

MINUTES of the meeting of Herefordshire Schools Forum held at Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford HR1 1SH on Friday 9 July 2010 at 10.00 am

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

Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins, Mrs D Coates, Mrs E Christopher, Mr J Docherty, Mrs C Garlick, Mr M Harrisson, Rev. D Hyett, Mr J Godfrey, Mrs A Jackson, Lloyd, Mrs A Pritchard and Mr R Thomas

In attendance: Councillors WLS Bowen and PD Price

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

It was proposed and seconded that Mrs J Powell be nominated for Chair.

RESOLVED: That Mrs J Powell be elected Chairman of the Herefordshire Schools Forum for the ensuing year.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was proposed and seconded that Mr NPJ Griffiths be nominated for Vice-Chair.

RESOLVED: That Mr NPJ Griffiths be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Herefordshire Schools Forum for the ensuing year.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr P Burbidge, Mrs A Jackson, Ms T Kneale, Mrs R Lloyd and Mr N O'Neil

4. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

Mrs D Coates substituted for Ms T Kneale

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of Interest

6. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chairman's announcements.

7. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 17 May 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

8. LATE ITEMS/ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman informed the Forum that she would be taking an additional item regarding the Draft Terms of Reference for the School Funding Review Group which had been circulated to members. The item would be taken after item no.10 on the Agenda.

In response to an issue raised by a member, the Interim Director of Children's Services agreed to present a report to the next Forum meeting which would brief members on the work of the Herefordshire Schools Task Group.

9. CONSTITUTION

The Democratic Services Officer presented a report which proposed an amendment to the Schools Forum constitution to include an Academies representative.

Circulated at the meeting, a copy of which is attached to the Minutes, was an amended copy of the report which amended the reasons for recommendations.

RESOLVED: That the Schools Forum approves the proposed amendment to the Schools Forum constitution to include membership from Herefordshire Academies as set out in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the report in accordance with the Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2010.

10. REPORT OF BUDGET WORKING GROUP - 20 APRIL 2010

The Schools Finance Officer presented a report which requested consideration of the recommendations of the Budget Working Group. He informed members that the report detailed the discussions of the Working Group meeting held on 20 April 2010 and attached to the report were the papers that were considered by the Working Group.

With regard to the 2011/12 and 2012/13 school budgets, the Lead headteacher informed the Forum that since the Working Group meeting, the government had announced that Harnessing Grant Technology had been cut by 50%..

The Schools Finance Manager referred to the Social Deprivation Funding and informed the Schools Forum that the government would be introducing a National Pupil Premium which would take effect April 2012 which would replace the current model and a consultation paper was expected over the summer.

With regard to the School Lunch Grant, the Lead headteacher reminded members that the £112,000 was the final sum for redistribution in 2010/11 and that the options for the re-distribution were detailed in paragraph 14 of the report.

The Schools Finance Manager informed the Schools Forum that he considered (c) to be the fairest option whereby all schools would receive some funding.

RESOLVED: That

- (a) the role of the Budget Working Group be agreed as set out in the report and included in the School's Forum constitution;**
- (b) the initial budget assumptions for 2011/12 be noted;**
- (c) further work by the Budget Working Group on the local pupil premium and social deprivation funding be deferred until government announcements on the next steps for funding for these areas are received; and**
- (d) the method for allocating the balance of the School Lunch Grant for 2010/11 be Option C, as set out in paragraph 14 of the report, to be subject to review after 12 months.**

11. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT

The Schools Finance Manager presented a report which informed members in relation to the final Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2010/11 and the outturn for 2009/10. He advised the Schools Forum that the Council had received notification from the Department for Education (DFE) that prior to Academy recoupment, the final DSG for 2010/11 would be £90,304,000 which was £10,000 more than was expected. He drew members' attention to the pupil numbers in the table at the top of page 89 and that these were reducing overall but that as a positive, the amount of Individual Schools Budget had increased by 3.5 per cent. He also drew attention to paragraph 11 in the report and, in particular, that the forecast in 2010/11 that the Joint Agency Management budget (for out of county placements for children with complex medical, social and educational needs) an £248,000 overspend in the cost allocated to DSG and to the revaluation of school business rates (after school budgets had been issued) had resulted in increased costs of £198,000.

In response to an issue raised, the Schools Finance Manager advised that the DSG did not take account of in year pupil transfers. He would, however, take the issue to the Budget Working Group for consideration and bring back its views to the next Schools Forum meeting.

With regard to an issue raised on early years expenditure, the Schools Finance Manager advised that the Budget Working Group would bring a report to the next Schools Forum meeting on early years expenditure.

The Schools Finance Manager suggested that the £128,000 DSG underspend be retained to be set against overspends for 2010/11.

Members' attention was also drawn to the suggestions in an earlier report to the meeting that the schools budget was expected to be based partly with 0.9 per cent efficiency savings and 10 per cent procurement savings.

RESOLVED: That

- (a) the final DSG settlement and the increase of 3.5% in the Individual Schools Budget be noted;**
- (b) the schools Forum retains the 2009/10 DSG underspend of £128k to help meet the forecast overspends in out county placements and school business rates.**

- (c) a report detailing Early Years expenditure be presented for discussion to the Budget Working Group with a report from the Group to the October Schools Forum meeting;
- (d) schools be requested to put forward suggestions to Schools Forum on how to achieve 0.9 per cent budget efficiency savings and 10 per cent procurement savings; and
- (e) Property Services and other appropriate officers be asked for their suggestions in relation to (d) above.

12. DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SCHOOL FUNDING REVIEW GROUP

The Schools Finance Manager presented a report which requested the Schools Forum to consider terms of reference for the Schools Funding Review Group and funding for the Group for 2011/12 and 2012/13. He informed the Forum that the Budget Working Group had considered and agreed the draft terms of reference at its meeting on 20 April 2010 and made some amendments.

The Interim Director of Children's Services advised members that it was unlikely that a permanent appointment of Director of Children's Services would be made in the near future. He would, however, be willing to join the Group until the permanent appointment was made.

The issue was raised regarding the possibility of cluster group representation on the Review Group and the financial implications this would have. It was suggested that funding for the Review Group could be sourced from the local authority rather than Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The Interim Director of Children's Services advised that there were no other areas to achieve such funding other than from DSG. It was suggested to the Schools Forum that an alternative would be to consult with Clusters on issues raised by the Review Group.

RESOLVED: That

- (a) the Schools Forum approves representation of the School Funding Review Group as set out in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Paragraph 6 of the report and that the Review Group incorporates a mechanism to enable a two way consultation process with school clusters with regard to issues being considered by the Group;
- (b) the Interim Director of Children's Services to support the Review Group until such time as a permanent Director of Children's Services has been appointed;
- (c) representatives of the review Group be nominated by Headteacher groups early in the autumn term;
- (d) £23,000 funding be allocated from Dedicated Schools Grant in 2011/12 and 2012/13, to be capped at a maximum of £46,000, for the review as a priority allocation but subject to final ratification in February 2011 when the Dedicated Schools Grant is known; and
- (e) the terms of reference for the School Funding Review Group are approved.

13. PROPOSED PROCEDURE FOR APPROVING TRANSFER OF REVENUE BALANCES TO CAPITAL

The Head of Access and Capital Commissioning presented a report which sought endorsement of the proposed process for the transfer of schools' revenue budgets to capital. He reminded members that previously schools had been able to transfer funds from revenue to capital and that the report was as a consequence of the Schools Forum concerns about the issue. He advised that the report suggested a process at paragraph 11 to restrict such transfers.

After discussion regarding the timeframe whereby schools would need to inform the authority of revenue transfers, and the suggested process at paragraph 11 it was

RESOLVED: That, subject to

(a) paragraph 11 (a) v of the proposed process as detailed in the report be amended as follows and be relocated to become paragraph 11(b)iii. 4:

(b) 'With the exception of capital schemes which address issues identified in (i),(ii) and (iii) above, the revenue contribution to any other individual capital scheme shall not exceed 50% of the cost of the scheme.

(c) the addition of paragraph 11(b) vii. as follows:

'A timescale of planning be created which sets out the latest dates when schools can apply for a transfer.'

the proposed process as detailed in paragraph 11 be applied to all categories of school seeking to transfer revenue funds to capital.

14. PROPOSAL TO FUND REQUIREMENT FOR 25 HOURS SHORT STAY/PRU PROVISION

The Head of Additional Needs presented a report regarding the funding of the requirement to provide pupils at Pupil Referral Units (PRU) with 25 hours of short stay/PRU provision. He emphasised that if the level of permanent exclusion remained at the current level, from September 2010 to the end of March 2011, £156,000 would be required to provide the 25 hours of education and to maintain the current number of places. He advised that if the additional funding was not agreed it would result in fewer places of shared costs across all schools to provide the 25 hours.

Members expressed concern that Herefordshire Association of Headteachers (HASH) had not been consulted on the proposals.

The Interim Director of Children's Services advised that given the nature of the responses from members, further work was needed on the proposals with a further more detailed review by HASH. In the meantime he suggested that the additional hours be met from the 2009/10DSG underspend.

RESOLVED: That subject to consideration of the proposal to fund the requirement for 25 hours short stay/PRU provision being deferred for further review particularly on the funding source and to enable consultation with Herefordshire Association of Secondary Headteachers (HASH) on the proposals with a report back to Schools Forum accordingly. In the meantime the

- (a) number of places in the PRU be maintained potentially at the current level; and
- (b) as an interim measure, funding for the 25 hours short stay/PRU Provision be funded from the DSG underspend with a £91,000 expenditure ceiling on the funding.

15. CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD MANAGEMENT GROUP MEETINGS

The Chairman suggested that consideration of this item be deferred to the next Schools Forum meeting.

RESOLVED: That this item be deferred for consideration to the next Forum meeting.

16. WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11

The Forum considered the Work Programme for 2010.

RESOLVED: That the following items be added to the work programme:

October 2010 Work Programme

- (i) Children's Trust Board Management Group Meetings – Chairman's Brief to the meeting.
- (ii) Proposal to Fund Requirement for 25 Hours Short Stay/PRU Provision.
- (iii) Early Years Expenditure.
- (iv) Budget Efficiency Savings and Procurement Savings.

The meeting ended at 12.10 pm

CHAIRMAN