

MINUTES of the meeting of Herefordshire Schools Forum held at Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford HR1 1SH on Friday 19 October 2012 at 10.30 am

Present: Mr NPJ Griffiths (Vice-Chairman in the Chair))

Mrs S Bailey, Mr P Barns, Mr P Burbidge, Mrs J Cecil, Mr JA Chapman, Mrs L Cochrane, Mr K Crawford, Mr T E Edwards, Mrs A Jackson, Mr R Leece, Mr C Lewandowski, Mrs R Lloyd, Mr S Matthews, Mr S Pugh, Mr S Robertson, Mrs K. Rooke, Mr A Shaw, Mrs L Townsend and Mr K Wright

In attendance: Councillor GJ Powell (Cabinet Member – Education and Infrastructure)

Officers: Mr C Baird, Assistant Director Peoples Services Commissioning, Mrs W Boulter, Senior Secondary School Improvement Adviser, Mr M Green, Senior Finance Manager, Mr L Knight, Head of Provider Services (Additional Needs), Mr T Brown, Governance Services.

89. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mr J Docherty, Ms T Kneale, Mrs C Lawson, Mr I Peake, Mrs J Rees, and Mrs D Strutt.

90. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Mrs L Cochrane substituted for Mrs J Rees.

91. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr R Leece and Mr C Lewandowski declared an interest in agenda item 8 – Report of the Budget Working Group – recommendation m – retention of funding centrally for trade union facilities time.

92. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Mrs D Strutt be elected Chairman for the ensuing year.

93. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Mr N Griffiths be elected Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.

(Mr N Griffiths, Vice Chairman in the Chair)

94. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

95. SCHOOLS FORUM CONSTITUTION

The Forum was informed of changes to the Forum's Constitution required by Regulations and guidance from the Department of Education.

The report was noted.

96. REPORT OF THE BUDGET WORKING GROUP

The Forum considered a report from the Budget Working Group on the National Schools Funding Formula.

Mr Griffiths presented the report. He noted that there were very few areas where the responses received on the consultation document on the National Schools Funding Formula suggested any disagreement.

He also drew attention to the BWG's concern about the apparent lack of engagement with the consultation process either through attendance at the consultation events or through submission of responses.

He highlighted the proposed scheme to protect schools from the full effects of the significant changes to the funding of special educational needs.

In discussion the following principal points were made:

- Concern was expressed about funding in relation to prior attainment (question 4 in the consultation paper) because of the absence of early years baseline data for 2013/14.
- The Senior Finance Manager commented that the Authority was complying with the Department for Education's requirements. If the Forum had concerns these could be submitted to the Department. However, it was recognised that the DfE might change its approach and the recommendation proposed that the matter be reviewed in setting the 2014/15 budgets.
- The division of opinion between secondary schools in relation to splitting the basic per pupil entitlement for secondary schools between KS3 and KS4 was noted. It was suggested that this could be reviewed in the light of the approach taken by other authorities.

The Forum then discussed and voted in turn on each of the Budget Working Group's recommendations set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

RESOLVED: That

(a) the proposals for the local application of the National Schools Funding Formula as set out at Appendix 1 to the report be approved for recommendation to the Cabinet Member – Education and Infrastructure as follows:

- a) Basic entitlement - that the basic per pupil entitlement for primary pupils should be set at £2,756 for each pupil (but subject to a £3 per pupil reduction to reflect resolution (h) below);**
- b) Basic entitlement - that the basic per pupil entitlement for secondary pupils should be split between KS3 and KS4 to represent the higher costs at KS4. Funding rates would be £3,605 for KS3 pupils and £4,543 for KS4 pupils;**
- c) Deprivation - that the deprivation indicator should be an allocation of £2,848 for every pupil on the "Ever-6" Free Schools Meals;**

- d) **Looked after children** - there should be an additional allocation of £900 for each looked after pupil in 2013/14 in order to match the pupil premium;
- e) **Prior Attainment** - there should be a basic entitlement of £228 for each primary pupil with less than 78 points EYFP and £355 for each secondary pupil not achieving level 4 or above in both maths and English at Key Stage 2 for 2013/14 only, and given potential DfE changes subject to review thereafter;
- f) **English as an Additional Language** - there should be an allocation of £405 for each pupil in the first year only with English as an Additional Language in order to match funding allocated in 2012/13
- g) **Lump Sum** - there should be a lump sum allocation for all schools of £105,000 to fairly represent school fixed costs
- h) **Pupil mobility** - there should be a budget in the High Needs Block of £62,800 to support inclusion of hard to place pupils to be funded by a standard deduction of £3 per pupil from all schools with the impact to be reviewed after one year;
- i) **Split site costs** - there should be no split site allocation in line with the current local school funding formula;
- j) **Business rates** - that, as determined by the DfE, the existing method that business rates are allocated at actual cost should be continued;
- k) **PFI contracts** - that as determined by the DfE, the existing allocation of £190,000 to Whitecross to meet PFI contractual commitments and to be indexed annually in future as per RPI should be continued;
- l) **Notional SEN** - the Notional SEN budget should be consistent with previous Herefordshire practice and based on 6% of the per-pupil funding + 6% of the lump sum + 40% of deprivation funding (Ever-6 Free School Meals) + 100% of prior attainment (as a proxy measure for SEN);
- m) **De-delegation-** retention of funding centrally for trade union facilities time and free school meals assessment be supported;
- n) **De-delegation** - the retention of funding centrally for Ethnic minority support be supported;
- o) **Special school funding** - As an interim measure in 2013/14, the funding of special schools on the principle of “maintaining budget stability” by determining the top-up funding according to the existing tariff of standard and enhanced pupil needs for the agreed number of commissioned places be supported;
- p) **Special school additional places** - Additional places in excess of the agreed number of places if needed, will be funded at marginal cost as determined by the school’s ability to meet the needs of the pupil;
- q) **PRU funding – Herefordshire model** - the continuation of a Herefordshire model whereby high schools contribute a £4,325 p.a. fee for every PRU placement be supported; and
- r) **SEN protection** - additional school expenditure on Band 3 & 4 pupils be

limited to 1.5% per pupil to be funded by reducing the cap on schools gaining from 1.52% to 0.94% (originally 1.05%) as set out in paragraphs 11 and 12 of the report.

and

- (b) that in the interim, the funding formula values, as set out in Appendix 1, be submitted to the Education Funding Agency by the deadline of 31 October marked “pending cabinet member approval” as necessary.

Discussion with Education Funding Agency Representative

Mr Keith Howkins Team Leader, Funding Reform Team, Maintained Schools Division at the Education Funding Agency was present as an observer at the meeting and, on the conclusion of the above item, the Forum took the opportunity to discuss some matters with him.

Mr Howkins commented that it was not possible at this stage to make assumptions, as the Institute of Fiscal Studies had done, about the effect of the implementation of the National Funding Formula on school budgets. He provided reassurance that it was intended that when the Minimum Funding Guarantee ceased after 2014/15 it was intended to put some form of protection scheme in place so that schools losing funding would do so gradually.

In relation to the implications for local authorities of the creation of free schools Mr Howkins commented that, whilst not within his remit, it was Government policy to encourage free schools. They were subject to the same funding formula and their success depended on them attracting pupils.

The funding pressures presented by rurality and how these were taken into account in the funding formula were discussed. Mr Howkins commented that no decisions had yet been taken on how factors in the formula would be balanced. Ministers were well aware of the concerns of the F40 Group.

The extent to which authorities delegated funding to schools and the implications of this for the funding formula were discussed. The view was expressed that because Herefordshire already delegated a higher percentage of funding to schools than most other authorities it was being adversely affected by the application of the funding formula.

The Senior Finance Manager commented that he had not seen any evidence to contradict the view that Herefordshire Schools would eventually be worse off under the new formula, due to the “harmonisation” process required to even out funding between authorities.

97. MEMBERSHIP OF THE BUDGET WORKING GROUP

The Forum considered the composition of the Budget Working Group.

The Democratic Services Officer presented the report. A chart was circulated showing how the membership of the Budget Working Group would look if the Group were to be constituted broadly proportionately. It was proposed that nominations to serve on the Group should be sought from representative bodies on that basis.

RESOLVED: That

- a) the Budget Working Group continue to operate on the basis previously agreed by the Forum as set out at paragraph 5 of the report, with small

schools and special schools to be represented and with consideration also given to governor involvement;

- b) there should be a minimum of one maintained school representative from the secondary sector and one academy representative from the primary school sector;**
- c) the factors set out at paragraph 10 of the report are taken into consideration in making appointments to the Budget Working Group;**
- d) that in future membership of the Budget Working Group be reviewed in parallel with membership of the Schools Forum;**
- e) the chairmanship of the Budget Working Group be considered at the Forum's next meeting once nominations have been received;**
- f) the current membership of the BWG continues in place until 31 December 2012; and**
- g) representative bodies be invited to submit nominations to serve on the Budget Working Group on the basis that the Group will consist of 14 Members with the 11 places available to primary schools, secondary schools and academies, (taking account of the 2 early years places and 1 specialist schools place) to be allocated on a broadly proportionate basis based on pupil numbers in each category.**

98. WORK PROGRAMME

The Forum noted the work programme.

The Vice-Chairman reminded Members that if there were any issues that they wished the Forum to consider they should notify the Chairman and Vice-Chairman who would then discuss their possible addition to the work programme.

99. DATES OF MEETINGS

The Forum noted the dates of future meetings.

The meeting ended at 11.30 am

CHAIRMAN