

# **NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

## **SCHOOLS FORUM**

**18 June 2020**

### **PRESENT:**

#### **School Representatives**

Mr E Gibbs (present for part of the meeting), Mr B Lawrance, Mrs D West, Mr R Biglands, Mrs T Millard, Miss A Nuttall, Ms M Potterton and Mrs R Stephenson.

#### **Academies Representatives**

Mr D Flowitt, Mr P Raspin and Mr A West

#### **Non Schools Representative**

Mr M Lochran

#### **PVI Representatives**

Mrs M Drury and Mrs C Williams

#### **Executive Elected Members**

Cllr J Reed

#### **Local Authority Officers**

Ms T Elliott (Strategic Lead – Servicedesk), (Head of Access and Inclusion), Mr P Thorpe (Director of Learning Skills and Culture), Ms R Maughan (Specialist – Commercial), Ms J Frost (Education Inclusion Lead Officer), Mrs J Flintoff (Head of Standards and Effectiveness), Ms N Raines (Early Years Sufficiency Manager) and Mrs V Oxley (Democratic Services – Secretary to the Forum)

The meeting was quorate.

The forum met via MS Teams.

#### **892 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Miss Z Bidmead, Mr E Gibbs (Chair), Mrs S Thomas and Mr D Chaplin.

#### **893 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS** – The vice chair welcomed members, adding Mr E Gibbs was unable to chair the meeting due to technical issues.

#### **894 DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST AND PERSONAL OF PERSONAL PREJUDICIAL INTEREST** - There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests and personal or personal and prejudicial interests.

#### **895 MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING DATED 14 January 2020 - Resolved** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2019, having been printed and circulated

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amongst the members, be taken as read and correctly recorded, and be signed by the vice chair.

- 896 **REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION** – (a) The review of the Constitution had been updated as part of the Coronavirus Act 2020, the above regulations amended the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012. Members could be present at meetings through remote means where they were able to access and participate simultaneously by electronic means (including (but not limited to) telephone and video conferencing, live webcast and live interactive streaming). The preference of North Lincolnshire Council as the local authority being Microsoft Teams. (b) Current vacancies on the Forum membership are Academy secondary representative, maintained PRU representative, and primary heads representative. (c) New Chair of the forum to appointed due to the retirement of Mr E Gibbs.

Members took this point to thank Mr E Gibbs for his contribution and commitment to the forum.

**Resolved** – (a) That the amended Constitution be agreed by Forum members; (b) that current vacancies be agreed at the Primary and Secondary Heads meeting, and reported to the forum; (c) that nominations for Chair be discussed at the October meeting and (d) that the Secretary sends a letter of thanks to Mr E Gibbs on behalf of the Forum.

- 897 **DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT OUTTURN 2019-20** - Ms R Maughan presented the report.

The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) was a ring-fenced specific grant that must be used in support of the schools' budget as defined in the School and Early Years Finance (England) (No 2) Regulations; it could be used for no other purpose.

Individual School Budgets were set in January 2020 for the 2020/21 financial year. No further adjustments could be made in year. Once allocated, school funding was counted as expenditure in support of the schools' budget.

The central element of the schools' budget may be under or overspent. If there is an underspend in respect of the central budget, this must be carried forward to support schools' budget in future years.

There were new arrangements for handling overspends with effect from the end of the 2019 to 2020 financial year making it particularly important to maintain a reasonable level of DSG reserve. New provisions had been put into the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2020, so that local authorities were required to carry forward overspends to their schools' budget.

A breakdown of expenditure for each of the central budgets was provided.

**Resolved** – That the report be noted.

- 898 **SCHOOLS OUTTURN 2019/20** - Ms R Maughan presented the report.

Individual school budgets for 2019-20 amounted to £109.585m of which £51.280m was recouped by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for academy schools. In addition, maintained schools carried forward balances of £2.939m from 2018/19. Actual

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expenditure by maintained schools in 2019-20 was £58.048m, resulting in an in-year contribution to reserves of £0.257m.

The increase to reserves of £0.257m brought the total value held in individual schools to £3.196m. Dedicated Schools Grant balances amounted to £2.009m. The scheme of finance stated that the maximum proportion of the collective balances held by the authority, which would be used to back the licenced deficit arrangement would not exceed 50%. Deficit balances held by schools totalled £1.188m, a reduction of £0.08m from 2018-19 and stood at 23% of collective balances.

**Resolved** – That the report be noted.

#### 899 **EARLY YEARS – FUNDING UPDATE** – Ms N Raines presented the report.

The Early Years Dedicated Schools Grant (EYDSG) was paid for two, three and four-year olds accessing funded early education.

On 17 March 2020 the Chancellor confirmed the government would continue to pay funding to local authorities for the funded early education entitlements for two, three and four-year olds, providing reassurance for early years providers in light of the coronavirus outbreak.

Schools and childcare providers were closed to all but key worker and vulnerable children (priority groups) as of 20 March 2020. More than half of all providers stayed open to meet the needs of key worker families and vulnerable children. This included school nurseries, day nurseries, childminders and a small number of pre-schools.

The numbers of children attending provision started from a low base of 188 in the week commencing 6 April 2020. Numbers had gradually increased to 423 children attending the week prior to half term (week commencing 18 May 2020). With the re-opening of provision from 1 June 2020 to all families, it was estimated that 1088 children would have attended over the course of the week.

The announcement that the government would continue to pay local authorities for free early education funded places for two, three and four-year olds to support providers at this time ensured that the council could confidently make arrangements to fund providers for the summer term.

**Resolved** – (a) That members support the double funding of children in the summer term to ensure the sufficiency of childcare places for priority groups, and (b) that members support the concept of a Hardship fund for the sector to ensure sufficiency of childcare places longer term using EYDSG reserves.

#### 900 **HIGH NEEDS UPDATE** – Ms J Frost presented the report.

The report provided an update on the DSG High Needs outturn figures for 2019/2020 and information about developments in statutory provision during Covid 19.

The Government had published a notice from the Secretary of State for Education issued under the Coronavirus Act 2020 to modify section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for->

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[education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care);

Councils would continue to receive their high needs budgets and should continue to pay top-up and other high needs funding so that the employment and payment of staff supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and those requiring alternative provision, could continue. High needs funding would therefore continue to be paid to the following types of setting, whether from local or central government:

- local authority-maintained schools (mainstream, special and pupil referral units)
- academies and free schools (mainstream, special and alternative provision)
- non-maintained special schools
- independent schools, including independent special schools
- independent alternative provision
- high needs places in further education (FE) colleges and sixth form colleges
- special post-16 providers
- hospital schools

At the time of the previous report of January 2020, it was anticipated that the 2019/20 DSG High Needs budget would have an overspend of £320,000. This mainly related to the independent schools and colleges specialist provision budget where there had been fee uplifts, as well as top up funding for maintained schools and colleges and the Inclusion and Alternative Provision budgets.

The final outturn figure for 2019/20 had a reduced overspend of £117,215 due to savings relating to vacancy management within some areas during the staffing review.

**Resolved** – (a) That Headteachers/Principals and the council continue to work together to implement and embed the area-wide solutions, by reviewing alternative provision resources in the context of inclusion and reducing both fixed term exclusions and permanent exclusions; (b) that KS2 SEMH provision be fully functioning within 2020 (20 place SEMH provision – EHC plan children), and (c) that small overspends of High Needs DSG be met through the use of reserves (HN DSG Ear-Marked Reserves).

#### 901 CHANGES TO CENTRAL SERVICES FOR SCHOOLS (HISTRORIC COMMITMENTS) FUNDING – Mrs J Flintoff presented the report.

The Dedicated Schools Grant Historic Commitments funding had been used in North Lincolnshire to provide a range of school focussed support and activity including the provision of School Improvement Partners to every school in North Lincolnshire. For the last two years the Peer Leader Programme had also been funded through this element. Additionally, money was used to support workforce development such as the aspirant head programme, Safeguarding pro, and innovation grants for schools wishing to work with the Research School.

The current key priority had been to reboot the Peer Leader Programme in relation sector lead improvement approaches.

**Resolved** – That a further update on progress be provided at the next meeting.

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902 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS** – Ms R Maughan updated about the Risk Protection Arrangements (RPA).

The arrangements were an alternative to insurance but contractually different and up until this financial year were only open to academies. This year the Department for Education had opened the scheme up to local authority-maintained schools (as from April 2020).

For the financial year 2020-21 the RPA was set at £18 per pupil or place if a special school. Full details of the scheme were available via gov.uk.

If schools wished to join individually, they could do so, and the local authority would be notified.

903 **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS – Resolved** - The following items were agreed;

- DSG 2021 update
- Scheme of financing schools
- Progress update to central services for schools (historic commitments) funding

904 **DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS** – The next Forum would take place on Thursday 1 October 2020, at 2pm via MS Teams.