



**Schools Forum**

**Date:** 22 October 2015

**Time:** 8.30 am

**Venue:** STDC, Monkmoor, Shrewsbury

Item/Paper

**A**

Public

**MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2015**

**Present**

**School Forum Members**

- Bill Dowell (Chair)
- Phil Adams – Academy Headteacher
- Colin Case – Primary Governor
- David Chantrey – Primary Governor
- Christine Harding – Early Years and Childcare
- Christine Hargest – Association of Secretaries
- John Hitchings – SSGC
- Sandra Holloway – Primary Governor
- Jo Humphreys – Primary Governor
- Peter Ingham – Secondary Governor
- Pete Johnstone – Secondary Headteacher
- Martin Jones – Primary Governor
- Yvette McDaniel – Primary Headteacher
- Geoff Pettengell – Academy Headteacher
- Geoff Renwick – Academy Headteacher
- Kay Redknapp – TMBSS
- Mark Rogers – Primary Headteacher
- Philip Sell - Diocese
- Joy Tetsill – Secondary Governor
- Ruth Thomas – Post 16

**Members**

Cllr Nick Bardsley

**Officers**

- Rob Carlyle
- Gwyneth Evans
- Gareth Proffitt
- Neville Ward
- Stephen Waters
- Phil Wilson
- Helen Woodbridge (Minutes)

**Observers/Visitors**

- Roger Evans
- Hannah Fraser

**1. Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Austin Atkinson, Mark Blackstock, Richard Bray, Ann Hartley and Karen Bradshaw. Subsequent apologies were received from Phil Poulton.

**2. Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

- Bill Dowell was unanimously elected as Chair. John Hitchings was appointed as Vice Chair and intends to become more involved with the organisation and planning of Schools Forum.
- All and particularly those new members who were present (Alan Parkhurst, Stephen Waters and Geoff Renwick). Michael Barrett (Priory) and Andrew Turner (Severdale) were not present but are now members.
- The Chair spoke of his desire to continue the links that have been developed between Schools Forum and the political groups.

**ACTION**

JHi

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

- Membership - it was confirmed that there would be two primary headteacher vacancies by the end of term.
- The Lord Hill Event has been arranged for 7 October and bookings are being taken.
- Neville Ward agreed to provide an early years update at the next meeting.
- Gwyneth Evans confirmed that she had written to the three schools who have not returned their SFVS. One school has responded and is working on this.

PW

NW

**4. School Funding 2016/17**

Gwyneth Evans went through her report and clarified that there are no required changes to the formula at this stage. If there are any later changes it will mean that there is a very tight timescale.

High Needs Funding – Ruth Thomas had no news at this time but will be lobbying at political conferences.

The Chair asked for comments.

Phil Adams raised the primary/secondary split of funding pointing out that the secondary sector seems to have more deficits which may indicate that the current split is incorrect.

Mark Rogers reasoned that with lots of change and issues such as federation, primaries may well be conserving funding.

Colin Case added that falling rolls will hit primary earlier than secondary.

It was agreed that benchmarking against similar local authorities would be sensible.

The Chair confirmed that there are significant concerns re secondary budgets.

Chair summarised that there are issues which are now logged and on to the do list.

Geoff Renwick asked how this would be done - benchmarking information is widely available.

Chair suggested that when funding is confirmed a task and finish group should be convened to carry out this work.

Mark Rogers thought that it would be too late to do anything for 2016/17 as significant officer research will be needed – he suggested it is looked at for 2017/18.

John Hitchings wondered if the EAL allocation may need to be considered if there are refugees coming into Shropshire.

Roger Evans confirmed that a cross party group would be looking at refugees and that it would be worth Schools Forum making contact with that group to raise school funding issues.

Jo Humphreys asked if amending the lump sum could help. Gwyneth Evans advised that modelling had been done and primary had been reduced and secondary increased.

Geoff Pettengell asked if the amalgamation funding would apply to academies too?

Gwyneth Evans advised that it would but that there may be an issue if it was not in Shropshire's best interests.

Jo Humphreys flagged up that the site issues at Severndale are not temporary.

Gwyneth Evans advised that the wording probably needs to be revisited.

Geoff Renwick flagged up real concerns re joint use reductions and thought there was a danger that facilities may close.

Mark Rogers gave some background as to why decision taken.

Chair confirmed that Schools Forum have returned to this several times and are concerned. It is a whole Council decision.

John Hitchings, Phil Adams and Peter Ingham stressed the need to remind Shropshire Council of this.

It was agreed that Schools Forum will refer this back to George Candler, Lead Officer and request a response.

Schools Forum unanimously agreed to recommend the proposals made in the

Chair

Chair

GE

Chair/PW

paper.

The Chair reminded colleagues to keep other forums up to date.

### **Lord Hill event.**

Gwyneth Evans advised that the event has been part of consultation in the past but that there is not no need this to consult this year as there are no changes.

Therefore it is intended that the session is used to present summary table and to deliver a financial planning session/workshop.

John Hitchings thought that the emphasis should be on financial planning. He suggested adding the decisions of forum to the paper (eg writing to George Candler).

A planning meeting is to be held shortly.

Mark Rogers thought that a decreasing NOR could be a lot more problematic than changes to the formula. He also found it worrying that there is no further news re the future of education funding.

Nick Bardsley advised that the message re demographic issues is getting though in some areas but that the myth re house building creating more children is very prevalent – the event will provide an opportunity to repeat the message.

Martin Jones shared that there has been a 30% increase in his school's population which had led to a capital funding requirement.

Phil Wilson advised of school place plan work is ongoing across 16 planning areas. Five areas have place planning issues. This will be covered at Lord Hill event and a paper will be available to Schools Forum at the next meeting.

David Chantrey asked if the work would cover closing schools?

Phil Wilson advised that it is a factor which is considered but that capital funding is not a direct Schools Forum issue.

PW/GE

PW

### **5. Schools in Deficit Protocol Update**

Gwyneth Evans went through her paper.

Nick Bardsley and Phil Adams welcomed the strengthening of the protocol which will enable early intervention.

Yvette McDaniel asked if governors are aware of this and suggested a simplified version to go to governors - maybe a step by step guide.

Schools Forum agreed that Gwyneth Evans should send a letter to headteachers and governors covering the protocol and attached an appendix with a timeframe.

John Hitchings thought that the notice of concern needs to be strengthened – may should be changed to will. Schools Forum agreed.

Neville Ward advised that as an IEB member at a school where the budget is safe and secure and financial management sound, bullet point 4 may be not appropriate for 'will'. Gwyneth Evans suggested that it would continue to be appropriate as there will be the need regular meetings.

Pete Johnstone confirmed that the information would be useful for schools.

GE

### **6. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2015-16 Update**

Gwyneth Evans went through her paper.

Jo Humphreys was concerned re pre-school needs in terms of both capital and revenue.

Neville Ward advised that a paper went to Scrutiny Panel in July which outlined issues and that interest and concern had been expressed. Panel members are currently visiting providers. Further reports will be provided on national developments to enable response. National organisations are lobbying.

Some pilots are being run from 2016 in other areas of the country.

Neville Ward added that there are many issues re places and funding and that there are links with school place planning. The LA is waiting for absolute confirmation of who will be eligible.

**7. Dedicated Schools Grant monitoring**

Stephen Waters went through his paper.  
Geoff Renwick asked what would happen if any underspend continued to year end.  
Phil Wilson confirmed that Schools Forum would consider the use of any underspend.

**8. Communications**

The Chair confirmed that the communication process has started including the Lord Hill event and letters being sent out from Gwyneth Evans. Schools Forum members were encouraged to continue to spread the messages.  
F40 work continues and they are pushing hard on funding formula reform. They have proposed a formula and Gwyneth Evans agreed to provide a link to this.  
John Hitchings asked if there would be a press release after the Lord Hill event.  
Gareth Proffitt advised that he will be working on this. The Chair offered to meet with new Schools Forum members if they would appreciate it. They should email Phil Wilson to arrange this.

All

GE

GP

**9. Next meeting**

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

**The meeting closed at 10.05 am**

**Future meetings:** 26 November 2015, 21 January 2016, 24 March 2016, 9 June 2016

Helen Woodbridge agreed to look at rescheduling the 24 March meeting as it is the last day of term.  
(This has now been booked for 17 March but at the moment, has to be Room 5 at STDC)