

Lancashire Schools Forum meeting of 24 March 2020 at County Hall, Preston

Executive Summary

1. Attendance and Apologies for Absence and 2. Substitute Members

To note attendance and apologies for absence and welcome any substitute members.

3. Forum Membership

To note the Forum membership changes since the last meeting.

4. Minutes of the Last Meeting and 5. Matters Arising

To agree the minutes of the last meeting held on 14 January 2020 and any matters arising.

6. Apprenticeship Levy Update

The presentation by the apprenticeship levy team updating members on Schools Apprenticeship Levy issues has been postponed.

A briefing paper will be circulated separately.

7. Recommendations from the Schools Block Working Group

To consider the recommendations from the Schools Block Working Group held on 10 March 2020

i. Schools Block Budget

This report provided an update on the finalisation of the Schools Budget 2020/21, other government funding announcements for 2020/21 and on early information about possible school funding developments in 2021/22 and beyond.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the information provided;*
- b) Asked to be kept informed of future developments.*

ii. School Resource Management Adviser (SRMA)

This report provided an update and the latest SRMA developments, including reports from SMRA visits in Lancashire and the published ESFA report on the School Resource Management Adviser Pilot evaluation.

The Working Group:

Noted the report.

iii. Inclusion Hub Funding

This report provided information on the methodology for distributing Inclusion Hub funding to districts in 2020/21, which included a pupil numbers and deprivation factor.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report;*
- b) Asked that information be requested in relation to the primary inclusion hub impact and any secondary sector developments.*

iv. *High Needs Block Provision Task and Finish Group Report*

A brief verbal update was provided for the working group, which indicated that work on the Task and Finish Group work themes was continuing, with many tasks now embedded in ongoing county council processes.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the information provided.*
- b) *Welcomed the work that was continuing around the HNB T&F group themes as part of the ongoing work of the county council.*

v. *Embedding System Leadership*

This report provided information about 'Defining a new relationship with schools - Embedding System Leadership'.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the information provided.*
- b) *Asked that a link to the new website be circulated to members.*

The Forum are asked to ratify the Working groups recommendations.

8. Recommendations from the High Needs Block Working Group

To consider the recommendations from the High Needs Block Working Group held on 5 March 2020.

i. *High Needs Commissioned Places*

Following comments received in the last Schools Budget setting round, the LA has been reviewing the communication process around commissioned place numbers.

The Working Group:

- a) *Welcomed the proposed earlier communication process around commissioned places.*

ii. *High Needs Block Funding*

This report provided an update on the finalisation of the Schools Budget 2020/21, other government funding announcements for 2020/21 and on early information about possible high needs funding developments in 2021/22 and beyond.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the information provided.*

iii. *Developing the Approach and Provision for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities*

The LCC Cabinet approved a number of recommendations arising from a report titled 'Developing the Approach and Provision for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities'. The role of the Forum and the HNB Working Group were formally set out in the strategy.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report;*
- b) *Welcomed the formal strategy agreed by Cabinet and the identified links to the Schools Forum and High Needs Block Working Group which are set out in the Funding and Governance section of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Sufficiency Strategy 2019 – 2024;*
- c) *Welcomed the additional places being offered in the Lancaster area, but also asked that the use of the former Skerton High School site be considered as a possible location to provide additional high needs places in the area;*
- d) *Asked what plans the county council may have for the Broadfield School site, if the school moved into the former Hameldon School premises;*
- e) *Enquired about the responses from mainstream schools to the request for expressions of interest to develop special educational needs units and asked for any further information around the funding of such units;*
- f) *Acknowledged that Inclusion Service colleagues were tied up with preparations for the OfSTED inspection so were unable to attend the March HNB meeting, but asked if the service could ensure representation at future meetings, and wondered if there was a possibility of someone being available at the Schools Forum meeting on 24 March 2020 to respond to the queries raised.*

iv. High Needs Block Provision Task and Finish Group Report

A brief verbal update was provided for the working group, which indicated that work on the Task and Finish Group work themes was continuing, with many tasks now embedded in ongoing county council processes.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the information provided.*
- b) *Welcomed the work that was continuing around the HNB T&F group themes as part of the ongoing work of the county council;*
- c) *Asked if it were possible for the Schools Forum to receive a brief update on 24 March around the specific T&F group themes and the involvement of Forum members;*

v. Embedding System Leadership

This report provided information about 'Defining a new relationship with schools - Embedding System Leadership'.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report;*
- b) *Supported the educational vision behind the developments and the information provided at events throughout the county;*
- c) *Commented that it may have been preferable to host combined Headteacher and CoG events to ensure representatives from a school received an identical message;*
- d) *Acknowledged that there would always be uncertainties around any transition to a revised system/service offer;*
- e) *Welcomed the involvement of cross sector school representatives on the Steering Group and the intention to introduce a newsletter and website to aid communication of key issues;*
- f) *Requested that the names of the Steering Group representatives be published so that schools knew who to contact if they had queries or comments to feed into the process;*

- g) *Commented that there was a perception that schools buying into the SSG would be subsidising the cost of the networks for schools that chose not to buy SSG from Lancashire;*
- h) *Asked if information could be provided around the financial aspects of the new networks and the SSG offer;*
- i) *Asked if someone would be available to attend the Schools Forum on 24 March to respond to the queries raised.*

The Forum are asked to ratify the Working groups recommendations.

9. Recommendations from the Early Years Block Working Group

To consider the recommendations from the Early Years Block Working Group held on 25 February 2020.

i. SEN Inclusion Fund

As requested at the last Working Group, updated SEN Inclusion Fund information had been re-circulated.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the information.*

ii. Supplementary Claims Process for Maintained Settings

Following discussion at the last meeting, arrangements have been made to introduce a second supplementary payment opportunity for maintained settings from 2020/21.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the information.*

iii. Early Years Block Funding

This report provided an update on the finalisation of the Schools Budget 2020/21, other government funding announcements for 2020/21 and on early information about possible early years funding developments in 2021/22 and beyond.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report and the final 2020/21 financial year funding decisions;*
- b) *Recommended that future communications about EY funding rates highlighted that deprivation supplements continued to be paid in addition to base rates.*

iv. Future of Maintained Nursery Schools

Information was provided in connection with a report presented to the LCC Cabinet about the future of maintained nursery schools.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report.*

v. *Payments for Social Services Supported Children*

An update report on progress to revise procedures for payments for social services supported children, was presented.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report;*
- b) *Welcomed the proposed introduction of the revised proforma and funding arrangements for social services supported children.*

vi. *Local Government Association (LGA) Early Years Peer Review*

A Local Government Association (LGA) Early Years Peer Review has been arranged in Lancashire on the 24th-27th March 2020. The Peer Review Team undertake a number of visits, meetings and focus groups with key groups/individuals.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report;*
- b) *Relevant members were encouraged to participate in the peer Review process*

vii. *EY Sustain*

The Chair provided a brief update on 'ey sustain' a registered charity with funds to provide free financial and business consultancy to Early Years settings in Lancashire in the private, voluntary and independent sector.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report.*
- b) *Requested that a copy of the NDNA document be forwarded to members.*

The Forum are asked to ratify the Working groups recommendations.

10. Recommendations from Chair's Working Group

A background paper is attached. The recommendations from the Chair's Working Group which will be obtained electronically and made available to the Forum in due course.

11. Forum Correspondence

To consider the Forum related correspondence received since the last meeting.

12. Urgent Business

To note decisions taken since the last meeting, using the Forum's urgent business procedure.

13. Any Other Business

To consider any other items of Forum business.

14. Date of Future Meetings

To note that the next scheduled Forum meeting will be held at 10.00am Thursday 2 July 2020 at County Hall, Preston, subject to Covid-19 implications.