

**Leicester City Council
Schools Forum**

**DRAFT Minutes of the Meeting held at 1:00 pm on Thursday 30th November 2017 at
Soar Valley Training Centre**

Present:

Schools members:

Academies:	Jim Cook, Maxine Clewlow, David Wyatt
Special Academies:	Julie Aquilina
Special School Governors:	~
Special School Heads:	Eleanor Shaw
Secondary School Governors:	Steph McDonald, Janet Washington
Secondary School Head representatives:	Ian Johnson, Julie Robinson
Primary School Governors:	Steve Wilson, Daniel Routledge, Glenys Mulvany, Wendy Martin
Primary School Head representatives:	Liz Warren, Karl Stewart, Dave Nimmo, Nigel Bruen
Pupil Referral Units:	Shaun Whittingham

Non-Schools Members:

Teaching Unions:	Peter Flack (Chair)
School support staff Unions:	~
14-19 Partnership:	~
Early Years PVI Providers:	~
Voluntary Sector:	~

In attendance:

Ian Bailey	Interim Director of Learning
Martin Judson	Head of Finance, Education and Children's Services
Simon Walton	Senior Accountant, Finance
Purminder Samaria	LCC Education and Children's Services Finance
Ed Rowe	Clerk to the Forum

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Sandra Hamilton-Fox, Anne-Marie Jameson and Simon Catchpole.

2. Declarations of interest

Declarations of interest were received from Daniel Routledge in respect of Item 7 (De-delegated funding) and Purminder Samaria for Item 8 (National Funding Formula).

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st September 2017 were agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

i. Children's Centre Teachers – performance management of lead practitioner

The Interim Director of Learning confirmed that he had discussed the position with Caroline Tote, and would follow the matter up to confirm the outcome.

Action: Ian Bailey

5. Update on re-pooling of landlord CMF monies for 2017/18

Members from both primary and secondary phases provided an update on progress since the last meeting. Separate workshops had been held by Estates and Building Services with primary and secondary

representatives. These had provided some additional details, but key information had still not been made available. The special schools had invited a representative from Estates and Building Services to their business managers meeting, but no-one had attended and no apologies had been received.

Members expressed their ongoing frustration with this issue, noting that it was made very clear at the last meeting that clarity was needed urgently, and this had still not been delivered. Schools needed clear pricing options and detailed Service Level Agreements so that they could make an informed decision, but this information was still not available. Time was very short for decisions to be made and it may already have been too late for many schools.

The workshops had apparently indicated that suppliers would be asked by LCC to sign exclusivity agreements, meaning that schools that chose not to re-pool CMF monies would be unable to use those firms unless they signed up.

Members unanimously confirmed they were unhappy with the lack of progress, and it was noted that the majority of schools were likely to choose not to re-pool funding as a result. This would result in a loss of income for the local authority and potentially lead to job losses.

The Interim Director of Learning noted the concerns that had been raised and agreed to feed them back accordingly.

Action: Ian Bailey

6. Revised membership and updated constitution

The Chair advised that changes had been made to the membership of Schools Forum because of the number of maintained schools that had converted to academies. Two vacant maintained secondary school representatives had been replaced with mainstream academy members as a result.

The Schools Forum constitution had been updated to reflect these changes, and the revised version was approved by members.

The Chair advised that he would be stepping down at the end of the academic year, and encouraged members to consider potential replacements for the role of Chair.

7. Results of the consultation on de-delegation

The report of the Head of Finance was received. This set out the results of the consultation exercise that had been carried out. The Chair noted there appeared to be clear consensus to continue de-delegation for the majority of services, but not all. It was therefore agreed to vote on specific items where there was no clear majority to continue de-delegation.

Secondary Whatever it Takes

The maintained secondary school representatives voted unanimously to stop de-delegation for this service.

Primary Whatever it Takes

The maintained primary school representatives voted 7 – 0 (with one abstention as a result of a declaration of interest) to continue to de-delegate funding for the core offer of WiT, but to stop the de-delegation of funding for individual school projects.

Primary academic coaching

The maintained primary school representatives voted 7 – 0 (with one abstention as a result of a declaration of interest) to continue to delegate funding for the costs of training and printing of workbooks, but to stop the de-delegation of funding for staff release costs.

It was noted that on virtually all other services, there was clear support for continuing de-delegation for a further year. However, it was noted that secondary schools have only narrowly supported continuing to de-delegate funding for Closing the Gap.

Members also commented that the consultation result clearly supported funding Traveller Education for one more year only, so it could be anticipated that this may well not continue beyond the next financial year.

A query was raised as to what impact the withdrawal of de-delegated funding would have on services if it was stopped at the end of the financial year, which obviously fell in the middle of an academic year. There was the potential for disruption in schools as a result.

The Head of Finance stated that had always been the case, and the timing could not be altered. However, Forum members could change the amount they wished to de-delegate if they wanted to make provision to extend any specific service until the end of any academic year. It was also noted that Forum had previously received reports setting out the impact on specific services of any future decision to stop de-delegation.

Before voting to approve the funding for the remaining services that were dependent upon de-delegation, members asked what mechanism could be employed to ensure the comments that respondents had made in the consultation exercise were noted and addressed. It was agreed that the lead officer for each relevant service would be asked to meet with headteachers and business managers to progress that.

Votes were then held on a motion to continue de-delegation of funding for all the remaining services that had not already been decided by a separate vote.

Primary representatives voted 8-0 (with one abstention from the special schools) and secondary representatives voted unanimously to continue de-delegation for one more year.

8. National funding formula and the 2018/19 budget

The report of the Head of Finance was received. This presented proposals for implementing the National Funding Formula (NFF) from 2018-19. The Head of Finance advised that he was seeking views and would like the consultation process to be concluded before the end of the calendar year.

Members were reminded that the Department for Education (DfE) calculated the total local authority funding, and the authority then distributed that money to schools using a formula. For the coming financial year, there was a choice between maintaining a local formula and moving directly to the NFF.

The DfE had put transitional arrangements in place, so that gains by individual schools under the NFF would be capped at 3% in 2018/19 and 6% in 2019/20. All schools were guaranteed at least a 0.5% increase from 2017/18 funding levels, although this did not take into account the £1.2m of support that had been provided to primary schools from DSG reserves in recent years.

The report set out the impact on the Schools Block allocation received by the local authority over the next three years. The cumulative change in funding would total an additional £10.3m by 2020/21.

The Head of Finance confirmed that the funding allocations from 2018/19 onwards would use the latest (2015) IDACI dataset, instead of the 2010 data that we had previously been using.

Mainstream schools with special needs units were currently funded from the High Needs Block, but would in future be funded through the NFF.

The NFF utilised a number of factors that had not been applicable in the local formula, and unit values for other factors that had been used also differed significantly under the new formula. As a result, it had been very difficult to establish trends or clear reasons for schools that had seen significant changes to their funding levels. However, Appendix A clearly showed the impact of implementing the NFF immediately if no other amendments were made. Every secondary school would gain, and the majority of primaries would as well. Those primaries that would lose did so as a result of the withdrawal of the support from DSG reserves.

The Head of Finance set out a number of concerns that would arise if the NFF were implemented without further adjustments. He noted that it made no allowance for increases in property rates, as funding would be limited to 2017/18 planned expenditure in that area.

Funding for the Growth Fund would be based upon planned expenditure in the previous year. Unless any adjustments were made, Leicester would therefore only receive £1.9m next year, whereas the total amount actually expected to be spent on this area totalled £3.8m when ECP and expenditure from reserves were taken into account.

A further concern was that DSG reserves were currently being used to support High Needs Block expenditure. There was a gap of £2.7m between budget and actual costs, which was expected to deteriorate further as the number of High Needs pupils was rising each year. The current reserves of £14m were expected to have been exhausted by 2012/20 as a result. A review of SEND services was planned to identify savings that would deliver a sustainable position in future. However, this would take some time to deliver the desired outcome.

Because of these concerns, a second proposal had been developed. This would increase the planned Growth Fund from 2018/19, to allow the in-year growth for both primary and secondary sectors to be fully funded. This would result in the gains for individual schools being restricted, with a cap of around 1.6% instead of the 3% that would otherwise apply.

The disadvantage was that schools would gain less money. Appendix B set out the likely impact. However, the advantages were that the life of the DSG reserves would be extended, allowing support for the High Needs Block to continue. The funding received from the DfE in 2019/20 for Growth Fund would also match the planned expenditure in 2018/19, so potentially an additional £1.9m would be received.

A vote was held on the recommendation to implement the NFF from 2018/19. Members supported this motion by 15 votes to nil, with one abstention.

Members noted the impact on school budgets of the NFF, and also noted the different options regarding the Growth Fund. It was agreed that a meeting of the Funding Formula Review Group should be convened to consider the position before feedback was provided to the Head of Finance. The Chair of FFRG would make the necessary arrangements.

Action: Jim Cook

Steph McDonald offered to join the existing FFRG membership and no objections were raised.

9. Any other business

i) Ian Bailey

The Chair noted that this was Ian Bailey's last Schools Forum as he was leaving his role as Interim Director of Learning in January. On behalf of all members, the Chair thanked Ian for his contribution, which had gone well beyond what could normally have been expected.

ii) Kate McGee

The Head of Finance advised that Kate has passed away after a prolonged battle with cancer. This was a massive loss both professionally and personally. Kate's funeral would be held on Friday 8th December 2017 at 12.30 at Gilroes cemetery.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 2.45 p.m.