



**Schools Forum**

**Date:** 22 March 2018

**Time:** 8.30 am

**Venue:** STDC, Monkmoor, Shrewsbury

Item/Paper

**A**

Public

**MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON 18 JANUARY 2018**

**Present**

**School Forum Members**

- Bill Dowell (Chair)
- Phil Adams – Academy Headteacher
- John Eglin – Primary Headteacher
- Sabrina Hobbs – Academy Headteacher
- Marilyn Hunt – Primary Headteacher
- Sam John – Academy Representative
- Pete Johnstone – Secondary Headteacher
- Alan Parkhurst – Primary Headteacher
- Geoff Pettengell – Academy Headteacher
- Michael Revell – Primary Governor
- Mark Rogers – Primary Headteacher
- Philip Sell – Hereford Diocese
- Guy Verling – Primary Headteacher

**Members**

- Cllr Nick Bardsley
- Cllr Clare Aspinall

**Officers**

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

**Observers**

- Cllr Roger Evans

**ACTION**

**1. Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Michael Barratt, Alan Doust, John Hitchings, Sandra Holloway, Colin Hopkins, Shelly Hurdley, Karen Bradshaw and Chris Mathews

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

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.  
The minutes were accepted as a true record.  
Phil Wilson confirmed that:

- information re the Multicultural Development Team had been sent to schools
- he had communicated the decisions made at the last meeting to schools.

**3. School Revenue Funding Settlement and School Funding Arrangements 2018-19**

Gwyneth Evans went through the paper.  
She pointed out that it is difficult to make a like for like comparison to last year on the Schools Block funding as this year it is based on the national funding formula (NFF).  
Neville Ward confirmed that the early years funding arrangements are not ideal and make it impossible to match spend and budget. Schools Forum registered their concern with this situation.  
High Needs Block – the additional pressure caused by the loss of £0.816 million was highlighted.  
Sabrina Hobbs suggested that it had been a questionable decision to change the

funding basis for placements.

### **School Funding Arrangements 2018-19**

Gwyneth Evans explained that because Schools Block units of funding were worked out on the NFF based on the October 2016 census number - allocating the Schools Block to schools through the NFF based on October 2017 will not be an exact match to the funding received (a national issue). The result is an underspend in 2018-19 against the Schools Block of approximately £800k. She further explained the unfair effect if it was allocated to all schools through the funding formula. Given the pressures on the High Needs Block, the recommendation is to transfer up to 0.5% of the Schools Block to the High Needs Block, as allowed within Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) regulations.

The chair explained that if the £800k was not used it could be allocated back to schools the following year.

Phil Adams suggested that as all LAs seem to be struggling with high needs funding, it does need to be raised. The chair confirmed that f40 are active in this area but Shropshire Schools Forum could add to this.

Sabrina Hobbs confirmed that special schools are lobbying for a change in how high needs funding is allocated. There is simply not enough money being put in.

Mark Rogers suggested that the proposal in the paper seems sensible and the recommendation to transfer the funding for the High Needs Block was unanimously approved.

The chair thanked Gwyneth Evans who is coping well despite the obstacles she is facing.

#### **4. Early Years Funding Formula – Disadvantaged Supplement**

Neville Ward went through the paper which was for information only.

Schools Forum acknowledged that a sensible approach is being taken.

#### **5. Shropshire Schools Forum Constitution**

Phil Wilson went through the paper.

Phil Adams suggested putting this as an agenda item on the secondary headteacher briefing.

It was identified that academies need to put further representation forward.

Phil Adams asked about the future of School Forum from 2020. It was confirmed that there would still be a need for decisions for other blocks eg high needs so there will be an ongoing role.

Mark Roger pointed out that there are still large/small, deprived/non-deprived school issues so a balanced membership needs to be maintained, particularly when voting in separate categories.

Marilyn Hunt stressed the importance of the small school view but added that it is hard to get out of small schools to join the meeting.

Phil Adams commented that the pool of available people is reducing as schools federate.

Schools Forum unanimously agreed to the re-apportionment of Schools Forum membership from April 2018.

#### **6. Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring**

Stephen Waters and Julia Dean went through the paper which is for information only. Behaviour is a huge issue and there has been a significant increase in placement in ISPs. Exclusion from schools has increased this year (doubled) and the consequent six day provision needs to be paid for out of the High Needs Block. Assessment then takes place (and often this has not been done). Ongoing costs for ISPs,

PW

sometimes until the age of 18. The LA is working hard to ensure provision in our schools.

A high needs review is ongoing, funded by DfE. It is highly likely that a hub and spoke provision will be put into place long term.

Other factors include the impact of the Children and Families Act and the extension of the age range to 25. Some pressure is being put on re more use of high needs funding for areas currently being funded from social care. The Graduated Support Pathway may also add slightly to early costs.

Mark Rogers agreed that this area is a challenge and there is a need to prevent long term placements that are not necessary. The school system needs to be more flexible.

Chair thanked colleagues for an interesting strategic overview.

Phil Adams could see how part of problem is the diminishing support services.

Sabrina Hobbs confirmed that there are revenue pressures around required provision. At Severndale, if there is a required change in nursery places they will need consultation as a projection adjustment will be required. Severndale is currently struggling to accommodate PMLD.

She added that in terms of inclusion, changes to the national curriculum have not helped. Pressure on mainstream schools means there is a threat of system collapse.

#### **7. Funding SEN in Schools – Shropshire Local Offer**

Julie Dean went through the paper which is for information only.

She particularly highlighted residential overnight schools, independent mainstream schools, personal budgets and elective home education.

Schools Forum noted the report.

#### **8. Communications**

The chair advised that f40 continue to be active.

Nick Bardsley confirmed that Cabinet appreciates the work of Schools Forum and the chair and do not question the judgements made by Schools Forum. He added that the meetings with MPs continue and issues around funding are raised.

The chair suggested that £4.30 for early years is not enough and that high needs and exclusions also add to budget pressures. There is a need to engage more with schools and governing bodies.

Phil Adams suggested that the reduction of funding to LAs (eg ESG) is contributing to the funding issues.

**The meeting closed at 10.00 am.**

**Future meetings (please diary):**

**The chair confirmed that the provisional meeting scheduled for 1 February is not necessary.**

22 March 2018	08.30	STDC, Monkmoor
7 June 2018	08.30	STDC, Monkmoor