

Review and benchmarking of the high needs funding arrangements for Severndale Specialist Academy and Woodlands School

Introduction

Shropshire Schools Forum has requested an independent review in relation to the funding arrangements for Shropshire Council's specialist schools, namely Severndale Specialist Academy and Woodlands School. The banding levels for two schools have not been reviewed and updated for a number of years and there is a need to secure a justifiable, transparent and sustainable arrangement for funding provision into the future.

Requirements

1. To gain a clear indication of the total 'revenue' income for each school consistent with the income streams available to all schools, including in particular any financial support from the health sector.
2. To determine an accurate cost per pupil based on this total amount, for each school.
3. To complete an analysis of national benchmarking data for similar schools and give an indication of where each schools sits compared to other similar providers in term of overall cost per pupil.
4. To complete a further analysis, taking into account the cost of staffing as a percentage of total income, which should give an indication of overall cost effectiveness.
5. To review the staffing structures in each school, to determine the balance between leadership, management and front line delivery, and report accordingly.
6. To provide a summary judgement for each school, based on the evidence presented, of the overall levels of income and whether these appear low, broadly in line with other similar schools, or high, for the type of school.
7. To report on each schools' use of its budget, with emphasis on the deployment of personal, staffing structures and other stand out budgetary features.

Deliverables

- A draft review report for the Council's initial consideration and discussion with the report writer. The draft review should include any sensitive or contentious issues, together with potential solutions.
- A final report with recommendations, together with a summary PowerPoint presentation, to be completed and available for consideration at the Schools Forum meeting on 7 December 2017.

Timeline and resources

This is a time-limited review with two key milestones:

- Draft report to Council by Friday 3 November 2017.
- Final report and summary PowerPoint presentation to be completed by Friday 24 November, in time for the Schools Forum meeting on Thursday 7 December 2017.

The commission will be largely undertaken remotely as a desktop exercise but will, if required, involve visits to the two school sites.

The providers will be required to be completely transparent and co-operative in presenting the necessary budgetary and school organisation information necessary to undertake the comprehensive review of funding arrangements.