

MINUTES of the meeting of Herefordshire Schools Forum held at Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford HR1 1SH on Friday 3 December 2010 at 9.30 am

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

Councillors: Mr JA Chapman, Mr P Burbidge, Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins, Mr N O'Neil, Mr S Pugh, Rev. D Hyett, Mr P Box, Mrs J Baker, Mr TE Edwards, Mrs S Bailey, Mr J Docherty, Ms A Pritchard, Mr M Harrisson, Mr J Godfrey, Mr A Shaw, Mr P Barns and Dr M Goodman, Mr J Sheppard,

In attendance: Councillors PD Price and WLS Bowen

30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mrs A Jackson, Ms T Kneale, Mrs R Lloyd, Mrs K Rooke and Mrs S Woodrow.

31. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were none.

32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

33. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman said that the number of schools becoming academies would have an impact upon the proportional membership of the Forum, and would require changes to be made to the current membership to accord with the forum's Constitution. She suggested that no changes should take place to the membership of the Forum for the time being but that the matter should be reviewed in March 2011 by which time the Government might have issued further guidelines on the composition of Forums. The Forum agreed with the course of action proposed by the Chairman.

RESOLVED: That the Schools Forum's existing membership continue until the end of the financial year with a report on revising the Membership and amending the Constitution to be considered in March 2011.

34. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to recording that Mrs J Baker had not been present and had sent her apologies.

35. STATEMENT ON COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW AND OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Schools Finance Manager said that the Government announcement about the details underpinning the comprehensive spending review including the amount of Dedicated Schools Grant and other matters, anticipated for 2 December, would not now be made until 9 December. This would necessitate the meeting of the Budget Working Group scheduled for that day being re-arranged. He said that he would now present a report to the Forum in January. He confirmed that draft budgets could not be prepared until further detail was provided by the Government.

36. BUDGET WORKING GROUP

The Vice-Chairman presented on the report from the meeting of the Budget working Group held on 5 November and highlighted the main points.

RESOLVED THAT: the report from the meeting of the Budget Working Group held on 5 November be received and noted.

37. PROGRESS REPORT FROM THE WIGMORE AND BROMYARD CLUSTERS ON THE IMPACT OF THE NATIONAL SCHOOLS LEADERSHIP COLLEGE PILOTS

A report was presented by Mr A Shaw, Head Teacher, and Dr M Goodman, Head Teacher about the effectiveness of the National College for Schools Leadership (NCSL) pilots on school business management in respect of the Bromyard and Wigmore clusters.

The report outlined progress of the scheme which stemmed from a successful bid by the two clusters in 2008 for NCSL and schools Dedicated Schools Grant funding to establish pilot School Business Manager (SBM) projects. The Clusters had approached the scheme through two different models. Mr Shaw outlined the approach used by the Wigmore cluster and felt that the scheme had been beneficial in providing greater flexibility for head teachers and time saving. The financial benefits involved cost saving through matters such as joint grounds maintenance contracts and the clusters having a greater bargaining power. There had also been an advantage for bursars having a joint and mutually supporting approach.

The Bromyard approach had been to merge the responsibilities of Extended Schools Coordinator with that of SBM. This had the benefit of affording sufficient total funding to extend the project over an initial two years. In the Bromyard model, it was decided to base the SBM at the secondary school in order to give the Manager adequate support within the Queen Elizabeth Humanities College (QEHC) administration team. Technically, the SBM was an employee of QEHC, though funded from external sources, but working for the interest of the primary schools. Dr Goodman outlined the advantages that the scheme had given to the Bromyard cluster and consideration being given into how the project might be funded in the future.

The Assistant Director Improvement and Inclusion observed that the two clusters had followed two different models and that the Bromyard one was experiencing some difficulty with the sustainability of its approach. She asked whether national research had identified a recommended model. Mr Shaw replied that he was aware of some research work and that he would circulate any material that was available.

RESOLVED THAT:

- (a) it be noted that that within the Bromyard Cluster (from 1st November, *Education for Bromyard: a Cooperative Trust, EfB*) it is intended to ask the six primary schools to consider whether the School Business Manager project be embedded at the core of its Trust infrastructure and that QEHC should be a full partner;
- (b) in the broader local authority education structure the School Business Manager project approach developed by the Bromyard Cluster be considered as a potentially effective model of good administrative practice, provided sustainability is embedded at the planning stage; and
- (c) the interim reports be received and noted.

38. LATE ITEMS/ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were none.

39. WORK PROGRAMME

The Forum considered its work programme.

It was agreed that the Work Programme should be updated to include the following:

- Report of the Budget Working Group;
- Service Level Agreements;
- Academies – financial impact; and
- Impact of changes to the internal audit service

The dates for the meetings to be held in 2011/2012 were noted, including a new date in March 2011 and deletion of those scheduled for February and April 2011.

40. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Forum noted that the next meeting was scheduled to be held at 1.00 pm on Monday, 31 January 2011.

The meeting ended at 9.55 am

CHAIRMAN

