

NOTES of discussion held by Members of Herefordshire Schools Forum held at Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford HR1 1SH on Friday 11 July 2014 at 9.30 am

Present:	Mrs D Strutt (Academies) (Chairman)	
	Mr NPJ Griffiths (Academies) (Vice Chairman)	
	Mrs S Bailey	Special Schools
	Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins	14-19 Partnership
	Mr J Docherty	Academies
	Mr T E Edwards	Local Authority Maintained Secondary School Governor
	Mr R Leece	Trade Union Representative
	Mr C Lewandowski	Trade Union Representative
	Mr A Shaw	Academies
	Mrs S Woodrow	Locally Maintained Secondary Schools

The Chairman informed those members of the Forum who were present that the meeting was inquorate. She proposed that they should discuss the report of the Budget Working Group and express a view to assist the Schools Finance Manager in drafting the budget consultation paper over the summer for publication in early September.

Those members of the Forum who were not present would be invited to indicate their support for the proposed approach to the 2015/16 budget, or to suggest alternative options if they were not content.

All other business on the agenda could be considered at the Forum's next meeting.

Members of the Forum present agreed with this approach.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received Mr P Barns, Mrs L Brazewell, Mr P Burbidge, Mr J Chapman, Mr G House, Ms A Jackson, Mrs R Lloyd, Mrs J Rees, Mrs L Townsend and Mrs C Woods.

2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

None.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

4. REPORT OF THE BUDGET WORKING GROUP

Consideration was given to the report of the Budget Working Group (BWG) on the following matters: Whitecross Private Finance Initiative, National Funding Formula proposals for 2015/16 and high needs tariff funding.

A supplementary report, prepared following the BWG's meeting on 7 July reporting on the further consideration given by the BWG to the National Funding Formula proposals for 2015/16 on High Needs Tariffs, had been circulated to the Forum.

The School Finance Manager presented the report. He highlighted the following principles underpinning the proposals for consultation on the 2015/16 schools budgets:

- Increasing all per pupil funding values by 2.9% to reflect the additional £2.6m allocated to Herefordshire by the DfE for 2015/16.
- Continuing the current budget strategy designed to move the primary to secondary funding ratio to 1:1.23 over five years. This would entail a reduction of £6,000 per school in the primary lump sum and a corresponding increase in sparsity funding for qualifying schools. The secondary lump sum per school would increase by £13,750.
- Increasing funding for English as an Additional Language (EAL funding) from £104k in 2014/15 to £160k.
- Transferring some funding from deprivation (ever-6 Free School Meals) to low prior attainment to start a process of funding low prior attainment more in line with national standards. It was proposed to include a range of options in the consultation paper. These would be different for primary and secondary schools.

He also drew attention to the consultation meetings for schools on the 2015/16 funding formula, as set out in the report.

He then highlighted the principal elements of the proposals for high needs tariff top-up funding which it was proposed to implement with effect from September 2014. He reported that the following proposals had the support of the Headteachers of Special Schools:

- A reduction in the original tariff values by 5% in order to ensure that the expenditure going forward was consistent with existing budgets.
- Minimum Funding Guarantee protection to both Brookfield and Westfield schools on a fixed basis and to be met by capping the gains of the other two special schools in accordance with the principles applied to the mainstream national school funding formula.

He commented that the funding of the Pupil Referral Unit would be subject to a separate review to bring it in line with the new tariffs. It was proposed that the same tariff rates would also be adopted pro-rata in early years settings.

He also noted that it was proposed that the Dedicated Schools Grant underspend for 2013/14 of £554k, virtually all of which had resulted within the High Needs Block, should be retained to support that Block.

Those Members of the Forum who were present supported the proposals as consolidated within the supplementary report as follows:

1. That the following approach be applied in the drafting the schools budget consultation paper over the summer:
 - (a) Funding Model C, the continuation of the current approved budget strategy, with an increase in funding for English as an Additional Language provision (Model D), should form the basis of the recommended budget strategy; and

- (b) The consultation paper include the following options in relation to moving some funding from deprivation to prior attainment in line with the direction of Model F:
- I. Primary schools – a choice between no change and options for transferring £200 per pupil and £400 per pupil, and
 - II. High schools – a choice between no change and options of transferring £500 per pupil and £1,000 per pupil.
2. The final high needs tariff top-ups be supported for implementation from September 2014 as recommended by the Budget Working Group as follows;

- (a) based on a -5% reduction on the original proposals to balance the budget and allow for expected future “tariff creep” as shown below;

	Original Tariff	Recommended Tariff (option A)
A	1,350	1,280
B	3,500	3,150
C	5,500	5,225
D	8,500	8,075
E	12,000	11,400
F	16,000	15,200

- (b) that high needs top-up tariff protection based on the Minimum Funding Guarantee be approved for Brookfield and Westfield on the basis that gains of Barrs Court and Blackmarston are capped until 2016/17 and thereafter the residual protection cost is met by the high needs block directly;
- (c) the DSG underspend for 2013/14 of £554k be retained in the High Needs Block to support the financial risk from implementing the new tariff scheme and budget pressures in the high needs block; and
- (d) Schools Forum receive a report on a post implementation review of the new tariff scheme in Summer 2015; and
- 3 the arrangements for consultation meetings with schools on the 2015/16 funding formula as set out below be endorsed:

Date	Time	Venue
Thursday 18 September	4.00pm	John Kyrle high School and Sixth Form Centre
Wednesday 24 September	4.00pm	Earl Mortimer College and Sixth Form Centre
Thursday 25 September	4.00 pm	Whitecross High School and Specialist Sports College
	6.30 pm	(For School Governors)

The discussion ended at 10.00 am

CHAIRMAN