

Minutes of the Schools Forum – 19th November 2020

Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams and YouTube

Status: Agreed

Name	Establishment	Representing
Gill Eatough (GE) Chair	Learning Community Trust	Academies (Special)
Helen Osterfield (HO)	Tibberton Primary School	Maintained Primaries – Small Schools
Paul Broomhead (PB)	Burton Borough Secondary School	Maintained Secondary schools and governors.
Rachel Cook (RC)	Newdale Primary School	Maintained Primaries – Central Cluster
Christobel Cousins (CC)	Lilleshall Primary School	Maintained Primaries – Newport Cluster
Heather Davies (HD)	The Bridge School	Maintained Special schools
Robert Fox (RF)	Donnington Wood Junior School	Maintained Primaries – North Cluster
Mark Davis (MD)	St Peter's Bratton Primary School	Maintained Primaries – Wellington Cluster
Denise Garner (DG)	Wrockwardine Wood Infant School	Schools with nursery classes
Penny Hustwick (PH)	ABC Nursery	PVI Representative
Darren Lennon (DL)	Linden Centre PRU	Maintained Pupil Referral Units
Michael Scott (MS)	Newport Girls' High School	Mainstream Academies
Claire Whiting (CW)	Redhill Academy	Mainstream Academies
Lee Hadley (LH)	Abraham Darby Academy	Mainstream Academies
Laura Arscott (LA)	Telford College	16 – 19 Provision
Jo Britton (JB)	Executive Director Children's Services	Executive Director Children's Services
Simon Wellman (SW)	Director Education & Skills	Representative of the Executive Director of Children's services
Tracey Smart (TS)	Finance Manager	Representative of the Director of Finance
Tim Davis (TD)	T&W Group Accountant	Representative of the Director of Finance
Andy Wood (AW)	T&W Senior Accountant - Schools	Representative of the Director of Finance

1. Apologies - AW.

1.1 Apologies were received from:

Shirley Reynolds – Cabinet Member Education & Skills.

Sue Blackburn – Coalbrookdale & Ironbridge Primary School

Louise Lowings – Madeley Nursery School

1.2 GE thanked both SB & HO for their long term support to the School Forum and wished them well for their well-earned retirement.

1.3 GE welcomed LA to the Forum, representing the 16 – 19 sector.

2. Minutes of the 8th July 2020 meeting and matters arising - GE

2.1 The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting. The minutes can be found at the link:

[October 2020 Approved minutes](#)

2.2 TD advised that the single status update planned had been withdrawn as at this stage there was no new information to provide to the Forum. GE asked SW if this could be progressed soon. SW responded that he would continue to encourage for this to be resolved but advised that schools should hold onto provisions where possible for the time being.

3. School Funding Formula for Financial Year 2021-2022 - TD.

3.1 TD talked the Forum through the main points of the papers which can be found at the links below:

[School Funding Formula for Financial Year 2021-2022.](#)

3.2 The LA formula continues to mirror as closely as possible the latest National Funding Formula (NFF). Last year due to the way the growth funding was used we were able to fund T&W schools at just above the NFF rates.

3.3 The increase in rates for the Average Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) look generous but include the mainstreaming of the Teachers' Pay Grant and the Teachers' Pension Grant which added £160 for the primary rate and £240 for the secondary rate.

3.4 We estimate that we will receive around £0.9M for growth funding, which will be used to fund the estimated increase in NOR for those schools that have increased their PAN / admitted above their PAN with local authority agreement. Any remaining funds will be added to the funding formula drivers, which may allow us to again fund above the NFF levels.

3.5 TD reminded the group that the final decision to approve the formula methodology rested with the Council's cabinet, but the views of the Forum were requested to advise cabinet.

3.6 GE stated that T&W schools are in a positive position and supported the authority's policy of mirroring the national formula as far as possible. Forum members concurred with this view.

4. Arrangements for funding statutory services provided by the local authority - TD.

4.1 The Forum was presented with two papers on this agenda item, the first describing the context of funding for central services and the second the details of funds requested. The papers can be found at the following links:

[Funding Statutory Services for Schools Financial Year 2021 – 2022.](#)

[Costs of Funding Statutory Services for Schools Financial Year 2021 – 2022](#)

4.2 TD talked through the papers comparing the funding requested for 2021/2 to the last five or so years.

4.3 Within the DSG there is a specific block of funding entitled the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) for which the LA must obtain Forum approval to spend on central schools services.

4.4 Costs for FY2021-2022 have been inflated by 2.75% in line with NJC staff inflation. Most of the costs incurred for these services represent staffing costs.

4.5 GE commented that the costs seem consistent year on year.

4.6 CW stated that the information provided now is a lot clearer giving a better picture of where monies are being spent. CW asked if the Director of Education & Skills post was full time; SW answered yes. CW asked is the Place Planning increase based upon staff inflation and is the service fully staffed; SW answered again yes, the service has filled vacancies and is very busy due to increase in pupil places required, some connected with new housing.

4.7 RC asked why Safeguarding Training has gone up and what is this for; CW answered that this charge includes the statutory course that schools have to undertake every two years. Other training would be on a buy back basis. TD noted that a number of services, including his own, finance, have a mixture of statutory and traded elements.

4.8 GE moved to vote on the proposals.

4.9 For the first vote on the use of £884,413 funds from the CSSB for central services for all schools, schools members on the Forum voted unanimously in favour of the proposal.

4.10 For the second vote for de-delegation for statutory central services, formerly funded by the Education Support Grant (ESG), at a rate of £26.95 per pupil for maintained schools, equating to roughly £398,000, maintained school members of the Forum voted unanimously in favour of the proposal.

5. De-delegation for Free School Meal eligibility checks - TD.

5.1 The Forum was presented with a paper which can be found at the following link:

[Frees School Meal eligibility checking](#)

5.2 TD talked the Forum through the main points within the paper. For this proposal the vote is just for maintained mainstream schools by phase.

5.3 PB voted for the Secondary phase in favour of the proposal.

5.4 Primary phase members voted unanimously in favour of the proposal.

6. Early Years' (EY) Funding Autumn Term 2020 - TD.

6.1 The Forum were presented with a paper which can be found at the link:

[Early Years' Funding Autumn Term 2020.](#)

6.2 TD talked through the paper highlighting the LAs intention to support EY setting with falling numbers resulting from the CV19 pandemic.

6.3 The LA will fund settings for actual pupils on roll at the full rate. For those settings with reduced numbers compared to the previous autumn the difference in hours would be funded at approximately 62% of the relevant hourly rate. This is intended to enable the LA to use available funding without incurring a deficit.

6.4 CW stated that she was pleased to see this on the agenda and the method chosen seems to be fair.

6.5 GE stated that it seemed a fair way of doing things and noted that schools tend to support nursery classes as the funding for EY does not cover the costs of running a nursery class.

6.6 PH stated that the PVI sector was struggling and parents were struggling to pay for the private provision. Recently some settings had been forced to close which was unusual in T&W.

6.7 SW stated that the LA appreciates the efforts made by the EY sector in the context of the disruption and difficulties arising from the pandemic.

7. AOB - GE.

7.1 TD advised the Forum that discussions were taking place within the LA around moving to the Real Living Wage (£9.50 per hour compared to the current rate of £9.30 per hour) for T&W employees from 1st December 2020. This would apply to community and voluntary controlled maintained schools. It would also apply to voluntary aided and trust schools unless individual schools chose to opt out. The budgetary impact across all T&W maintained schools for the basic pay element would be around £7K. This covers the period December to March.

7.2 There was no opposition from Forum members concerning this proposal.

7.3 There being no further business the meeting closed at 1020.

8. Next Meetings

The dates of the forthcoming meetings for the academic year 2020/2021, are as follows:

Thursday 14th January 2021, Walker Room, Meeting Point House at 9:30 am

Thursday 11th March 2021, Walker Room, Meeting Point House at 9:30 am

Thursday 20th May 2021, Walker Room, Meeting Point House at 9:30 am

Whilst the venue above remains booked, whether or not we have remote meetings in future will depend upon the Covid 19 situation.

A full record of future meetings can be found at the following link:

[Planned Forum Meetings](#)