

MINUTES of the meeting of Herefordshire Schools Forum held at Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford HR1 1SH on Friday 24 February 2012 at 9.30 am

Present: Ms T Kneale (Chairman)
Mr NPJ Griffiths (Vice Chairman)

Mr A Teale, Mrs K. Rooke, Mrs JS Powell, Mr P Burbidge, Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins, Mr S Woodrow, Mrs J Cecil, Mr P Box, Mr S Matthews, Mrs J Baker, Mr TE Edwards, Mrs S Bailey, Mr J Docherty, Mr M Harrisson, Mrs A Jackson, Mr P Barns, Dr M Goodman and Mr J Sheppard, Mr A Heatley and Mrs A McArthur.

In attendance: Councillor PD Price (Cabinet Member – Corporate Services & Education)

59. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from, Mr J Chapman, Mr Godfrey, Mrs R Lloyd, Mr S Pugh, Mrs A Pritchard and Mr A Shaw and also from Mrs J Davidson.

60. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Mr A Heatley substituted for Mr Godfrey and Mrs A McArthur for Mr A Shaw.

61. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mrs Catlow-Hawkins declared an interest in recommendation 18 as printed in the agenda papers and did not vote upon it.

62. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were none.

63. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

64. REPORT OF THE BUDGET WORKING GROUP

The Forum considered a report from the Budget Working Group (BWG) on the following issues: Budget 2012/13; In Year Fair Access Placement Panel and Funding Implications for Schools; Funding Schools Strategic Change; and Service Level Agreements for Energy Savings.

The Chairman of the BWG presented the report. She commented that the proposal that when a school received a pupil through the In Year Fair Access Placement Panel from another Herefordshire School a funding charge should be agreed between the two schools represented an equitable acknowledgment of the financial consequences. She also noted that proposals on Funding Schools Strategic Change were to be considered by the Schools

Strategy Group. Once a view had been taken on the future strategy, if appropriate, the financial implications would be considered by the BWG and a report made to the Forum. In considering that strategy, the BWG had discussed anomalies within the small schools protection mechanism and it was proposed that work be commissioned to examine options for retargeting small schools protection.

In discussion the following principal points were made:

- There was consensus that the proposed funding charge when a school receives a pupil from another Herefordshire school through the In Year Fair Access Placement Panel should be implemented with effect from 1 April 2012. The proposal to review the Scheme's operation was welcomed. It was confirmed that the intention was to keep the arrangement straightforward and payment of a charge was therefore proposed for a full term rather than pro rata.
- That a wider view needed to be taken of the implications for schools of in-year moves generally and that procedures and protocols should be reviewed to ensure that they were robust and in line with those of neighbouring authorities.

RESOLVED:

- That:**
- (a) when a school receives a pupil from another Herefordshire school through the In Year Fair Access Placement Panel a funding charge is actioned between the two schools affected based on a figure of £1,000 per pupil per full term subject to a maximum of £3,000;**
 - (b) a report be made to the Forum after twelve months reviewing the operation of the Scheme; and**
 - (c) the Scheme should commence with effect from 1 April 2012;**
 - (d) the Budget Working Group be asked to consider the financial implications for schools of managed moves in year and whether a funding mechanism should be developed to provide for funding to be transferred between schools in-year in time for consideration as part of the 2013/14 budget preparation;**
 - (e) Officers should be requested to review the operation of procedures and protocols relating to in year pupil movements; and**
 - (f) That work be commissioned to examine options for retargeting small schools protection and a report made to the Budget Working Group in Autumn 2012.**

65. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT 2012/13

(Mrs Catlow-Hawkins declared an interest in recommendation 18 as printed in the agenda papers and did not vote upon it.)

The Forum was invited to consider the Dedicated Schools Grant budget for 2012/13 and recommend it to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Education.

The Schools Finance Manager presented the report setting out the budget proposals as recommended by the BWG and highlighted the following points:

The proposals had been fully considered by the Budget Working Group. If approved by the Forum the recommendations would be reported to the Cabinet Member for approval. School budgets would then be issued before 31 March 2012.

Particular consideration, as reflected in the key points summary and at paragraph 7 of the report, that had been given to the proposals to reduce social deprivation funding for schools with high free school meal numbers. He emphasised that the proposed reductions would be more than offset by an increase in additional grant funding from the proposed changes to Schools Standards Grant (personalisation), Disadvantage Subsidy and One to One tuition. He confirmed that the pupil premium would be additional to this grant funding in accordance with Department for Education advice. It was proposed that the BWG should review the impact of the 2012/13 proposals as part of the preparation of the budget proposals for 2013/14.

He also highlighted the additional funding proposed to be allocated to the Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School of £215k to meet the disproportionately higher number of pupils at the school with special educational needs.

He also noted the ongoing work with Pupil Referral Units to provide a formula funding model which would be trialled in 2012/13 in preparation for a full implementation of delegated formula funding in 2013/14.

In discussion concern was expressed that the effect on schools of the application of the sliding scale to delegated Band 3 funding for special educational needs (recommendation 19) was not clear and that some schools may lose significant funding.

It was noted that information on the effect on schools had been presented to the Head Teacher's Task and Finish Group that the Forum had established to consider the further delegation of banded funding and whose findings underpinned the budget proposals. However, some members of the Forum considered that the Forum itself needed to be provided with a more detailed analysis.

The Schools Finance Manager commented that recommendation 21 was linked to recommendation 19, proposing to set aside a sum to support the delegation of Band 3 and Band 4 funding by reducing the impact of the savings in the Minimum Funding Guarantee. It was open to the Forum to set aside an additional sum.

It was proposed that consideration of recommendations 19 and 21 should be deferred and referred to the Budget Working Group to consider and report back to the Forum on 12 March, with the information presented to the group also being submitted to the Forum.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Education the basis for the schools budget 2012/13 as set out below, noting the deferral of consideration of recommendations 19 and 21 until the Forum's meeting on 12 March:

- (a) the budget options, before the Minimum Funding Guarantee protection, that were broadly supported in the consultation be approved as follows (options refer to the consultation paper items):
1. Option B(ii): Reduce small schools protection by £100k via a cash reduction applied equally to all high schools and primary schools
 2. Option C: Reduce social deprivation by £500k – to be offset by changes within the grants review E(vii), E(viii) and E(ix)
 3. Option D: Reduce personalised learning by £500k –

to be offset by changes within the grants review E(vii), E(viii) and E(ix)

4. Option F: Reduce “per pupil funding” by 0.25% i.e. £125k
5. Option H: No reductions to PVI nursery funding in 2012/13
6. Option J: Reduce central DSG by -3% with the exception of a 1% reduction for PRUs

(b) the grant review options, that were broadly supported in the consultation be approved as follows;

7. Option E(i): School Development Grant - be paid at £164 per pupil and a £10,000 fixed base per school to be phased in over three years. Special schools to be funded on four times pupil numbers to reflect their higher staffing levels.
8. Option E(ii): Excellence cluster funding – further consultation in autumn 2012 for implementation in 2013/14 and 2014/15.
9. Option E(iii): Lunch Grant – funding is allocated to primary schools at £18 per pupil.
10. Option E(iv): Specialism funding – the Herefordshire Association of Secondary Head Teachers to develop proposals for further consultation in autumn 2012 for implementation in 2013/14 and 2014/15.
11. Option E(v): School Standards Grant – to implement the DfE formula and use any surplus to add a percentage increase for all pupils as follows:
 - a. Primary schools £12k base plus £120 per pupil
 - b. High schools £12k base plus £130 per pupil
 - c. Special schools £29k base plus £120 per primary age pupil and £130 per secondary age pupil to be paid on four times pupil number to reflect the higher staff ratios.
 - d. PRUs £12k base plus £120 per pupil
12. Option E(vi): Advance Skills Teachers – pay £16,000 to meet salary costs for actual ASTs for the one day outreach per week until March 2015 and share the balance (approx £60k) by pupil numbers.
13. Option E(vii): School Standards Grant Personalisation – distribute by social deprivation formula all in 2012/13 to offset the budget reductions in social deprivation and personalised learning.
14. Option E(viii): Disadvantage Subsidy - distribute by social deprivation formula all in 2012/13 to offset the budget reductions in social deprivation and personalised learning.
15. Option E(ix): One to One tuition - distribute by social deprivation formula all in 2012/13 to offset the budget reductions in social deprivation and personalised learning.

- 16 Option E(x): Extended schools sustainability – allocate per pupil all in 2012/13
 - 17 Option E(xi): Primary and secondary strategy funding – allocate per pupil all in 2012/13.
- (c) the further delegation of banded funding, broadly supported in the consultation be approved as follows
- 18. Option G(i): Delegate Band 3 and full band 4 to high schools including an additional fixed sum of £215k to the Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School to provide for the higher pupil numbers with banded funding.
 - 19. that consideration of Option G(ii): Delegate Band 3 to primary schools according to the sliding scale as set out in the report be deferred;
 - 20. Option G(iv) : retain Band 4 centrally for all primary schools.
- (d) that, subject to the deferral and further consideration of recommendation 21 below the £200k funding provisionally set aside for the SEN complex needs budget be allocated as follows:
- 21. the delegation of Band 3 and Band 4 by reducing the impact of the savings in the Minimum Funding Guarantee £100k be deferred for further consideration.
 - 22 to provide further training for schools and governors by delegating a fixed sum of £150 per school which can be used by schools to cover supply costs for the release of the SENCo to attend the training at a cost of £15k.
 - 23 to provide a budget for in-year funding for out of county pupils and in-year managed moves and transfers in County of £67k.
 - 24 to reduce the impact of budget cuts on Pupil Referral Units to a 1% reduction (Option J above) at a cost of £18k.
- (e) that the Budget Working Group be asked to review the impact of the 2012/13 budget proposals as part of the preparation for the 2013/14 budget.
- (f) that if a final budget adjustment is necessary, then the age weighted per pupil funding be adjusted to cover any surplus or deficit when final pupil numbers are known from the January 2012 census.

66. WORK PROGRAMME 2011/12 AND 2012/13

The Chairman reported that it was proposed that the membership of the Budget Working Group should be considered following the review of the Membership of the Forum itself.

RESOLVED: That the work programme, as amended, be approved.

67. LATE ITEMS/ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Capital Maintenance Allocation

In accordance with the Forum's request on 8 December 2011 a briefing note had been circulated explaining the capital maintenance allocation of £300k as a contribution to insurance in addition to the provision of an emergency contingency of £250k.

The Head of Sufficiency and Capital Commissioning explained that the decision had been taken to use capital maintenance grant over a period of two years (2011/12 and 2012/13) to offset a shortfall on the mutual insurance scheme created by the severe floods in 2007 and severe cold weather in 2010/11. The view had been that this funding option would have the least direct impact on schools. He confirmed that the approach had not set a precedent. Action had been taken to make the insurance scheme more robust and minimise future liabilities. However, he clearly could not guarantee that a problem would never arise again.

Directed Scheme Revisions

A paper had been circulated setting out a number of directed revisions to local authority schemes for financing schools that the Secretary of State for Education was proposing to make.

The Forum noted the proposed changes.

68. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Forum noted that the next meeting was scheduled to be held at 9.30 am on Monday 12 March 2012.

The meeting ended at 10.17 am

CHAIRMAN