



Schools Forum
Date: 5 November 2020
Time: 8.30 am
Venue: Via MS Teams

Item/Paper
A
 Public

MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2020 – HELD VIA MS TEAMS

Present

School Forum Members

- Bill Dowell (Chair)
- Mark Cooper – Secondary Headteacher
- John Hitchings – Academy Governor
- Sandra Holloway – Primary Governor
- Marilyn Hunt – Primary Headteacher
- Kerry Lynch – Primary Academy Headteacher
- Stephen Matthews – Primary Governor
- Alan Parkhurst – Primary Headteacher
- John Parr – Academy Headteacher
- Michael Revell – Primary Governor
- Andrew Smith – 16 -19 Representative
- Charles Thomas – Professional Association Rep.
- Reuben Thorley – Secondary Headteacher

Members

- Cllr Nick Bardsley
- Cllr Ed Potter

Officers

- Karen Bradshaw
- Julia Dean
- Jo Jones
- Neville Ward
- Stephen Waters
- Phil Wilson
- Helen Woodbridge

Observers

- Roger Evans

	ACTION
<p>1. Apologies</p> <p>Apologies had been received from Alan Doust, Sabrina Hobbs, Sian Lines and Mark Rogers.</p>	
<p>2. Election of Chair and Vice Chair</p> <p>Karen Bradshaw welcomed all to the meeting and advised of the result of the ballot for the election of chair and vice chair. She confirmed that Bill Dowell and John Hitchings had been elected as chair and vice chair respectively for the academic year 2020-21, and until the date of the first meeting of Schools Forum in the academic year 2021-22.</p> <p>The chair thanked colleagues and gave best wishes to all school colleagues who were having to cope in the most difficult of times.</p>	
<p>3. Minutes and Matters Arising</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2020 were approved subject to the following clarification: John Hitchings identified that under item 8 in the first paragraph which referred to six areas of weakness, of which one applied to the work of the high needs task</p>	

and finish group. He clarified that this weakness related to the number of exclusions which the task and finish group is working on.

Item 9 - Action regarding a recovery plan. Phil Wilson advised that this will be picked up by Stephen Waters in a later paper.

4. Final Dedicated Schools Grant from 2019-20

Phil Wilson presented the paper which was for information only.

5. Updated Dedicated Schools Grant from 2020-21

Phil Wilson presented the paper which was for information only.

6. School Revenue Funding Update 2021-22

Jo Jones presented the paper which was for information only.

Stephen Matthews asked about accessing IDACI data. It was confirmed that this is included in the outturn budget where there is a breakdown by factor.

The chair asked Karen Bradshaw about the issues re Central Schools Services Funding and she agreed that this will provide a challenge.

Stephen Matthews asked about the historic commitments.

Stephen Waters advised they these include contribution to combined budgets (£450k), and termination of employment – ongoing pension compensation payments and the £195k borrowing for Monkmoor Campus. Phil Wilson explained that as usual, there will be a paper on this at the November meeting.

7. Schools' Finances and COVID-19

Phil Wilson presented the paper which was for information only and was an update on the paper presented at the last Schools Forum meeting.

Marilyn Hunt was disappointed that significant expenditure had been made and only 32 schools had managed to access any of the extra funding.

Phil Wilson clarified that some schools have claimed and not yet received anything. He explained that the DfE is still assessing costs claimed in the section 'any other costs'. He has also requested information from the DfE on which schools in Shropshire have made claims.

Karen Bradshaw advised that if there is another window, guidance and support on claiming will be provided from the LA.

The new catch-up premium was welcomed by all and Phil Wilson stressed the importance of the monitoring of its use by governors/trustees.

The lobbying letter from f40 was shared.

8. Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring (DSG) 2020-21

Stephen Waters presented the paper which was for information only.

Neville Ward explained the different approaches taken by LAs around Early Years and confirmed that the overriding aim in Shropshire has been to maintain the number of places required (which he suspected will be fewer from January 2021). He advised that further announcements regarding funding are expected and assured Schools Forum that expenditure is being carefully monitored.

The DfE template for the Financial Plan (for managing deficits) was shared. Julia Dean advised that:

- regarding high needs top up/graduated support pathway funding there is continuous monitoring, and, in terms of meeting children's need, impact monitoring is positive. More children are having their needs met at an earlier stage leading to better outcomes for those children.
- there is an increased pressure on the high needs block and the budget will need to be realigned. The national trend is that there are more children with SEN. The new SEN school planned for Shropshire will reduce expenditure on expensive high needs places.
- most schools are willing to support the policy of continuing with centralised alternative provision by providing some funding towards it. It is important to maintain capacity (as more children are being excluded) but not to add to costs in the high needs block.

Marilyn Hunt commented on the high needs deficit. She agreed the need to increase the budget and asked how the deficit compared to previous years. Stephen Waters advised that there is a £419k in-year deficit which is lower than in previous years.

The chair confirmed that for the meeting on 5 November there will be more information available to share with Schools Forum.

Stephen Waters agreed to schedule a meeting with Julia Dean to start the completion of the template.

Neville Ward suggested that the impact of COVID will also need to be taken into account.

9. Communications

The chair advised that f40 continue to monitor.

Phil Wilson is in regular touch with the DfE regarding COVID and offered to feed in any questions.

Regular headteacher meetings and briefings continue.

Karen Bradshaw confirmed that the meetings with local MPs are continuing.

10. Future meeting dates:

5 November 2020 via MS Teams

SAW

The meeting closed at 10.25 am.