

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title: Children and Young People
Date: Thursday 25 October 2012
Venue: Gold Room, Devonshire Park Centre, Eastbourne

Attendance

Position	Councillor	Council / Representing
Chairman	David Simmonds	Hillingdon LB
Vice-Chairman	John Merry CBE	Salford City
Deputy-Chairman	Liz Green	Kingston upon Thames RB
Deputy-Chairman	Apu Bagchi	Bedford BC
Members		
	David Pugh	Isle of Wight Council
	Susie Charles	Lancashire CC
	John Osman	Somerset CC
	Anne Burns	Cumbria CC
	Jude Robinson	Cornwall CC
	David Bellotti	Bath & NE Somerset Council
	Rita Krishna	Hackney LB
	Paul Lakin	Rotherham MBC
	John Osman	Somerset CC
Substitutes		
	Roy Perry	Hampshire CC
	Peter Evans	West Sussex CC
	Richard Watts	Islington LB
	Patricia Bradwell	Lincolnshire CC
Apologies		
	Paul Carter	Kent CC
	Derrick Murphy	Norfolk CC
	Robert Light	Kirklees MBC
	Liz Hackett Pain	Monmouthshire CC
	Nick Forbes	Newcastle City
	Kath Pinnock	Kirklees MBC

Officers: Sally Burlington, Ian Keating, Cassandra Harrison, Jas Jhas, Caroline Bosdet, Frances Marshall

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
1.	<p>Welcome and Introductions</p> <p>The Chairman welcomed all those present and opened the meeting with a round of introductions.</p> <p>To maximise the opportunity of having a large number of lead members from different parts of the county present, the Chairman asked all those in attendance to take part in a survey using electronic voting pads to ascertain Members' views on key issues. This feedback would then be used to inform the LGA's policy development.</p>	
2.	<p>Questions</p> <p>GENERAL</p> <p>a) What type of authority are you from?</p> <p>12 Two tier – including county/district 11 Metropolitan Borough 12 Unitary 1 Other</p> <p>b) How long have you been a Lead Member?</p> <p>8 Less than a year 30 1 - 4 8 5 – 9 years 7 I'm not a Lead Member</p> <p>SCHOOLS FUNDING</p> <p>c) From the list below please select the key issue causing your authority concern at the moment?</p> <p>6 The new schools funding formula 5 The top slice for academies central functions 17 The changes in Early Intervention Grant 10 Increases in pressures on safeguarding and looked after children 7 Availability of schools capital resources 7 Child poverty</p> <p>d) There are £2.4 million in school balances in England – should councils be able to access some of this funding to deal with some of these issues?</p> <p>35 Yes 15 No</p> <p>e) Which issues on the new local schools funding formula are causing you concern?</p> <p>7 The lump sum 10 The minimum funding guarantee 16 Small schools 1 Service children 18 The new High Needs arrangements</p>	

f) **Has work commenced on any Priority Schools Building projects in your area?**

- 7 Yes
- 38 No
- 8 Don't know

SECTOR-LED IMPROVEMENT

g) **Are you participating in your council's peer challenge process?**

- 39 Yes
- 12 No

h) **Would you welcome an increased role for Ofsted in the improvement agenda?**

- 10 Yes
- 40 No

i) **Are the regional arrangements for the Children's Improvement Board effectively supporting you in your role?**

- 21 Yes
- 28 No

j) **Is the challenge provided by Ofsted to your council:**

- 9 Very useful
- 36 Useful
- 8 Not useful

THE COUNCIL ROLE IN EDUCATION

k) **As a result of academy reforms has your relationship with schools in your local area:**

- 9 Got better
- 30 Stayed the same
- 13 Got worse

l) **Should all schools be given academy freedoms?**

- 30 Yes
- 17 No

OTHER IMPORTANT CHILDREN'S SERVICES ISSUES

m) **Have adoption scorecards helped you to improve adoption services in your council?**

- 12 Yes
- 34 No

n) **What is the biggest challenge your council faces in adoption services:**

- 16 Insufficient numbers of adopters
- 1 Lack of appropriate adopters
- 6 Excessive bureaucratic delays
- 27 Court delays

o) Do you feel that councils have sufficient power and influence to fulfil their statutory duties in respect of:

Safeguarding

34 Yes
15 No

School Improvement

18 Yes
31 No

Children's Homes placements

34 Yes
13 No

Raising the Participation Age

12 Yes
34 No

Provision of school places

17 Yes
32 No

Supporting vulnerable children

27 Yes
22 No

2. Education and Children's Services Funding

The Chairman moved the report without further comment and invited contributions from the floor.

A detailed discussion followed, in which Members made a number of comments, which were responded to by the Chairman, relating to issues including:

- Members strongly opposed the Government's proposal that £150 million of what was formally part of the Early Intervention Grant (EIG) be retained by the Department for Education (DfE) for central purposes in 2013-14 and 2014-15. In discussing a recent announcement from the Department for Education regarding EIG funding, several concerns were expressed regarding the lack transparency around the level of funding local authorities would receive and whether or not this represented a cut in funding. It was agreed that a letter be written to the Secretary of State seeking clarity on this matter.
- In addition to concerns regarding EIG funding, Members also emphasised the significant financial pressure on non-schools funding for local government, with a 28% reduction in real terms over the period of the Spending Review. In doing so, serious concerns were expressed regarding the detrimental impact on service delivery and on vulnerable service users.

- With reference to the Government's consultation on replacing Local Authority Central Spend Equivalent Grant (LACSEG), Members raised serious concerns regarding guidance and communication from central Government.
- A number of Members expressed support for de-ring-fencing the Dedicated Schools Grant to provide councils with the flexibility to target funding based on local need and deliver better local outcomes.
- With reference to the Priority Schools Building programme, concerns were expressed regarding inequalities in the distribution of grants across the country. Members requested that the LGA take this issue forward as an important part of their lobbying work.

Decisions

That the Board:

- i. **noted** the report; and
- ii. **agreed** to write to the Minister of State for Schools seeking clarity on Early Intervention Grant Funding.

Action

Officers to take forward this work in light of Members' comments.

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3 Sector-Led Improvement

The Chairman moved the report without further comment and invited contributions from the floor.

No comments were made.

Decision

That the Board **noted** the report.

4. The Council Role in Education

The Chairman moved the report without further comment and invited contributions from the floor.

A detailed discussion followed, in which Members made a number of comments, to which the Chairman responded, including:

- Concerns were expressed about councils' ability to fulfil their statutory and moral duties given the inability of local authorities to hold academy schools to account. With reference to the role of local authorities in school improvement, Members indicated that in their view, councils remain best placed to ensure that all schools, including academies, are accountable.
- A Member highlighted the need for there to be a statutory duty on schools to inform the local education authority of exam results in advance of publication.
- A Member advocated that local authorities be given freedoms and responsibilities to bid for new schools and that councils are involved in the overall process.
- Concerns were expressed that there is no requirement to have a local authority representative on all School Governing Bodies.
- Members discussed the importance of more clearly defining the role the council in education. In doing so, the issues of exclusion of Special Educational Need (SEN) students and the uptake of free school meals were highlighted as areas of concern.
- Concerns were expressed regarding the detrimental impact of universal credit on the number of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium. Similarly, the impact of increasing numbers of low paid international migrants not eligible for state support was highlighted as an issue which councils needed support to address.

Decision

That the Board **approved** the LGA's draft paper on the council role in education and training for submission to the Ministerial Advisory Group.

Action

Officers to take forward this work in light of Members' comments.

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7. Notes of the last meeting and actions arising

The Board **agreed** the note of the last meeting.

8. Matters arising

Councillor Judith Blake provided an update on the legal challenge against Ofqual and the Examination Boards regarding the recent discrepancies in GCSE marking. She invited Members who wanted to sign up in support of the legal challenge to contact her. The Chairman informed Members that a breakdown of who is participating in the legal challenge had been requested and would be shared with members of the Board.

Action

Share the breakdown of the legal challenge with Board Members.

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