

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**DERBYSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM**  
**Minutes of the Meeting Held on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2016**  
**At 6.00 pm County Hall**

**Present**

Barbara Arrandale, David Beaumont, Linda Du-Roe, Shirley Harvey, Julie Cadman, Liz Moorsom, Gill Hutton, Martin Brader, David Baker, Pauline Wensley, Julien Scholefield, Angela Stanton, Carey Ayres, David Plummer, Karen Hudson, Andrew Large, Deborah Turner, Peter Crowe

**Substitutes**

Alan Thomas

**Observers**

Cllr Caitlin Bisknell

**Officers/Others**

Chris Allcock, Mary Murkin, Ruth Lane, Andrew Rowan, Tanja Green, Kathryn Boulton

**Apologies**

Stephanie Marbrow, Bridget Handley, Sue Kennedy, Kam Grewal-Joy, Tracey Burnside, Angela Lindley, Lisa Key, Chris Wayment, Cllr Joselyn Street, Philip Sutherland, Andrew Wild, Cathy Tattersfield,

Martin Brader chaired the meeting and Chris Allcock confirmed it was quorate.

**16/17 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were given as noted above.

**16/18 Minutes of the previous meeting – 13<sup>th</sup> June 2016**

No matters of accuracy were noted. Matters arising:

Page 1 – Martin Brader asked how the future workload plan was progressing. Chris Allcock replied that the plan was still fluid because of the uncertainties around various national developments, particularly the National Funding Formula (NFF). Chris was to meet with Kathryn Boulton on 7<sup>th</sup> October regarding small 6<sup>th</sup> forms and a paper will be brought to the next Forum meeting. A paper regarding additional educational needs in mainstream, Enhances Resources (ERS) and special schools would also be brought to the next Forum meeting.

Page 3 – Martin Brader asked for an update on the use of the additional funding to support reducing exclusions in secondary schools. Kathryn Boulton replied that the Educational Psychology service had done a research report which could be presented, along with an update on numbers, at the next Forum meeting. Kathryn advised the Forum that exclusions had increased.

Page 4 – Martin Brader asked for an update on the summer 2016 exam results to assess the impact of the additional funding agreed by the Forum to support under-performing secondary schools. Kathryn Boulton replied that the LA was still working on the data and

once the national validation report was received a report could be presented to the Forum, probably in December.

### **16/19 Services 4 Schools update**

Andrew Rowan and Tanja Green from the Authority's Services 4 Schools Traded Services Team presented an update regarding the new Services 4 Schools website. Andrew said that every school had accessed and purchased at least one service via the website. It will shortly be updated with rolling contracts, a resources page with a lot of the information currently provided on the Learning in Derbyshire website and a new alerts system. Booking of training courses will be available from early 2017 which it's hoped will be much better than the current ad-hoc system. Forum members were asked for feedback on the website.

Deborah Turner said she had attended a Health and Safety briefing and was told that accident reporting would soon be available on the Services 4 Schools website which would streamline the system for schools.

Julien Scholefield said he hoped rolling contracts would not stop representatives of Derbyshire's services visiting schools to discuss their service as he felt this was a valuable opportunity to improve relationships and services. Andrew indicated that by making the routine purchasing more efficient this should release time for managers to meet schools to discuss performance and future needs.

David Plummer said that schools needed sufficient notice to re-purchase services on a rolling programme and that he thought January would be an appropriate time to be advised on the new contract information for signing up each year.

Andrew and Tanja confirmed that not all services were suitable for rolling contracts, bespoke services would continue to be available for re-purchasing individually each year and that they planned to have information available for schools in January. They also confirmed that the website would remain free to use for schools, which was raised as a concern by a Forum member.

The Chair thanked Andrew and Tanja for their attendance.

### **16/20 DfE summary of mainstream schools' funding formulae 2016 - 17**

Chris Allcock presented the paper to inform Schools Forum of the DfE's analysis of LAs' mainstream funding formulae allocations for 2016-17 published in July 2016.

Chris confirmed that he could only speculate on what the National Funding Formula might look like but the report indicated areas where Derbyshire's formula was at variance to other shire LAs. This could signal areas where Derbyshire schools could lose or gain from the National Funding Formula.

David Beaumont asked if since the primary LCHI AEN factor was chosen in 2013, had there been any evidence that the LCHI indicator fitted with pupils' progress rather than final results. Chris replied that as far as he was aware no analysis had been undertaken, although this was something that could be looked at. However, the general robustness of schools' finances, with overall balances being above £40m, suggested that money was not necessarily the only driver of performance. If more resources were to be allocated via the AEN factor then other formula factors would have to be reduced.

Liz Moorsom asked how Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) might work under the NFF. Chris and Mary Murkin replied that for 2017-18 MFG was set again at 98.5% of the previous year's funding and that the lump sum was excluded from the baseline calculation.

Liz made the point that this could hit small schools if the lump sum was reduced in the NFF. Chris stated that although the DSG would be determined by the NFF, the LA could take gradual steps towards full implementation. There would be two years' transition during which the Authority could soften formula losses.

David Beaumont asked if the budget monitoring spreadsheet projections provided by the LA were still working on the current formula basis. Chris replied that they were, the only change being the removal of the one off funding which secondary schools received in 2016-17.

Finally, Chris said that he hoped the Government would set out its NFF proposals later this term which would enable the Authority and Schools Forum to use 2017-18 as a further transitional year.

The Forum agreed to note the report.

### **16/21 School Funding – Schools Block**

Chris Allcock presented the paper some of the points had been discussed in the previous item. He explained that the DfE had restated our 2016-17 DSG to reflect our planned spending. The new Block totals would become baselines against which gains and losses arising from the national formula changes would be measured. A key point was that the DfE were strongly advising LAs not to move money between Blocks in 2017-18 as these would have to be reversed in 2018-19 when the School Block itself was ring-fenced.

Recommendation 1 – The Forum agreed to note the issues arising from the restatement of the Authority's baseline 2016 – 17 DSG allocation.

Three relatively modest changes to the 2017-18 formula were proposed in the paper to PFI Allowances, premises factors for individual schools and, potentially, a sparsity factor in the secondary sector.

Deborah Turner asked that if the secondary schools sparsity factor was introduced was it correct that funding would go to Academy schools and would this be to the detriment of LA schools. Chris replied that the DfE not only provided a list of factors which could be used in the funding formula but also the data to be used for each. Within the formula schools and academies had to be treated equally. Mary Murkin added that there has to be exceptional circumstances to use a different data set from the one provided by the DfE and Secretary of State approval would have to be sought.

David Plummer said once the ESG grant goes, the funding for Academies and LA schools would be exactly the same and asked if the three secondary schools mentioned in the sparsity factor had considered how they would spend their extra funding. Chris replied that New Mills were considering closing their 6<sup>th</sup> form due to funding pressures, Anthony Gell were struggling in line with most secondary schools but he didn't know about Hope Valley as they are an Academy.

Liz Moorsom asked about the sparsity factor for primary schools and had looked at the definition on the DfE website and wondered if the topography of Derbyshire might mean that more schools qualified that was immediately evident. Chris Allcock replied that the sparsity

factor was difficult to calculate and that information for every child had to be calculated as to where they live and the next -nearest school. Nicky Morgan (when she was Secretary of State) said that the sparsity factor would prevent small schools from having to close which does not currently appear to be the case. However, the NFF may include a sparsity or some kind of rurality factor which would need to be implemented.

Recommendation 2 – the Schools Forum agreed to note the potential changes to the mainstream LA formula for 2017-18.

Chris Allcock stated that he had no reason to believe that the Education Services Grant (ESG) would end from September 2017 and any change in policy was unlikely to be announced until the Chancellor's Autumn Statement. Some LAs are considering challenging the DfE about withdrawing the grant whilst statutory responsibilities for schools still remain.

A major expense currently funded by the ESG was school redundancy costs, the latest estimate of cost for 2016/17 is around £800k, higher than the figure quoted in the report. Also the future funding of the School Improvement Service, currently just under £2m, would have to be resolved.

The DfE have said that LAs can top slice school budgets (not academies) to provide services previously funded by the ESG – General Duties Grant. Schools Forum permission is required for this although LAs can seek Secretary of State approval where this is not given.

Recommendations 3 and 4 – The Forum noted the proposed loss of ESG funding and the potential implications for mainstream schools' budgets and/or services and that further information on the loss of ESG funding would be brought to the Forum later in the year.

Finally, Chris reported that schools had been asked which services from the eligible list they would be prepared to re-pool funding for and a report seeking a decision from school representatives on the Forum would be considered at the November meeting.

Recommendation 5 – The Forum agreed to note that schools have been asked to give a view on the de-delegation of funding for a range of services and that a further report would be brought to the Forum in November.

### **16/22 – Early Years National Funding Formula**

Chris Allcock presented the paper to inform the Forum on the Government's consultation regarding a proposed Early Years National Funding Formula for introduction from April 2017. The new formula would see a significant reduction in funding for Derbyshire Early Years providers over the next two years.

David Plummer asked if the reduction in the Early Years Block means that more money would be available in Schools and High Needs Blocks. Chris replied that the bar had been set high for the Early Years and High Needs Blocks, with a lower bar for the Schools Block. Hopefully this would mean that, in overall terms, funding for mainstream schools would increase but the key will be the impact on individual schools.

Andrew Large stated that as a private, voluntary and independent Early Years provider he and many others wouldn't be able to provide 30 hours at the proposed rate of £4.10 per hour.

Kathryn Boulton said that the new Early Years funding formula was a significant challenge.

Martin Brader asked what were the potential consequences of the reduction in funding.

Andrew replied that he was looking at potentially selling up some of his premises for alternative uses if funding reductions meant they weren't viable as nurseries. He was also looking at increasing fees and reducing provision from 52 weeks to 38 weeks. However, the LA has to provide places and this is a problem created by central government.

Kathryn Boulton said there were serious implications for Early Years education at a time when this stage of education was receiving great focus

Angela Stanton from the nursery schools sector said that the funding proposals just don't add up.

The Forum agreed to the recommendations, including supporting the LA's proposal to commission a review of Early Years provision in Derbyshire.

### **16/23 – Dates of future meetings:**

Future meeting dates were advised as follows;

10<sup>th</sup> November 2016 (4-6pm) Birchwood Room, Post Mill Centre, South Normanton

12<sup>th</sup> December 2016 (4-6pm) Rangewood Room, Post Mill Centre, South Normanton

9<sup>th</sup> February 2017 (4-6pm) Rangewood Room, Post Mill Centre, South Normanton

22<sup>nd</sup> June 2017 (6-8pm) Committee Room 1, County Hall

The meeting closed at 7.35pm.