



Schools Forum

Date: 22 January 2015

Time: 8.30 am

Venue: STDC, Monkmoor,
Shrewsbury

Item/Paper

A

Public

MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON 27 NOVEMBER 2014

Present

School Forum Members

Bill Dowell (Chair)
Phil Adams – Academy Headteacher
Richard Bray – Secondary Governor
Colin Case - Primary Governor
Chris Davies – Special Headteacher
Christine Hargest – Association of Secretaries
John Hitchings - SSGC
Jo Humphreys – Primary Governor
Peter Ingham – Secondary Governor
Pete Johnstone – Secondary Headteacher
Martin Jones – Primary Governor
Sally Lill – Primary Headteacher
Yvette McDaniel – Primary Headteacher
Ian Nurser – Primary Headteacher
Geoff Pettengell – Academy Headteacher
Kay Redknap – TMBSS
Mark Rogers – Primary Headteacher
James Sparkes – Secondary Governor
Joy Tetsill – Secondary Governor
Ruth Thomas – Post 16

Members

Cllr Ann Hartley
Cllr Nick Bardsley

Officers

Karen Bradshaw
Phil Wilson
Gwyneth Evans
Neville Ward
Rob Carlyle
Deb Fern
Gareth Proffitt
Helen Woodbridge/Brydie Lawless (Minutes)

Observers/visitors

Cllr Roger Evans
Cllr Hannah Fraser

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Austin Atkinson, Hilary Burke, David Chantrey, Sandra Holloway, Kay Miller, Phil Poulton and Phillip Sell. Late apologies were received after the meeting from Christine Harding. The Chair advised that Kay Miller had tendered her resignation from Schools Forum and he thanked her in her absence for her contribution. A letter of thanks will be sent.
Phil Adams registered a concern that heavy workloads were preventing colleagues from attending meetings.
The Chair thought that an 8.30 start and two hour time limit was conducive to maximising attendance.

2. Minutes and Matters Arising (Paper A)

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true record
Phil Wilson advised that he had attended the secondary headteachers' mini-conference re Schools Forum membership. He is also talking to SSGC.

ACTION

Chair

Post-16 concerns had been discussed by Nick Bardsley, Steven Wain and Janine Vernon during a very thorough briefing. Nick Bardsley is visiting post-16 institutions. Sustainability in 2016-17 continues to be a concern.

The Chair suggested that it is a fluid situation and hard to predict, even for the next 12 months. Whilst it is not a Schools Forum issue, some 11-18 schools are being affected.

Mark Rogers said that changes in sixth form schools funding are having an impact on the 11-16 part of 11-18 schools.

The Chair clarified that the funding comes from different sources – 11-16 via DSG (for maintained schools), 16-18 from the EFA. He added that Janine Vernon and Graham Moore are working with schools with sixth forms and are developing a budget modelling tool.

3. **Lobbying**

A draft of a letter to Nicky Morgan MP was considered. The subtle difference 5/12 and 7/12 was explained by Gwyneth Evans. It was agreed that the letter should now be sent.

PW

4. **De-delegation 2015-16 (Paper B)**

Gwyneth Evans went through her paper. She advised that evidence of additional costs is required before any contingency payments are made. Proposals to offset the contingency overspend against maternity cover and set the maternity cover at £13.08 per pupil whether in primary or secondary were made. It was confirmed that decisions are needed by January.

Sally Lill asked whether any budget carried forward figures were considered when making contingency payments. Gwyneth Evans advised that they were not considered because carried forward sums are usually committed.

Sally Lill suggested that carried forward figures should be considered and tied up with the clawback rule.

Mark Rogers asked if the percentage limit could be changed eg to 8%.

Martin Jones advised that extra resources were needed at his school due to a growth in numbers. Admissions cannot be refused if there is space in the school John Hitchings spoke of the need to break the idea of a 'bottomless purse'.

Sally Lill added that it is difficult to predict numbers.

Richard Bray queried the overspend/underspend balance as it looked like a primary funding problem was being solved by primary and secondary funding even though some primary schools have more reserves than secondary schools. Gwyneth Evans confirmed that this is the case.

James Sparkes thought that 8% carry forward was very generous

Rob Carlyle confirmed that a decision would be needed by January.

Gwyneth Evans requested a decision today on whether or not to de-delegate, with the amounts being agreed later.

Richard Bray asked if not carrying forward the underspend on maternity could lead to future issues.

Peter Ingham observed that the overspend may not be as much as expected.

Joy Tetsill asked why there is not a 10% contingency for secondary schools.

Pete Johnstone advised it is unlikely that a large number of extra pupils would arrive at a secondary school to trigger a 10% threshold.

Gwyneth Evans advised that another option to reduce the contingency spending would be to increase the trigger level from 10% to 15%.

Yvette McDaniel suggested if it were a small group of schools, they could be considered on a case by case basis.

Gwyneth Evans explained that the change in point 5 would lead to 9 schools benefitting.

The Chair asked for more information including circumstances of schools.

Gwyneth Evans confirmed that the insurance figure fully funds the fidelity insurance. It is proposed that the trades union duties are de-delegated as previously.

Phil Adams advised that it had been suggested that some academies could pay into the pot. Christine Hargest agreed to discuss this further.

Gwyneth Evans suggested this would be pooling their funding rather than de-delegating.

The Chair suggested that Christine Hargest and Phil Adams discuss this further considering other academies,

Maintained primary school Schools Forum members unanimously approved the de-delegation for 2015-16

Maintained secondary school Schools Forum members unanimously approved the de-delegation for 2015-16

Maintained primary and secondary Schools Forum members unanimously approved the adjustments to the level of budget held in 2015-16 in relation to the 10% contingency and maternity cover.

5. Schools in Deficit Protocol Update (Paper C)

Paragraph 5 – the procedures were discussed.

Phil Adams asked if the LA would wait for a special measures report to be received. Karen Bradshaw advised that the LA would not wait for the report.

Gwyneth Evans went through the appendices and confirmed that all would be put onto the SLG.

Phil Adams spoke of the difficulty in managing spend in special measures schools when they need to spend to obtain support to improve.

This now affects all schools including free schools.

Ian Nurser clarified that if a school has a surplus, they can still spend it.

John Hitchings was pleased because it is morally not acceptable for one school's deficit to affect other schools. He thought that the extra £10 million should be used for repayment of deficits.

Mark Rogers agreed and added that the extra funding arrives at an opportune moment.

The Chair reminded colleagues that these are challenging times for headteachers and governors and funding needs to be spent on training.

Phil Wilson agreed but more could be provided specifically for headteachers.

James Sparkes added in sparsity complexities.

Sally Lill asked if there is enough information about the possible removal of financial delegation. Phil Wilson advised that Anne Gribbin makes this clear in her meetings with schools.

Ian Nurser suggested that this could be an agenda item on governing body meetings.

Mark Rogers was encouraged at the robustness of the process and the tough approach being taken by the LA,

The Chair thanked the Task and Finish Group for their work.

6. SEND Funding Task and Finish Group

Phil Wilson went through the paper and advised that the High Needs Task and Finish Group has become the SEND Task and Finish Group. A secondary representative is needed and Schools Forum members were asked to consider this. The next meeting is scheduled for 14 January 2015 and the call for evidence will be considered at that meeting.

Chris Davies reported that he had met with David Laws last week and there is still limited understanding re rurality. It will be important to present evidence including that which shows that Health and Social Care are withdrawing support. This is for consideration at the Task and Finish Group but examples of costs for equipment were requested.

The Chair referred to Section 2.4 in the DfE paper. James Sparkes confirmed links with Hereford and Chris Davies with Somerset and Devon.

Ruth Thomas sits on the national group. She confirmed that funding reforms are working behind the Children and Families Act and there is little communication. Working regionally presents challenges as all areas are different.

Phil Wilson confirmed that revised funding arrangements are not expected until 2016/17 or 2017/18.

7. Dedicated School Grant Monitoring (Paper D)

Deb Fern talked through the DSG paper.

8. Communications

Gareth Proffitt confirmed relative success in getting issues into the media. Shropshire Star and Radio Shropshire, Midlands Today, Radio 4 Today and BBC News had all featured the story. He thanked the Chair and Nick Bardsley for talking to reporters. The Star is keen to run a follow up which would reinforce the existing message. The future communication strategy should be considered. Nick Bardsley was pleased at the coverage but remains concerned that some people still think numbers are increasing. He recorded his thanks to Gareth Proffitt. He had been surprised to receive more follow up interest from outside Shropshire.

The Chair asked about Parish Council messages.

Nick Bardsley thought that SALC is not as active as it could be.

Ann Hartley suggested going through elected members as briefing sessions have been held.

John Hitchings agreed that the output had been good but a bigger discussion re the future of Shropshire in the light of an ageing population is required.

Joy Tetsill's experience from her day job is that connections need improving.

The development plan is being reviewed in March 2015.

The Chair suggested that the Council should ensure that links are being made.

Short term sustainability is the issue as growth is not planned in.

Jo Humphreys asked about destinations of young people.

Ann Hartley was hopeful that some would now stay on to attend university in Shrewsbury. Work is ongoing with Business and Development departments.

James Sparkes suggested that young people are caught in a trap and have to move away for access to a variety of well paid jobs.

Colin Case advised that he is a member of the SALC executive and confirmed that there is an effective email communication system that can be used to get messages out.

9. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 22 January 2015.

The meeting closed at 10.23 am.

Future meetings:

26 March 2015, 18 June 2015.

DRAFT