

Minutes of the Schools Forum – 17th November 2022

Walker Room, Meeting Point House, Telford Town Centre.

Status: Draft

Name	Establishment	Representing
Gill Eatough (GE) Chair	Learning Community Trust	Academies (Special)
Rachel Cook (RC)	Newdale Primary School	Maintained Primaries - Central Cluster
Heather Davies (HD)	The Bridge Special School	Maintained Special Schools
Darren Lennon (DE)	Linden Centre PRU	Maintained PRUs
Penny Hustwick (PH)	ABC Day Nurseries	Private, Voluntary and Independent Nurseries
Michael Scott (MS)	Newport Girls' High School	Academies
Clare Whiting (CW)	Redhill Primary Academy	Academies
Simon Wellman (SW)	Director Education & Skills	Representative of the Executive Director of Children's Services
Tim Davis (TD)	Group Accountant	Representative of the Director of Finance
Andy Wood (AW)	Senior Accountant - Schools	Representative of the Director of Finance

1. Apologies - AW.

1.1 Apologies were received from:

Sarah Roberts – High Ercall Primary School.

Christobel Cousins – Lilleshall Primary School.

Shirley Reynolds – Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, Education and Lifelong Learning.

Jo Britton – Executive Director of Children's Services

Tracey Smart – Finance Manager.

2. Minutes of the 29th September 2022 meeting and matters arising - GE

2.1 The minutes of the 29th September 2022 were accepted as a true and accurate record. A copy of the minutes can be found here:

[Minutes of 29th September 2022.](#)

2.2 A discussion took place regarding Union Facility Time (UFT) and the correct forum for unions to be asking schools for funding. Some Clusters had discussed it but Unions had not approached clusters directly. GE stated that Unions should be approaching clusters and possibly the Primary Head's Forum directly. TD advised the LA has no direct responsibility to arrange UFT funding but collects contributions and passes these onto the schools hosting the UFT staff.

2.3 There were no other matters arising that would not be covered in the current meeting agenda.

3. Membership of the Schools Forum/ appointment of Chairperson - GE

3.1 GE welcomed Mandy Dhaliwal to the Forum, in her absence, as the newly appointed representative of the maintained primary schools South Cluster.

3.2 GE advised the group that on her upcoming retirement in December 2022 Paul Roberts would become the representative for Academy Special Schools and asked if any Forum member wished to take over as Chairperson. There were no volunteers at this time but Claire Whiting agreed to contact GE to discuss the opportunity to take over as Chair.

3.3 GE asked AW where we currently have vacancies on the Forum. AW responded that there are vacancies for primary governors and for academy PRUs. SW stated that he would ask for volunteers on the Education Noticeboard.

4. Schools Funding Formula 2023/24 - TD.

4.1 The Forum were presented with a paper related to this agenda item which can be found at the link below:

[Schools Funding Formula Financial Year 2023 - 2024](#)

4.2 TD highlighted the key points in the paper, stating that the formula used for Financial Year 2023-2024 will be as similar as possible to that of the previous year; attempting to mirror the National Funding Formula (NFF) as calculated by the ESFA.

4.3 As the data to be used for the final formula, supplied by the ESFA based predominantly on the October 2022 schools census, is not available until late December and could be different to that used for allocating funding to the LA, the funding for schools will not be confirmed until January 2023.

4.4 The growth allocations will, as last year, be used to fund:

- increases in PAN for those schools that have been requested, and agreed, to increase their PA; or
- pupils admitted above PAN following a request from the local authority

4.5 Should there be any growth funding remaining after funding the aforementioned increases, that funding will be used to increase the pupil driven elements in the local

funding formula. Should the growth funding not be sufficient the opposite will be true, in that we will need to reduce the pupil driven elements to balance the funding available.

- 4.6 For the first time in several years we will also be funding a new school from the growth fund allocations. We are responsible for funding estimated pupil numbers and start-up costs. Once the amount of start-up costs is known this will be notified to the Forum.
- 4.7 CW asked about number projections. SW responded that numbers are expected to be stable in the medium term and that house building was contributing to this. There have been high numbers of applications for school places and this could well grow for the next two years.
- 4.8 TD reminded the Forum that the Schools Funding Formula is a consultation with the Forum, the Formula being approved by Cabinet in January, and asked if schools were happy with the proposals within the paper. The Forum supported the proposals in the paper.

5. Arrangements for funding statutory services provided by the Local Authority – Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) and De-delegation - TD.

- 5.1 The Forum were presented with two papers the first stating the case for the proposals the second showing the costings of the proposals. The papers can be found at the following links:

[Funding Statutory Services for Schools – 2023/24 CSSB and De-delegation.](#)
[Costings for Statutory Services for Schools and De-delegation.](#)

- 5.2 TD briefly talked through the papers, noting that they are very similar to the papers for the same item last year.
- 5.3 TD pointed out that the expenditure in the proposals for the CSSB element is the as the previous years and even with the LA absorbing the inflationary pressures would likely result in a deficit which again the LA would need to fund.
- 5.4 The planned expenditure for the former ESG De-delegation have reduced slightly, although the rate per pupils has remained the same, due to one of our school converting to academy status. Again, the LA is absorbing any inflationary pressures on this service.
- 5.5 RC asked why some services are receiving funding from De-delegation and have SLAs; is this not double funding. TD stated that the De-delegation funding is for the statutory duties whereas the SLA is for the additional services that schools buy into. Therefore, as an example for Finance the Statutory duties would be to complete the high level schools budget and returns whereas the SLA would be for school level budgeting and monitoring.
- 5.6 GE stated that the LA services are very good and the LCT still buys into a number of them.

5.7 There was then two votes. The first of these was for the CSSB duties for the LA to spend £968,160 on the duties listed in the schedule. The Forum unanimously voted in favour of this proposal.

5.8 The second vote was for maintained schools to De-delegate £387,557 for former ESG duties. This was approved.

6. De-delegation for Free School Meal Eligibility Checks - TD.

6.1 A paper was presented which can be found at the link below:

[De-delegation for Free School Meal Eligibility Checks.](#)

6.2 A short discussion took place as this paper was similar to that produced in prior years. The main point being that this being administered centrally made sense and avoided the headache of all schools doing this individually.

6.3 This item requires two votes; one for primary local authority maintained schools and one for secondary phase local authority maintained schools. For the primary phase the Forum voted in favour of the De-delegation. As the secondary school representative was not attending, the Local Authority will approach both secondary schools for their opinion on De-delegation and report back to the Forum.

7. Funding for Local Authority Monitoring and Brokerage (Quality Assurance) in maintained schools in 2023/24 – TD/SW.

7.1 A paper was presented to the Forum which can be found at the link below:

[Funding for Local Authority Monitoring and Brokerage \(Quality Assurance\) in maintained schools in 2023/24.](#)

7.2 GE summarised the background to this agenda item.

7.3 SW stated that the initial work undertaken was to clarify the statutory duties that fell into the funding that was being requested. That is to say, recognise that this is Quality Assurance not School Improvement. Also looking at how the LA deliver what is within the protocol.

7.4 This year we have faced some challenges with staff turnover but we now have a new consultant in place with an abundance of experience in Quality Assurance.

7.5 We have a working group in place including RC but need more input from schools.

7.6 By January 2023, we should have the proposals ready, which in turn will inform us of the cost.

7.7 The new protocol would make the roles clear and make discussions with school continuous rather than being inspection orientated. The new model from April 2023 is looking at school-

to-school support, with heads potentially being co-opted into working with school improvement.

- 7.8 RC stated that things seemed a lot clearer after the second meeting of the working group. However some schools were concerned that they were paying the same regardless of if they had one visit or twelve. Some schools were asking if part of the service could be on a bought in basis. SW responded that all suggestions were being considered.
- 7.9 GE stated that the Strategic Partnership would be looking at this as well.
- 7.10 RC stated that clusters need to be discussing this on an ongoing basis to ensure they are getting what they need/want. GE commented that some of the networks need to be reviewed to ensure that they were still fit for purpose.

8. AOB - GE.

- 8.1 MS commented that members were more likely to join in discussions, at Virtual meetings, if the recording of the meeting was not left on the web. AW said he would look at the regulations to see if there is a requirement for the streams to remain on the web. If there is no requirement then we will get them removed.
- 8.2 As this was GE's last Forum meeting before her well earned retirement, the Forum gave a vote of thanks to GE for her invaluable contribution to the Forum and wished her well for the future.
- 8.3 There being no further business the meeting closed at 10:55.

9. Next Meetings

The dates of the forthcoming meetings for the academic year 2022/2023, are as follows:

- Thursday 19th January 2023 at 9.30 am
- Thursday 9th March 2023 at 9.30 am
- Thursday 18th May 2023 at 9.30 am

[Planned Forum Meetings](#)