

# NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

## SCHOOLS FORUM

18 January 2024

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

### **School Representatives**

Mr B Lawrance, Mrs A Cvijectic, Mrs A Nuttall, Mrs M Potterton, Mrs D Senior and Mrs R Stephenson.

### **Academy Representatives**

Mr D Flowitt, Mr D Keogh, Mr A Sutherland and Mr P Raspin

### **PVI Representatives**

Mrs C Williams

### **Non School Representatives**

Dr H Beverley

### **Elected Representatives**

Cllr J Reed

### **Local Authority Officers**

Mrs T Falshaw, Mrs J Flintoff, Ms J Standing, Mrs W Holmes, Mrs N Raines and Mrs A Dawson (Secretary)

The meeting was held at the Ashby Community Hub, Scunthorpe.

#### 1010 **WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS/APOLOGIES**

Apologies had been received from Zoe Birchall, Rachel Abbott, Rob Biglands and Rob Biglands.

#### 1011 **DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND PERSONAL OR PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS (IF ANY)**

There were no declarations of Disposable Pecuniary Interests and Personal of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

#### 1012 **MINUTES AND ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING FOR APPROVAL**

That the minutes of the last meeting held on 21 September 2023, 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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Item 1006 – Mrs T Falshaw advised that progress on trade union funding was continuing and there would be sufficient information for the Forum to make a decision on the issue next year.

Item 1007 – Mrs D Senior noted that some primary schools Ofsted grades had reduced from Outstanding to Requires Improvement and was not sure if that implied that more funding was needed to support schools who had judgements less than Good. Mr B Lawrance agreed that it was a point that needed to be considered and added to the wider conversation.

#### **1013 MEMBERSHIP UPDATE**

The Secretary advised that there was currently no further progress on the three outstanding vacancies on the Forum.

On a separate issue, it had been noted that the PVI representative Mrs M Drewery had not attended a meeting for over a year. Mrs N Raines had approached Mrs Drewery to enquire if she wished to continue on the Forum and was informed that she was happy for someone else to take her place. Mrs N Raines had advised that another person had come forward who was happy to act as the second PVI representative.

**Resolved** – That Mrs N Raines approaches the potential new member with a view to her replacing Mrs M Drewery as PVI representative.

#### **1014 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT 2024/2025**

Mrs T Falshaw presented the report.

On 19 December 2023 the Education Funding Agency published the 2024-25 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Allocations. The allocation for North Lincolnshire was £180.511m after deductions for national non-domestic rates (NDR) and the direct funding of high needs places by the Education Skills Funding Agency.

The DSG Allocations were presented in four blocks, each block was determined by a separate national funding formula. The report provided information on the planned use of the DSG for 2024/25.

The Department for Education had confirmed its commitment to continue to move forward with its plans to implement a direct National Funding Formula, whereby funding would be allocated directly to schools based on a single, national formula. A gradual approach to transition was taking place. In 2024-25 councils would continue to set a local schools funding formula, in consultation with schools.

**Resolved** – That the central retained schools' budget, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved:

- Central spend on the early years block provision
- Historic Commitments (Combined Budgets)

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- School Admissions
- Servicing of Schools Forum
- Contribution to the responsibilities that councils hold for all schools.

#### **1015 EARLY YEARS - DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT**

The report was presented by Mrs N Raines.

Early Years funding was participation based. Funding allocations were currently provisional for 2024/25. Allocations were determined by three census counts (January 2023, 2024, and 2025) final allocations were published July 2025. Two additional funding streams would be available in 2024, for working parents of two-year-olds and children over nine-months, from April and September 2024, respectively. To ensure allocations for councils were as accurate as possible, the new working parent funding would be adjusted based on the submission of actual take-up data for the summer and autumn terms 2024 and the January 2025 census.

Funding allocations had increased for the 2024/25 financial year with an additional 28 pence and 27 pence per hour per child on the hourly rate for two-year olds (£7.56) and three and four-year olds (£5.47) respectively. Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) and Disability Access Funding (DAF) had both increased (2p) to 68p per hour per child and (£29) £910 per annum respectively. EYPP and DAF funding were extended to include the new working parent funding.

Children over nine months of working parents may become eligible for 15 hours of funded early learning and care from the term after they became nine months from April 2024 for 38 weeks of the year.

Disadvantaged two-year olds were eligible for a maximum of 15 hours funded early learning and care where if their family circumstances meant that they met certain criteria, as set out in the report.

Approximately 400 children were eligible each term in North Lincolnshire. Additionally, children of working parents may be eligible for a maximum of 15 hours funded early learning and care from April 2024 to support them with the cost of childcare. In the summer of 2023, it was estimated that 473 families of two-year olds were paying for childcare.

All three and four-year olds were entitled to a maximum of 15 hours funded early education in the maintained, private, or voluntary sector for 38 weeks of the year. Children of working parents may also be eligible for an additional 15 funded hours. Approximately 52 per cent of funded children took-up the additional funded hours in North Lincolnshire.

The report gave detailed information on funding allocations, sector consultation, under two's, two, three and four year old funding and population projections.

Resolved – (a) That the provisional funding allocation in relation to the Early

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Years Block of the DSG for 2024/25 be noted; (b) that the proposed pass-through rates for centrally retaining funding and a small grants programme to extend early years place be supported; (c) that the proposed base rates per hour per child for under two's, two year olds and three and four year olds, as set out in the report, be supported; (d) that the proposed local supplements of the Early Years Single Funding Formula – deprivation and sufficiency lump sum, be supported and (d) that an increase in Early Years Pupil Premium and Disability Access Funding to nationally funded rates (68p per hour and £910 lump sum respectively), be supported,

**1016 SCHOOLS FUNDING FORMULA 2024/2025**

The report was presented by Ms J Standing.

On 19 December 2023 the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) published the 2024-25 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Allocations, based on October 2023 School Census data. The allocation for North Lincolnshire was £180.511m (£167.638m in 2023/24) after deductions for business rates and the direct funding of high needs places by ESFA.

The element of DSG available for the Individual Schools Budget (ISB), for all mainstream schools was £138.308m before deductions for the funding of National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) directly by the ESFA.

The Operational Guide set out how individual school budget shares could be calculated. To continue the introduction of the National Funding Formula (NFF) the Department for Education had consulted and now directed that all councils moved closer to the NFF so that resources were distributed based on the individual needs and characteristics of every school in the country.

The council's local formula now reflected the NFF for all factors, except for Exceptional Premises factor (listed buildings). The factor values had been increased in 2024-25 and were detailed at Appendix 1 to the report.

The report set out the final proposals for the North Lincolnshire schools funding formula.

Resolved – (a) That the distribution of the individual school's budget, using the proposed funding formula, be endorsed as follows:

- (i) MFG set at maximum of 0.5%
- (ii) Sparsity Factor using NNF values and distance taper
- (iii) Exceptional Factor for listed buildings premises to be applied
- (iv) Notional SEN contribution from deprivation factors increased to 25%
- (v) A cap on gains of 0.5% and scaled back by 8.25% to be applied;

(b) that the contribution of £8.44 per pupil towards the cost of Education Functions that the local authority provided on behalf of maintained schools, be approved by maintained school representatives and (c) that reserves be used for growth if required.

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**1017 UPDATE ON HIGH NEEDS FUNDING**

Mrs J Flintoff presented the report.

The report provided a briefing on work being undertaken to review the bandings and use of High Needs Funding for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

The High Needs element of the Dedicated Schools Grant supported schools and the council to provide support for children with SEND. This included the costs of some elements of council SEND staffing, as well as paying for specialist placements, and providing the banding rates for top up funding for children whose needs meant that they could be adequately supported using the notional element of the SEND funding.

Locally, the bandings for children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) who attended mainstream schools in North Lincolnshire were due to be reviewed; it was proposed that the council worked with schools through the Primary Consortium and the Secondary Heads and Principles to evaluate the current funding levels. Additionally, work was underway to benchmark local funding bandings for SEND in comparison to regional neighbours. It was intended that this work would place the council in a good position to bring revised bandings proposal to Schools Forum in the autumn, in readiness for the financial year 2025/2026.

To address more immediate issues, under the Department for Education funding rules for High Needs, councils could plan for the use of exceptional funding. A working draft exceptional funding protocol was being developed to ensure that schools were funded to meet exceptional circumstances, for example where there were significant in-year changes to the number of children with an EHCP, or where children had, through their EHC Plan, an agreement for independent specialist provision but where no such provision was available.

Discussion took place around the above issues. Mrs J Flintoff asked for feedback on the With Me in Mind programme, to ascertain how effective the programme was. Mr D Flowitt advised that the programme would not work for any children with complex needs; he felt that only low level issues were prioritised.

Mrs A Cvijetic agreed with the discussion, however, felt that work was required on school buildings as currently there were no small, quieter spaces available from the main areas of the school. Mrs J Flintoff advised that there was a piece of work taking place to look at SEND capital and capital funding which could assist with this.

**Resolved** – (a) That the proposal for SEND Exceptional Funding be agreed in principle, and (b) that the possibility of including successful and unsuccessful case studies within the protocol be considered.

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