

Schools Forum

Date: 6 June 2019

Time: 8.30 am

Venue: STDC, Monkmoor,
Shrewsbury

Item/Paper

A

Public

MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON 17 JANUARY 2019

Present

School Forum Members

Bill Dowell (Chair)
Phil Adams – Academy Headteacher
Mark Cooper – Secondary Headteacher
John Hitchings – SSGC
Sandra Holloway – Primary Governor
Marylin Hunt – Primary Headteacher
Shelly Hurdley – Early Years Representative
Kerry Lynch – Academy Headteacher
Sian Lines – Diocese of Hereford
Stephen Matthews – Primary Governor (and headteacher)
David O'Toole – Secondary Headteacher
Alan Parkhurst – Primary Headteacher
John Parr – Secondary Headteacher
Mark Rogers – Primary Headteacher
Andrew Smith – 16 -19 Representative
Charles Thomas – Professional Association Rep
Guy Verling – Primary Headteacher

Members

Cllr Nick Bardsley
Cllr Ed Potter

Officers

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

Observers

Roger Evans – Shropshire Council

The chair extended a warm welcome to new members – Mark Cooper, John Parr and Sian Lines

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Alan Doust, Greg Portman, Michael Revell, Darren Reynolds and Karen Bradshaw. (Later apologies were received from Sam John.)

Nick Bardsley apologised for having to leave the meeting early due to a clash with another Council meeting.

2. Minutes and Matters Arising (Paper A)

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

- Gwyneth Evans confirmed that she will be writing to academies on behalf of Schools Forum regarding sharing their end of year balances.
- Phil Wilson had circulated the letter from Peter Nutting.
- Stephen Waters advised that he will be checking out the situation with regard to paternity leave before the next meeting.
- Gwyneth Evans had communicated the decision re school balances to schools.

Phil Adams queried the need for a meeting on 31 January. It was agreed that this meeting would not be required.

ACTION

3. Schools Revenue Funding Settlement and School Funding Arrangements 2019-20
Gwyneth Evans went through the paper.

Neville Ward advised that early years providers are struggling to make provision with the current level of funding - early years funding is now included in f40 concerns as Shropshire comes within the 20 lowest funded local authorities.

Neville Ward agreed to bring an explanatory paper regarding Early Years funding to the next meeting.

Nick Bardsley agreed to continue to press the issues with political groups/MPs.

Neville Ward also agreed to provide a briefing note for Nick Bardsley.

NW

NB
NW

Gwyneth Evans advised that there had been some shifts in school funding since drafting the paper. With significant academisation (academies are entitled to 80% rate relief) the rates bill has reduced. This has led to a forecast underspend of £440k which will be transferred to the High Needs block.

She also advised that the LA is awaiting approval for one disapplication request and that she intends to submit the APT on Monday 21 January.

Phil Adams felt that if the funding for high needs is not improved, there may come a time when schools will not agree to subsidise it.

The Chair agreed but was sure that it is right thing to do as an interim arrangement.

John Hitchings suggested that any shortfall of funding leads to a narrowing of the curriculum – there is a need for careful consideration in the future, especially for secondaries.

4. Shropshire Schools Forum Constitution

Phil Wilson went through the paper.

Mark Cooper agreed to check regarding the maintained governor vacancy (could be a headteacher).

It was suggested that Phil Wilson could contact Kate Aspinall at the Marches Academy Trust to put School Forum academy representative vacancies on the agenda for discussion at an academies meeting.

Phil Adams spoke of the need for some future localised decision making and therefore a future for Schools Forum.

MC

PW

Schools Forum unanimously approved the re-apportionment of membership from April 2019.

5. High Needs Funding Task and Finish Group

Phil Wilson went through the paper.

David O'Toole suggested that the priority needs to be (and driver is to) provide the correct education – not sacrificing provision just due to cost.

Julia Dean suggested that the policy move is not about finance, but about the need to intervene earlier.

John Hitchings spoke of the need to be careful as government will consider whether enough has been done (ie higher SEN in Shropshire).

Schools Forum agreed the need to develop greater understanding of why the level of SEN in Shropshire is above average.

The chair suggested the creation of a small group of around eight members. Volunteers from Schools Forum were: Kerry Lynch, Alan Parkhurst (who could also represent CPG), David O'Toole, Sabrina Hobbs/John Hitchings, Andrew Smith. It was agreed that an early years representative could be invited, if and when necessary. Mark Rogers suggested the inclusion of a headteacher from a school with a new SEN hub.

6. **Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring**

Stephen Waters went through the paper.

Julia Dean reminded colleagues that once a pupil is placed in an expensive external placement, they are usually locked in to it for a number of years.

Mark Rogers asked about residential provision in the LA. He was advised that there are examples but there is not a high enough population of a type of child to create this.

Phil Wilson advised that the West Midlands LAs are working together to consider this as it is becoming impossible to place some pupils.

The Chair stressed that this is a multi-faceted area which is incredibly complex. This should be thoroughly understood before moving the strategy forward.

LGA report to be circulated to T&F group members.

Kerry Lynch advised of worsening mental health issues in schools which are complex and requiring huge resource.

7. **Communications**

Ed Potter and Nick Bardsley confirmed ongoing dialogue with local MPs which will include high needs, early years and the shortfall in budgets of all settings/schools/post 16.

Phil Adams advised that his local MP had taken action.

Gwyneth Evans advised that a wide range of schools are experiencing issues with their budgets next year.

John Hitchings reported that Sabrina Hobbs had been to meet The Education Select Committee on Tuesday. High needs would have been raised.

Charles Thomas reminded colleagues that the overall 1.6% increase in budgets is well below the rate of inflation so is in fact a cut.

9. **Future meeting dates:**

21 March 2019	8.30 am	STDC, Monkmoor
6 June 2019	8.30 am	STDC, Monkmoor

The meeting closed at 9.45 am.