



Shropshire Council
Legal and Democratic Services
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
SY2 6ND

Date: 18 March 2015

**Committee:
Schools Forum**

Date: Thursday, 26 March 2015

Time: 8.30 am

**Venue: Shrewsbury Training and Development Centre, Racecourse Crescent,
Monkmoor, Shrewsbury, SY2 5BP**

You are requested to attend the above meeting.
The Agenda is attached

Claire Porter
Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer)

Members of Schools Forum

Bill Dowell (Chair)
Phil Adams
Austin Atkinson
Nicholas Bardsley
Richard Bray
Hilary Burke
David Chantrey
Chris Davies
Christine Harding
Christine Hargest
Ann Hartley
Sandra Holloway
Colin Hopkins
Jo Humphreys

Peter Ingham
Pete Johnstone
Martin Jones
Sally Lill
Yvette McDaniel
Kay Miller
Ian Nurser
Phil Poulton
Kay Redknap
Mark Rogers
James Sparkes
Colin Case
Joy Tetsill

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AGENDA

- 1 **Apologies**
- 2 **Minutes and Matters Arising** (Pages 1 - 4)
- 3 **Joint Use Leisure Centres and Swimming Pool Funding (Phil Wilson)**
(Pages 5 - 10)
- 4 **SEND Funding Consultation Response (Gwyneth Evans)** (Pages 11 - 18)
- 5 **Sustainability Task & Finish Group (Gwyneth Evans)** (Pages 19 - 26)
- 6 **Universal Infant Free School Meals Capital Grant (Phil Wilson)** (Pages 27 - 30)
- 7 **Communications** (Pages 31 - 34)
- 8 **Next Meeting**

Thursday 18 June 2015, 8.30 am, Shrewsbury Training & Development Centre, Monkmoor

Future Meetings:

Thursday 17 September 2015, 8.30 am
Thursday 22 October 2015, 8.30 am
Thursday 26 November 2015 8.30 am
Thursday 28 January 2016, 8.30 am
Thursday 24 March 2016, 8.30 am
Thursday 9 June 2016, 8.30 am



Schools Forum

Date: 26 March 2015

Time: 8.30 am

Venue: STDC, Monkmoor,
Shrewsbury

Item/Paper

A

Public

MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON 22 JANUARY 2015

Present

School Forum Members

Bill Dowell (Chair)
 Phil Adams – Academy Headteacher
 Hilary Burke – Secondary Headteacher
 Colin Case - Primary Governor
 David Chantry – Primary Governor
 Christine Harding – Early Years and Childcare
 Christine Hargest – Association of Secretaries
 John Hitchings – SSGC
 Jo Humphreys – Primary Governor
 Martin Jones – Primary Governor
 Yvette McDaniel – Primary Headteacher
 Geoff Pettengell – Academy Headteacher
 Kay Redknap – TMBSS
 Mark Rogers – Primary Headteacher
 Phillip Sell – Hereford Diocese
 James Sparkes – Secondary Governor
 Joy Tetsill – Secondary Governor
 Ruth Thomas – Post 16

Members

Cllr Nick Bardsley

Officers

Phil Wilson
 Gwyneth Evans
 Rob Carlyle
 Deb Fern
 Neville Ward
 Helen Woodbridge (Minutes)

Observers/Visitors

Cllr Hannah Fraser

ACTION

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Austin Atkinson, Richard Bray, Karen Bradshaw, Chris Davies, Ann Hartley, Peter Ingham, Pete Johnstone, Sally Lill, Phil Poulton, Gareth Proffitt and Phillip Sell.

2. Minutes and Matters Arising (Paper A)

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true record. All actions had been completed.

3. Lobbying

Phil Wilson advised that no response to the letter to Nicky Morgan had yet been received.

4. Schools Budget 2015-16

Gwyneth Evans went through the paper and gave an overview of the APT return. She advised Schools Forum of an error on Page 3 - 0.93 should read 0.093. JH asked about the new pupil premium for early years. NW advised that it would be based on the FSM eligible criteria and guidance from the DfE is awaited. 24U will communicate with schools.

MJ asked about the number of pupils in the free school – 82.

GE advised that the 2015-16 APT submission to the EFA on delegation details had been submitted on 20 January 2015 – she thanked RC for his work on this. She advised that the budget share letters are being drafted and should be in schools by 30 January 2015.

A FSM issue was highlighted. The AWPU has increased to £389 which is significantly higher than expected as the FSM numbers have decreased.

Analysis has been carried out and in the main FSM number have held up but there are 20-30 schools where numbers are significantly lower. This could just be due to the schools' profile or a consequence of parents not registering for FSM due to the UIFSM. A consequence of raising the unit price would be that it would overinflate many schools' FSM factor funding.

MR wondered about increasing the lump sum but thought it probably too late to do so.

HB thought that the formula is based on facts so was acceptable.

MR considered the increase in AWPU from £333 to £389 to be significant.

GE advised that FSM has decreased by 334 units which has freed up £22.90 per pupil for AWPU. The recycling of the MFG has added £42 to AWPU.

DF's monitoring has shown an underspend of £1 million – it is proposed that half of this is put into DSG which adds a further £14 to AWPU.

The High Needs Block 2015-16 adds £6 per pupil to budgets and contributes to centrally retained budgets.

JT asked how many schools would be disadvantaged severely.

GE advised that a reduction of FSM pupils from 53 to 29 was the worst case scenario at a reduction of £56,000 but £4,800 would come back through AWPU so £51,000.

MR felt that this could be explainable and not necessarily due to UIFSM.

JH asked if this is based on Ever6 or actual and GE confirmed actual – she also confirmed that none of the affected schools had made contact.

PW reminded colleagues of the turbulence that can take place from year to year.

JS spoke of the transient school population.

YM advised that at her school FSM had dropped from 10 down to 2 and all families had been checked that they had registered.

MR asked if the DfE could change the formula.

GE agreed to check but did not expect any issues.

Schools Forum unanimously agreed that the formula should remain unchanged.

5. Proposed amendments to the Schools Financial Value Standard

GE introduced the paper. LA views are required by 6 February 2015.

The number of questions has increased from 23 to 26.

JHi commented that in practical terms, benchmarking is becoming more difficult.

MR felt that pay policies are in place and this is another check which should be done.

PW advised that when considering the audit plan for 2015-16 he had been alerted to the increasing number of unsatisfactory school audits – there are training and development issues.

JS spoke of the leeway for governing bodies but that they need to be held to account.

The Chair advised that audit would check that proper processes had been followed.

6. SEND Funding Task and Finish Group

PW went through the paper. The call for evidence response will be submitted by 27 February 2015 and reported to Schools Forum in March.
YM advised that she had shared this with her SDG.

7. Dedicated School Grant Monitoring (Paper D)

Deb Fern talked through the DSG paper.

8. Lobbying/Communications

The Chair and Nick Bardsley had nothing to report.

It was anticipated that following the receipt of budget letters there could be some communication.

The budget modelling/planning tool is to be updated and circulated again after half term.

Advice, support and training and development is being provided.

PW advised that a Shropshire Place Planning Strategy is being drafted.

The Sustainability Task & Finish Group will meet after half term and will link in with the place planning.

JHi felt it important not to lose momentum.

PA thought it a good time as all political parties could be asked their intentions prior to elections.

The Chair suggested asking members to talk to the MPs.

NB asked if collaborations were halting prior to the election – it was confirmed that this was not the case.

GE advised that f40 continue to pressurise government and remind them that the extra funding received is the start of fair funding.

YM asked where Shropshire ranks now.

GE advised that Shropshire is funded on the minimum funding level along with 60 other authorities.

JS asked if the £1 million underspend could support sustainability by providing a contingency fund for remodelling.

GE advised that schools need to find funding for remodelling.

PW suggested that some capital funding could be provided although capital funding is diminishing.

The Chair identified this as an item for consideration by the Sustainability Task & Finish Group.

MJ advised that academies had more chance of obtaining capital funding.

PW advised to be careful re out-of-area pupils.

9. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 26 March 2015.

The meeting closed at 9.40 am.

Future meetings:

18 June 2015, 17 September 2015, 22 October 2015, 26 November 2015, 28 January 2016, 24 March 2016, 9 June 2016

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Schools Forum

Date: 26 March 2015

Time: 8:30 a.m.

Venue: Shrewsbury Training
and Development
Centre

Item

Public

Paper

B

JOINT USE LEISURE CENTRES AND SWIMMING POOLS FUNDING

Responsible Officer Phil Wilson

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Tel: (01743) 254344 Fax (01743) 254538

1 Summary

- 1.1 The funding arrangements for joint use leisure centres and swimming pools has been the subject of previous reports to Schools Forum and, in particular, a detailed review undertaken by a Task & Finish Group in autumn 2013 and early spring 2014. The review culminated in a report with recommendations being presented to Forum on 20 March 2014.
- 1.2 At the 20 March 2014 meeting Schools Forum supported the recommendation to move over a 4 year period, starting in 2015/16, to the full delegation of the joint use leisure centres and swimming pools funding of over £1 million, which is allocated to support provision in 15 secondary schools and 3 primary schools.
- 1.3 This report updates Forum on a recent change in the approval from the Education Funding Agency on the treatment of this funding as an exceptional premises factor in the local funding formula from 2016-17 onwards, which has an impact on the strategy approved by Schools Forum on 20 March 2014.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 To note the change in the approval for the use of a joint use premises related factor in the Shropshire school funding formula from 2016-17 onwards, and to consider the impact on the previous approval by Schools Forum to move over a 4 year period from 2015-16 towards the full delegation of the funding for joint use leisure centres and swimming pools.

REPORT

3 Background

- 3.1 Prior to changes in local government in 2009 Shropshire County Council (as LEA) had, since 1968, entered into a series of joint use arrangements and agreements with other councils in Shropshire. The key drivers for this policy had been to improve the quality of provision and maximise the potential for using the facilities. Joint use funding is a delegated budget, distributed through the schools formula funding arrangements, which covers the schools daytime pupil use of the joint use facilities. The funding does not cover community use.
- 3.2 The introduction of the Government's funding reforms for the financial year 2013-14 meant that premises related factors were no longer an allowable factor within local authority funding formulas. However, Shropshire Council was able to secure approval from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) to treat the funding of joint use leisure centres and swimming pools as an exceptional local premises related factor in the 2013-14 formula and future years. As a consequence the funding for this provision has been able to be targeted to 15 secondary schools and 3 primary schools – in 2014-15 this amounted to £1,006,411 (including an element for rates on the joint use facilities).
- 3.3 Schools Forum considered a detailed report on the funding for joint use leisure centres and swimming pools at their meeting on 20 June 2013 and agreed to continue treating the funding as an exceptional premises factor for 2014-15. They also agreed to the establishment of a Joint Use Task & Finish Group to review the arrangements and to report back to Forum in the spring of 2014 on the way forward for the financial year 2015-16.
- 3.4 The Joint Use Task & Finish Group reported back to Forum on 20 March 2014, who supported a recommendation to move, over the next 4 years starting in 2015-16, to the full delegation of the joint use leisure facilities and swimming pools funding, noting that the funding released would be redistributed to all schools via the Age weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU).

4. Revised Education Funding Agency Position

- 4.1 An Authority Proforma Tool (APT) has to be submitted annually to the Education Funding Agency (EFA) by each local authority to ensure that the funding formula it is proposing for the next financial year is compliant with 2015-16 financial regulations and conditions relating to the Dedicated Schools Grant.
- 4.2 The authority has received notification that its final APT submission is compliant. However, it was noted that the approval of this exceptional premises factor is for the financial year 2015-16 only as it supports the move to a simplified formula while protecting schools in transition and because

Shropshire schools are benefiting from the additional funding allocated to 69 local authorities the next year financial year.

- 4.3 In 2015-16 the joint use funding for the 15 secondary schools and 3 primary schools in receipt of funding will reduce by 25% as per the strategy agreed by Schools Forum on 20 March 2014. The schools have been informed of this reduction.
- 4.4 Beyond 2016-17 the EFA will not approve any exceptional formula factor that is less than 1% of an individual schools overall budget share. This means that from 2016-17 onwards, any further planned reduction of 25% in joint use funding that is below this 1% threshold will not be approved as an exceptional formula factor and so the schools in this position will not be able to receive any further joint use funding.
- 4.5 The attached appendix details the position for each of the 18 schools receiving funding. The overall impact on the agreed strategy is that the funding will be removed at an accelerated rate, which could have consequences at the individual site level of managing a removal of funding over a shorter period (noting that the released funding is redistributed to all schools via AWPU, including those with joint use facilities).
- 4.6 The table below compares the impact of the EFA requirements to the original Schools Forum approved strategy for eliminating the joint use funding over the next 4 years.

Year	Original Strategy Annual Joint Use Funding	Revised Annual Funding in line with EFA Requirements	Increased Reductions in Joint Use Funding
2015-16	£753,020	£753,020	£0
2016-17	£502,020	£314,550	£187,470
2017-18	£251,010	£72,490	£178,520
2018-19	£0	£0	£0

- 4.7 Schools Forum will want to consider the impact of this development on their agreed strategy from March 2014 and whether any further action is required beyond notifying the schools in receipt of the funding of the changed arrangements for eliminating the support from April 2016 onwards.

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Summary of Joint Use Tapering

Appendix A

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	2015-16 Allocation £	2016-17 Allocation £	2017-18 Allocation £	2018-19 Allocation £	2019-20 Allocation £
CCBC	51,015	34,010	below 1%		
Idsall	70,583	below 1%			
Lacon Childe	7,688	below 1%			
Ludlow	25,148	below 1%			
Mary Webb	21,360	below 1%			
Meole Brace	18,143	below 1%			
Oldbury Wells	15,128	below 1%			
Sir john Talbots	39,420	26,280	below 1%		
St Martins	38,760	25,840	below 1%		
Thomas Adams	44,633	below 1%			
Endowed	184,050	122,700	61,350	below 1%	
Church Stretton	18,750	below 1%			
Lakelands	26,760	below 1%			
Shrewsbury Academies Trust	22,838	below 1%			
William Brookes	92,820	61,880	below 1%		
Ellesmere	32,318	21,550	below 1%		
Albrighton	10,185	below 1%			
St Lawrence	33,428	22,290	11,140	below 1%	
Total	753,023	314,550	72,490	0	0

The LA can only apply to the EFA for Exceptional circumstances if a school's Joint Use funding is greater than 1% of the schools budget share.

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Schools Forum

Date: 26 March 2015

Time: 8:30 a.m.

Venue: Shrewsbury
Training and Development
Centre

Paper

C

Public

SEND FUNDING CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Responsible Officer Gwyneth Evans

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Summary

Schools Forum approved the terms of reference and work programme for the SEND Funding Task & Finish Group in November 2014. A report providing feedback from the second meeting of the group was presented to Schools Forum in January 2015 and included notification of the Department for Education's paper entitled *SEND funding: longer term changes*, in which the Department launched a 'call for evidence' to inform the national debate on distributing special educational needs and disability (SEND) funding more fairly.

Attached to this report is Shropshire's response to the Department's 'call for evidence'.

Recommendation

To note Shropshire's response to the Department's SEND funding 'call for evidence' submitted by the deadline of 27 February 2015.

REPORT

1. A report to Schools Forum in January 2015 provided key points of the second meeting of the SEND Funding Task & Finish Group. The main focus of the meeting was the Department for Education paper entitled *SEND funding: longer term changes* and the 18 specific questions in a request for evidence, addressing the following issues: the national to local level funding distribution, the local to institution level funding distribution and the local authorities' approaches to capital investment.
2. As agreed, a Shropshire response was finalised by the Task & Finish Group via email by 27 February 2015 and submitted to the Department. The response also included extracts from f40's submission where these were relevant to Shropshire's context.

3. Shropshire's response is attached to this report for Schools Forum's information.

SEND Funding Consultation – Response from Shropshire Council

National to local level funding distribution

Q1. In moving to a fairer distribution of funding for SEND, which proxy factors other than those already included in the School and Early Years Funding (England) Regulations (e.g. low prior attainment, children from families entitled to free school meals) offer the best way of distributing funds from the Education Funding Agency to local authorities, or would these factors be adequate at this level of distribution?

The current proxy indicators provide a reasonable basis for distribution of funding. An additional indicator for consideration is numbers of Gypsy, Roma Traveler pupils. Proxy factors may support fairer distribution where there is low need, high incidence SEN that is funded through element 2.

Where there is high need low incidence it is likely that this does not correlate to socio-economic factors and other proxy indicators, especially when considering funding more specialist provision – although there could be an argument that this is not the case for areas with high levels of immigration from specific cultural backgrounds that may have genetic causes underpinning high need.

Proxy indicators may be useful when considering type of need e.g. SEMH.SLCN (0 to 5) – it is likely that there is a higher incidence of such need in areas of greater deprivation – data suggest that this is the case in Shropshire.

Q2. Apart from using a formula, is there anything else we could do to make the allocation of funding for SEND to local authorities fairer? For example, how far should we take into account the pattern of provision that has developed in the locality, and the cost of that?

You should not take into account existing provision as existing provision is based on unfair historic funding levels.

Consideration should be given to rurality and population density.

Higher costs will be inevitable because of increased need for specialist transport, difficulty in delivering specialised provision in remote areas as a result of cost of high cost of delivery where economies of scale cannot be taken advantage of, lack of specialist skills. In Shropshire this has meant that specialist provision has been centralized and therefore there is a lack of choice. This is particularly difficult where specialist provision is required for very young children.

The [pattern of provision will therefore be important in establishing a fairer system of funding but this may need to be considered with a view to changing the pattern of provision to one that is less centralised and possibly more costly in order to provide greater choice and local access.

Q3. Are there types of SEND that are best handled above the level of individual local authorities and, if so, how might that best be dealt with in the funding system? Should collaboration between local authorities be encouraged through the funding system?

We believe in collaboration between local authorities but do not believe collaboration

should be encouraged through the funding system.
If research can identify and quantify the benefits of collaboration then this should be shared so local authorities can act on that information.
Collaborative working between authorities may be helpful but may not be practical. There are some types of SEND where as a result of the very specialist nature of it need would be preferable for local authorities to be able to access specialist provision beyond that which is available within the locality. It may be that fairer funding could be organized through provision of regional resources that are funded centrally. This would help to reduce the need to access very high cost private provision.

Local to institution level funding distribution

Q4. Are there other funding formula factors that could provide a good proxy for institutions' need to spend on children and young people with SEND? Are different factors appropriate for funding provision of support for those with high incidence low cost SEN and for funding provision of support for those with high level SEN? For each factor, are any perverse incentives associated with it?

The current approach of using proxy indicators for all levels of SEN with additional top-up funding for high needs SEN pupils is appropriate.
Different factors could also be appropriate. Possibly looking more carefully at area of need rather than just SEN. More funding could be available for pupils with high levels of anxiety as a result of ASD type difficulty – this may reduce the need for Statutory plans and may help schools and parents to see support as more flexible i.e. not attached to a particular child but to be used to train staff so that they are able to support a number of children/yp with an identified need.
Possibly allocating resourcing on a basis of success rather than potential difficulty – encouraging settings to undertake specific training and put in place specialist provision. This may help reduce the incidence of schools resisting admission for pupils with a particular category of need.
Could consider incentives for small rural schools to develop federations and partnerships to encourage specialisms which will support a particular area of need.

Q5. It is less resource intensive to allocate funding on the basis of proxy measures or using pre-determined bands of funding, particularly if the necessary data collection mechanisms are already in place, but such allocation methods can fail to take sufficient account of individual circumstances and the cost of meeting pupils' and students' needs in the setting, particularly where the cost is comparatively high. How can the right balance best be achieved in allocating funding to institutions?

Could provide LA with greater flexibility to allocate using real measures ie identified SEN in the same way that Pupil premium is allocated.
This may give greater capacity for challenging settings to measure the impact of success of intervention provided and to work harder to keep more 'difficult pupils'.

SEN within mainstream schools:

Whilst using proxy indicators is less resource intensive and is a transparent and efficient method of distribution, there remains a need for local flexibility to allow for situations where schools receive very little funding through proxy indicators but have a relatively high

number of SEN pupils in the school. Mainstream schools do not have access to various specialist equipment and resources without incurring additional costs.

Specialist Settings:

Whilst a banded funding system is less resource intensive it does lack clarity around expectations, outcomes and accountability. A person centered individualised cost calculator that matches learners with programmes and outcomes is a more effective system that supports progress towards specific aspirations. There is much expertise in education and social care settings that could be better utilised in order to support and make this highly effective match.

Q6. In what circumstances would it make sense for local authorities to be able to distribute some SEND funding to a level above that of individual institutions: for example to geographical clusters of schools, or to multi-academy trusts, leaving them with more discretion on the further allocation of those funds to individual institutions?

This could be helpful but should be left to local discretion. Where a cluster of schools consider pooling resources in order to offer specialist provision for pupils with low incidence high needs and where there is specific expertise to meet need.

Q7. In distributing funding to institutions, which methodologies are most efficient and offer the best prospect of reducing bureaucracy, whilst at the same time make sure that money gets to the institutions that need it to support their pupils and students with SEND?

Using funding flexibly for short term and measuring the impact for pupils with high needs that may be transitory or may reduce as a result of the impact of specific support/ intervention. This could be achieved through a matrix and may reduce the need for a statutory plan for those pupils with less complex needs. There may be concerns around measuring impact and providing challenge to institutions, particularly those such as academies that free schools.

The bureaucracy involved in separating costs and gathering funds from three areas – education, social care and health – in each local authority is not sustainable.

Q8. How are local authorities securing appropriate contributions from their social care budgets, and from local NHS budgets, and how should such contributions be taken into account in the distribution of education funding?

Q9. How will the way funding is allocated to institutions impact on local authorities' ability to offer personal budgets for SEND provision?

If funding continues to stay with local authorities it is vital that colleges invoice one contract for the full cost – an approach that requires multiple invoicing is not sustainable for national providers who work with many local authorities.

It is likely in Shropshire that we will only allocate element 3 funding to personal budgets. We are not yet sure how this will impact on our ability to offer a personal budget for SEND provision. We anticipate that we would be able to offer flexible provision without the need to offer a personal budget in most circumstances. It is unlikely that we will be able to offer direct payment for the education element of a personal budget.

Q10. How are local authorities allocating funding to early years providers (schools as well as the private, voluntary and independent sector) for both low cost and high level SEND? Are authorities using the early years block of funding within the dedicated schools grant (DSG) or the high needs block? How are they calculating the funding required (e.g. are they using formula factors, or assessing the cost of support required on an individual basis, or taking a different approach)?

Shropshire currently funds early years SEN from the Early Years block of funding. Funding is based on an assessment of the cost of support required on an individual basis.

Local authorities' approaches to capital investment

The data we have published and research we have commissioned are primarily about revenue funding distribution, but we are interested in how we can improve the funding of specialist facilities for pupils and students with SEND, where there is demand for new places or expansion.

Q11. What are the different approaches that local authorities are taking towards capital investment to create specialist provision – in special schools, special units attached to mainstream schools, and similar types of provision in academies and colleges – and what are the drivers behind these?

We allocate funding as needs arise. This could be for individuals, specific specialist groups or for basic need places for pupils/students with SEND. As members of Educational Building Development Group (EBDOG) recognition has been sought, over a number of years, for a specific spending stream for pupils/students with

SEND.

Shropshire are currently reconsidering specialist provision and moving from a centralised model to more localised provision, particularly for younger age groups.

Also creating specialist hubs within mainstream provision.

The drivers behind this move include an increasing number of high needs and complex needs with limited capacity in current specialist setting for further expansion.

Increasing numbers of pupils identified with ASD and increasing pressures on schools to demonstrate high levels of academic achievement which often conflict with the needs of individual pupils.

The need to reduce the cost to the authority of pupils accessing private specialist provision.

Q12. What sources of capital funding do local authorities use to create specialist provision, and what factors affect this?

We allocate some of our capital maintenance grant to assist with adaptations in schools for pupils with specific needs.

We have allocated funding from capital receipts due to school closures to create new provision.

The greatest factors affecting this is need.

Q13. What factors drive local authorities' decisions to invest capital in additional specialist provision – as opposed to using revenue funding for placements in existing mainstream/specialist provision, or placements in another local authority or in the independent sector?

Our current main specialist provision for pupils with ASD, SLD, & SPLD, is at capacity.

Our present philosophy is to “spend to save” by using capital to increase our specialist provision more evenly around the county which will save on revenue budgets in the future on placements in other local authorities or the independent sector. This will also save on transport costs.

Q14. Do local authorities take into account the cost of transport for pupils and students with SEND when making decisions about capital investment, and compare this investment with the cost of residential provision out of the area?

In a large rural authority transport costs are considerable and mean that some of our most vulnerable pupils have long journeys to their specialist education provision. Comparisons with these costs and those of out of county residential provision feed into our forward planning.

Q15. What specific criteria do local authorities use in allocating capital funding for specialist provision?

The basic need of places for pupils and students with SEND.
The principle of “spend to save” in order to provide more localised specialist provision which will assist pupils and students remaining or being integrated into mainstream provision whenever possible.
Individuals’ specific needs.

Q16. What data do local authorities collect and hold on current capacity and forecast pupil numbers for different types of specialist provision?

Birth data collected from the NHS.
School census data to identify areas of need and analyse growth areas, as well as using census data to identify ‘hot-spots’ across the authority.
Early notification following multi-disciplinary assessment
Analysis of data including type of specialist provision, age when accessed, impact/outcomes

Q17. Do local authorities pool capital funding to create shared specialist provision? If not, should this be considered and what are the barriers?

We do not presently pool capital funding to create specialist provision as there is no specific funding allocated to authorities for this. Whilst cross border provision at the extremities of the county could be considered this has not yet been explored for this age group.

Q18. What approach should the Education Funding Agency take in allocating capital funds for specialist provision?

Look at the growth in the numbers of pupils and students with SEND. The numbers, types and complexities of the provision required in each authority. The innovative ways of providing the most cost effective provision and the long term savings capital investment could give on revenue budgets.



Schools Forum

Date: 26 March 2015

Time: 8:30 a.m.

Venue: Shrewsbury
Training and Development
Centre

Paper

D

Public

SUSTAINABILITY TASK & FINISH GROUP

Responsible Officer Gwyneth Evans

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Summary

Schools Forum approved the terms of reference and membership of a Task & Finish Group on School Sustainability in November 2013. Reports from meetings of the group have been presented at previous Forum meetings.

This report provides an update from the latest meeting of the group held on 10 March 2015.

Recommendation

To note the key points raised at the meeting on 10 March 2015 of the Task & Finish Group on School Sustainability.

REPORT

1. Reports following meetings of the Task & Finish Group on School Sustainability have been presented to Forum previously. A further meeting of the group took place on 10 March 2015 and notes of the key points raised at the meeting are attached to this report.
2. The group considered the impact on individual schools of projected pupil number reductions across the county and the subsequent projected reduction to individual school budget shares over the next 5 years to 2019-20.
3. The group reviewed the development of budget planning tools aimed at supporting Shropshire schools. A budget modelling tool, designed to enable schools to estimate future year budget shares based on the current 2015-16 funding formula and school data on pupil numbers, has been developed. The group confirmed this should be provided to schools as soon as possible with guidance notes providing appropriate caveats to highlight the potential risks of using current funding levels, formula data and criteria into the future. The group

also considered a Shropshire benchmarking tool which it was agreed should be available to Shropshire maintained schools in September each year based on the previous financial year's data.

4. The group recommended that budget planning training and guidance should be made available to schools predicted to be facing a significant pupil number decline and subsequent reduction in funding over the next 5 years.
5. The group also reviewed budget modelling tools for early years and post-16 providers which are being developed. The significant pressure on post-16 funding was raised and discussed within the group.
6. The group was presented with a briefing note entitled *A Shropshire Strategy for Pupil Place Planning* which summarises the position regarding pupil growth in some parts of Shropshire over the next plan period (copy attached). They were advised that the full strategy is being drawn up and will be going out for consultation in the summer. The group felt strongly that the strategy should include the overall Shropshire picture with regard to falling pupil numbers and surplus places.
7. Details of future meetings will be presented to future Schools Forum meetings.

Schools Forum Task & Finish Group on Sustainability

Notes of key points raised at the meeting held on 10 March 2015 at the Shrewsbury Training and Development Centre, Monkmoor, Shrewsbury.

In attendance:

Bill Dowell (Chair)
Nick Bardsley
Hilary Burke
Chris Davies
Sandra Holloway
Jo Humphreys
Mark Rogers
Phil Wilson
Gwyneth Evans
Rob Carlyle

1. Bill Dowell welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. Apologies were received from Hannah Fraser, Phil Adams, Peter Ingham and James Sparkes.
3. **Modelling Tool**
RC showed the group the latest version of the budget modelling tool including 2015-16 budget figures and data. This version includes details of the de-delegation budgets that maintained schools will see deducted from their budget share allocation.
RC also showed the group a modelling tool designed to enable schools to estimate future years' pupil premium levels. MR stressed that the tool must include a caveat that pupil premium is not guaranteed for future years and that it must be spent on the pupils it is intended for.
The group agreed that the detailed funding sheet developed as part of the modelling tool will be useful to schools. There was a discussion around the risk of some of the factors into the future. A need for caveats regarding the uncertainty of this data into the future as it is based on current (15-16) sparsity criteria and minimum funding guarantee levels.
The group were informed that the Government has not guaranteed that the new additional funding in 2015-16, £10m for Shropshire schools, will be part of the baseline for future years. f40 has raised this with the DfE and stressed the point that schools need to be able to commit this additional funding to additional staff costs and therefore need to know that it will be included in future year budget settlements.
4. **Summary Forecast Budget Analysis**
RC shared with the group a spreadsheet, with schools anonymised, summarising individual school budget shares over the period 2015-16 to 2019-20 based on 2015-16 formula and the LA's estimation of future numbers on roll.

NB commented how important it was for schools in some areas to understand that the pupil number decline is an issue for their area and therefore attracting more pupils is unlikely to be a realistic solution to their budget situation. MR suggested an area rag-rating system within the modelling tool to alert schools to the fact that pupil decline is an issue for their area and not just their individual school.

BD recommended that schools with falling rolls should be required to produce a 3 year budget plan showing how they will address the impact of the expected decline in pupil numbers.

The group suggested schools with predicted falling rolls should be invited to a training session to take them through the modelling tool and discuss options for addressing the impact on their budget.

The group felt governors should be encouraged to share issues with their local Member.

5. **Collaboration Tool**

RC showed the group how individual school budget modelling tools can be used in a collaboration tool for use by schools in, or planning for, formal collaborative arrangements. The group felt this was very useful. The group discussed the importance of the local Member being informed and understanding what their local school is potentially facing.

6. **Development Work**

RC showed the group further budget modelling tools that have been developed in relation to early years funding and post-16 funding.

SH asked if an additional funding line could be added to the early years' budget modelling tool, and into the bar chart at the bottom of the tool, to allow schools to include any additional parental income.

7. **Benchmarking**

RC showed the group the local benchmarking tool which is being developed. The intention is to make this available to maintained schools in September. The group agreed that whilst it was useful for primary schools it had limited usefulness in secondary schools in Shropshire.

8. **Post-16**

BD highlighted the particularly stark budget picture for Post 16 which has knock on consequences to the budget of schools with Post 16 provision. Aiming to get a briefing paper to local members. A briefing paper for members, schools and colleges is being collated by Janine Vernon and Graham Moore.

9. **A Shropshire Strategy for Pupil Place Planning**

PW presented a draft Shropshire strategy which will be out for consultation in the summer. It was agreed by the group that the Strategy needs to make reference to the number of surplus classrooms across the County also. It needs to give the whole picture. It is important it does not give schools the impression that there is not a pupil number decline issue in the County.

10. **Date of next meeting**

It was agreed to meet again in the summer term.

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A Shropshire Strategy for Pupil Place Planning

Shropshire Council, together with the Schools Forum Task & Finish Group on School Sustainability, has recently highlighted - in the face of falling pupil numbers - the need for a cost effective and sustainable network of schools to deliver high quality education for all Shropshire children. A briefing note on schools sustainability was circulated to schools, Council members, Parish Councils and the media in September 2014.

The overall reduction in pupil numbers in Shropshire schools over the next few years is bucking the national trend, but is not evenly spread and varies across the county. In the short-term, the current updated projections - following the last school census in October 2014 - indicates an overall reduction in pupil numbers of 3.2% (1,122 pupils) between 2014 and 2018 (3.7% in primary and 2.6% in secondary). This equates to a potential loss in funding to schools, via the Dedicated Schools Grant, of around £5 million.

This reduction in pupil numbers will have an impact on the post-16 phase over time, and post-16 providers know that they need to plan for this potential reduction in student numbers and in funding for post-16 places.

While there is an overall demographic decline, the Council's pupil projections confirm that in some areas of the county there will be pressure on school places, mainly linked to proposed large scale housing developments. In the majority of cases this increased demand is neither significant nor imminent and can be absorbed within the existing provision, particularly where there are places available within neighbouring schools.

The Council is required to plan carefully for these predicted rises in a timely and flexible way, and to be clear about where the pressures will apply and the potentially different timelines for primary and secondary phase. The methodology used has been subject to external scrutiny and judged to be accurate and reliable.

There is a need to involve key stakeholders - including school leaders, governors, local members and communities - and to plan for the necessary local and political decision-making.

It is important to note that:

- The Local Authority (LA) is required to respond to the demographic changes for each school and their individual circumstances in a dynamic and changing environment. The LA's routine and robust pupil forecasting and assessment of need means that current local issues are, as usual, being managed in a timely and appropriate way.
- In many circumstances predicted demand will be in schools which currently accept children from outside their catchment area because they have unfilled places. Where pupil populations are growing, this take-up pattern will gradually change at the point when children join the school. The admissions process will prioritise places to in-area children and out of area children will be able to access places at their catchment or other schools. Over time this will help ease the pressure of additional demand but also improve the sustainability of neighbouring schools where pupils take up places.

Appendix 2

- Although the responsibility for the provision of sufficient places is a statutory responsibility of the LA, academy schools can make decisions independently of the LA which can impact on local provision. It is therefore important that the LA liaises closely with all schools, including academies, so that all stakeholders can base their decisions on detailed, accurate and up-to-date information.

Where additional pupil places are demonstrably required there are a range of funding streams which may be available to meet the costs of any required capital works. These include Government allocated Basic Need capital grant to the LA, contributions from housing developers (including Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106) and any potential capital receipts from the sale of surplus school sites within Council ownership (subject to Cabinet approval to allocate such receipts to Learning & Skills). Academies also have access to additional capital grant funding through the Education Funding Agency's Academies Capital Maintenance Fund.

The table below summarises the current projections for additional school places over the current plan period for the LA.

Area	2017/18, 2018/19 & 2019/20 Academic Years	2020/21, 2021/22 & 2022/23 Academic Years	2023/24, 2024/25 & 2025/26 Academic Years
Primary			
Shrewsbury	2 classrooms	5 classrooms	5 classrooms
Ellesmere		1 classroom	1 classroom
Ludlow		1 classroom	2 classrooms
Market Drayton	2 classrooms	1 classroom	2 classrooms
Oswestry		3 classrooms	3 classrooms
Shifnal	3 classrooms	1 classroom	
Whitchurch	1 classroom	1 classroom	2 classrooms
Primary Total	8 classrooms	13 classrooms	15 classrooms
Secondary			
Shrewsbury		7 classrooms	5 classrooms
Oswestry		1 classroom	4 classrooms
Secondary Total		8 classrooms	9 classrooms

Note - An additional classroom represents approximately 30 pupils.

It is important that all stakeholders understand that these are forecasts, and that they change. Information will therefore be regularly updated and used to review schools' admissions numbers and plans for the use of available funding.

The first task is to publish and consult informally on a Strategy for Pupil Place Planning which will include:

- a detailed analysis of the demand forecast for school places across Shropshire
- a breakdown by area and by school
- consideration of the impact on the admissions process and the take-up of unfilled places
- a timeline (including of any statutory processes) which identifies key actions related to consultation, decision-making, funding and building works.

Much of this information exists and work to collate it is already underway. The strategy is expected to be published in draft early in the Summer term 2015 and will then be shared with all key stakeholders.



Schools Forum

Date: 26 March 2015

Time: 8:30 a.m.

Venue: Shrewsbury Training
and Development
Centre

Item

Public

Paper

E

UNIVERSAL INFANT FREE SCHOOL MEALS CAPITAL GRANT

Responsible Officer

e-mail: phil.wilson@shropshire.gov.uk

Tel: (01743) 254344

Fax (01743) 254538

1 Summary

- 1.1 Since September 2014 a legal duty has been placed on schools to provide a free school meal for infant aged children (i.e. those in reception, year 1 and year 2). This duty applies to pupils in maintained schools, academies, free schools and pupil referral units. It does not extend to pupils in maintained nursery schools.
- 1.2 To support the implementation of this policy capital funding of £150 million was made available nationally in 2014-15 to upgrade kitchens and to increase dining capacity where required. Other transitional funding was provided to support small schools (i.e. schools with up to 150 pupils on roll) in addressing the particular challenges they face. Revenue funding is also being made available in the 2014/15 and 2015/16 academic years to provide a flat rate of £2.30 per meal taken based on actual take-up by newly eligible infant pupils.
- 1.3 At their meeting on 20 March 2014 Forum approved the model for distributing the capital funding allocated to the authority in 2014-15. The report included a provision to potentially claw back any underspends in the delegated capital funding for redistribution to other schools in need of additional funding. This report updates Forum on the application of the capital grant and seeks their views on how to address any identified underspends.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 To receive an update on the application of the capital funding delegated to schools for the implementation of the statutory universal infant free school meals (UIFSM) policy and to consider what should happen with any reported underspending of this capital grant, taking into account the recommendation from the Learning & Skills Capital Programme Board to claw back and redistribute the funding.

REPORT

3 Background

- 3.1 The Children and Families Act 2014 places a legal duty on state-funded schools in England, including academies and free schools, to offer a free school meal to all pupils in reception, year 1 and year 2. Existing entitlements to free school meals (FSM) for disadvantaged pupils in nursery classes and at key stages 2-4 will continue, based on existing FSM eligibility criteria. This new duty on schools came into force from September 2014.
- 3.2 In the financial year 2014-15 capital funding of £150 million was allocated to local authorities to support the roll out of UIFSM. Shropshire Council was allocated a total of £662,822 in capital funding to upgrade kitchens and to enhance dining capacity where required.
- 3.3 At their meeting on 20 March 2014 Schools Forum were presented with a model for equitably distributing the capital grant to qualifying schools. The model took into account the difference between the existing take-up of school meals and the likely increases in numbers taking a meal from the implementation of a universal provision. This made it possible to calculate for each individual school the likely additional pupil numbers they would need to cater for from September 2014 and to use these numbers to pro-rata the capital funding. Forum approved the model.
- 3.4 The report included a provision for underspends in the delegated funding to be clawed back from any schools not applying the funding fully, with a view to it being redistributed to schools where there is an identified need for additional capital resource in order to fully implement their statutory responsibility. Schools were advised of this provision in the letters they received in late March 2014 informing them of their individual school allocations.

4 Application of UIFSM Capital Grant

- 4.1 The Learning & Skills Capital Programme Board, at their meeting on 28 January 2015, considered a report on the individual school allocations of capital funding and spend to date, as reported on SAMIS. The Board authorised officers to contact schools in receipt of UIFSM capital grant to inform them of their current position and to ascertain if this was an accurate record. They were advised of the Board's desire for any uncommitted capital grant to be clawed back and redistributed. This communication went out to schools in early February 2015.
- 4.2 At the time of writing the identified underspend of capital grant is around £82,000, spread across 34 schools. The individual levels of underspend range from £26 to £7,749.

- 4.3 An additional £20 million capital funding was made available nationally in October 2014 by the Department for Education. Local authorities were asked to bid for this funding which was aimed at enhancing kitchen and dining facilities. Shropshire Council submitted a total of 10 bids at a value of over £500,000, none of which were successful.
- 4.4 At the Learning & Skills Capital Programme Board, it was recommended that some of the capitalised £500,000 Dedicated Schools Grant savings in 2014-15 be targeted to fund a number of the projects for which national funding was bid for. To date approximately £300,000 of this work has been commissioned. Any clawed back funding will be added to this capital budget for further work on enhancing kitchens and dining facilities in schools which are struggling to fulfil their statutory responsibilities.
- 4.5 Schools Forum are asked to consider what should happen with the reported underspending of this capital grant, taking into account the Capital Programme Boards view that the funding be clawed back and redistributed.

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Fighting for fairer funding for our schools



The way the government funds schools is a mess. As a result, schools around the country that are similar can get very different budgets and children with the same needs can receive very different levels of financial help depending on where they go to school. It's another postcode lottery!

A campaign group called f40 made up of low funded local authorities has been fighting for fairer funding for many years with some success. Both the coalition government and the Labour one before it accepted the problem and both promised to sort it out. Although the Coalition has found an extra £390m for lower funded schools for 2015-16 (for which we are very grateful), the underlying problem has not been sorted, while a static income per pupil, rising costs and 6th Form funding cuts mean some schools have lost out in recent years.

f40 suggests a new formula

f40 has worked hard to develop a proposal for how this can be sorted out by coming up with a fair and transparent formula to more fairly divide the cake and this has received a positive response from the Department for Education.

We just need politicians to bite the bullet and make it happen. The fact is that when money is tight, it is particularly tight in the lowest funded areas. It is only fair, therefore, that schools that have been better funded for decades should help those that have been historically underfunded to achieve a reasonable level of funding as quickly as possible. This would help them to meet the challenge of cost pressures, which affect all schools, but particularly those in the lowest funded areas.

How you can help

So if you want your children to continue to have a broad range of subjects to study, good resources to use, well maintained and fit for purpose buildings, reasonably sized classes and excellent pastoral support, please act now by demanding a commitment to a fair funding formula straight after the election. Here's what you can do:

- Contact the Secretary of State for Education, the Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP, at Sanctuary Buildings, London SW1P 3BT. Tweet @NickyMorgan01 or email ministers@education.gsi.gov.uk
- Contact the Minister of State for Schools, the Rt Hon David Laws MP (also based at Sanctuary Buildings) or email ministers@education.gsi.gov.uk
- Contact the Shadow Secretary of State, Tristram Hunt MP, at the House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. Tweet @TristramHuntMP or email tristram.hunt.mp@parliament.uk
- Contact the candidates standing for election where you live and work and ask them what they are doing about fairer school funding. Tell them how important this is to you. Check local websites to get their names and contact details.
- Ask your children's schools, governors and your local councillors to do the same.

To find out more go to www.f40.org.uk

Please help now! Early in a new government is the time to act, and whichever party is in power, they need to know that this matters to us, for our children and the future prosperity of this country.

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2015/0001821POJN

Lord Nash

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools

Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

William Dowell, Chair of Shropshire Schools Forum
Shropshire Council, Shirehall
Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury
Shropshire
SY2 6ND

Your ref: WD/hjw

11 February 2015

Dear Mr Dowell,

Thank you for your letter of 27 November, addressed to the Secretary of State, about the treatment of deficit budgets for schools becoming sponsored academies. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area. I do apologise for the delay in sending you a response.

I very much share your concerns about this issue. It is important that governors of maintained schools and local authorities take prompt and effective action to deal with any school budget which has gone or is at risk of going into deficit. I am glad to read that Shropshire Council are reviewing their protocols in this area and putting more robust processes in place. Poorly performing schools which become sponsored academies must have the best possible start to ensure that they can quickly improve and provide a high quality of education for their pupils. It is, therefore, vitally important that any deficit which they have is removed at the point which they become an academy.

Whilst I recognise your concern that the cost of the deficit then falls to the local authority, this is fair as they were responsible for the oversight of that school when the deficit built up and had the ability to take action to prevent it from growing. Removing the responsibility for the historic deficit of a school that was a sponsored academy from the local authority would send the wrong signal. The current approach should and does act as a spur to local authorities to take prompt action to tackle poor financial management in maintained schools and prevent large deficits from building up. The action which you are now taking in Shropshire to put more robust arrangements in place for tackling any deficit should ensure that in future, schools no longer build up a large deficit and that the potential costs arising from any sponsored academy is minimised.

Thank you for writing on this important matter.

JOHN NASH

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