



Schools Forum

Date: 19 January 2017

Time: 8.30 am

Venue: STDC, Monkmoor, Shrewsbury

Item/Paper

A

Public

MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON 23 NOVEMBER 2016

Present

School Forum Members

- Bill Dowell (Chair)
- Phil Adams – Academy Headteacher
- John Eglin – Primary Headteacher
- Jean Evanson – Association of Secretaries
- Meryl Green – 16-19 Representative
- John Hitchings – SSGC
- Sabrina Hobbs – Special/Academy Headteacher
- Shelly Hurdley – Early Years Representative
- Alan Parkhurst – Primary Headteacher
- Geoff Pettengell – Academy Headteacher
- Mark Rogers – Primary Headteacher
- Ruth Thomas – 16 -19 Representative

Members

- Cllr David Minnery
- Cllr Nick Bardsley

Officers

- Phil Wilson
- Julia Dean
- Gwyneth Evans
- Neville Ward
- Ros Bridges
- Stephen Waters
- Jo Jones
- Helen Woodbridge (Minutes)

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Karen Bradshaw, Pete Johnstone, Deb Mills, Phil Poulton, Gareth Proffitt, Geoff Renwick and Joy Tetsill.

Apologies were also received from two observers: Hannah Fraser and Roger Evans.

The chair welcomed Shelly Hurdley as the new early years representative and she introduced herself.

The chair advised that Joy Tetsill will no longer be a school governor and is therefore stepping down from Schools Forum – he asked that a letter of thanks be sent to her.

ACTION

PW

2. Minutes and Matters Arising (Paper A)

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

Gwyneth Evans confirmed that a funding briefing had been sent out to schools. Neville Ward was pleased that several Schools Forum members had agreed to join a working group to consider the Government’s early years national funding proposals. They will meet when information becomes available.

Phil Wilson advised that he is working with other officers on the academy conversion recoupment costs. It has already been established that these are in excess of £5,000. He will be corresponding with schools and is also keeping dialogue open with the DfE in case there are alternative/additional funding streams.

The chair confirmed that he had met with David Minnery, Karen Bradshaw and Nick Bardsley to discuss the Early Help and High Needs issues. A new Head of Early

Help, Partnerships & Commissioning (Children's Social Care) is being appointed today who will be the lead officer on Early Help. Mark Rogers was surprised that a permanent appointment was being made when funds are scarce. He was advised that the funding for this post is not from schools and the post's responsibilities are wider than just Early Help.

3. De-delegation 2017-18 (Paper B)

Gwyneth Evans went through the report and Schools Forum considered each budget heading separately.

Contingencies – 10% growth

Headteachers asked whether this was Shropshire children moving or children who were incoming to county. Phil Wilson and Gwyneth Evans agreed to analyse this. John Hitchings commented on the disparity. Gwyneth Evans explained the variations eg an extra class may be needed in some schools but not others. Mark Rogers pointed out that some of this is healthy reorganisation with empty school places being filled.

John Eglin wondered why more accurate predictions could not be made. Phil Wilson agreed to carry out some more analysis to ascertain if they could be made more accurate. He added that parental choice has an effect.

Mark Rogers did not think an alternative percentage should be considered unless the NOR was also considered.

John Hitchings saw this as a cushion to protect schools.

School representatives approved the de-delegation at £17.78 per pupil.

Maternity cover

School representatives approved the de-delegation at £20.93 per pupil.

Insurance

School representatives approved the de-delegation at £0.94 per pupil at primary and £1.26 at secondary.

Trade Union duties

Jean Evanson talked through her report pointing out the advantages of retaining local representation.

Mark Rogers was concerned to establish if maintained schools are subsidising those academies who do not contribute.

Phil Wilson confirmed that some academies have bought in.

John Eglin suggested an SLA arrangement for academies.

Jean Evanson confirmed that services would not be available for academies who do not buy in.

School representatives approved the de-delegation at £1.82 per pupil at primary and £2.95 at secondary.

FSM/Public duties/Library and museum services

School representatives agreed not to de-delegate these items.

Phil Wilson undertook to advise absent secondary school representatives of these decisions.

4. School Funding 2017-18 (Paper C)

Gwyneth Evans went through the report.

Due to recent new information, recommendation iii. was considered first.

Schools Forum unanimously voted in favour of applying to disapply the MFG for 2017-18 for one Shropshire school with a significant increase in number on

PW/GE

PW

PW

roll.

A statement from Government on 22 November had confirmed that there would be no extra funding in 2017-18 for schools (although the £10 million extra awarded last year would continue).

Phil Adams urged local members to continue to make the case for increased funding to national politicians.

The chair spoke of the need to continue ways of sustaining an effective education network – he suspected that some schools are still in denial.

Phil Adams echoed this need and regretted that the ability to reduce the number of schools had been taken away.

Phil Wilson confirmed that part of the MAT agenda is to achieve efficiencies.

Nick Bardsley said that although the pressure to convert to academy appears to have reduced, there remain demographic pressures.

John Hitchings reported back from an NGA conference where Sir David Carter had advised of a sea-change in the academies drive due to Brexit, indicating that maintained schools may remain so for many years.

John Hutchings also expressed a concern that the NFFF may not materialise.

Ruth Thomas agreed to circulate the notes from a recent Sir David Carter presentation (these were circulated on 25 November 2016).

RT/HW

ESG

The chair suggested that there is a lot of media noise around this and the f40 group are particularly active. However, there is confusion.

2017-18 LA responsibilities are not yet clear – DfE are anticipating that schools will pay for services. They are talking about the three Cs – change service, cease service or charge for service.

It was agreed that a working group should be set up and meet before the end of term and early next term.

Mark Rogers asked about the £77 to establish if it would also be taken from academies.

Gwyneth Evans advised that it is unclear regarding the transitional situation.

Phil Wilson advised that there would be a £2 million hit on the budget in September.

Mark Rogers asked what the options would be – DSG?

Gwyneth Evans suggested top slicing (not de-delegation) or SLA.

The chair suggested that the discussion is straying into the work of the working group which would start by looking at the statutory responsibilities and then work into the detail.

It was agreed that the first meeting of the working group would be set up for 6 or 7 December 2016 (subsequently confirmed for 6 December). Volunteers for the group were Mark Rogers, John Hitchings, Nick Bardsley and the chair. It was agreed that Pete Johnstone would be invited to represent secondary school interests.

PW

5. High Needs and Early Help Task and Finish Groups (Paper D)

Phil Wilson advised that there will be a further meeting of this group and then a final report will come to the meeting on 19 January 2017, (the meeting was subsequently arranged for 6 January 2017).

John Hitchings advised of the issues between the different bodies. Clarity is required and this is being pursued by the groups.

Phil Wilson confirmed that the £600k will be monitored through Stephen Water's regular DSG monitoring reports.

Mark Rogers sought clarification on whether this is for maintained schools and academies. It was agreed that it was for both.

Mark Rogers suggested that whether funds affect maintained schools and/or academies should be made clear in future papers.

PW

Sabrina Hobbs advised that the groups are taking time to consider matters as there needs to be wider choice than either a service or no service.
The chair summarised by confirming that more transparency is being strived for.

6. Apprenticeship Levy

Stephen Waters went through the paper.

Phil Wilson advised that HR are taking a lead on this and that further information is awaited from the relevant Government department. A more detailed paper will be brought to Schools Forum.

Hannah Fraser (although absent) had asked that her concerns re detail/adverse affect on schools were noted.

7. Dedicated School Grant Monitoring (Paper G)

Steven Waters went through the paper.

John Eglin asked if the centrally retained funding is a 'top-slice'.

Gwyneth Evans confirmed that it was centrally held and not delegated to maintained schools or academies.

The chair thanked Stephen Waters for the high quality of his paper. He felt that the detail enables questions to be asked.

Phil Wilson suggested that the contribution to combined budgets is revisited as part of the ESG Working Group.

Schools Forum agreed the 2017-18 centrally retained budgets.

8. Communications

It was confirmed that meetings between members and MPs are ongoing.

There was no further discussion regarding communications.

9. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 19 January 2017

The meeting closed at 10.45 am.

Future meetings (please diary):

23 March 2017	8.30 am	STDC, Monkmoor
8 June 2017	8.30 am	STDC, Monkmoor