

MINUTES of the meeting of Herefordshire Schools Forum held at Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford HR1 1SH on Friday 16 May 2014 at 9.30 am

Present:	Mrs D Strutt (Academies) (Chairman)	
	Mr NPJ Griffiths (Academies) (Vice Chairman)	
	Mrs S Bailey	Special Schools
	Mr P Barns	Pupil Referral Unit
	Mr P Box	Academies
	Mrs L Brazewell	Local Authority Maintained Primary School
		Governor
	Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins	14-19 Partnership
	Mr J Docherty	Academies
	Mr T E Edwards	Local Authority Maintained Secondary School
		Governor
	Mr NPJ Griffiths	Academies
	Ms T Kneale	Locally Maintained Primary School (Nursery)
	Mr R Leece	Trade Union Representative
	Mr C Lewandowski	Trade Union Representative
	Mrs L Townsend	Local Authority Maintained Primary School
	Mrs S Woodrow	Locally Maintained Secondary Schools

Officers: L Knight (Head of Provider Services (Additional Needs), S Laycock (Virtual Headteacher for Looked After Children) and T Brown (Governance Services)

166. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mrs J Cecil, Mr J Chapman, Mr G House, Mrs R Lloyd, Mrs J Rees, Mr A Shaw, and Mr K Wright.

167. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

None.

168. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

169. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 April 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

170. USE OF THE PUPIL PREMIUM GRANT FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

The Forum received an update on arrangements and funding to support the achievement of Herefordshire's looked after children (lac).

The Virtual Headteacher for looked after children presented the report, setting out proposals for the use of a lac pupil premium top slice to give the Virtual Headteacher immediate access to resources which could be used to improve the situation of and outcomes for those young people who are in care and the direct responsibility of Herefordshire Council.

In response to questions he clarified that the allocation of funding for individual pupils would be through personal education plans in consultation with schools.

RESOLVED: That the Local Authority's proposed application of £300 of Pupil Premium Grant in respect of each looked after child be noted and supported.

171. SAVINGS TO THE EDUCATION SERVICES GRANT FOR 2015 TO 2016

The Forum's views were sought on the Department for Education (DfE) consultation: Savings to the Education Services Grant (ESG) for 2015-16.

The Head of Provider Services (Additional Needs) presented the report. He noted that the financial information in the consultation document was based on the annual Section 251 local authority education budget statements. However, the way in which authorities recorded their expenditure was notoriously inconsistent. He outlined what the ESG should cover and the main themes running through the consultation document as set out at paragraph 8 of the report.

It was noted that it was intended that the response would be a combined response by the local authority and the Forum.

The Forum discussed the response to each question in turn. The following principal points were made:

- That it might be helpful to demonstrate in the response the extent to which Herefordshire was already beneath the median spend for the various activities covered by the ESG. There had to be a question as to whether the Council was able to carry out its responsibilities with the current ESG. It was hard to identify where it might be possible to make further reductions. Herefordshire was a high delegating authority focusing on limiting its activities to discharging its statutory duties. This was still in contrast to a number of other authorities. Given that this was the case it would be wrong if the DfE were to apply a blanket reduction across all authorities and this should be pointed out.
- There appeared to be some inconsistency and poor reasoning in the consultation paper, for example in the section on the relationship between local authority expenditure on education welfare services and absence and exclusion rates in schools. The case study of Kent County Council following section 3.2 of the consultation document commented on a reduction in school improvement spending between 2012/13 and 2013/14 but quoted a performance improvement since 2010. The lack of the robustness of the evidence used in the consultation paper was also visible in the evidence of good practice relating to centrally held services which are not funded by ESG. It was suggested a comment to this effect should be included in the response.
- In relation to response 6c it was suggested it might be appropriate to amend this to reflect the fact that whilst the Council had capped redundancy costs the cap was still above the statutory minimum.

- The Forum's view was that any response to section 9 of the consultation response document (how the savings will affect academies) was a matter for individual academies.
- That, if appropriate, any relevant comments arising from the current Ofsted inspection should be incorporated into the response.

RESOLVED: That the draft response to the consultation as appended to the report, with the incorporation of wording to reflect the additional comments made at the meeting, be endorsed and that a revised draft be circulated to members of the Forum for their confirmation.

172. WORK PROGRAMME

The Forum noted its work programme.

173. MEETING DATES

Noted.

The meeting ended at 10.05 am

CHAIRMAN

draft