

**Minutes of the meeting of Herefordshire schools forum held at
The Council Chamber – The Shire Hall, St Peter's Square,
Hereford, HR1 2HX on Tuesday 22 January 2019 at 9:30am**

Present: Mr A Evans (Mainstream Academies) (Chairman)

Ms C Bryan	Academies
Mr S Fisher	Academies
Mr J Hedges	Primary Governors
Mr M Henton	LA Maintained Secondary Schools
Mr T Knapp	Academies
Mr C Lewandowski	Trade Unions
Mrs S Lines	Church of England
Mr N Moon	LA Maintained Primary Schools
Mr P Deneen	Trade Unions
Mrs J Rees	Local Authority Maintained Primary School
Ms R Rice	Secondary Governors

In attendance: Councillors CA Gandy

**Officers: Lisa Fraser, Assistant Director Education Development and Skills
Malcolm Green, Strategic Finance Manager (SFM)
Les Knight, Head of Additional Needs (HAN)**

20. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were noted from: Mrs S Bailey, Mr E Gwillim, Ms K Harley, Mr S Kendrick and Mrs R Lloyd.

21. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

None.

22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

23. MINUTES

The SFM updated the forum that contact had been made with the offices of both Herefordshire MPs with a view to their meeting with members of the forum. As neither MP was able to attend the planned January or March meetings of the forum, a letter would be sent to them setting out the key matters the forum wished to raise and requesting that they suggest alternative dates for a separate session.

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chair.

24. SCHOOLS BUDGET 2019/20

The SFM introduced the report. Key points noted were:

- the Budget Working Group considered the report on 11 January 2019 and did not make any additional or alternative recommendations;
- primary schools had indicated that they valued the SEN protection scheme and the proposed transfer of £112k ensured that the current cap remained for 2019/20;
- additional funding for high needs had been allocated by the government after the consultation with schools had been carried out, the additional funding of £375k for each of 2018/19 and 2019/20 was welcome and had been incorporated into the high needs block projections shown at paragraph 17 of the report;
- there was no indication whether there would be similar additional funding for future years but the one off allocation reduced the possibility of the LA needing to top slice school budgets to meet a deficit in the high needs block, current projections showed a positive balance figure through to 2021/22;
- if demand continued to increase or the funding from the DfE changed substantially then the forecasts would be revised, it was agreed that the high needs block be kept under annual review to ensure sensible budget setting;
- the detail of the high needs budget for 2019/20 would be brought to the March forum meeting with revised forecasts, rising numbers continued to be a concern.

The SFM summarised the recommendations before the forum:

- recommendation (a) fully implemented the national funding formula (NFF) values at a total cost of £100.2m;
- recommendation (b) made additional allocations relating to the expected surplus of £0.3m reflecting the outcome of consultation with schools in the autumn term, this resulted in an additional £10 per pupil on top of the NFF values, an increase to the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) to ensure this was passed to all schools and a transfer of £112k to the high needs block to support the primary SEN protection scheme;
- recommendation (c) allocated additional surplus funds that had not been projected on a broadly equal share between allocating to schools and supporting high needs, this resulted in a further £5 per pupil, an increase in the MFG to the maximum permitted 0.5% to ensure this was passed to all schools and a further transfer to the high needs block of £103k to support the increase in special school places;
- recommendation (d) was a technical matter setting the protected funding level so that the government's 0.5% increase on 2017/18 baselines would be passed on to all schools;
- recommendation (e) set out the allocation of the central schools services block, which included a transfer of £56k surplus funds in this block to the high needs block;
- recommendation (f) related to early years block funding, as the funding received from the government was unchanged no changes were proposed to the early years funding formula, the pass through percentage would be 97.5%;
- recommendation (g) related to de-delegated services for LA maintained schools, the only significant change from the previous year was the transfer of free school meals administration to a service level agreement which would reduce the need for multiple small invoices to be sent to schools.

In discussion of the report the following points were noted:

- Herefordshire had not previously benefitted from pupil growth funding as it was a long time since a new school had been created. The DfE had moved to allocating

growth funding on a formulaic basis so it was expected that Herefordshire would receive this funding in future but the amount it would receive each year was uncertain.

- The additional capital funding set out by the government in the 2018 Budget had not yet been allocated. It was anticipated that more information would be available before the end of the financial year and as soon as the LA received the funds it would pass these on to maintained schools.
- A static budget for education psychology and apparent reduction in budget for the SEN assessment team were raised as a concern. However, the HAN confirmed that the current level of demand, while creating pressures, was being managed within the budgets set. The reduction in the SEN assessment team resulted from the loss of interim staff working on the transition of statements to EHC plans and should not be seen as a reduction in the service since that work was now complete and staffing levels returned to the period prior to the EHC conversions. Predicting the level of future demand remained challenging.
- Work continued with secondary schools to reshape the PRU service. This work still needed to take place even in light of the additional high needs funding received.
- The broad strategy remained to delegate as much funding to schools as possible while ensuring the high needs block was sustainable. The LA would aim to pass on the NFF values to schools with any extra dependent on demands elsewhere.
- The Budget Working Group (BWG) considered the report on 11 January 2019 and did not make any additional or alternative recommendations. The chair of the BWG commented that the group welcomed the additional funding and agreed with the proposal to share the additional funds between schools and the high needs block. Previous concerns about propping up the high needs block with transfers from other blocks remained but the pressure on the high needs block had been recognised by the group.
- De-delegation related to budget deductions at source for central services provided by the LA to maintained schools. The current de-delegations had been in place for some years. The trade union facility amount for primary schools reduced for 2018/19. The only change proposed for 2019/20 was the introduction of a service level agreement for free school meals administration. Academies would be invoiced for services.
- A member of the forum suggested that schools should be given the choice whether to have the services rather than de-delegate. Service level agreements gave schools the choice to opt in or source their services elsewhere. It was noted that the response to the consultation was significantly in favour of the de-delegations proposed, although the total number of responses was disappointingly low. It was agreed that the BWG be asked to review the de-delegations ahead of the next budget consultation to assess if schools were getting best value and what the impact would be of a move to another model such as service level agreements. The LA was required to consult schools every year and all members of the forum were asked to encourage schools to respond.

Resolved that:

The local implementation of the National Funding Formula (NFF) for 2019/20 as set out in the consultation document and recommendations (a)-(f) as below, be

approved for recommendation to the Cabinet member for children and families as follows;

- (a) The final school funding values be agreed, subject to a minimum total funding per pupil of £3,500 for primary schools and £4,800 for secondary schools, including the adoption of the NFF sparsity taper, as follows:

1.	Basic entitlement per pupil	Primary	£2,747
2.	Basic entitlement per secondary pupil	Key stage 3	£3,863
3.	Basic entitlement per secondary pupil	Key stage 4	£4,386
4.	Deprivation per free school meals	Primary	£440
5.	Deprivation per free school meals	Secondary	£440
6.	Deprivation per ever-6 free school meals	Primary	£540
7.	Deprivation per ever-6 free school meals	Secondary	£785
8.	Socio-economic deprivation Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI)		
9.	Band A (3% of pupils)	Primary	£575
10.		Secondary	£810
11.	Band B (8% of pupils)	Primary	£420
12.		Secondary	£600
13.	Band C (7% of pupils)	Primary	£390
14.		Secondary	£560
15.	Band D (8% of pupils)	Primary	£360
16.		Secondary	£515
17.	Band E (9% of pupils)	Primary	£240
18.		Secondary	£390
19.	Band F (10% of pupils)	Primary	£200
20.		Secondary	£290
21.	Band G (55% of pupils)	Primary	£0
22.		Secondary	£0

23.	Low prior attainment per pupil	Primary	£1,022
24.	Low prior attainment per pupil	Secondary	£1,550
25.	Lump Sum	Primary	£110,000
26.	Lump Sum	Secondary	£110,000
27.	Looked After Children, primary and secondary		£0
28.	Primary sparsity, on a NFF taper basis, over 2 miles and less than an average year group size of 21.4 pupils		£15,625
29.	Secondary sparsity, on a NFF taper basis, over 3 miles and less than an average year group size of 120 pupils		£40,625
30.	English as additional language per primary pupil (year 1 basis)		£515
31.	English as additional language per secondary pupil (year 1 basis)		£1,385
32.	PFI contract		£286,824
33.	Business rates		£1,224,807
34.	Exceptional premises factor (Eastnor)		£8,764

(b) the options as supported in the schools' consultation paper be agreed at a cost of £281k, as follows;

- (i) Funding of £10 per pupil additional to the national funding formula as set out in (a) above be recommended
- (ii) That the Minimum Funding Guarantee be set at 0.33% to ensure those schools on the guarantee also receive the £10 per pupil additional funding as in (b)(i) above be recommended
- (iii) The transfer of £112,000 equivalent to 0.12% of the total schools block to the high needs block for 2019/20 to help fund the primary Special Educational Needs (SEN) protection scheme and ensure the current cap of 130 pupils continues for 2019/20 be recommended

(c) The additional funding within the schools block of £197k be allocated as follows;

- (i) An additional £5 per pupil for primary and high schools and a further increase 0.17% in the MFG i.e. a total of the maximum permitted 0.5%.

- (ii) **An additional £103,000, equivalent to a further 0.10%, be transferred to the high needs block in support of the increase in special school places**
- (d) the protected funding level be adopted in order to pass through to all schools the government's 0.5% increase this year on 2017/18 baselines;**
- (e) The central school services block be used to fund the former Education Services Grant retained duties (£360k), national licences for schools (£131k), Schools Forum (£12k) and admissions (£132k – reduced by £10k) and the remaining £56k is transferred to the high needs block for 2019/20;**
- (f) For the early years block:**
 - (i) There is no change in the early years funding formula for providers in Herefordshire**
 - (ii) Central expenditure of £335k for early consultants and NEF payment costs be approved for 2019/20**
 - (iii) The pass through percentage to 3 and 4 year old providers be approved at 97.5%**
- (g) local authority maintained school members of Schools Forum, approve the de-delegation in 2019/20 of funding, and advise the Cabinet member for children and families for information, as follows;**
 - (i) trade union facilities (primary schools only) at £2.90 per pupil**
 - (ii) ethnic minority support at £1.12 per pupil plus £6.60 per "Ever 6" free school meals (Ever-6 FSM) plus £107 per English as an additional language (first year only) pupil**
 - (iii) software licence costs for financial planning at £350 per school**
 - (iv) education functions for local authority maintained schools at £13.50 per pupil**
 - (v) that the free school meals administration be transferred to a service level agreement through the schools portal from April 2019.**

(NB restrictions were applied to voting as follows:

Only representatives of LA maintained schools, academies and early years providers were eligible to vote on recommendations (a) to (f). All were supported unanimously.

Only representatives of LA maintained schools were eligible to vote on recommendation (g). The recommendation was supported on the majority with 4 votes in favour and 1 abstention.)

25. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Vacancies for parent governor co-optees to children and young people scrutiny committee

The chair of the children and young people scrutiny committee reminded forum members that there was a vacancy for a primary school governor and a secondary school governor to be co-optees onto the scrutiny committee. Forum members were asked to consider if they knew of any parent governors who might be interested in these roles. The chair was happy to meet informally with anyone who wanted more information.

The assistant director education development and skills agreed to circulate information to governing bodies.

Future of Schools Forums

In response to a query, the SFM confirmed that the government had not published any further information about the future role of schools forums. Primary legislation to put in place the hard national funding formula would clarify the role of the forum but there was no indication as to if and when this legislation would come forward.

The meeting ended at 10.19 am

Chairman

