

Looking to the Future

Schools Forum Task and Finish Groups

As part of a five year funding strategy to ensure that Herefordshire Schools Forum and the council pro-actively manage future funding pressures in the Dedicated Schools Grant, Schools Forum has agreed to set up four task and finish groups with the following terms of reference:

- All groups need to consider how to incentivise change, whether it be by, for example managing demand, meeting need in a different way or incentivising new models of school
- To clarify additional sources of support and research needed and identify best practice elsewhere
- To prepare costed proposals to achieve better value for money from current spending as appropriate on
 - Outcomes
 - Capital
 - Early years
 - High Needs
- To provide the evidence base for improved educational standards in Herefordshire to support educational standards in Herefordshire
- To call for evidence from all Herefordshire schools and early years settings as appropriate and as required
- To prepare suggested implementation timelines setting out funding implications
- To make interim recommendations and proposals to Schools Forum in May 2016, following discussion at the Education Strategic Board and final recommendations by May 2017
- Each task and finish group to consider its operating practice whereby rather than meeting regularly the group could alternatively block out slots of time to do concentrated work to finish quicker.

Herefordshire Council's General Overview and Scrutiny Committee be invited to either shadow or work alongside the task and finish groups.

Question – how best to involve governors?

All proposals for change must take account of current expenditure and standards, DfE finance regulations that may restrict spending flexibility and clearly set out the proposed changes to ensure effective spending of Dedicated Schools Grant taking full account of the increased demand for reducing resources in a time of financial stringency

School Forum's notes on key issues are attached.

Group 1: Outcomes - Herefordshire School Improvement Partnership

Co - Chair: Lisa Fraser

Co-chair and Lead Headteacher: Tracey Kneale

Issues to address

1. Are we as effective as we could be and how can we evidence funding is having a positive effect?
2. Can we target the funding we have in better ways?
 - Lump sum
 - Low prior attainment
 - Deprivation i.e. ever-6 free meals funding
3. Removing barriers to learning e.g. mental health, therapeutic support, early help/troubled families.
4. What do the graphs tell us?
5. How do we target for outcomes?
6. Consider whether by pooling funds say between schools and/or with the Local Authority and Clinical Commissioning Group could help secure better outcomes.

Group 2: Capital – Capital Strategy Group

Co-Chair: Andy Hough

Co-chair and Lead Headteacher: Anne Pritchard

Issues to address

1. High quality learning environments are more likely to deliver the best outcomes for all children and young people
2. Don't have the money to spend via "traditional routes"
3. Becoming academy not the answer
4. Size of school
5. Leadership and management
6. Use of range of funding:
 - Use of DfE grants

- Recycling funding e.g. Broadlands/Aylestone
- Dedicated Schools Grant/school revenue – schools already doing this – how to do it better?
- Academies fund
- CIL and section 106
- Business sponsorship
- Business investment
- Corporate council borrowing

7. Make the case at local and national political level

Group 3: Early Years Strategy Group plus additional representatives to ensure full representation

Co- Chair: Julia Stephens

Co-chair and Lead Headteacher: Julie Rees

Issues to address

1. Base for all future schooling – evidence from the research is “quality of early years provision is carried through to GCSE
2. Overall, outcomes improving, but not where we want them to be – gap for the vulnerable too big.
3. National funding issue particularly for expansion to 30 hour provision
4. No increase in rate paid to Herefordshire providers since circa 2007
5. Herefordshire is 16th lowest funded nationally by DfE for early years
6. How can we invest more in early years?
7. Can we afford not to?
8. Who pays?
9. How do we lobby government?
- 10 Strategic nursery classes in schools – where? Rationale? Outcomes?

Group 4: High Needs – Reconstituted High Needs tariff group plus additional nominees to ensure full representation

Co-Chair: Les Knight

Co-chair and Lead Headteacher: Sara Catlow-Hawkins

Issues to address

1. Cannot continue to grow special school places
2. High needs funding largely fixed irrespective of growth in demand
3. Review the DfE's high needs report published by ISOS July 2015
4. Growth in special school places of 25% since 2010 at a cost of £1.2m – impact is reduction of mainstream school funding
5. Similar growth of 25% to 2020 will cost further £1.2m i.e. £60 per pupil
6. High needs budget overspent in 2014/15 by £126k
7. And in 2015/16 propped up by £150k of one-off reserves
8. Growth pressures in hospital education, autism, out-county placements rising again, disproportionate impact of pension costs, early years SEN increasing
9. Consider whether by pooling funds say between schools and/or with the Local Authority and Clinical Commissioning Group could help secure better outcomes.