

## Herefordshire Schools Forum

Minutes of a meeting of the Forum held at the Hereford Education and Conference Centre on Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> February 2005 at 1:30pm.

### Present:

<b>Non-school members</b>	Rev Ian Terry, C. Lewandoski, B Ashton – Chairman of Scrutiny
<b>School representatives</b>	I Foster, Mrs J S Powell, R Thomas, A Marson, Mrs P Jewkes, Mrs A Mundy
<b>Also in attendance</b>	Ms S Fiennes – Director of Children’s Services T St. George – Head of School Effectiveness G Salmon – Head of Policy and Resources D Rule – Cabinet Member for Children’s Services M Chamberlain – School Services Manager (acting as clerk), M Green – Manager of LMS & Planning D Keetch – Assistant County Treasurer A MacArthur – Administrative Officer F Wood – Workforce Reform Advisor Mrs R Sinfield – Childcare Manager
<b>Observer</b>	J Pritchard – NUT

### 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mrs C Potts, Mrs M Hayward and P. Cosgrove.

### 2. Membership

The Clerk reported that Mrs C. Potts had offered her resignation and was being substituted by Mrs A. Mundy. – Headteacher of St. James’ CE Primary School, Hereford.

### 3. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were reported.

### 4. Minutes of meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December

The minutes of the previous meeting, copies having been circulated were approved and signed by the Chairman after John Pritchard was recorded as being a school representative not an observer.

### 5. Matter arising from the Minutes

#### i) Development of Cedar Financial System

The Manager of LMS and Planning reported that there had been IT technical problems with regard to firewalls. He added that Martin Fowler would purchase a new Firewall before March 2005 following a meeting of the IPG group. The project could now proceed as planned.

## ii) Teachers Workload Agreement

I Foster expressed concern over the wording within the minutes regarding schools determining their own points. Fiona Wood agreed that this was not in the spirit of workload agreement as determined.

## LMS Consultation

It was agreed that the issues regarding greater delegation should be discussed at the scheduled meeting in June. It was felt that discussion on greater delegation would inevitably form part of the training session to be held by George Phipson.

## **6. Workforce Reform**

Fiona Wood gave a verbal report on the current position. In particular she stated that 4 training days had been organised – 3 for Primary and Special and 1 for High Schools. She added that overall there had been 90% attendance.

She expressed concern at the problems of workforce reform both in small schools and the Council's Music Service. In respect to the Music Service it was noted that PPA had to be implemented and this was confirmed by NRT; which will either increase costs to schools or reduce the tuition times. Andrew Marson expressed concern at the possible implications of changes to the music service and asked whether a workforce grant was available for next year. In response Ted St. George gave details of the grants that had been allocated to the authority.

'Grant 25 re Workforce Reform for 2004-2005 was £170,238 and for 2005-2006 it is £168,666 which is a slight decrease. This grant is 100% grant funded and supports the salary costs of the Workforce Reform Adviser and training to ensure schools are on target to implement PPA (Planning Preparation and Assessment) time from September 2005. Much of the grant has been devolved to schools for pump priming. In 2005-2006 the grant has also to support HLTA (Higher Learning Teaching Assistants).'

## **7. LMS Consultation Results 2005**

The Manager of LMS and Planning circulated a summary of 2005 consultation results and requested that the Forum consider each topic and make appropriate recommendations for him to action.

1. Use of available headroom – agreed Option B.
2. Take-up of standards fund grant – approved.
3. Differential funding for job evaluation – to be discussed under agenda item.
4. Delegating the contingency for insurance – approved (Mr R. Thomas requested information on likely increases in percentage terms for next few years. David Keetch to liaise with the Council's Insurance Officer and provide details).
5. Delegating centrally funded SEN support staff – approved.
6. Part-time attendance of special school pupils – approved.
7. Reduction in small school protection.  
Items 1 and 2 approved – it was agreed that the working party should be reconvened and that a decision on items 3 and 4 shall be determined after the working party had met.  
Mr R Thomas asked whether fixed costs could be determined. In response the Manager of LMS and Planning stated that the figures for St. Mary's of Hope CE Primary was £60,000.
8. Key Stage 1 class size grant – approved.
9. Increase SEN bands above inflation – approved.
10. Two tier level of funding for special schools – approved.
11. Formula factors for PFI projects – to be considered at a future meeting.
12. Service Level Agreement for Creditors/VAT and external bank account support services – approved.

## **8. Nursery Education Funding**

Mrs Ruth Sinfield, Childcare Manager was invited to address the meeting with particular regard to the budget proposal to transfer £200,000 of underspend. She stated the following:

1. Universal funding for N.E.F. has been reached according to our statistics and monitoring. I recognised that the budget settlement was generous this year but anticipated difficulties in following years because of the Government's Childcare Strategy where the scheme is to be developed and will have large resource issues.
2. The E.F.S.S. funding is allocated in the school block, so it seemed important that if the Schools Forum was the consultative body, that Early Years was represented.
3. Grant funding for childcare, early education and family and health support has been increasing through Sure Start initiatives for some years. It is important that there is some cohesion with this funding and E.F.S.S. funding so planning for delivery is considered holistically. This is not the position at the moment but will become more important as budgets from the DfES are mainstreamed. There are transparent planning processes in place through the EYDCP so my recommendation is to use these processes for all Early Years matters.

The Manager of LMS and Planning added that a funding strategy for early years should be developed and be considered by the Schools Forum at a future meeting. In relation to EYDCP being a member of the Schools Forum the Clerk stated that this was not possible within the Statutory Instrument, however, they could be invited as an observer but without voting rights.

## **9. Schools Budget**

The Manager of LMS and Planning circulated a report detailing the proposed budget prior to formal approval by Council on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2005.

In addition he submitted an eight-page breakdown of general information explaining the budget proposals for 2005-2006.

Under central costs, discussion took place on whether the budget reduction of £20,000 for ESS should be accepted. Both Ted St. George and Malcolm Green gave information on this topic, which indicated that ESS had not spent their budget allocation in recent years and therefore it seemed appropriate to adjust the budget to reflect this situation. The money would be delegated to schools and be available to meet any increased charges from ESS in the new year. School representatives generally felt strongly the funding should be delegated and that ESS should only receive funding for work done in schools and not through an LEA subsidy.

The Forum were also advised of changes to Ofsted arrangements where school meals and SEN statistics were no longer being considered. The question was put whether this factor would change the LMS scheme. The Manager of LMS and Planning indicated that he would check this point.

The Forum agreed to endorse the 2005/2006 budget proposals as submitted and voted unanimously to accept that the £20,000 should be reduced for ESS and delegated to schools.

## **10. Funding Job Evaluation in Schools**

The Manager of LMS and Planning submitted his report outlining methods of distributing funds to schools. The Forum considered the report and made the following decisions based on four recommendations listed in the report.

- (a) £482,000 should be carried forward and allocated according to Option B for primary schools and Option C for secondary schools.

- (b) Funds to be re-allocate by the Directorate but must be sorted before budgets are allocated to schools. Under no circumstances would funds be clawed back for budgets already issued to schools.
- (c) and (d) Those two recommendations should be delayed to allow Forum members more time to consider the options. Item for consideration at the June meeting. The Manager of LMS and Planning asked members to write to him with any views before the June Meeting.

## **11. Review of Charges**

The Head of Policy and Resources submitted the report which outlined charges/allowances made for transport, music tuition and free school meals. The Forum decided to consider the Free School meals charges only leaving the other two items for a future meeting – possibly a discussion prior to the training day on 7<sup>th</sup> March.

With regard to Free Meals the Forum noted the allowances paid in other authorities and the budget implications of £32,000, £58,000 and £93,000 respectively. Following an assurance by the Manager of LMS and Planning that he could find £58,000 within the existing budget proposals it was agreed to approve Option B - £1.25 for primary and high schools and £1.50 for special schools.

## **12. Threshold Performance Grants for 2005/2006**

Mary King, Staffing and Appointment Officer submitted her report outlining that Herefordshire had received £3,015,784 in grant allocation and recommended one of the following options.

- (a) single payment fro 205/2006 based on teacher numbers in April, 2005, or
- (b) two payments, one in April for 5/12 of the funding based on teacher numbers employed in April and a final payment of 7/12 of the funding based on teacher numbers employed in September.

Mr Lewandoski expressed concern at the unfairness of the proposed distribution of funding. It was his view that the funds should be allocated on a percentage basis of UPS1, UPS2, UPS3 and Leadership payments.

Following a discussion the Forum decided that the Staffing and Appointments Officer needed to provide additional information including detailed data on Mr Lewandoski's proposals. It was agreed that this item could be discussed prior to the training day on 7<sup>th</sup> March.

## **13. Mileage Allowance for Teachers**

Nick Austin, Directorate Personnel Officer submitted his report and stated that following conclusion to the single status terms and conditions it was appropriate to abandon the current rates and introduce the recommended Inland Revenue business mileage rate.

The Forum supported the recommendation based on the following arrangements.

- Up to 10,000 miles per annum – 40p per mile
- Over 10,000 miles per annum – 25p per mile
- An additional 5p per mile if carrying passenger(s)

At this point the Clerk adjourned the meeting because it was not quorate. He advised the members that the meeting would resume on the 7<sup>th</sup> March to discuss item 11 and 12 prior to the training session.

continued/...

Minutes of a reconvened Forum meeting held at the Hereford Education and Conference Centre on Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2005.

**Present:**

**Non-school members** C. Lewandoski, B Ashton – Chairman of Scrutiny

**School representatives** I Foster, Mrs J S Powell, R Thomas, A Marson,

**Also in attendance** G Salmon – Head of Policy and Resources  
D Rule – Cabinet Member for Children’s Services  
M Chamberlain – School Services Manager (acting as clerk),  
M Green – Manager of LMS & Planning  
A MacArthur – Administrative Officer

**Observer** J Pritchard – NUT

**14 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from R. Aird, Mrs P Jewkes, Mrs M Hayward, Mrs M Mundy, P. Cosgrove, D. Keetch, Ted St. George.

**15 Membership and Constitution**

The Clerk reported that Mrs P. Jewkes and S. Boka, Governor would be resigning from the Forum. He added that the secondary school sector now had only one representative and in this respect he had advised H.A.S.H. to consider the appointment of a Deputy Head or Bursar.

The Manager of LMS and Planning indicated that the Forum would be gaining new powers and it was important that schools have representatives to consider important budgetary decisions. This view was supported by the Cabinet Member who indicated that many committees were only advisory but that the Forum would be assuming a more executive role.

**16 Review of Charges**

The Head of Policy and Resources continued with his report that he submitted on 9th February, 2005. With the Free School Meals charges having been agreed as Option B he covered the remaining two items –

- a. Discretionary transport (VSPS) and
- b. Music Tuition

In respect to VSPS the Head of Policy and Resources outlined current cost saving exercises relating to contractor charges and reductions of the number of buses. He added that the subsidised figures did not match actual costs which were in the region of £2 per day (£380 per year).

The Forum noted the recommendations and supported the proposal to increase as follows for 2005/2006.

Post 16 students - £85 and £25 (pupils entitled to free school meals)  
Vacant seat scheme - £100 and £35 (pupils entitled to free school meals)

The Head of Policy and Resources then submitted proposals for increases in Music Tuition fees and was supported by Mrs MacArthur who gave details of costs in other LEAs and also made the point that the service was being subsidised.

Andrew Marson expressed concern at a possible rise in costs especially as many parents were paying less to the private sector estimated at £15 per hour. Mr Marson indicated that the service might be good for money but the Council needed to monitor the future take up if the charges were increased.

The Forum agreed that the fee should increase to £24 per hour but requested that a report be submitted to the October, 2005 meeting when information on take up would be known.

**17 Threshold and Performance Related Pay Grant for 2005/6**

Mary King, Staffing and Appointment Officer submitted a revised proposal based on each individual element of the grant in addition to the original proposal considered at the meeting on 9th February, 2005. In particular she highlighted how the revised proposal would allocate the £3,015,809 by staff category.

Mr Marson and Mr Foster both expressed the view that the original system based on a set amount per full-time equivalent teacher and a single payment for the full year (detailed in Agenda Item No 9) was easier to understand and they recommend staying with the original scheme but reviewing the position in the future. Mr Lewandoski repeated his opinion that the new proposals were fairer in its allocation to schools and recommend that the alternative scheme should be adopted.

The Manager of LMS and Planning commented that he expected the Threshold and Performance Related Pay Grant to be absorbed into core EFSS funding as part of the introduction of the Dedicated Schools Grant from April 2006 and it would be an option to allocate on pupil numbers.

On being put to the vote the original scheme (agenda item number 9) received four votes and the revised scheme (agenda item number 4) one vote. The forum therefore, recommend the original scheme as submitted in February, 2005.

**18 Forum Training Session**

The members of the Forum received a training session led by George Phipson, NAHT, details of his training document are attached to the signed minutes.

Chairman.....

Date.....