

Minutes of the meeting of Herefordshire schools forum held at Online Meeting on Friday 10 July 2020 at 9.30 am

Present: **Mrs J Cohn (Academy Special School Representative) (Chairperson)**
 Mrs K Weston (Local Authority Maintained Primary School) (Vice-chairperson)

Ms C Bryan	Academies
Mr P Burbidge	Archdiocese of Cardiff
Mr A Davies	Academies
Ms N Emmett	Academies
Ms N Gilbert	LA Special Schools
Mr J Hedges	Primary Governors
Mrs S Jenkins	Local Authority Maintained Primary School
Mr S Kendrick	Local Authority Maintained Primary School (with Nursery)
Ms T Kneale	Local Authority Maintained Primary School
Mr C Lewandowski	Trade Unions
Sian	Diocese of Hereford
Mr N Moon	Local Authority Maintained Primary Schools
Mr P Deneen	Trade Unions
Ms R Rice	Secondary Governors
Mrs K Weston	Local Authority Maintained Primary School

In attendance: Councillor Carole Gandy

Officers: Director for children and families and Strategic Finance Manager

60. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from the following forum members: Ed Gwillim, Kimberley Harley, Martin Henton, Tim Knapp and Rose Lloyd.

Apologies were also received from the Assistant Director - Education Development and Skills.

61. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

Nicki Emmett attended as representative of secondary academies.

62. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

63. MINUTES

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chair.

64. UPDATE ON NATIONAL SCHOOLS FUNDING ISSUES (Pages 5 - 16)

The Schools Finance Manager gave a presentation to members outlining the latest information on schools funding. In particular it was highlighted that:

- There had been an overspend on the 2019/20 budget which had reduced DSG balances to £0.6m;
- A balanced budget had been set for 2020/21 but latest forecasts predicted an overspend in a range from £0.25m to £0.97m;
- Approximately two thirds of local authorities either already had or were predicting a DSG deficit, some of these deficits were significant sums;
- The presentation reflected previous announcements made by the Department for Education (DfE) with details of the 2021/22 funding package were expected by the end of the summer term;
- The timetable for the process of consulting on and determining the 2021/22 schools budgets would follow a similar pattern to previous years.

In discussing the points raised by the presentation forum members noted that all schools would be able to put their views forward via the consultation process.

The maintained special schools representative stressed the efforts that special schools made to keep within budgets but highlighted that the fixed amount per pupil of £10k had not been increased for the last 7 years. Although top up tariffs had been increased to try and reflect inflationary costs, the fixed sum represented half of the budget of special schools. The SFM noted that the outcome of the government review into SEND was expected and that any changes to the fix sum would have to come from DfE.

The chairperson of the children and young people scrutiny committee expressed her thanks to all schools for the efforts made during the past few months to respond to the coronavirus epidemic.

The director for children and families also thanked all those working in the education sector for their compassion, care and commitment which he described as humbling. The challenging environment was expected to continue and he wished everyone well.

Forum members expressed their thanks to the director for the close co-operation and support during the recent difficult period. It was noted that everyone had worked well together.

Post meeting note

The Minister of State for School Standards announced on 20 July 2020 the provisional funding allocations for 2021-22 through the schools, high needs and central school services national funding formulae (NFF) – see www.parliament.uk for the text of the announcement and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-funding-formula-tables-for-schools-and-high-needs-2021-to-2022> for technical details.

65. CONSTITUTION AND ANNUAL REVIEW OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP

Forum members received the outcome of the annual review of membership. It was noted that:

- the forum was required to review membership on a regular basis to ensure that representation by schools members broadly reflects the proportion of pupils in academies and local authority maintained schools;
- Analysis of the 2020 January School Census showed no significant change in proportionality and as a result no changes were proposed to the allocation of seats on the forum;
- There were some vacant seats and efforts would be made in September to recruit new forum members.

The clerk to the forum also outlined the new regulations that had been put in place in response to the coronavirus epidemic and resulting restrictions on physical meetings. Key points included:

- the new regulations took effect from 18 June 2020 and would remain in place until 1 April 2021 unless revoked;
- the forum was still required to meet on at least four occasions each year;
- the new regulations permitted the holding of meetings via video conferencing software provided that such meetings were made available to the public through an appropriate broadcasting method;
- the meetings of Herefordshire Schools Forum would be streamed live onto the Herefordshire Council YouTube channel and available as a recording shortly after the meeting;
- if the use of online platforms for holding forum meetings was felt to be successful it was possible that the DfE would consider extending their usage when the new regulations came to an end.

Forum members queried whether the forum would continue to have a role once a hard national funding formula was established. It was noted that changes were likely but that details were still awaited from the DfE. The number of local authorities who had not yet implemented the national funding formula in full was continuing to fall.

It was agreed that:

- (a) Herefordshire Schools Forum received the report on the constitution of the forum; and**
- (b) the outcome of the annual review of proportionality was noted and no changes made to allocations of seats on Herefordshire Schools Forum or the Budget Working Group.**

66. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND WORK PROGRAMME

The dates of meetings for 2020/21 academic year were noted as:

23 October 2020

15 January 2021

19 March 2021

9 July 2021

The draft work programme was noted as containing the standard regular items. The programme would be kept under review and amended as necessary during the year.

The meeting ended at 10.12 am

Chairperson