

Minutes of the meeting of Herefordshire schools forum held as online meeting on Friday 15 January 2021 at 9.30 am

Present:	Mrs J Cohn (Academy Special School Representative) (Chairperson) Mrs K Weston (Local Authority Maintained Primary School) (Vice-chairperson)
Mr D Bennett	Academies
Ms C Bryan	Academies
Mr P Burbidge	Archdiocese of Cardiff
Mr A Davies	Academies
Ms N Emmett	Academies
Ms N Gilbert	LA Special Schools
Mr E Gwillim	16-19 Providers
Mr J Hedges	Primary Governors
Mr M Henton	LA Maintained Secondary Schools
Mrs S Jenkins	Local Authority Maintained Primary School
Mr P Jennings	Academies
Mr S Kendrick	Local Authority Maintained Primary School (with Nursery)
Mr T Knapp	Academies
Ms T Kneale	Local Authority Maintained Primary School
Mr C Lewandowski	Trade Unions
Mrs R Lloyd	Early Years
Mr N Moon	Local Authority Maintained Primary Schools
Mr P Deneen	Trade Unions
Mrs K Weston	Local Authority Maintained Primary School

In attendance: Cllr Carole Gandy, Felicity Norman and Diana Toynbee

Officers: Strategic Finance Manager, Head of Additional Needs and Assistant Director Education Development and Skills

10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from the following forum members: Georgie Griffin, Ali Jackson, Sian Lines.

11. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

The attendance of the following substitutes was noted:

Andy Gosling for Georgie Griffin
Andrew Teale for Sian Lines

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Tim Knapp declared an interest in agenda item 6 as the headteacher of Whitecross Hereford High School.

Paul Deneen and Chris Lewandowski declared interests in agenda item 5 as representatives of unions.

13. MINUTES

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2020 be approved as a correct record.

14. SCHOOLS BUDGET 2021/22 (Pages 9 - 16)

The strategic finance manager (SFM) presented the report and outlined the proposed schools budget based on the confirmed Dedicated Schools Grant allocation from the Department for Education (DfE). A copy of the slides used in the presentation are attached to the minutes of the meeting.

The SFM highlighted that the proposals were largely the same as those set out in the consultation paper shared with schools in the Autumn Term. However the final settlement was better than expected and as a result the allocations proposed an improved amount to schools. The underlying approach remained to fully fund the national funding formula levels for schools and to share any surplus funding between schools and the high needs block to support the SEN protection scheme. The Budget Working Group had been fully involved in drawing up the proposals and had endorsed the recommendations set out in the agenda papers.

The SFM had submitted a request to the Secretary of State for approval of an exceptional factor to pay additional monies to six small schools who would lose out on the consolidation of the teachers' pay grant and teachers' pension grant. A response was still awaited. The Budget Working Group had recommended that while use of the exceptional factor was the preferred way forward, in the event that approval was not received the £27k allocated for this factor should be distributed to all schools by increasing the per pupil amount.

An inflationary allowance of 1.5% had been received for the early years' block which was not expected. Taken together with an adjustment for a regular underspend in part of the early years block this allowed for an improvement in the offer to the nursery education funding to settings. There was also an allocation of £10k funding to the MASH to provide support to early years settings.

The allocations of the central services block were largely as set out in the consultation paper. An allocation of £25k into SEN casework was proposed, which would help to support the implementation of the amended high needs matrix which would be discussed later on the agenda.

The high needs budget was in a slightly more positive position than it had been recently. An increase of £2.1m in the high needs block allocation had been received and the latest forecasts of the complex needs funding showed a lower demand for additional funding than had been expected. It was not yet clear whether the council would need to fund the new Beacon College so an allocation had been set aside.

The chair of the Budget Working Group thanked the SFM for his work on the proposals and also thanked members of the working group for their contributions. He highlighted that there had been a number of interesting and robust discussions on the key points during the working group meetings and that it was refreshing to have a small amount of good news to share regarding the budget proposals. The working group were happy to commend the recommendations put to the forum in the agenda papers.

It was resolved that:

The local implementation of the National Funding Formula (NFF) for 2021/22 as set out in the consultation document and recommendation (a) – (k) as below, be approved for recommendation to the Cabinet member for children and families as follows;

- (a) The final school funding values be agreed, subject to a minimum total funding per pupil of £4,180 for primary schools and £5,415 for secondary schools, including the Minimum Funding Guarantee at 2% as follows:

1	Basic entitlement per pupil	Primary	£3,123
2	Basic entitlement per secondary pupil	Key Stage 3	£4,404
3	Basic entitlement per secondary pupil	Key Stage 4	£4,963
4	Deprivation per free school meal	Primary	£460
5	Deprivation per free school meal	Secondary	£460
6	Deprivation per ever-6 free school meal	Primary	£575
7	Deprivation per ever-6 free school meal	Secondary	£840
8	Socio-economic deprivation Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI)		
9	Band A	Primary	£620
10		Secondary	£865
11	Band B	Primary	£475
12		Secondary	£680
13	Band C	Primary	£445
14		Secondary	£630
15	Band D	Primary	£410
16		Secondary	£580
17	Band E	Primary	£260
18		Secondary	£415
19	Band F	Primary	£215
20		Secondary	£310
21	Band G	Primary	£0
22		Secondary	£0
23	Low prior attainment per pupil	Primary	£1,095
24		Secondary	£1,660
25	Lump Sum	Primary	£117,800
26		Secondary	£117,800
27	Looked after Children, primary and secondary	All	£0
28	Primary sparsity, on NFF taper basis , over 2 miles and less than an average year group size of 21.4 pupils	Primary	£45,000
29	Secondary sparsity, on NFF taper basis, over 3 miles and less than an average year group size of 120 pupils	Secondary	£70,000
30	English as additional language per primary pupil	Primary	£550
31	English as additional language per secondary pupil	Secondary	£1,485
32	Mobility	Primary	£900
33	Mobility	Secondary	£1,290
34	PFI contract	Secondary	£299,163
35	Business rates	All	At cost
36	Exceptional premises factor – Eastnor rent	Primary	£9,060
37	Exceptional factor – TPG/TPECG adjustment subject to Secretary of State approval	Primary	£27,000

(b) Growth funding for basic need expansion in the Golden Valley be agreed at a total cost of £235k, as follows;

- (i) Growth funding for basic need expansion at Kingstone High School, £75,715 for an additional 45 planned pupils for the summer term 2021**
- (ii) Growth funding be finalised for basic need expansion at Fairfield High School, £55,525 for an additional 33 planned pupils for the summer term 2021**
- (iii) Growth funding be finalised for basic need expansion at Kingstone High School, £77,070 for an additional 30 planned pupils in September 2021**
- (iv) Growth funding be finalised for basic need expansion at Fairfield High School, £25,690 for an additional 10 planned pupils in September 2021**

(c) Transfer to high needs block to support the SEN protection scheme, £300k

(d) Additional £15 per pupil for primary and secondary schools at a cost of £117,158

(e) That any minor adjustments to the schools budget up to £5k, in order to comply with DfE submission requirements, be made to the funding allocated to the growth fund in order to provide a contingency.

(f) That the central services block be allocated as follows

- (i) Statutory retained duties £369k**
- (ii) Schools Forum administration costs £15k**
- (iii) School admission costs £125k**
- (iv) National licences for schools £140k**
- (v) Additional funding for statutory duties for SEN casework team £25k**
- (vi) transfer SACRE funding to statutory duties £5k**
- (vii) transfer to the high needs block £75k**

(g) That local authority maintained school members, approve the de-delegation of funding in 2021/22, and advise the Cabinet member for children's and families for information, as follows

- (i) trade union facilities for primary schools only be approved at £2.75 per pupil**
- (ii) school budgeting software licence at £405 per school**
- (iii) ethnic minority support at £1.12 per pupil plus £6.60 per Ever-6 Free school meals and £107 per English as an Additional Language first year pupil**
- (iv) school meals entitlement assessment at £1.25 per primary pupil and £0.94 per secondary pupil (Proposal A) for local authority schools**
- (v) trade union facilities for secondary schools only be provided for through a Service Level Agreement at £2.75 per pupil**
- (vi) that the statutory education services for non-academy schools be reduced by 50p per pupil and charged at £12 per pupil**

(h) The early years funding formula for Herefordshire providers from April 2021 be as follows;

- (i) Two year olds: £5.36 per hour**
- (ii) Three and four year olds: £4.08 per hour + £0.35 per hour for Early Years Pupil Premium eligible children + a rurality supplement per provider of £52 per week (pro-rata for providers that deliver less than 100 hours per week) paid for 38 weeks per year**
- (iii) Early years central expenditure be increased by 1.5% inflation**
- (iv) the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub be supported to help and support to early years settings at a cost of £10,000 per annum**

(j) to remove the reception uplift factor as proposed in the consultation paper

(k) to reduce the maximum percentage for permitted carry forward of school balances to 20% of the school allocation (including early years funding) from April 2021

(l) In the event that approval is not received the basic entitlement per primary and secondary pupil be increased by £2 a pupil and the growth fund allocation in recommendation (b) be reduced to £234k.

(NB restrictions were applied to voting as follows:

Only representatives of LA maintained schools, academies and early years providers were eligible to vote on recommendations (a) to (f) and (h) to (l).

Only representatives of LA maintained schools were eligible to vote on recommendation (g). This was further restricted to LA primary school representatives for part (i) and LA secondary school representatives for part (v).)

Decision by Secretary of State

Following the meeting it was confirmed that the request to include the exceptional factor listed as item 37 in part (a) of the decision had been rejected. The contingency set out in part (l) of the decision will therefore be taken forward.

15. WHITECROSS PFI CONTRACT - TRIENNIAL REVIEW

The strategic finance manager presented the findings of the triennial review of the Whitecross PFI contract. It was noted that the level of inflation had generally been below the 2.5% included in the finance model. Should inflation continue at its current low rate through to the end of the contract then the council would be able to cease paying into the sinking fund a year or two earlier than planned. The contract was felt to be working well and no changes were proposed for the next three year period.

In response to a query the SFM explained that in the event Whitecross School was expanded any building work undertaken through the PFI contract would be expensive and the council would need to consider carefully how to proceed. The headteacher confirmed that the school was aware of the costs to the council of any kind of expansion. While some very informal conversations had taken place around possible future expansion this had not proceeded further at this stage.

It was resolved that:

(a) The council's existing contribution of £928,350 pa be continued until the next triennial review in Autumn 2023.

16. HIGH NEEDS REVISED MATRIX AND TARIFFS - IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The head of additional needs (HAN) presented the implementation plan for the revised high needs matrix and tariffs and explained that this would be subject to consultation with schools and parent carer groups. The results of the consultation would be brought back to the budget working group and from there to the March meeting of the schools forum.

The HAN reported that a considerable amount of work had gone into the changes and it was important to differentiate between the matrix itself, which had been revised for some

time, and the table of tariffs which are the values attached to the number of points generated by that wording. The revision sought to address double counting of scores and give greater recognition to the high level of medical and physical needs of some children. The revised matrix would cover the vast majority of children so fewer exceptional decisions would need to be made.

The revisions to the wording in the matrix had been carried out with a working group which had a wide range of stakeholders represented. Since that work had been completed a moderation exercise had taken place to make sure that individual children did not receive big changes to their financial packages and that individual schools did not have wide fluctuations between the old and new arrangements. The principles set out at the start of the review included an aim that children and young people should be funded at the same level irrespective of the setting they attended. A lot of work had been undertaken to try and smooth out changes for individual settings while still adhering to that principle.

The new arrangements would be phased in over five years. From April 2021 all new education health and care plans would be based on the new matrix and tariff. Existing plans would be moved to the new system as pupils reached points of phase transfer.

Forum members noted that there would likely be some fluctuations for individual schools but they should be relatively small in an overall budget. The representative of LA special schools highlighted that the tariff system was the only means of increased income for special schools as there was no year on year increase in the basic per pupil funding. The SFM explained that the council was restricted by the national funding formula which fixed the per pupil figure of £10k. Feedback had been sent to the DfE that it was about time the figure was increased but the DfE were waiting for the conclusion of the national SEN review. It was hoped that the outcome of the review would be published before the end of the Spring Term 2021. The SFM explained that the council had allocated greater inflationary increases on the tariffs which were most relevant to special schools in recognition of the increase in costs such as staffing for special schools.

It was resolved that:

- (a) Schools forum endorses the implementation plan for consultation with schools and parent carer groups (subject to any comments made); and**
- (b) The Budget Working Group be asked to consider the responses to the consultation and any necessary financial adjustments; and**
- (c) A finalised implementation plan and tariff values be considered by Schools Forum at the meeting in March.**

17. EARLY YEARS FUNDING

The chair introduced an additional item of business. The forum heard from one of the early years representatives regarding problems with the NEF payments for the Spring Term 2021.

Forum members noted that current guidance was that the funding was to be on actual children attending on a head count, which was difficult given that many families were keeping their children away from settings during the lockdown. New guidance had just been issued that settings would be able to apply for funding for children for whom they had a space even if they weren't attending but many settings had already cut back on their availability and staffing because children were not coming in. It was a challenge to balance costs with keeping sufficient places open for those parents wanting them and ensuring settings were viable for the future.

The SFM confirmed that the council was aware of the difficulties and was in dialogue with the DfE. Further information and guidance was expected. Funding for the autumn term had been based on the figures from the previous year and it was possible that a similar arrangement would be put in place for this term. If children were not recorded on the census then the council did not receive the funding in its DSG to pass through to settings.

The assistant director education development and skills confirmed that the council had taken a decision to provide some additional support to nurseries and that details of this would be announced shortly. It was recognised that information needed to be communicated to providers as soon as possible.

The meeting ended at 10.42 am

Chairperson

School Forum
15 January 2021
School Budget 2021/22

Autumn budget consultation

- Fully fund schools at National Funding Formula
- £620k estimated as available allocated as:
 - Golden Valley growth £240k
 - £10 per pupil extra £80k
 - Transfer to high needs £300k
- Delete reception uplift factor
- Reduce clawback % for LA schools to 20%

• **Budget recommendations to Forum are as per consultation or better throughout**

Schools Forum Proposals

- Fully fund schools at National Funding Formula
- £652k surplus allocated as:
 - Golden Valley growth £235k **BETTER**
 - **£15 per pupil extra** £117k **BETTER**
 - **£300k to HNB re SEN Protection scheme**
 - ⇒ **Includes £27k for TPG/TPECG protection 6 schools (still waiting for SoS decision - expect next week)**
- Delete reception uplift factor
- Reduce clawback % for LA schools to 20%
- De-delegation – as per consultation FSM Option A
- **Reduce Education Man'gt Charge by 50p to £12**

Early Years Block

Consultation no change to early years formula

34YO is £3.97/hr+£51/week rurality (pro-rata <100hrs) +£0.33/hr deprivation for EYPP pupils

- 2YO is £5.28/hr

Recommendation for approx 2.5% increase

- ¹²• 34YO is £4.08/hr+£52/week rurality (pro-rata <100hrs) + £0.35/hr for EYPP pupils
- 2YO is £5.36/hr
- Need to inform EY settings

£10k for EY MASH support from central EY spend

Forum Recommendations

Central Block

All £'000	Consult	Schools Forum
ESG Retained	360	369
Forum Admin	15	15
Admissions	125	125
⁶³ National licences	140	140
SEN Casework	0	25
SACRE	0	5
Transfer to HNB	83	75
TOTAL	713	754

High Needs Budget 2021/22

- Major revamp of budget as CNF £1m less
- Settlement as expected – actually £2.1m extra
- Re-allocated as follows
 - £0.35m for TPG/TPECG
 - £0.1m growth for primary LCC unit
 - £0.37m Beacon College (to be confirmed)
 - £0.08m SEN protection scheme
 - £0.13m new tariffs & MFG Special schools
 - £0.1m unallocated
- Final proposals to come back to March meeting

14

PFI Contract - Triennial Review

- 10 years of contract remains
- Annual cost to council £928k
- Max value of sinking fund £1.9m in 2024
- Realistic estimates of inflation and school contribution gives final sinking fund of £1.6m
- Rather than reduce annual budget preferable to reduce budget in final years of contract – as provides cover for higher inflation
- All in order for another three years

