



**Schools Forum**

**Date:** 18 June 2015

**Time:** 8.30 am

**Venue:** STDC, Monkmoor, Shrewsbury

Item/Paper

**A**

Public

**MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON 26 MARCH 2015**

**Present**

**School Forum Members**

- Bill Dowell (Chair)
- Phil Adams – Academy Headteacher
- Richard Bray – Secondary Governor
- David Chantry – Primary Governor
- Chris Davies – Special/Academy Headteacher
- Christine Harding – Early Years and Childcare
- Christine Hargest – Association of Secretaries
- John Hitchings – SSGC
- Sandra Holloway – Primary Governor
- Jo Humphreys – Primary Governor
- Sally Lill – Primary Headteacher
- Yvette McDaniel – Primary Headteacher
- Geoff Pettengell – Academy Headteacher
- Phil Poulton – Secondary Headteacher
- Mark Rogers – Primary Headteacher
- James Sparkes – Secondary Governor

**Members**

- Cllr Ann Hartley
- Cllr Nick Bardsley

**Officers**

- Karen Bradshaw
- Phil Wilson
- Gwyneth Evans
- Rob Carlyle
- Gareth Proffitt
- Helen Woodbridge (Minutes)

**Observers/Visitors**

- Mark Blackstock
- Roger Evans
- Cllr Hannah Fraser

**ACTION**

**1. Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Colin Case, Deborah Fern, Peter Ingham, Pete Johnstone, Martin Jones, Joy Tetsill, Ruth Thomas and Neville Ward.

Mark Blackstock was welcomed as an observer in advance of his School Forum membership term commencing.

**2. Minutes and Matters Arising (Paper A)**

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true record.

Gwyneth Evans clarified the position of Shropshire in terms of funding compared to other local authorities – 2014/15 140<sup>th</sup>, 2015/16 107<sup>th</sup>.

Phil Adams asked if pupil premium was low – Gwyneth had not yet analysed this but suspected that it is lower.

An item of Any Other Business was identified – Constitution of Schools Forum.

**3. Joint Use Leisure Centres and Swimming Pools Funding**

Phil Wilson went through the paper explaining that due to an EFA rule the funding reduction would need to be completed over a shorter period of time. John Hitchings was concerned that the sympathetic approach that had been agreed by Schools Forum could not be carried through – however, Schools Forum members understood that there was nothing they or the LA could do about this.

James Sparkes added that the reduction in funding is another example of pressures on small schools which in the case of Bishop's Castle may result in the closure of the pool.

Phil Wilson could see why the EFA were enforcing rules in their move towards a National Fair Funding system.

Phil Poulton confirmed that there is no money from schools to support the joint use facilities so activities will cease and there will be a knock on effect to the curriculum. Richard Bray and Geoff Pettengell echoed these concerns.

Mark Rogers spoke of the extra funding in 2015/16 - they responded that most of this had been used to cover pension and pay rise costs.

Schools Forum noted 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 considered 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.

Phil Wilson will report this to Leisure Services and write to schools to provide them with the information.

PW

**4. SEND Funding Consultation Response**

Gwyneth Evans talked through the paper.

The SEND Task and Finish Group will continue to meet in particular to consider bandings and to tighten up processes and procedures.

The Chair thanked the group for their work to date.

Chris Davies provided some feedback from a regional information session which had demonstrated that there was little understanding nationally.

**5. Sustainability Task and Finish Group**

Gwyneth Evans talked through the paper. The modelling tool had been sent out to school but there is a slight error so it has been recalled and will be sent again after the Easter holiday. A benchmarking tool is being considered which will be particularly useful for primary schools. A post 16 modelling tool has also been sent out and an early years version is in the process of being developed.

John Hitchings asked how sure the continuation of the extra £10 million received this year is.

Gwyneth Evans confirmed that f40 are raising this issue.

It was confirmed that training packages for schools and governing bodies are being discussed.

The Chair was concerned that the £10 million received this year is masking a long term challenge.

Rob Carlyle showed a map which demonstrated the declining NOR which would lead to a reduction in funding of £6 million.

Phil Wilson referred to Appendix 2 re place planning and advised that there

will be a further update in the summer.

The Chair stressed the importance of schools using the modelling tool and the need for balance between the autonomy of schools and the role of the LA so that schools do not go into deficit. Work to get governing bodies engaged with issues needs to continue.

Nick Bardsley felt that the message re falling rolls is getting through but that the £10 million has provided a comfort blanket.

James Sparkes was pleased that strategic conversations are being held as there is a vision needed to manage the declining NOR and a need from schools to know about support from the LA eg property and legal for reorganisation.

The Chair advised that the need and desire for local solutions has been communicated.

Chris Davies added that another dimension is that special school numbers are rising.

Phil Adams thought that politicians need to accept the exception to the rule - the market led model of education doesn't work when numbers are declining.

The Chair advised that he has engaged to make the situation in Shropshire clear. Nick Bardsley will report back to the administration.

The Chair advised that the Sustainability Task and Finish Group will meet again in the summer term. All colleagues were asked to continue to share information with colleagues, including recommending the use of the modelling tool.

Richard Bray spoke of the difficulties being faced and the need for support if schools are to stay as county schools.

Yvette McDaniel thought that schools would all become academies with possibly no LA.

The Chair reminded colleagues that the funding benefits the children in Shropshire so there is a need to work together for them.

PW

## **6. Universal Infant Free School Meals Capital Grant**

Phil Wilson updated Schools Forum on the application of the capital funding delegated to schools for the implementation of the statutory universal infant free school meals (UIFSM).

Mark Rogers could not understand why schools had not spent their allocation – his school had overspent and he wondered if this could be reimbursed.

Sally Lill advised that had given her school's capital grant to her provider school so wouldn't know if her school's allocation had been spent and also some issues occur later.

Phil Wilson agreed to follow this up.

Jo Humphreys thought that any funding clawed back should be targeted at identified projects.

Schools Forum considered what should happen with any reported underspending of this capital grant and agreed with the recommendation from the Learning & Skills Capital Programme Board to claw back and redistribute the funding.

PW

## **7. Communications**

The letter from Lord Nash on deficit budgets was discussed.

Phil Wilson advised that the LA will continue to work with schools and

Gwyneth Evans will bring a paper of deficit budgets to the next meeting. Karen Bradshaw advised that there are an increasing number of call in meetings with schools re their financial situation. The Chair was concerned at the unfairness that if an academising school was in surplus it was kept with the school but if in deficit it could be left with the LA (and therefore a cost to other schools). Schools Forum members agreed with his concern. David Chantry asked if we are clear how to stop schools overspending prior to becoming an academy. Gwyneth Evans advised that the LA is doing what it can. In a worst case scenario the LA could install an Interim Executive Board to replace the governing body but there are timescale issues. It was agreed that the Sustainability Task and Finish Group should consider the deficit budget protocol. Schools Forum members agreed that the LA needed to take prompt and appropriate action to prevent deficits building up.

GE

The f40 flyer was considered. John Hitchings reminded colleagues of the SSGC conference. He thought a copy of Rob Carlyle's map would be useful for this. Ann Hartley and Nick Bardsley confirmed they would be attending. Nick Bardsley will also be attending the SALC Executive meeting to talk about declining NOR. Ann Hartley advised that there is a strategy in Ellesmere to engage the community and obtain more funding which could fund three more teachers. Gareth Profitt is supporting on this.

PW

**8. Next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 18 June 2015.

**9. Any other business**

Constitution of Schools Forum

	Current	Future
Primary headteacher	5	5
Primary Governors	5	4
Secondary Headteachers	3	2
Secondary Governors	4	2
Academy Headteachers/Governors	5	5

Phil Wilson is to talk to the three secondary headteachers and governors to manage this reduction.

PW

There are two primary headteacher vacancies which need to be filled – Phil Wilson will pursue this.

PW

The Chair thanked James Sparkes for his valuable contributions to Schools Forum as this is his last meeting. James Sparkes had been heartened by the way Schools Forum can have an influence.

**The meeting closed at 10.10 am.**

**Future meetings:** 17 September 2015, 22 October 2015, 26 November 2015, 28 January 2016, 24 March 2016, 9 June 2016