

**Minutes of the meeting of Herefordshire schools forum held at  
The Council Chamber - The Shire Hall, St. Peter's Square,  
Hereford, HR1 2HX on Friday 21 June 2019 at 9.30 am**

**Present:**            **Councillor (Chairperson)**  
                         **Mrs J Cohn (Academy Special School Representative) (Vice-chairperson)**

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Mrs S Bailey     | LA Maintained Special Schools             |
| Mr P Burbidge    | Archdiocese of Cardiff                    |
| Mrs J Cohn       | Academy Special School Representative     |
| Mr S Fisher      | Academies                                 |
| Ms K Harley      | PRU management committee                  |
| Mr J Hedges      | Primary Governors                         |
| Mr M Henton      | LA Maintained Secondary Schools           |
| Mr T Knapp       | Academies                                 |
| Mr C Lewandowski | Trade Unions                              |
| Mrs R Lloyd      | Early Years                               |
| Mr N Moon        | LA Maintained Primary Schools             |
| Mr P Deneen      | Trade Unions                              |
| Mrs J Rees       | Local Authority Maintained Primary School |

**In attendance:**    **Carole Gandy and Felicity Norman**

**Officers:**            **Chris Baird and Malcolm Green**

**32.        APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Andy Evans, Christine Bryan, Nicki Emmet, Ed Gwillim, Sian Lines and Rachel Rice.

**33.        NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)**

None.

**34.        DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

**35.        MINUTES**

The chair of the children and young people scrutiny committee queried if information had been circulated seeking nominations for parent governors to sit on the scrutiny committee. It was confirmed that HGA had circulated information to governors but no one had yet come forward. It was noted that parent governors would now have voting rights on any issues that impact on schools such as safeguarding, rather than only on purely education items.

**Members of the forum were asked to encourage parent governors to put themselves forward.**

**The notes of the meeting of 15 March were agreed.**

### **36. UPDATE ON NATIONAL SCHOOLS FUNDING ISSUES**

The Schools Finance Manager provided an update on national school funding issues, key points noted were:

- DfE had indicated that the outcome of the spending review was likely to be late and that any information on changes to the national funding formula were unlikely to be known until December;
- The advice was to carry on with current arrangements for 2020/21;
- Some local authorities had historic spending commitments which the DfE were looking to phase out and would then distribute this funding via a formula, Herefordshire had no such historic spending commitments and could benefit if and when this was put in place;
- There had been no news about funding of future pay awards and pension increases, the DfE had committed to fully fund minus 1% for the 2018/19 pay award but nothing further.

With the guidance from the DfE in mind, the consultation paper for Herefordshire schools budgets for 2020/21 would be based on carrying forward the 2019/20 arrangements. The approach would be updated if further information came forward.

The SFM updated forum members on the work of the Budget Working Group since the previous meeting as follows:

- The DSG outturn for 2018/19 showed a £531k underspend at the end of the year, largely due to the additional government grant of £380k for high needs which was not planned in spending commitments; if that grant had not been received there would have been a £66k overspend in the high needs block and a smaller underspend overall;
- With the surplus from 2018/19 added, reserves stood at £2.5m of which £0.8m was committed to support early years projects;
- De-delegation arrangements for local authority schools had been reviewed as requested and the working group was broadly content with the current arrangements, there was likely to be a small reduction in cost per pupil of the trade union de-delegation to better reflect recent actual costs;
- The budget consultation for 2020/21 would include the de-delegation arrangements as it did every year and would reflect the feedback from the working group, all schools would be able to give their views through the consultation;
- The chair of the working group stated that there had been a long discussion on the current de-delegation arrangements and that overall the group felt the position was fair and that local authority schools were not losing out;
- A draft scheme was being drawn up by the SFM for allocation of the growth pot funds, this would be included in the consultation paper in the autumn for schools to give their views;
- Latest forecasts showed the high needs block should remain in surplus through to March 2022 on the assumption that additional funding from the DfE was continued and that modest transfers from the school block growth pot were approved.

The SFM reported on an exercise to compare Herefordshire's current DSG position with that of statistical neighbours. The review was based on unaudited published accounts but showed that a number of councils in the group had significant deficits while other councils had provided additional funding to prevent deficits. It was concerning how quickly some councils had moved from a surplus to a deficit and this emphasised the need for careful and continuous monitoring of the schools budget. Where councils were

in deficit by more than 1% they would be required to submit a recovery plan to the DfE. The SFM would review such plans to understand the causes of these deficits and what lessons Herefordshire could take forward.

### **37. ANNUAL REVIEW OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP**

The clerk to the forum summarised the report on the annual review of membership. Key points were noted as:

- The forum was required to review membership on a regular basis to ensure that representation by schools members broadly reflects the proportion of pupils in academies and local authority maintained schools;
- Analysis of the 2019 January School Census showed no significant change in proportionality and as a result no changes were proposed to the allocation of seats on the forum;
- The membership of the Budget Working Group was not required to be proportional but the forum had previously decided that the working group would follow the same principles as the forum, no changes were proposed to the membership of the working group.

The clerk highlighted that there were five vacant seats for primary headteacher representatives. Information would be circulated at the start of the autumn term to all primary schools seeking to recruit additional representatives. The clerk requested that forum members encourage colleagues to consider putting themselves forward. There were two academy seats and three local authority seats. The clerk reminded members that deputy or assistant headteachers or finance managers could also serve on the forum but it was appreciated that primary schools may find it difficult to release staff for forum meetings.

**It was decided that:**

**The outcome of the annual review of proportionality be noted and no changes be made to allocations of seats on Herefordshire Schools Forum or the Budget Working Group.**

### **38. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND WORK PROGRAMME**

The dates of meetings for 2019/20 academic year were noted as:

25 October 2019  
17 January 2020  
13 March 2020  
10 July 2020

The draft work programme was noted as containing the standard regular items. The programme would be kept under review and amended as necessary during the year.

The meeting ended at 9.57 am

**Chairperson**