

## **Minutes of the meeting of Herefordshire schools forum held at online meeting on Friday 7 October 2022 at 9.30 am**

**Present: Ms A Banner (Vice-Chairperson in the chair)**

Mr D Bennett	Academies
Mr A Davies	Academies
Mr P Deneen	Trade Unions
Ms N Emmett	Academies
Mr R Foster	Academies (primary)
Ms N Gilbert	LA Special Schools
Mrs G Griffin	Primary Governors
Mrs S Jenkins	Local Authority Maintained Primary School
Mr P Jennings	Academies
Mrs L Johnson	Local Authority Maintained Secondary School Governor
Mr T Knapp	Academies
Mrs R Lloyd	Early Years
Ms C Rushton	Trade Unions
Mr A Teale	Diocese of Hereford

**Officers: Service Director, Education, Skills and Learning, Strategic Finance Manager and Head of Additional Needs, Childrens Wellbeing**

### **54. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON**

Kathy Weston was proposed and unanimously supported by members of the forum.

**Resolved: that Kathy Weston be elected chairperson of the Forum for the ensuing year.**

### **55. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

Alison Banner was proposed and unanimously supported by members of the forum.

**Resolved: that Alison Banner be elected vice-chairperson of the Forum for the ensuing year.**

### **56. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were noted from the following forum members: Andy Gosling, Ed Gwillim, Steve Kendrick, Tracey Kneale, Chris Lewandowski, Sian Lines, Sheila Taylor, Kathy Weston.

### **57. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)**

The following substitutes were noted:

Lynn Johnson for Andy Gosling  
Carol Rushton for Chris Lewandowski

Andrew Teale for Sian Lines

## 58. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Paul Deneen declared an interest in item 7 on the agenda as a representative of trades unions.

## 59. MINUTES

The strategic finance manager had contacted the f40 group as requested at the previous meeting with regard to the sharing of information gathered on school energy costs. However this had been overtaken by national events and the government's actions to address rising energy prices. Most Herefordshire schools received their energy through West Mercia Energy, who reported that they were fully hedged this year and next year, meaning Herefordshire schools were as protected as they could be through to April 2024.

**With this update noted it was resolved that: the minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2022 be approved as a correct record.**

## 60. LOCAL AND NATIONAL SCHOOLS FUNDING UPDATE (Pages 5 - 12)

The strategic finance manager gave a presentation on the key points to be covered in the annual consultation with schools. A copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes of the meeting.

In discussion of the presentation and proposed budget consultation it was noted that:

- The behaviour support service would provide further information so that schools would understand what they would be getting for the de-delegated sum if approved;
- There was now very little flexibility in the funding formula as it moved closer to a hard national formula;
- A 0.5% minimum funding guarantee was recommended;
- It was proposed to transfer £615k to the high needs block to fund the SEN protection scheme, this was the maximum that could be transferred;
- Schools had consistently reported how they valued the SEN protection scheme but the transfer proposed would not fund continued growth;
- Pressure for EHCPs continued, with referrals up 26% in the financial year;
- The outcome of the consultation would be discussed with the budget working group before coming to the next forum meeting in January 2023.

Further discussion will take place on the high needs budget ahead of setting a budget in March 2023 but there is concern that the expected allocation will not allow a balanced budget to be set. Forum members noted that:

- At the request of the budget working group a projection had been produced which showed how the deficit could grow based on the experiences of other councils;
- Action was being taken to minimise the use of out of county placements but this would take time to come to fruition;
- The base funding block for special schools had not been increased since 2014 and no funding proposals had yet come forward from the national SEND review, the local authority attempted to compensate for this by increasing the higher tariffs as much as possible;
- There was also a lot of demand outside special schools and all pupils with special education needs required better funding;
- Schools were also looking at solutions including options for Alternative Provision.

Options to apply pressure to the national government to address the pressures in high needs were discussed. Efforts have been made previously to engage with local MPs and it was suggested that the forum keep this under review.

The strategic finance manager informed forum members that he had re-applied to the DfE as advised by them to continue the exceptional factor to cover rent costs for Eastnor Primary School. This was a largely technical matter and the outcome would be reported to the forum in due course.

Forum members thanked officers and members of the budget working group for their work on the budget proposals.

**It was resolved that:**

**The initial budget proposals for 2023/24 for schools and high needs, as outlined in the draft consultation paper, be approved for consultation with schools during the autumn term 2022.**

**61. WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23**

The work programme and dates of future meetings were noted. No additional items were proposed for the work programme.

The meeting ended at 10.30 am

**Chairperson**



DSG 2023-24  
School Forum  
7 October 2022

# De-delegation proposals 23/24

- New proposals in Spotlight newsletter
- **School Improvement** – replacement of government grant of £230k pa by de-delegation of £12 per pupil
- **Contingencies** - de-delegation at £3 per pupil for three years to build up fund for unexpected and significant costs e.g. Employment Tribunals
- **Behaviour Support Service** at £4 per primary pupil – to be reviewed with BWG in December
- All other de-delegations to have inflationary increase of 1.9% as per DfE's NFF allocations

# Schools Block 2023/24

- £122.35m funding for full NFF and an MFG at 0.5%
- Forum has very limited discretion to change NFF
- MFG guarantees a minimum per pupil increase to all schools and can be set between 0.0% and 0.5%
- Any greater increase requires DFE approval
- Choice of MFG at 0% or 0.5%
- MFG at 0.5% costs £378k and to support 6 larger primary schools with high deprivation. Max is £145k
- At 0% the cost is £314k and supports 6 schools with the max at £131k

# Schools Block 2023/24

## Base Reference Case

- MFG at 0.5% minimum and SEN Protection scheme funded with expected £350k surplus growth plus **£25k underspend** = £375k

## Current spend of SEN Protection scheme

- Estimated at £619K 22-23
- Which is the max transfer of 0.5% of Schools Block

**Consulted BWG to scale back gains by 16.5%** to create surplus £274k to add to maintain SEN scheme at £615k – but will not fund continued growth.



# HNB Consultation in Autumn 2022

Additional £1.57m is provisionally allocated;

- £0.5m out-county independent schools
- £0.6m inflation on tariffs A - C (2%) D-F (+5%)
- £0.2m autism places from September 2023
- £0.2m PRU site leads and increase in tariffs
- £0.05m increase in behaviour based tariffs re Brookfield
- £0.03m Early Years high needs tariffs increases re parity with schools

**Doesn't look enough to set a balanced budget**

# Next Steps

- Consultation with schools October to November
- Views re SEN protection v MFG
- Views on delegation options for LA schools
- Review at Dec 2 BWG
- DSG confirmed mid- December
- Finalise budget proposals BWG 6<sup>th</sup> Jan
- Schools Forum 13 Jan
- Submit to DfE 20 Jan
- High Needs budget to Schools Forum 3 March

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# High Needs Deficit Forecast

- Based on extrapolation from 2016-17 of top 5 LAs with biggest deficits – most were tiny in 2016-17
- Ave deficit in 2016-17= £1.2m
- Ave deficit forecast in 2024-25 = £117.3m
- ⇒ • Applying year on year % to Herefordshire we get
  - **21-22** £0.3m, **22-23** £0.9m, **23-24** £2.9m
  - **24-25** £5.8m, **25-26** £10m, **26-27** £15.7m
  - **27-28** £20.3m, **28-29** £25.1m, **29-30** £29.3m
- Herefordshire is 5 years behind Top 5 but same national EHCP pressures apply

