



**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 Redknapp – 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