



Schools Forum

Date: 5 December 2019

Time: 8.30 am

Venue: UCS, Shrewsbury

Item/Paper

A

Public

MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON 7 NOVEMBER 2019

Present

School Forum Members

Bill Dowell (Chair)
Mark Cooper – Secondary Headteacher
Caroline Courtyard – Professional Association rep.
Alan Doust – Secondary Academy Headteacher
Sabrina Hobbs – Special Academy Headteacher
Sandra Holloway – Primary Governor
Marylin Hunt – Primary Headteacher
Shelly Hurdley – Early Years representative
Sian Lines – Diocese of Hereford
Kerry Lynch – Primary Academy Headteacher
Stephen Matthews – Primary Governor (and headteacher)
David O'Toole – Secondary Academy Headteacher
Alan Parkhurst – Primary Headteacher
Mark Rogers – Primary Headteacher
Andrew Smith – 16 -19 Representative
Guy Verling – Primary Headteacher

Members

Cllr Nick Bardsley
Cllr Ed Potter

Officers

Karen Bradshaw
Phil Wilson
Julia Dean
Gwyneth Evans
Stephen Waters
Jo Jones
Helen Woodbridge (Minutes)

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from John Hitchings, Sam John, John Parr, Charles Thomas and Neville Ward.

Late apologies were received from Michael Barratt and Michael Revell

2. Minutes and Matters Arising (Paper A)

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2019 were approved. Business World issues were discussed. Phil Wilson advised that he had met with a group of school representatives, the issues had been pushed through to Neil Felton, and action has been taken. Issues were also addressed at the administrators' network meeting earlier this week where there were around 80 schools represented. There is also a planned input at the schools funding meeting next week.

Alan Parkhurst confirmed that there is movement and that Karen Bradshaw's letter was useful and had been well received.

Phil Wilson advised that he had recently attended an event focusing on the School Resource Management Advisers where Lord Agnew had made a presentation and had confirmed that the DfE will continue to invest. Phil Wilson had provided some feedback and had stressed the poor levels of funding for

ACTION

Shropshire.

3. **School Revenue Funding Arrangements 2020-21**

Gwyneth Evans went through her paper which was for information only.

Marilyn Hunt suggested publicising the issue around the ESFA published notional funding. Phil Wilson advised that this would be raised at the funding meeting.

Gwyneth Evans provided a verbal update on Early Years funding as the DfE had published headline figures. The hourly rate for two year olds had increased from £5.20 to £5.28 and for three/four year olds from £4.30 to £4.38.

Mark Rogers raised the confusion around the teachers' pay grant. Top up funding is available but there is a need to know the affordability and the pay award as the grant is the difference between the two. Damian Hinds thought schools could afford 2%. Mark Rogers felt that it is late on into the year to work on this. There is talk of plans to mainstream this next year or year after – clarification is needed as this is leading to budget uncertainty.

Gwyneth Evans agreed the need for this to be done earlier in the year.

Mark Rogers also queried the formulaic approach to the mobility factor and asked how this interacts with DSG and the growth contingency, and if there is any overlap. Gwyneth Evans advised that there probably will be – the mobility factor will be historically based and if there is growth over 15% there could potentially be double funding. She suggested that action may be needed to limit this and would like to see a one-year cycle to establish the effects.

Sabrina Hobbs asked if anything further has been said about the £30k starting point for NQTs and how it may impact further. She was advised that there had been no further news.

Sabrina Hobbs asked if there were stipulations regarding the high needs block. Gwyneth Evans advised that there were not and there is flexibility for the LA to make decisions.

4. **Central Retention of DSG from April 2020 Consultation**

Phil Wilson presented the paper and advised that the consultation paper will be sent out to all maintained schools later today. The results will be brought to the Schools Forum meeting on 5 December for approval.

Stephen Matthews asked about the proportion retained by the LA. Phil Wilson advised that it is around 1.5 – 2%.

Mark Rogers asked, if looking at EAS, how you could work out the cost for your school. Phil Wilson agreed to clarify this before the funding meeting.

PW

5. **High Needs Funding Task & Finish Group**

Julia Dean presented her paper which was for information.

There had been two meetings of the group so far this term. The key priorities have been to minimize any impact on the high needs budget while meeting statutory responsibilities. The group is to create a full consultation document and it is hoped this would be sent out to schools in January. It had been recognised that models for KS3 and KS4 need to be different.

Alan Doust could see that it makes a lot of sense for models for KS2 and KS3 to be more similar.

Alan Parkhurst reported that positive progress is now being made.

Schools Forum agreed that the consultation document as approved by the group should be sent out to schools so that results could come back to Schools Forum

in the spring term. It was agreed that the date of the 30 January meeting should be changed to mid-February.

It was confirmed the aim is to start the new arrangements in September 2020.

HW

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

Stephen Waters presented his paper which was for information only.

David O'Toole identified conflict in the language used (reducing EHCPs) as the reduction in funds does not take away a child's need. He did not think a goal could be set to reduce EHCPs when the needs are there.

Julia Dean highlighted that it is not a reduction in spending but considering whether needs can be met before an EHCP.

Karen Bradshaw reminded colleagues that EHCPs include other inputs but Graduated Support Pathways are education only.

The chair stressed that the needs of children and young people are paramount.

Alan Doust asked if there was any financial modelling going on if £1m is to be taken out to remain within budget.

Julia Dean advised that she is tracking the impact of GSPs and will report back at a future meeting.

Sabrina Hobbs asked about independent provision – is it just school-aged or post 19? Julia Dean confirmed that it includes all and added that there is a multi-agency complex case panel in place to consider post school aged young people. Karen Bradshaw advised that it is becoming more challenging and costly to meet the growing complex needs.

Mark Rogers referred to paragraph 19 and suggested that 8% would largely cover this year's deficit. He wondered how the amount of increase had been generated – is it historic? Gwyneth Evans advised that it is partially the historic spend element/factor within high needs.

Marilyn Hunt asked if health are contributing towards higher needs placed in independent provision – it was confirmed that they are.

Sabrina Hobbs suggested that it would be useful to see the breakdown of ages in independent special placements.

Julia Dean and Karen Bradshaw confirmed that the plan is to meet the needs of children and young people at the most efficient cost.

JD

7. **Communications**

The chair advised that:

- the f40 group continue and their work is appreciated.
- there is currently in a period of 'purdah' due to the planned election.
- the School Funding meeting is scheduled for 14 November 2019 at the Shrewsbury Town Football Club.

8. **Future meeting dates:**

7 November 2019, 5 December 2019

~~16 January 2020, 30 January 2020~~

13 February 2020, 19 March 2020

The meeting closed at 9.45 am.