

MINUTES of the meeting of Herefordshire Schools Forum held at Committee Room 1, The Shirehall, Hereford on Friday 17 January 2014 at 2.00 pm

Present:	Mrs D Strutt (Academies) (Chairman)	
	Mr NPJ Griffiths (Academies) (Vice Chairman)	
	Mrs S Bailey	Special Schools
	Mr P Burbidge	Roman Catholic Church
	Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins	14-19 Partnership
	Mrs J Cecil	Academies
	Mr NPJ Griffiths	Academies
	Mr G House	Academies
	Mr R Leece	Trade Union Representative
	Mr C Lewandowski	Trade Union Representative
	Mrs R Lloyd	Early Years Representative
	Mr S Robertson	14-19 Partnership
	Mrs L Townsend	Local Authority Maintained Primary School
	Mrs S Woodrow	Locally Maintained Secondary Schools
	Mrs C Woods	Local Authority Maintained Primary School
	Mr K Wright	Local Authority Maintained Primary School

In attendance: Councillor JW Millar (Cabinet Member – Young People and Children’s Wellbeing)

147. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mr P Box, Mrs L Brazewell, Mr J Chapman, Mr J Docherty, Mr T Edwards, Mrs A Jackson, Ms T Kneale, Mrs J Rees, and Mr A Shaw.

148. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were none.

149. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr R Leece and Mr C Lewandowski declared an interest in the section on de-delegation in agenda item 5: Report of the Budget Working Group.

150. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

151. REPORT OF THE BUDGET WORKING GROUP

The Forum considered the report of the Budget Working Group on the following matters: Dedicated Schools Grant funding settlement 2014/15, schools block expenditure, analysis of funding gap; options to balance the schools budget; PFI costs; broadband costs; de-delegation of trade union facilities funding; high needs top-up payments; school exit costs and school balances.

The Vice-Chairman introduced the report on behalf of the Chairman of the Budget Working Group (BWG). He reported that Mr Shaw had wished to remind the Forum of the difficult financial position faced and the BWG's recommended approach that changes should be introduced on a phased basis to allow schools time to plan. He had also requested that his thanks be conveyed to the High Needs Group and the Schools Finance Manager for their work.

The Schools Finance Manager presented the report, commenting on each section of the report in turn.

The first recommendation in the body of the report related to the allocation of the balance of the DSG underspend for 2011/12 which had been discussed by the Forum a number of times, most recently in May 2013. This recommendation was considered first, rather than fourth as set out in the printed recommendations in the agenda papers, because the balancing of the budget was dependent upon the underspend being allocated to support the 2014/15 budget. The Schools Finance Manager noted that in choosing to allocate this sum funds would no longer be available in future to assist schools with deficits.

In relation to dedelegation of Trade Union Facilities funding, the Schools Finance Manager reported that since the publication of the report the Department for Education (DfE) had published the outcome of its consultation exercise on this matter and its response. The DfE had also published non-statutory advice on trade union facility time in schools.

The Forum's attention was drawn to page 8 of the non-statutory advice which stated that, *"To enable schools forum representatives to decide what is best for their schools, the local authority should provide clear information in advance about how funds will be spent and how the service will benefit schools. Schools forum members should seek the views of the schools they represent before the decision is taken."*

The Schools Finance Manager circulated a paper on how funding for Trade Union Facilities had been allocated for 2013/14. He reported that the amount of expenditure proposed for 2014/15 was in line with the level of expenditure envisaged by the DfE. He also noted that in the budget consultation undertaken by the Authority in the autumn of 2013 a clear majority of respondents had supported continued dedelegation.

In response to a question about the impact of the recommended option to balance the schools budget on the vulnerable groups of pupils the Schools Finance Manager referred to the consideration by the BWG set out in paragraph 20 of the report and the BWG's view that various funding changes meant that the recommended option would not have an adverse impact on vulnerable groups.

RESOLVED: That

- (a) the Cabinet Member for Young People and Children's Wellbeing be recommended to approve the use of the remaining DSG underspend from 2011/12, i.e. £485,000, to support the National Schools Funding Formula in 2014/15;**
- (b) the variation of the provisional funding values, as submitted to the Education Funding Agency, for the National School Funding Formula 2014/15 be approved as follows:**
 - (i) the basic entitlement per pupil be reduced by £6 per pupil to £2,759 per primary pupil, £3,583 per Key Stage 3 pupil and £4,512 per Key Stage 4 pupil;**
 - (ii) the Ever-6 free school meal allocation be reduced by £28 for primary**

and secondary pupils to £2,820 per entitled pupil; and

- (iii) no amendments are made to the provisional lump sums for primary and secondary schools to take account of broadband network cost increases; and**
- (iv) the Cabinet Member for Young People and Children's Wellbeing be recommended to approve the variations to the basic per pupil entitlement and Ever-6 free school meal allocation per entitled pupils.**
- (c) the de-delegation of the funding for Trade Union facilities for 2014/15 be approved; and**
- (d) PFI funding arrangements be added to the Forum's work programme for March 2014.**

152. MEMBERSHIP OF SCHOOLS FORUM

The Forum considered the requirement in new Regulations that there must be at least one 16-19 provider representative on the Forum.

The Regulations also removed the requirement that the Forum's membership should include at least one representative of the 14-19 Partnership. In consequence the Forum also reviewed the need for the two 14-19 Partnership places currently on the Forum.

The Forum concluded that it would be useful to continue to have representation from the 14-19 Partnership. It was accepted that the size of the Forum should not be increased. It was therefore proposed that the Forum's membership should include one representative from the 14-19 partnership and one representative of 16-19 providers.

RESOLVED:

- (a) to recommend the inclusion of one representative of the 14-19 Partnership within the Forum's membership; and**
- (b) to recommend the inclusion of one 16-19 provider representative on the Forum.**

153. WORK PROGRAMME

The Forum noted its Work Programme.

154. MEETING DATES

Noted.

The meeting ended at 2.55 pm

CHAIRMAN