

**Leicester City Council
Schools Forum**

DRAFT Minutes of the Meeting held at 1:00 pm on Thursday 15th June 2017 at Soar Valley Training Centre

Present:

Schools members:

Academies:	Jim Cook
Special Academies:	Julie Aquilina
Special School Governors:	~
Special School Heads:	Eleanor Shaw
Secondary School Governors:	Steph McDonald, Janet Washington
Secondary School Head representatives:	Simon Catchpole, Bernie Green, Ian Johnson
Primary School Governors:	Steve Wilson, Wendy Martin, Daniel Routledge, Bernadette Ambler
Primary School Head representatives:	Liz Warren, Karl Stewart, Jo Marshall
Pupil Referral Units:	Shaun Whittingham

Non-Schools Members:

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

In attendance:

Ian Bailey	Interim Director of Learning
Martin Judson	Head of Finance, Education and Children's Services
Simon Walton	Senior Accountant, Finance
Julia Pilsbury	Service Manager, Early Help: Targeted Services
Amy Tallis	Lead Professional Children's Centre Teacher
Ed Rowe	Clerk to the Forum
Joseph Wyglendacz	(Observer)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Sumeya Bhiku, Martin Fitzwilliam, Anne-Marie Jameson, Gary Garner and Nigel Bruen.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th March 2017 were agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

i. Update on Free Schools

The Interim Director of Learning provided an update on the status of new Free School applications. The Lionheart Trust application for a 500 place post-16 school had been approved, as had requests for full size secondary schools from Learning Without Limits and the Rushey Mead Trust. Target dates had been set to open these schools, but it was not yet clear exactly when they would actually be available.

5. Children's Centre Teachers

The annual progress report for 2016-17 was received. This provided an overview of activity during the academic year and the contribution made to improving school readiness. It was noted that Schools Forum had previously agreed funding for 12 full time equivalent Children's Centre Teacher posts plus a lead professional position. The total costs were £761,500 per annum.

The Service Manager, Early Help: Targeted Services and the Lead Professional Children's Centre Teacher provided various examples of activities that had been carried out and the impact this had delivered.

Forum members welcomed the contents of the report and noted the progress that had been made, particularly in increasing the percentage of good and outstanding settings to a position that exceeded our statistical neighbours and the average for the East Midlands.

The Head of Finance, Education and Children's Services confirmed that funding was available should Forum members wish to approve the recommendation to extend funding for a further year.

It was unanimously agreed to note the contents of the report and approve the continuation of funding the cost of Children's Centre Teachers from the Early Years Block of DSG for 2018/19.

6. Membership of Schools Forum – academy representation

The Chair confirmed that, in view of the number of schools converting to academy status, it was necessary to review the membership of Schools Forum to ensure that representation broadly reflected pupil numbers as set out in the Department for Education regulations. As a result, it was intended to seek two additional mainstream academy representatives.

7. Redeployment and its role in redundancy procedures

The report of the Interim Director of Learning was received. This clarified who was responsible for paying redundancy costs in schools and in what circumstances the Exceptional Cost Pressures panel would approve related funding requests. It also set out a list of reasons why the local authority would not cover redundancy costs.

Members raised concerns regarding items 3 and 4 in the list of reasons set out in Section 3.1, noting it appeared that schools that had taken difficult budget decisions to avoid falling into a deficit position would not receive support, and were therefore effectively being penalised for sound planning.

The Interim Director of Learning confirmed that he was happy to amend the text to ensure it was even more explicit that the concern only related to schools with excessive balances, and also to communicate clearly how schools could apply for support.

Action: Ian Bailey

8. Secondary revenue growth per pupil funding (additional places)

The report of the Head of Finance, Education and Children's Services was received. This set out the plans that had been agreed with secondary school representatives for funding additional places in temporary modular buildings. A higher amount had been proposed for the first year, in recognition of the additional set-up costs incurred.

Different arrangements had been proposed for academies and the mainstream academy representative queried whether these were appropriate, noting that in certain circumstances no funding would be received in the 2018/19 academic year. It was agreed that these specific arrangements would be reviewed again.

Action: Martin Judson

The Head of Finance, Education and Children's Services confirmed that it was planned to use uncommitted DSG to fund these places in the short term, in the expectation that the Department for Education would create a Growth Fund under the national funding formula for future years. These places could cost up to £6.7m. Current unspent DSG amounted to approximately £14m although there were significant commitments, in particular the ongoing pressures in the High Needs Block and the additional funding for the primary sector in 2017/18 that had previously been agreed.

Forum members confirmed they were happy with the proposals, subject to the review of academy arrangements.

9. Schools Forum Association

The Chair confirmed that an invitation had been received to join the Schools Forum Association. This aimed to share best practice, advice and feedback amongst members, including the production of a regular newsletter. A nominal cost of approximately £50 was expected.

Members supported joining this association, and the Chair advised that he would contact Richmond's Schools Forum to confirm the decision.

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

Members advised that schools still required greater clarity on exactly where the balance of landlord and tenant responsibilities lay. Concern was expressed that schools were being asked to sign up to a re-pooling agreement without fully understanding exactly what would, and would not, be covered. Primary members also advised that the buyback scheme they entered into had very poor transparency and it was unclear how that money was being used.

It was noted that Estates and Building Services officers had attended meetings with school representatives to help try to address these issues, but a number of actions were still outstanding. The Interim Director of Learning asked for confirmation of the details so that they could be followed up. It was agreed this information would be provided.

Action: Liz Warren

It was agreed that this item would be added to the agenda for the first Schools Forum of the next academic year, and that Matt Wallace, Director of Estates and Building Services, would be invited to attend.

Action: Clerk

The Interim Director of Learning confirmed that he would request that a draft version of the re-pooling offer that was to be put to schools be circulated to members for comment before it was finalised.

Action: Ian Bailey

11. Proposed meeting dates for the next academic year

The list of proposed dates was received. The Head of Finance, Education and Children's Services advised that the January date may need rescheduling to early February. It was agreed the clerk would look for a convenient date and confirm the revised arrangements.

Action: Clerk

12. Any other business

i) De-delegation for 2018/19

The Chair asked whether it was likely that de-delegation would continue to be possible for the financial year 2018/19. The Head of Finance, Education and Children's Services said that this appeared to be the case, although no definitive announcement had been made by the Department for Education. The Chair then proposed that in the light of this, an item on de-delegation should be included on the September agenda. It was further agreed that the forms used in last year's de-delegation consultation would be re-circulated prior to that meeting for consideration.

ii) Bernie Green

The Chair advised that this was Bernie's final Schools Forum, having served as a member for many years. She had made an invaluable contribution throughout that period, providing positive solutions to many issues. On behalf of all members, he expressed his thanks and best wishes for the future.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 2.15 p.m.