mainstream schools, including Headway at Baysgarth School and Key Stage 2 provision at South Axholme Academy. There had also been a number of sponsor applications for the free school; a decision was awaited from the Department for Education. A bespoke building would be created for the school, it was hoped that it would be ready for September 2020 or possibly early 2021.

Information on elected home education had been included in the report; five of the 151 pupils home educated had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Annual reviews were held with children with an EHCP and a package of support was provided where required.

Mrs West queried whether families who had elected to home educate children were aware of events that were available to the children, e.g. music sessions. Ms Frost advised that events were organised for families and had been very well attended. The majority of families were committed to home education and were very much involved. Where families had fallen out with a school, a number of the children were now back in mainstream school. There were a rising number of children with anxiety and mental health needs, and home education often met their needs. Research was currently being undertaken with regard to future projects to help families with this issue.

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Ms Frost advised that Post 16 numbers were growing, however outcomes were good and there was an increase in numbers going into paid employment. There was an emphasis for the new 6th form provision, it was important that links were made with employers for the future.

A discussion ensued on the cost of supporting children with an EHCP and banding in special schools and the use of alternative provision.

Mrs West queried what support was available for parents of children who suffered from anxiety. Ms Frost informed members that work had taken place with CAMHS to look at a new pathway. Children were being signposted and referred appropriately. Through the early years triage group research could inform the council about the possibility of very young children becoming anxious in the future. Different approaches were being taken with children in Key Stage 2.

Resolved – That the recommendations outlined in section 8 of the report be agreed:

- i) That work continued to be undertaken with Headteachers and Principals to implement and embed the area-wide solutions to High Needs challenges and pressures ensuring that children and young people's needs remained central;
- ii) that a second competition exercise for inclusive secondary phase provision (November 2019) be commenced;
- iii) that Key Stage 2 SEMH provision be fully functioning within the Spring Term 2020 (20 place SEMH provision – EHCP children); and
- iv) that small overspends of High Needs DSG be met through the use of reserves (High Needs DSG Reserves).

876 **DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENTS 2020-21**– Ms R Maughan presented the report.

In September 2019 the Government announced details of schools and high needs funding arrangements for 2020/21.

Overall national schools funding would increase by £2.6 billion in 2020/21, £4.8 billion in 2021/22 and £7.1 billion in 2022/23. This included £780 million extra for high needs in 2020/21.

The Government had announced £66 million nationally to support early years through increases to hourly funding rates for two, three and four year old entitlement. The Government had also confirmed its intentions to move to a 'hard' National Funding Formula for schools as soon as possible, where every schools budget would be set on the basis of a single, national formula.

The report set out implications for school budget in relation to each of the funding blocks.

Resolved – That the changes to the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2020/21 be noted.

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877 **SCHOOLS FUNDING FORMULA 2020-2021** – Ms T Elliott presented the report.

The Department for Education was continuing the introduction of the National Funding Formula (NFF) for schools to distribute resources based on the individual needs and characteristics of every school in the country.

Recent announcements confirmed that the NFF would provide a minimum per pupil level of £5,000 for every secondary school and £3,750 for every primary school.

To ensure smooth transition councils would use local formulae to set school budgets in 2020-21.

The report set out details of changes for 2020-21 and options to be considered.

Discussion ensued on the possibility of schools being able to make future projections, in order that plans could be put in place to enable business managers to plan financially beyond a year.

Ms Elliott advised that more detailed information could be submitted to the January meeting once pupil numbers had been received from the school census.

Mr Gibbs asked that thanks be recorded to the finance team for their hard work.

Resolved – That the recommendations outlined in section 8 of the report be agreed:

- i) That the move to full implementation of the National Funding Formula including the change to the Mobility factor be endorsed;
- ii) that the continued use of measuring pupils travel distances by road and footpath instead of ‘as the crow flies’ under the Sparsity Factor be endorsed;
- iii) that the application of the Minimum Funding Guarantee at the maximum level which could be afforded including the use of DSG earmarked reserves as appropriate, be endorsed; and
- iv) that final proposals for schools funding be submitted to the meeting in January 2020 following consultation with all schools and on receipt of the final funding allocations in December 2019.

878 **DE-DELEGATION OF CENTRAL BUDGETS 2019-20** – Ms T Elliott presented the report.

As part of the Department for Education’s School Funding Reforms introduced from April 2013, councils were directed to delegate specific budgets to schools and academies.

The regulations allowed central budgets for specific services to be held by councils on behalf of maintained primary and secondary schools. The decision was made by the maintained school representatives of the forum.

The report provided information in relation to the budgets and requested approval to de-delegate some of the budgets.

Resolved – (a) That the recommendations for the maintained primary phase for the de-delegation of budgets, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be agreed by members for

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primary maintained schools, and (b) that the recommendations for the maintained secondary phase for the de-delegation of budgets, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be agreed by members for secondary maintained schools.

- 879 **DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS** – The Secretary explained that the proposed date for the next meeting of the forum clashed with the council’s Planning Committee meeting, which meant that there were no suitable meeting rooms available at Church Square House. It was proposed to avoid future issues in relation to this, that meetings be moved from a Wednesday to a Thursday afternoon where possible.

Resolved – (a) That future meetings of the forum be held on a Thursday afternoon, where possible, and (b) that the Secretary e-mails future dates out to all members when arranged.