



Schools Forum
Date: 23 January 2014
Time: 8.30 am
Venue: STDC, Monkmoor,
Shrewsbury

Item/Paper
A
Public

MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON 5 DECEMBER 2013

Present:

School Forum Members

Bill Dowell – 14-19 Forum
Phil Adams – Academy headteacher
Austin Atkinson - Diocese
Hilary Burke – Secondary headteacher
Chris Davies – Special school headteacher
Sheila Halsall – Secondary governor
Christine Hargest - Association of Secretaries
John Hitchings - SSGC
Sandra Holloway – Primary governor
Jo Humphreys – Primary governor
Chris Huss – Primary headteacher
Peter Ingham- Secondary governor (left at 9.50)
Martin Jones – Primary governor
Yvette McDaniel – Primary headteacher
Kay Miller – Primary headteacher
Ian Nurser – Primary headteacher
David Ravenscroft – Secondary governor
Philip Sell - Diocese

Members

Cllr Ann Hartley

Officers

Karen Bradshaw
Phil Wilson
Rob Carlyle
Gwyneth Evans
Neville Ward
Deborah Fern
Gareth Proffitt
Helen Woodbridge (Minutes)

Observers/visitors

Cllr Roger Evans
Cllr Nick Bardsley

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Cllr Joyce Barrow, David Chantrey, Chris Endacott, Pete Johnstone, Phil Loveday, Phil Poulton, Kay Redknap, Mark Rogers and James Sparkes.

Roger Evans and Nick Bardsley were welcomed as observers.

2. Minutes and Matters Arising (Paper A)

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2013 were accepted as a true record.

Item 5 - Gwyneth Evans confirmed that she has responded to the query about SEN from Prees and all 13 schools had been written to.

Item 6 - Phil Wilson had written to headteachers and Chairs regarding membership of Schools Forum. An election for a primary headteacher is underway.

Item 6 – Forum was advised that Ruth Thomas from Derwen College would

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be joining Schools Forum as the 16-19 Representative from April 2014.

3. Lobbying

The Chair advised that f40 activity continues. He intends to attend a meeting at the House of Commons on 6 February 2014.

Ann Hartley advised that a meeting between Cabinet members and local MPs is scheduled for January and school funding is to be an agenda item.

Karen Bradshaw shared a response from David Laws to Worcestershire County Council. He had indicated that he recognised the issues re fair funding, the implications of a national fair funding formula and the need for a degree of flexibility.

4. De-delegation 2014-15 (Paper B)

Gwyneth Evans took Schools Forum members through the paper and advised that it will become an annual paper.

A significant overspend is expected against the 10% contingency for pupil growth in 2013-14. Twelve schools have triggered the contingency this year, three of which required exceptionally high levels of funding.

Phil Adams queried where the additional pupils were from and it was confirmed that these were from within Shropshire.

John Hitchings spoke of the need for funding to remain at schools because of staffing commitments.

The Chair asked about future years and was advised that it would be considered.

Chris Huss felt the cost was too high and suggested there was a need to consider this again in the future. The sub-formula will need to be looked at.

Gwyneth Evans and Rob Carlyle agreed to do this and confirmed that the funding formula is used as the current basis for calculating the amount of contingency a school gets.

Karen Bradshaw suggested that schools should be required make a business case based on the actual increased costs.

Phil Adams thought that small schools over admitting pupils over and above their PAN are partly responsible.

Chris Huss reminded colleagues that the funding is based on October census figures and therefore there is more variance as chronologically further away than the previous January census figures.

Gwyneth Evans suggested another option would be to consider increasing the 10% threshold.

Martin Jones pointed out that schools are not necessarily in control of their admissions.

Phillip Sell advised that the closure of a local school over the border can have an impact and this may happen more.

Gwyneth Evans advised that the overspend in this one year could not be used to show a trend and therefore the 2014-15 budget would remain at the 2013-14 level at this stage. She confirmed that the estimated maternity underspend, if realised, can be carried forward.

Christine Hargest introduced the trade union duties appendices.

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A phase vote was held on each of the proposals:

	Pri		Sec	
	For	Ag	For	Ag
10% pupil growth – delegated and then de-delegated 14/15 (£69,460)	6	0		
Admin of free school meal eligibility – not de-delegated 14/15	6	0	4	0
Insurance - de-delegated 14/15	6	0	4	0
Maternity cover - de-delegated 14/15	6	0	4	0
Trade Union Duties - de-delegated 14/15	6	0	4	0
Public Duties – not de-delegated 14/15	6	0	4	0
Libraries and Museum Services – not de-delegated 14/15	6	0	4	0

5. High Needs Funding 2014-15 (Paper C)

Gwyneth Evans introduced the paper and clarified that it is a decision for the LA, but that Schools Forum's views are sought by the LA.

Gwyneth Evans explained Appendix A.

Chris Huss and Kay Miller commended the spirit of the paper.

Philip Sell advised that working with four LAs, High Needs funding had been top of the list of complaints from schools with high numbers of SEN pupils. He commended Shropshire Council for taking action where others hadn't.

Yvette MacDaniel echoed this.

Robert Carlyle advised that agreed factors have been used in a fair way.

Chris Huss pointed out that the 20% allows for School Action and School Action+.

Hilary Burke felt that it is very fair, simple and transparent.

The Chair thanked and congratulated the finance team but remains worried about SEN funding.

Karen Bradshaw thanked colleagues for their positive comments. She reminded Forum that statutory functions were still paid for by the LA eg statutory assessment.

The funding options were explained.

Ian Nurser queried Point 11 and asked what £3.59 before MFG would be after MFG. Gwyneth Evans advised that she could model this on 2013-14 data. Ian Nurser felt that 11b would be preferable.

Chris Huss advised that reducing FSM may not be acceptable to the EFA. It should come from the primary sector and not all the funding changes are included. So remodelling is needed.

Jo Humphreys preferred the per pupil reduction and it was clarified that it would be actual FSM and not Ever6 figures.

Martin Jones thought it outrageous that this is another instance of MFG having an adverse effect.

Gwyneth Evans advised that Schools Forum could request to dis-apply MFG for this part of the budget but warned that no Shropshire applications have been accepted to date. Ian Nurser suggested that this should be applied for.

Transfer to the High Needs block to escape the effect of MFG was raised

GE

but Gwyneth Evans advised that this was not allowable. Kay Miller suggested asking all schools to contribute voluntarily but it was felt that some schools would not be prepared to do so. Schools Forum accepted the paper but asked for further modelling on the effect of MFG to be carried out and the results reported to the next meeting. Chris Huss suggested that the chart should be amended to take account of other funding implications.

6. Task and Finish Group on Sustainability (Paper D)

Phil Wilson introduced the paper. He advised that information had been sent to headteachers and Chairs and discussed at CPGs and added that it will be an open and transparent exercise.

The table on page 3 was discussed.

The Chair acknowledged the work done on numbers and funding. He did not want to be alarmist but the future situation is now clearer and will be a big challenge to manage.

Martin Jones asked about sharing confidential details of finance. The Chair advised that due to competition, information is commercially sensitive.

Chris Huss was concerned about shifts in data and the impact of data is an issue.

Kay Miller thought that data should go to individual schools but they also need to know the impact on the area.

The Chair suggested the need for briefings and training packages for headteachers and governors regarding the consequence of falling rolls and funding pressures.

Phil Adams indicated that historical data re the attendance of children from outside catchment areas would be useful. He thought that being able to maintain a viable school could have a knock on effect to allow the development of market towns.

Schools Forum noted the minutes and endorsed the actions.

The Chair advised of the need to get secondary headteachers on board, Sheila Halsall asked if Post 16 was included and the Chair advised that it was not within the specification of the group. He suggested a briefing from Janine Vernon, Lifelong Learning Manager at the next meeting.

PW

7. Communications

John Hitchings suggested reaching a wider audience re the work of the Sustainability Task and Finish Group in February/March.

The Chair spoke of the need for careful management.

Paul Tynan's report of the last meeting was received.

8. Joint Use Task and Finish Group

Phil Wilson gave a brief overview.

Jo Humphreys advised that there was lots of useful information and that a lack of equity had been exposed.

9. Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring

Deborah Fern gave a brief overview and explained the appendix.

The 60% take up of 2 year places was discussed.

Neville Ward advised that parents are being encouraged to sign up for their places but some are no longer eligible and some are simply not known. 70 families have been identified but are not engaging. A countywide promotion is being considered and it was suggested that schools could be asked to help.

10. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 23 January 2014

Chris Huss was thanked for his long service to School Forum and for his knowledge, experience and respect of his colleagues. Following his retirement in December he will continue to contribute as a member of the Sustainability Task & Finish Group.

The meeting closed at 10.25 am.

Future meetings:

Thursday 20 March 2014, Thursday 19 June 2014

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