

## **NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **SCHOOLS FORUM**

**21 April 2022**

**PRESENT:** - B Lawrance (Chairman)

#### **School Representatives**

Mr B Lawrance (Chairman), Mrs A Cvijetic, Mrs A Nuttall, Mrs R Stephenson, Mrs M Potterton, Mrs D Senior, Mrs P Whittaker and Mr A Sutherland

#### **Academy Representatives**

Mr D Keogh and Mr P Raspin

#### **Non School Representatives**

Mr L Riley and Ms R Abbott

#### **PVI Representatives**

Mrs C Williams

#### **Local Authority Officers**

Ms T Elliott, Mrs R Maughan, Ms J Frost, Mrs J Flintoff, Mr D Chaplin, Mrs W Holmes and Mrs A Dawson (Secretary)

The meeting was held virtually via Microsoft Teams.

#### **957 WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS/APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence had been received from Mr P Thompson, Mr M Adnitt, Cllr J Reed, Mrs M Drewery and Mr R Biglands.

The Chair welcomed new members to the Forum.

#### **958 DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND PERSONAL OR PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS (IF ANY)**

Mrs D Senior declared that she had a personal interest as an employee for the Department for Education.

#### **959 MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING DATED 20 JANUARY 2022**

That the minutes of the last meeting held on 20 January 2022, 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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**960 MEMBERSHIP UPDATE**

The Secretary updated the Forum on changes to membership:

Mr D Keogh was now confirmed as the new Secondary Academy representative.

Mr A Sutherland was confirmed as the temporary Special Schools representative, to substitute for Mrs T Millard whilst she was on long term sick.

Mrs D Senior had been confirmed as the new Maintained Primary Governor representative, following the resignation of Mrs D West.

Mrs P Whittaker had been confirmed as the Maintained Primary – Special Schools Governor representative, she would replace Mrs S Thomas who had stepped down from her position.

The vacancy for Primary Academy Governor representative still remained and would be readvertised.

**Resolved** – That letters be sent to Mrs D West and Mrs S Thomas, thanking them for their service to the forum.

**961 SCHOOLS' SCHEME OF FINANCE UPDATE**

Mrs R Maughan presented the report.

The report introduced a new version of the North Lincolnshire Council Scheme for Financing Schools. The scheme was last reviewed in 2020 and circulated in February 2021.

The report set out the proposed changes to the scheme.

Consultation on the changes would take place during the summer term with maintained schools. Maintained schools' representatives on the Forum were required to vote on the proposed changes.

**Resolved** – That the changes to the Scheme for Financing Schools be approved by maintained schools' representatives, and that the results on the consultation with maintained schools would be reported to the Schools Forum in July 2022.

**962 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT UPDATE**

Ms T Elliott presented the report.

On 16 December 2021, the Education Funding Agency published the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocations. The report provided information on the updated DSG Allocations published in March 2022 and planned spending of central expenditure.

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The DSG allocations were present in four blocks; each block was determined by a separate national funding formula.

In March 2022 the Education and Skills Funding Agency updated DSG allocations for academy recoupment and high needs deductions. The changes to each block were set out in the report.

Mr B Lawrance requested that prior year figures were included on future reports for the benefit of new members.

**Resolved** – (a) That the changes to the Dedicated School Grant funding allocations and planned central expenditure for 2022/23 be noted and (b) that prior years budget/outturn figures be provided on future reports.

#### **963 HIGH NEEDS UPDATE**

Ms J Frost presented the report.

The report gave an update on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

The percentage of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) remained stable since reporting in January 2022. The percentage of pupils who had been identified as requiring SEN support had increased since January 2022.

The most common Primary Need recorded in North Lincolnshire primary schools was speech, language and communications need. In North Lincolnshire secondary schools, the most common Primary Need was social, emotional and mental health.

Next steps and priorities for inclusion meetings with headteachers were being organised to identify where the focus needed to be on developing local provision for inclusion bases within schools. The first meeting for secondary headteachers was anticipated for early May 2022, invites would go out shortly. Further discussions were taking place with primary headteachers to identify primary schools who may wish to open a similar base to support need and earlier support.

There remained increased pressure around social, emotional and mental health needs and the Tuition and Medical Needs Education Team (TAMNET) were identifying increased referrals for this area.

Overall, DSG high needs showed a projected underspend, which would enable a potential funding return into high needs reserves. Alternative provision budgets at year end were underspent for the first time in a number of years. This was partly due to the pandemic and the reduction in permanent exclusions.

Ms Frost advised that she believed there was an opportunity to review element three top up funding for children with an EHCP as it had not been reviewed for two years. Different formulas were being modelled, which would

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be shared with Schools Forum in the future.

However, Mr D Chaplin advised caution as it was likely that the uplift on high needs funding would decrease after the next couple of years. Ms T Elliott explained that the projected underspend would move into reserves and the supplementary grant allocated to mainstream schools for special schools had gone into the DSG and would be allocated directly to special schools. Discussion ensued with regard to funding elements in relation to high needs.

Ms Frost advised that a new formula was to be introduced by the Department for Education for import/export and would be adjusted mid-year. Ms Elliott explained that the council would be aware of any adjustments at the end of July and had included it in the funding forecast.

Mr B Lawrance queried how the percentage of pupils with an EHCP who attend special schools in North Lincolnshire compared nationally. Ms Frost advised that almost a third of young people with an EHCP attended special schools either in North Lincolnshire or out of area, which was similar in comparison with other areas. There were more young people in a mainstream setting with additional help. Given the work completed to support individual provision within North Lincolnshire there had been a massive reduction in pupils having to travel farther afield, which removed the need for residential provision.

**Resolved** – (a) That Headteachers, Principals continued to work with the council to implement and embed the area-wide solutions, ensuring that children and young people's needs remained central; (b) that Headteachers and Principals work with council officers to investigate funding models for Inclusion Hubs and explore opportunities for specialist units/resourced provision within primary and secondary mainstream schools, and (c) that top up funding for mainstream Education, Health and Care Plan be reviewed.

#### **964 CHANGES TO SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT FUNDING**

Mrs J Flintoff presented the report.

The report updated the Forum of the council response to changes to school improvement funding through the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Local Authority Monitoring and Brokering (LAMB) Grant.

The council worked with all schools, regardless of designation as a maintained school, free school or academy. The core school improvement offer had been funded through a combination of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Historic Commitments, the ESFA LAMB Grant and core council budget.

In January 2022, following the Department for Education announcement that the ESFA school improvement funding would be reduced by 50% for the financial year 2022/23 and removed in 2023/24, the Forum agreed delegation from maintained schools to ensure continuity of support into the new financial year (from April 2022),

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Subsequently elected members had agreed additional funding for school improvement, prioritising education standards as a key area for investment. As the de-delegation had already been agreed by the Forum for the new financial year, it would show on maintained school budgets, however, an in-year adjustment would be made so that costs to maintained schools were reimbursed.

Forum members agreed that decision was very positive and were thankful to the elected members.

**Resolved** – (a) That the political decision to invest in support for schools be noted and (b) that a letter be written by the Chair to the Children and Families Cabinet Member thanking her for her leadership in the decision.

#### **965 INCREASE IN LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN PUPIL PREMIUM FROM APRIL 2022**

Mrs W Holmes presented the report.

The report provided information on the increase in Pupil Premium for Looked After Children to councils from April 2022.

Pupil Premium was funding to improve education outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in schools in England. Evidence showed that disadvantaged children generally faced additional challenges in reaching their potential at school and often did not perform as well as other pupils.

Virtual School Heads were responsible for managing the funding given to councils for children in their care. They worked with schools to ensure that the funding was used to help deliver the outcomes identified in the children's personal education plans. Funding could be passed onto schools or part could be retained to fund activities that would benefit a group, or all of the looked after children in the council's care.

In April 2018 the funding allocation per looked after child increased to £2,300. Schools Forum agreed that schools would receive £630 per term and the remaining balance of £420 per child would be held within the Virtual School to support additional needs where needed. In April 2022, the funding allocation had increased to £2,410 per child, an increase of £110.

**Resolved** – (a) That the proposal that the increase in pupil premium for looked after children was accessed by schools as part of termly Pupil Education Plans (PEPs) be agreed, and (b) that the amount payable per child per term increases from £630 to £667, subject to appropriate SMART targets identified within PEPs.

#### **966 F40 GROUP MEMBERSHIP**

The Schools Forum had previously been part of the F40 group and an invoice had been received to renew the membership for another year, the cost of which was £750. Ms T Elliott advised that there was funding available for this

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fee.

**Resolved** - That the F40 group membership be paid for the forthcoming year.

967 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Mrs R Maughan advised that schools NNDR funding and charge now had to be shown through school budgets and would be amended accordingly. Schools would receive a copy of the latest plan.