

## Schools Forum

**Date:** 13 February 2020

**Time:** 8.30 am

**Venue:** UCS, Shrewsbury

Item/Paper

# A

Public

### MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON 5 DECEMBER 2019

#### Present

##### School Forum Members

Bill Dowell (Chair)  
Mark Cooper – Secondary Headteacher  
Caroline Clode – Professional Association rep.  
John Hitchings – Academy Governor  
Sandra Holloway – Primary Governor  
Kerry Lynch – Primary Academy Headteacher  
John Parr – Academy Headteacher  
Michael Revell – Primary Governor  
Mark Rogers – Primary Headteacher  
Andrew Smith – 16 -19 Representative  
Reuben Thorley – Secondary Headteacher

#### Members

Cllr Nick Bardsley  
Cllr Ed Potter

#### Officers

Karen Bradshaw  
Gwyneth Evans  
Jo Jones  
Neville Ward  
Stephen Waters  
Phil Wilson  
Helen Woodbridge (Minutes)

#### Observers

Roger Evans  
Charles Thomas

#### 1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Sabrina Hobbs, Julia Dean, Alan Doust, Marilyn Hunt, Sian Lines, Stephen Matthews and Alan Parkhurst.

Late apologies were received from Shelley Hurdley, Sam John and David O'Toole.

#### 2. Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 November were approved.

The change to Schools Forum meeting dates was confirmed. The two meetings arranged for January have been cancelled and a new meeting has been arranged for 13 February 2020. It was agreed that if there is a need for Gwyneth Evans/Jo Jones to consult Schools Forum members regarding the allocation of funding, this will be done via email.

#### 3. School Funding Arrangements 2020-21

Schools Forum considered and agreed the specific funding arrangements from April 2020 as detailed within the report which was presented by Gwyneth Evans.

Regarding the split site, Mark Rogers had a concern as less money is coming into Shropshire due to the two schools' decision to amalgamate and then other

#### ACTION

Shropshire schools are subsidising them.

Phil Wilson advised that the schools concerned had moved to amalgamation due to an Ofsted judgement for one of the schools which required them to academise via the sponsorship route.

Schools Forum agreed to the lump sum split site funding of £15k.

Schools Forum agreed to the transfer of any remaining balance, up to 0.5%, of the Schools Block into the High Needs Block after fully funding individual schools in line with the NFF.

Schools Forum agreed to reduce the MFG as necessary, and within allowable limits, to ensure affordability. Following this, if also required to reduce the AWPUP factor on a consistent basis across all Shropshire schools,

#### **4. Consultation on the Central Retention of Dedicated Schools Grant from April 2020**

Phil Wilson presented the paper. He advised that there had been a 19.5% response to the consultation.

Schools Forum considered the consultation responses received from Shropshire maintained mainstream schools, attached to and summarised within the report, and made decisions on de-delegation and top-slicing for centrally retained services for 2020-21.

**Maintained primary school representatives** (three) unanimously decided to de-delegate funding from maintained primary school budgets for a pupil growth contingency (when growth is 15% or more) for maintained primary schools in 2020-21.

Michael Revell asked about reconsideration of moving back to 10%. Gwyneth Evans advised that his school's issues would be helped by the new mobility factor.

**Maintained school representatives** (three primary and one secondary) unanimously decided to:

- de-delegate funding from maintained primary and secondary school budgets for a centrally managed maternity budget in 2020-21
- de-delegate funding from maintained primary and secondary school budgets for a centrally managed trade union duties budget in 2020-21
- de-delegate funding for school improvement support from maintained primary on a 50% fixed and 50% variable element basis, and secondary school budgets on a per capita basis in 2020-21
- top-slice a centrally held redundancy budget from maintained primary and secondary school budgets in 2020-21
- top-slice a centrally held statutory school finance budget from maintained primary and secondary school budgets in 2020-21
- top-slice a centrally held statutory HR and health and safety budget from

- maintained primary and secondary school budgets in 2020-21
- top-slice a centrally held budget for EAS from maintained primary and secondary school budgets or to fully delegate and offer buy-back arrangements in 2020-21.

## **5. Central School Services Block 2020-21**

Stephen Waters went presented the paper.

Schools Forum noted that the historic commitments value within Shropshire's CSSB funding allocation previously baselined as £2,142,380 has been subjected to a 20% cut in funding by the ESFA. Consequently, the historic commitments element of Shropshire's 2020-21 CSSB allocation has been reduced by £428,476 to £1,713,904. Appendix C provided more details.

### **Recommendation 1**

Schools Forum agreed to continue to contribute £452,110 to combined budgets as this is the least disruptive course of action.

Schools Forum were disappointed that the 20% cut had been made and were pleased that officers had done what they can by allocating £328k to maintain services whilst reducing costs. They noted that Shropshire Council has chosen to build expenditure growth of £328,476 into its 2020-21 budget with an expectation that the remaining £100,000 is delivered through efficiencies with minimal or no impact on service delivery.

### **Recommendation 2**

Schools Forum agreed to contribute £966,444 to fund a portion of the ongoing pension commitments, a reduction of £6,476 compared to 2019-20.

### **Recommendation 3**

Schools Forum agreed to continue to contribute £295,350 to fund the ongoing revenue costs of funding prudential borrowing for the Monkmoor Campus project.

### **Recommendation 4**

Schools Forum agreed to the increased charge of £243,040 for the provision of a School Admissions Team.

### **Recommendation 5**

Schools Forum agreed to the budget of £10,000 for the servicing of Schools Forum.

### **Recommendation 6**

Schools Forum agreed to the increased charge of £225,410 for the annual copyright licensing fees.

### **Recommendation 7**

Schools Forum agreed to continue to contribute £589,944 to ongoing responsibilities that the local authority provides for maintained schools and academies as per the detail of these costs outlined in Appendix D.

**6. High Needs Funding Task and Finish Group**

Phil Wilson provided feedback from the meeting last week which was positive. A further consultation paper is being created and will be sent to schools in early January. There are two more meetings of the group scheduled for January and February. There will be further feedback to Schools Forum, with timeline and milestones, in February 2020.

**7. Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring (DSG) 2019-20**

Stephen Waters provided a brief report as there had not been any significant change since the last paper had been presented.

A financial plan to reduce the deficit is being worked on and will be brought back to Schools Forum.

Karen Bradshaw added that the levels of exclusions and permanent exclusions is much higher in Shropshire than nationally and this is placing a significant strain on the High Needs Block. Collectively, Shropshire needs to address this, not least because excluded children are becoming at risk of criminal exploitation. Mark Rogers suggested comparisons to statistical neighbours in order to target a fix/solution effectively. Karen Bradshaw spoke of another 0-25 group who are considering similar issues.

**8. Communications**

The Chair highlighted the need to work on how message can be transmitted to schools.

Kerry Lynch confirmed that the High Needs Funding Task and Finish Group is an open forum where views are listened to by all. They have difficult decisions to make.

Andrew Smith was pleased that the High Needs Funding Task and Finish Group's primary concern is the outcomes for children.

Mark Cooper spoke of loss of the strength of working together in Shropshire. It was agreed that communication between headteachers needs to improve.

The chair asked if the letter from Shrewsbury headteachers re child exploitation could be circulated.

**PW**

**9. Future meeting dates:**

13 February 2020  
19 March 2020

The meeting closed at 10.15 am.