

MINUTES of the meeting of Herefordshire Schools Forum held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Monday 1 February 2010 at 9.30 am

Present: Councillor Mrs JS Powell (Chairman)
Councillor Mr NPJ Griffiths (Vice Chairman)

Councillors: Leach, Mr M Harrisson, Chapman, Burbidge, Pugh, Kneale, Hyett, Woodrow, Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins, O'Neil, Bailey, E Christopher, Pritchard, Lloyd and WLS Bowen

In attendance: Councillors

56. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr A Shaw and Mrs A Jackson.

57. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

There were no named substitutes.

58. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

59. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 7 December 2009 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

60. LATE ITEMS/ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Referring to the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2009, the Finance Manager informed the Forum that the Banded Funding underspend referred to in Minute No. 43 was in respect of 2008/09 actual expenditure and the Banded Funding increase referred to in Minute No.53 was in respect of 2010/11 budget.

The Director of Children's Services informed the Forum that as a consequence of the Governor positions in the constitution not yet being filled, she would be writing to Governors to encourage them to be represented at the Forum. She reminded the Forum that a request had been made at the previous Forum meeting for volunteers from Forum Members to participate in the group reviewing Service Level Agreements. So far none had put their names forward.

With regard to the Business Manager representative, the Forum noted that the Herefordshire Business Managers Group currently comprised Managers from High school only. The Director of Children's Services was hopeful that at some point in the future the Forum could add to its Membership a Business Manager representative from Primary schools.

The Chairman referred to Minute No.53 of the last meeting of the Forum and requested clarity of Resolution (iii) (a) relating to £70,000 and Governor services. She understood that the original decision in 2009 for funding Governor services was to pump prime the service

and was for 2009/10 only. The Assistant Director of Improvement and Inclusion agreed that the 2009 decision was for 2009/10 only and that Governor services would be viewed as a traded service in the future years. She informed the Forum that the £70,000 for 2009/10 had not yet been spent and requested that the money be carried forward for pump priming Governor services in 2020/11.

The Director of Children's Services informed Members that it was intended that the Governor services money would be transferred to school budgets so that they could buy back Governor services. She intended also that traded services would be discussed at the next Headteachers meeting so that they fully understood the way in which traded services worked. She emphasised that if services are not bought back then some services could be lost.

RESOLVED: That Resolution (iii) (a) to Minute 53 of the meeting held on 7 December 2009 be amended to read as follows:

- (i) Service Level Agreements - £70k to provide for a Governor Services Service Level Agreement as a one-off payment for 2010/11, to be funded using the £70,000 carried forward from 2009/10.**

61. REVIEW OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM

The Chairman informed the Forum that it had not been possible for the Vice-Chairman to present a paper with regard to a review of the Schools Forum. She did however want to proceed with a discussion regarding the way in which the Forum conducts its business. She acknowledged that some decisions made by the Forum were not popular with some Members but emphasised the decision making process at the Forum was democratic and that's how decisions should be made.

The Director of Children's Services referred to the need for Forum meetings to be timely so that Primary and Secondary Heads meetings can consider issues which are to be considered before Forum meetings are held and for any views they may have to be reported to the Forum through their representatives. She reminded Members that the Forum was a statutory meeting and therefore, efforts were made to try to dovetail Forum meetings with other Council and Committee meetings. She was of the view that the timing of Forum meetings in relation to the dovetailing issues was getting better. She was also endeavouring to ensure that Forum Members received all the necessary information on what matters to Primary and Secondary schools. She emphasised the need for any matter which is reported to the Forum to be of high quality, accountable with full modelling so all schools could understand the implications of any model or decision for all schools.

The Chairman referred to the fact that the Forum considers all monetary streams and how that money is spent, but emphasised that in doing this that there has to be priorities. She emphasised that it was for the Forum to formulate a vision so that areas can be prioritised. She asked that Members report back to their nominating bodies to consider such a vision and to come to the next Forum meeting with ideas for the Forum to discuss.

The Assistant Director for Improvement and Inclusion stressed that it was also important that Members report back to their nominating bodies following Forum meetings so the bodies are aware of the detail about matters that were discussed and the decisions that were made.

A Member raised some concern that Forum Membership changes were not staggered which would leave some Members in post to achieve some continuity.

It was suggested by a Member that maybe there could be some training for new Members.

RESOLVED: That the discussion be noted.

62. EXTENDED SCHOOLS SERVICES

The Children's Centre and Extended Schools Coordinator presented a report which

- updated the Forum on Extended Schools Services progress.
- reported on the use of designated Extended Services funding streams for the development of Extended Services in and around schools for the financial year 2009/10.
- updated the Forum on the indicative funding allocated to the Local Authority for 2010/11.

The Children's Centre and Extended Schools Coordinator informed Members that the report was a summary of the progress of Extended Schools Services. She emphasised that there was no extension of funding beyond March 2010/11. She drew the Forum's attention to the progress on Extended Services being very positive and that they were on target to achieve the target set by government. She emphasised that the primary object was to meet the needs of the community and that most schools were attaining these needs. She reported that the current year was the final year of the Extended School Services Agenda.

Responding to an issue regarding Kids First work, the Children's Centre and Extended Schools Coordinator informed Members that the Kids First had withdrawn from the County. However work was continuing with children and disabilities team and money for this was in the Standards fund.

In answer to a Member's question, the Children's Centre and Extended Schools Coordinator informed the Forum that extended school funds were partly held centrally with some money going to schools.

The Director of Children's Services referred to the core offer which was made by central government and the need to make sure of the importance that all money which was delegated needed to be discussed and future spending agreed.

The Chairman referred to the £1.3 million allocated through the Standards Fund and asked who was responsible for strategic decisions on that money. The Children's Centre and Extended Schools Coordinator advised that the Forum made the decisions on how the money was split. The Director of Children's Services emphasised that it was important to ensure that any allocations were reported to the Children's Trust together with Children's achievements. Also that the Forum must be more objective with decisions and what has been achieved with those decisions annually.

RESOLVED: That

- (i) **the Forum note the update on Extended Schools progress and designated development funding for financial year 2009/10, together with the indicative funding allocated to the Local Authority of Herefordshire for the subsequent financial year 2010/2011; and**
- (ii) **a report be submitted to the Forum at the May meeting to agree the 2010/11 allocations.**

63. SINGLE FUNDING FORMULA - EARLY YEARS FUNDING REFORM

The Manager Early Years and Extended Services presented a report to endorse the single funding formula for early years as required by the statutory early years funding reform for the fee entitlement to early education, to be implemented for April 2010 (pilot/pathfinder status). She referred to the Key Points Summary in the report and drew the Forum's attention to the background to the matter also set out in the report. She informed the Forum that the application was put forward outside the time scale but the Department of Children Schools and Families had advised that the application should be submitted after the meeting of the Schools Forum.

In response to a Member's question, the Forum was informed that if the Forum did not implement the new single formula there would be an additional estimated cost of £100,000. The reasons were that all school nursery classes that were less than full would need to be funded in full as in previously place led funding. Also that the Forum sub group had agreed an Abatement to be applied previously which would mean that there would be costs relating to overall school premises would need to be accounted for.

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum endorse the presented single funding formula for Herefordshire and the Local Authority progresses with pilot/pathfinder status from April 2010 on the understanding that the Abatement model is carried forward.

64. WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11

The Forum considered the Forum Work Programme. Circulated at the meeting was an updated Work Programme.

RESOLVED: That the following items be added to the 17 May Schools Forum Work Programme:

- (i) **Estimated School Balances**
- (ii) **Dedicated Schools Grant**
- (iii) **Extended Schools Review – Allocations**
- (iv) **Service Level Agreements**

The meeting ended at 11.03 am

CHAIRMAN