

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

SCHOOLS FORUM

1 October 2020

PRESENT:

School Representatives

Mr B Lawrance, Mrs D West, Mr R Biglands, Mrs T Millard, Miss A Nuttall, Mrs R Stephenson.

Academies Representatives

Mr D Flowitt, Mr P Raspin, Mrs T Norriss, Miss Z Bidmead and Mr A West

Non Schools Representative

Mr P Thompson and 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), 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 A Dawson (Democratic Services – Secretary to the Forum)

The meeting was quorate.

The forum met via MS Teams.

905 **ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR – Resolved** – That Mr B Lawrance be and he is hereby elected Chair of the forum.

Resolved – That Miss Z Bidmead be and she is hereby elected Vice-Chairman of the forum.

Mr Lawrance thereupon took the chair.

906 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Ms L Wilson and Mrs M Potterton.

907 **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS** – The Chair welcomed members.

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908 **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.

909 **MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING DATED 11 June 2020 - Resolved** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2020, having been printed and circulated amongst the members, be taken as read and correctly recorded, and be signed by the Chair.

910 **MEMBERSHIP UPDATE** – The Secretary informed the meeting that Mrs Clare Williams would be continuing to represent the PVI Sector for another term of office. A representative was still required for the primary maintained sector, along with the secondary academy sector. Ms Lynsey Norris had stepped down from her role as Church of England Diocese representative and had been replaced by Mr Paul Thompson.

Resolved – (a) That the Secretary contacts the Chair of the Primary Consortium to seek a representative and (b) that Miss Z Bidmead chases progress on the Secondary Academy representative.

911 **THE SCHEME FOR FINANCING MAINTAINED SCHOOLS** - Ms T Elliott presented the report.

Councils were required to publish schemes for financing schools, setting out the relationship between them and the schools they maintained. Statutory guidance set out what councils must do to comply with the law.

Updates were occasionally provided by the Department for Education when changes were required to bring the scheme into line with regulations. These were known as directed revisions and did not require further consultation with schools.

Following consultation that closed in September 2019, the Secretary of State had issued directed revisions to the schemes of all councils in England. In addition to the directed revisions other changes to wording were also required. Before these changes were made all schools must be consulted.

The report set out the directed revisions that would be incorporated into the scheme, along with other proposed changes. Discussion ensued on these.

Resolved – That a revised Scheme of Finance be submitted to the Schools Forum in January 2021 following consultation with schools.

912 **EARLY YEARS – DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT** – Mrs N Raines presented the report.

The report updated members of the response to the Covid-19 outbreak in relation to the Early Years Funding of Dedicated Schools Grant (EYDSG) and outlined proposals for a Hardship Fund from the EYDSG Reserves.

On 17 March 2020 the Chancellor confirmed the government would continue to pay funding to councils 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.

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The final years funding allocation for the financial year 2020/21 was usually determined with the January 2021 census count in the summer of 2021. The Department for Education recognised that the number of children attending childcare may not have returned to normal levels by January 2021. As such the final funding allocation to councils for the 2020 autumn term would exceptionally be based on the January 2020 census count.

The report gave details of the revised allocation budgets for two, three and four year funding.

From 1 June 2020 childcare providers were able to re-open to all families; the largest majority opened. Members agreed prior to the re-opening to support the double funding of children to ensure the sufficiency of childcare places for priority groups. With the re-opening of providers, the double funding ceased.

All early year's providers had re-opened for the autumn term. Forecasts from the private and voluntary sector illustrated a lower take-up of places at the start of term, however anecdotal evidence suggested that numbers were increasing. Most schools had chosen to phase the re-opening of Reception and nursery, as such numbers were low in schools. The council had sought to reassure families that the sector was 'Covid secure' and continued to promote two, three and four year old funding to encourage the return to early years childcare.

The report also set out details of autumn term funding and proposals for the Hardship Fund.

Mrs N Williams wished to record thanks, on behalf of the private and voluntary sector, to the council for the support during this difficult time.

Resolved – (a) That the revised funding allocation of the Early Years Funding of the Dedicated Schools Grant (EYDSG) be noted; (b) that the proposal to release £450,000 from the EYDSG reserves to support the sustainability and sufficiency of the sector be approved, and (c) that the proposal for the Hardship Fund be supported.

913 SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA 2021-2022 – Mrs R Maughan presented the report.

The report sought agreement for the local implementation of the school funding formula for the financial year 2021/22.

On 20 July 2020, the Department for Education (DfE) published the National Funding Formula (NFF) allocations at council level for schools, high needs and central services funding blocks for 2021/22.

In acknowledgment of the essential role councils were playing during the Covid-19 pandemic the DfE had made limited changes to the school funding arrangements for 2021/22.

The schools block element of the Dedicated Schools Grant was distributed to fund schools using the NFF. Local variation continued to be permitted for 2021/22 distribution to mainstream schools.

The report set out the key changes in 2021/22.

To continue the introduction of the NFF the DfE intended to consult, later this year, on forward plans to move to a 'hard' NFF in the future. This ensured resources were distributed based on the individual needs and characteristics of every school in the country.

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Mrs Millard queried whether special schools would receive the Teachers Pay Grant as they were not funded in the same way. Ms Elliott advised that this should be taken into consideration in the bandings. Mr Chaplin stated that he would be happy to look at the matter with colleagues in finance and feed back to Mrs Millard. He felt a discussion outside the meeting would be useful.

Mr Lawrance asked if information was available on allocations against actual costs. Ms Maughan advised that it could not be tracked back to actual costs, however she could investigate the per pupil element and feed back to him.

Resolved – (a) That the full implementation of the National Funding Formula be endorsed; (b) that the continued use of measuring pupils travel distances by road and footpath instead of ‘as the crow flies’ under the Sparsity factor criteria, be endorsed; (c) that the application of the Minimum Funding Guarantee at the maximum level which could be afforded including use of Dedicated Schools Grant earmarked reserves as appropriate, be endorsed, and (d) that final proposals for school funding be submitted to the meeting in January 2021, on receipt of the final funding allocations in December 2020.

914 **DE-DELEGATION OF BUDGETS** – Ms R Maughan and Ms T Elliott presented the report.

Schools Forum members for primary and secondary maintained schools must decide separately for each phase whether specific services should be provided centrally; the decision would apply to all maintained mainstream schools in that phase.

Members must decide on fixed contributions for these services so that funding could then be deducted through the formula before school budgets were issued. There may be different decisions for each phase.

The report set out services which could be de-delegated and those there were delegated in the council.

The de-delegation of resources provided an opportunity to further strengthen the relationship between the maintained schools sector and the council. Building on shared objectives for safeguarding the positive mental health and well-being and education outcomes of all children and young people in the area. De-delegation provided a mechanism for strengthening mutual accountability for outcomes, reaffirming standards of quality and continuing the discussion on the design and delivery of services.

Mr Biglands stated that there had been a wider discussion on the de-delegation of insurance with schools and business managers. He wondered if it was too late to buy out of the contract due to the possibility of sufficient savings. Ms Maughan advised that an e-mail had been sent to heads on the subject.

Resolved – (a) That the proposals for the maintained primary phase of de-delegations of school budgets as set out in appendix 1 to the report, be approved by members for primary maintained schools, and (b) that the proposals for the maintained secondary phase of de-delegations of school budgets, as set out in appendix 1 to the report, be approved by members for secondary maintained schools.

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- 915 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS** – Ms R Maughan updated members on the Covid-19 catch up grant for the academic year 2020/21, which would be £80.00 per pupil for primary and secondary schools and £240.00 per pupil for special schools. Information would be distributed to schools giving further details.
- 916 **DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS** – Meetings dates were still to be arranged for the forthcoming year.

Resolved – That future dates be agreed with the Chair and the Secretary forwards these to members.