

MINUTES of the meeting of Herefordshire Schools Forum held at Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford HR1 1SH on Friday 20 January 2012 at 9.30 am

Present: Ms T Kneale (Chairman)
Mr NPJ Griffiths (Vice Chairman)

Mr A Teale, Mrs K. Rooke, Mrs JS Powell, Mr P Burbidge,
Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins, Mr N O'Neil, Mr S Woodrow, Mr S Pugh, Mrs J Cecil,
Mr P Box, Mr S Matthews, Mrs J Baker, Mr TE Edwards, Mrs S Bailey,
Mr J Docherty, Ms A Pritchard, Mr M Harrison, Mr J Godfrey, Mr A Shaw,
Mrs A Jackson, Mr P Barns, Dr M Goodman and Mr J Sheppard

In attendance: None

48. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mr J Chapman and Mrs R Lloyd.

49. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were none.

50. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

51. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were none.

52. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

53. UPDATE ON SCHOOLS FUNDING SETTLEMENT FOR 2012/13

The Forum was informed of the details of the Secretary of State's announcement for Dedicated Schools Grant funding for 2012/13.

The Schools Finance Manager presented the report commenting that the settlement was as expected and planned for in the budget consultation. He drew attention to the highlights of the settlement as set out in the report.

RESOLVED: That the 2012/13 Dedicated Schools Grant funding settlement be noted.

54. REPORT OF THE BUDGET WORKING GROUP

The Forum considered a report from the Budget Working Group, which the Chairman of the Group presented.

RESOLVED:

THAT the recommendations of the Budget Working Group be adopted and recommended to the Cabinet Member – Corporate Services and Education as follows:

- (a) as originally recommended by the Budget Working Group on 19 October the remaining £361k of the 2010/ 11 underspend be all o cated to Early Years settings and schools based on pupil numbers as at January 2011; and**
- (b) in principle the future polic y should be that an y underspend should be allocated to schools and early year settings based on pupil numbers.**

55. INFORMATION REPORT ON NURSERY ENTITLEMENT FUNDING IN HEREFORDSHIRE

The Forum was informed of the background to and present funding of Nursery Entitlement Funding (NEF) and the associated Single Funding Formula (SFF).

The Head of Commissioning (Sufficiency and Capital) (HCSC) presented the report. He highlighted the current statutory duty upon the authority to secure sufficient places for early education places for all 3 and 4 year olds to access the NEF and for childcare and the extension of this duty to provide free places for 20 per cent of two-year-olds from 2013-14 and then 40 per cent of two-year-olds from 2014-15.

The cost analysis supported the view that present NEF rates did not cover the costs of providers and consideration needed to be given to how to sustain provision.

In discussion the following principal points were made:

- Asked about the possibility of providing more nurseries at schools the HCSC commented that the legislation required the Council to use external providers to deliver NEF and childcare except in exceptional circumstances.
- The Head of Provider Services (Learning and Achievement) outlined the mechanisms the Council had in place to monitor the quality of settings, noting also that all settings were subject of Ofsted regulation and inspection.
- The Forum noted the range of challenges being faced by providers. It was clear that the current funding situation was difficult and the extension of the duty on the local authority would generate a greater funding challenge. There was ample evidence supporting the importance of effective early years provision and its contribution to pupil achievement in later years. It was therefore proposed that the Budget Working Group should be required to consider the issue and report back to the Forum.

RESOLVED:

- That (a) the ongoing challenges faced by the Foundation Years’ sector be noted;**
- (b) it be noted how Nurs ery Entitlement Funding and the associated Single Funding Formula contribute to the Local Authority meeting its statutory d uty to co mmission provision in the Fou ndation Years’ sector; and**

- (c) **Schools Forum use the information in the report as supporting evidence for their proposal not to cut Nursery Entitlement Funding for 2012/13 and that the information form the basis of further work to inform Schools Forum budget proposals for 2013/14 with the Budget Working Group being requested to progress that work and report back to the Forum.**

56. WORK PROGRAMME

The Forum noted its work programme.

57. LATE ITEMS/ANY OTHER BUSINESS

National Foundation for Educational Research – (Schools Forum Arrangements)

It was reported that a request had been received to interview two members of the Schools Forum: 1 Mainstream Special School Headteacher, 1 Mainstream Special School Governor.

Mrs S Bailey and Mrs K Rooke agreed to participate in the research.

58. FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

The Forum noted that the next meeting was scheduled to be held at 9.30 am on Friday 24 February 2012.

The meeting ended at 10.07 am

CHAIRMAN