

MINUTES of the meeting of Herefordshire Schools Forum held at Whitecross High School and Specialist Sports College, Three Elms Road, Hereford HR4 ORN on Friday 4 April 2014 at 10.00 am

Present:	Mrs D Strutt (Academies) (Chairman)	
	Mr NPJ Griffiths (Academies) (Vice Chairman)	
	Mrs S Bailey	Special Schools
	Mr P Burbidge	Roman Catholic Church
	Mrs J Cecil	Academies
	Mr JA Chapman	Church of England
	Mr J Docherty	Academies
	Mr NPJ Griffiths	Academies
	Mr G House	Academies
	Ms A Jackson	Early Years Representative
	Mr M Jefferis	Maintained School Governors
	Ms T Kneale	Locally Maintained Primary School (Nursery)
	Mr R Leece	Trade Union Representative
	Mr C Lewandowski	Trade Union Representative
	Mrs R Lloyd	Early Years Representative
	Mr S Robertson	14-19 Partnership
	Mr A Shaw	Academies
	Mrs L Townsend	Local Authority Maintained Primary School
	Mrs S Woodrow	Locally Maintained Secondary Schools
	Mr K Wright	Local Authority Maintained Primary School

Officers: Mr C Baird, Assistant Director Education and Commissioning, Mr M Green, Senior Finance Manager, Mr A Hough – Head of Education Development, and Mr T Brown, Governance Services.

155. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mr P Barns, Mr P Box, Mrs L Brazewell, Mr T Edwards, Mrs J Rees, Mrs C Woods and Councillor JW Millar.

156. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Mr M Jefferis attended on behalf of maintained School Governors Mrs L Brazewell and Mr T Edwards. Mr SJ Robertson substituted for Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins.

157. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

158. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

159. FAIRER SCHOOLS FUNDING IN 2015-16

The Forum considered the response to the Department for Education (DfE) consultation on the 2015-16 school funding arrangements.

The Schools Finance Manager (SFM) gave a presentation, a copy of which has been placed on the Minute book with the agenda papers. The presentation summarised the Department for Education's fairer funding proposals. It also suggested a timetable for meetings of the Budget Working Group and the Forum to work on a consultation paper for schools and agree a provisional funding formula by the end of October 2015.

The SFM welcomed the fact that the indicative national formula showed a £2.6m funding increase for Herefordshire Schools in 2015/16 to £93.5m. However, he suggested that the figure should be treated with caution until the final details were confirmed by the DfE in June/July. Applying the minimum funding values to the October pupil census gave an indicative funding value of £95.8m. He considered it prudent to plan on the basis of £93.5m for the consultation document with an option included should additional funding be forthcoming.

The report set out the Herefordshire 2014/15 funding values alongside the DfE indicative minimum funding levels for 2015-16. The SFM noted that the DfE figures had not separated out the funding for PFI and business rates which amounted to some £1.1m and therefore distorted any comparison. In addition it was for the local authority and the Forum to determine the funding values.

He reminded the Forum of the current five year funding strategy which was based on moving towards a 1:1.23 primary to secondary funding ratio by April 2018. This had been a logical approach. However it was open to the Forum to review and change the approach.

In discussion the following principal points were made:

- The requirement to provide free school meals for Key Stage 1 pupils and the funding implications of this were discussed.
- It was noted that the DfE indicative minimum funding level for primary schools was £117,082 whereas the Herefordshire value for 2014/15 was £99,000 and under the current strategy would reduce in 2015/16 to £93,000. The SFM reiterated that business rates needed to be deducted from the DfE indicative figures which in any case were not directly comparable. The BWG would consider this issue and review how any additional funding might be allocated. The Assistant Director Education and Commissioning suggested that in reviewing the funding options the BWG should take into account the current strategy and pupil outcomes noting the desire to improve from prior attainment across the different phases of education.

The SFM noted that the front page of the consultation document indicated a response date of 5 June 2014. However, in other parts of the documentation it was suggested that the closing date for responses was 30 April 2014. A draft response to each of the questions in the consultation paper was circulated and discussed by the Forum. It was proposed that the responses as agreed in principle should be circulated to schools and the SFM authorised to submit the final response.

RESOLVED:

That (a) it be noted that the Budget Working Group would consider options for the formula funding values for 2015/16 and report to the Forum; and

- (b) **the responses as set out on the paper circulated at the meeting be endorsed in principle and circulated to schools allowing for further comment by 11 April 2014 and the Schools Finance Manager authorised to submit the final response to the Department for Education by the required date.**

160. HIGH NEEDS TARIFF PROPOSALS

The Forum was invited to defer implementation of the new High Needs Tariff until September 2014 to allow minor adjustments to the proposals, as identified by the independent review, to be finalised and agreed with the Development Top-Up Group to ensure successful implementation in schools and FE providers.

The Schools Finance Manager presented the report.

The Forum thanked those who had undertaken the work on the new tariffs.

RESOLVED That:

- (i) **The implementation of the new High Needs Tariff proposals be deferred to 1st September 2014 to allow the Top-Up Tariff Development group to finalise the outstanding details; and**
- (ii) **The recommendations from the independent expert review of the proposals be accepted as follows;**
- **Further independent moderation at Barrs Court school so that the school assessment for all pupils are reviewed;**
 - **School assessment at the other special schools be accepted as the moderation confirmed their accuracy; and**
 - **Peer moderation to be adopted from the Special Schools from September 2014;**
 - **The Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) weighting be increased from 3 to 4 – due to the additional provision that needs to be made because of the presenting difficulties and the impact on other children;**
 - **Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) factor – the Cognition and Learning category be capped to a maximum number of points (16 points but subject to confirmation) to avoid double counting the weightings/funding in Severe Learning Difficulties/Profound and Multiple Learning Learning Difficulties special school provision; and**
 - **To undertake further work for all special schools and particularly for Westfield so that the implications of the Minimum Funding Guarantee are clearly understood and appropriate for schools with a budget shortfall.**
- (iii) **confirmation of the final proposals be agreed by Schools Forum in July 2014.**

161. UPDATE ON SCHOOLS CAPITAL AND MAINTENANCE PROGRAMMES

The Forum received an update on capital allocations to schools.

The Head of Education Development presented the report.

In discussion the following principal points were made:

- It was noted that capital provision had been made for a new school at Westfield. This had been adjusted following quotations for the work and in discussion with the school. Some concern was expressed that all the money that had been allocated for Westfield should be directed to the school given the needs of the pupils. The Assistant Director Education and Commissioning commented that the council had to balance a number of competing demands, including the need to expand in certain areas, across a very small budget allocation from the DfE. It had been considered important to give priority to meeting pupil's needs at Westfield and the proposals for Westfield met this aim. He was happy to share details of the proposals for Westfield if members wished.
- Provision to meet the DfE requirement that free school meals should be provided to all key stage one pupils and the implications of this were discussed, including the method for allocating funding to schools which had been developed through the capital consultative group. The Assistant Director Education and Commissioning commented that schools had made differing individual arrangements with providers for school meals. The onus was on primary schools to discuss with providers how to meet the new requirement which had been introduced at very short notice. The Children's Wellbeing Directorate would be issuing more information to schools to prompt them to take the necessary action.

RESOLVED:

- That
- (a) the allocations to Herefordshire for new pupil (basic need), maintenance of LA maintained schools, Locally Co-ordinated Voluntary Aided Programme allocations and schools' devolved capital for 2014-15 be noted;
 - (b) progress with spending the basic need, maintenance and LCVAP for 2013/14 be noted; and
 - (c) the School Capital Strategy Consultative group be asked to consider the efficient and effective approach to these grants and report back to Schools Forum in July 2014.

162. MEMBERSHIP OF SCHOOLS FORUM

The Forum was asked to review the membership of the Schools Forum and the Budget Working Group.

The report stated that primary schools, secondary schools, and academies continued to be broadly proportionately represented on the Forum as required by Regulations. The representation on the Budget Working Group also remained broadly proportionate as the Forum had requested.

- That
- (a) it be noted that no amendment to the membership of the Forum was required; and

- (b) it be noted that no amendment to the membership of the Budget Working Group was required.

163. (URGENT ITEM) EDUCATION SERVICES GRANT - 2015/16

The Assistant Director Education and Commissioning reported that the Department for Education had issued a consultation paper proposing 20% savings to the Education Services Grant for 2015-16. This would have significant implications and it was proposed to submit a report to the Forum in May.

164. WORK PROGRAMME

The Forum noted its work programme.

165. MEETING DATES

Noted.

The meeting ended at 11.08 am

CHAIRMAN