

MINUTES of the meeting of Herefordshire Schools Forum held at Council Chamber, The Shire Hall, St. Peter's Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX on Friday 15 April 2016 at 2.00 pm

Present: Mrs J Rees (Local Authority Maintained Primary School) (Chairman)
Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins (Secondary Maintained Schools) (Vice Chairman)

Mrs S Bailey	Special Schools
Mr P Barns	Pupil Referral Unit
Mrs W Bradbeer	Academies
Mrs J Cohn	Special School Governor Representative
Mr A Davies	Academies
Mr J Docherty	Academies
Mr T E Edwards	Local Authority Maintained Secondary School Governor
Mr M Farmer	Academies
Mr A Hubble	Academies
Ms A Jackson	Early Years Representative
Mr T Knapp	Academies
Mr C Lewandowski	Trade Union Representative
Mr M Lewis	Local Authority Maintained Primary School
Mrs K Weston	Local Authority Maintained Primary School
Mr K Wright	Local Authority Maintained Primary School

233. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mr P Burbidge, Mr N Griffiths, Mrs L Johnson, Mrs S Lines, Mrs A Pritchard, Mrs M Stevens and Mr P Whitcombe, and from Councillor JG Lester (Cabinet Member – Young People and Children’s Services).

234. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Mr A Hubble substituted for Mr N Griffiths.

Mrs W Priday attended as an observer on behalf of Mrs Johnson.

235. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

236. MINUTES

It was noted that Mr T Edwards had been present at the meeting in January but this had not been recorded.

In relation to Minute no 230 the School Finance Manager reported that the Secretary of State had approved funding of the multi-agency support hub posts from the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2016/17 only. The implication was that a Service Level Agreement would be required to fund these posts in 2017/18.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2016, as amended, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

237. SCHOOLS NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA AND HIGH NEEDS FUNDING REFORM

The Forum considered the draft response to the government consultation on the schools national funding formula and high needs funding reform which had been prepared to reflect the joint views of the council and schools forum.

The assistant director – education and commissioning introduced the report and commented on the local authority's wish that it would be possible to agree a unified response to the consultation papers with the Forum.

The school finance manager explained that the consultation was the first stage of the consultation process on funding reform and looked at the principles that should underpin a fair funding formula. The second stage would set out the proposed national formulae and illustrate the impact on schools. The timescale was tight if the Budget Working Group was to be able to consider the proposed new national formula to inform the preparation of a consultation paper for Herefordshire Schools in September including the new funding values.

The Forum considered the draft responses to the two consultation papers as appended to the report.

The Forum indicated its broad support for the proposed responses whilst inviting the local authority to consider in relation to bullet point 6 of the statement at the start of the schools national funding formula response making reference to local authority powers; in relation to question 2 making greater reference to the importance of the local context, and clarifying that the answer to question 24 was “no”; and in relation to the high needs funding formula response inviting the local authority to consider in relation to question 4 making reference to the need to consider significant behavioural needs.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) **jointly with the council, schools forum welcomes the introduction of a national school funding formula that will ensure schools and Herefordshire receive fair funding and wishes to see implementation as soon as practicable and no later than the proposed April 2019;**
- b) **within the context of (a) above the Forum agrees the detailed responses to the questions 1-25 as set out in the DfE's schools national funding formula consultation paper, whilst inviting the local authority to consider in relation to bullet point 6 of the statement at the start of the schools national funding formula response making reference to local authority powers; in relation to question 2 making greater reference to the importance of the local context, and clarifying that the answer to question 24 was “no”;**
- c) **within the context of (a) above agrees the detailed responses to the questions 1-14 as set out in the DfE's high needs funding formula and other reforms consultation paper whilst inviting the local authority to consider in relation to question 4 making reference to the need to consider significant behavioural needs; and**
- d) **the joint response be submitted by the 17 April 2016 closing date.**

238. BUDGET WORKING GROUP

The Forum considered the report of the budget working group (BWG) on the following matters: summary of school budget proposals and special school funding.

Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins introduced the report on behalf of the Chairman of the BWG and thanked members of the Group and supporting officers for their work.

The School Finance Manager presented the report, highlighting in relation to school budget plans the summaries of common budgetary issues and possible solutions at paragraphs 7&8 of the report.

He also noted the BWG's discussion of the concerns over special school funding and the further consideration the BWG planned to give to the issue.

The Forum acknowledged the budgetary issues and solutions identified. It was noted that not all schools had replied to an invitation to submit outline action plans and savings proposals to the BWG. The Forum supported extending and publicising the offer of support to schools who had not replied, providing them with an opportunity to discuss any financial concerns they might have.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) the Herefordshire Association of Secondary Headteachers and the primary heads forum be asked to make the offer of further support to those schools who have not responded and to extend the offer by a direct communication to schools through the Spotlight schools briefing;**
- b) the support provided should also include educational support through a colleague headteacher e.g. a National Leader of Education in addition to the support offered by the schools finance manager; and**
- c) in accordance with principle six of the schools capital investment strategy, officers be asked to make contact with the relevant schools and in particular those schools with a deteriorating financial position.**

239. WORK PROGRAMME

The Forum considered its work programme.

The School Finance Manager commented that issues to be considered in June and July were dependent on the the DfE publishing the stage two consultation papers on the implementation of the national school funding formula. Without the DfE consultation proposals the meetings would be unable to proceed.

RESOLVED: That the work programme be noted.

240. MEETING DATES

Noted.

The meeting ended at 3.05 pm

CHAIRMAN