

Minutes of the Schools Forum – 25th November 2016

Walker Room, Meeting Point House, Telford Town Centre

Status: Approved

In attendance:

Name	Establishment	Representing
Sue Blackburn (SB) – Chair	Coalbrookdale & Ironbridge Primary	Maintained Primary – South Cluster
Becca Butler (BB)	Dothill Primary	Maintained Primary-Wellington Cluster
Christobel Cousins (CC)	Lilleshall Primary	Maintained Primary - Newport Cluster
Heather Davies (HD)	The Bridge Special	Maintained Special Schools
Chay Davis* (CD)	Ercall Wood Secondary	Maintained Secondary Schools
Rachel Moore* (RM)	Ercall Wood Secondary	Maintained Secondary Schools
Ros Garner (RG)	Newport Girls' High	Academies
Mark Gibbons (MG)	Windmill Primary	Maintained Primary – Central Cluster
Lee Hadley (LH)	Abraham Darby Academy	Academies
Penny Hustwick (PH)	ABC day Nurseries	PVI & Childminders
Claire Lamb (CL)	Redhill Primary	Maintained Primary – North Cluster
Helen Osterfield (HO)	Tibberton Primary	Maintained Primary - Small Schools
Paul Roberts (PR)	HLC Secondary	Maintained Secondary Schools
Gilly Reynolds (GR)	Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Regeneration	LA Observer
Jim Collins (JC)	Assistant Director, Education and Corporate Parenting	LA Observer
Tim Davis (TD)	Finance Team Leader	LA Observer
Jonathon Eatough* (JE)	Assistant Director, Governance, Procurement & Commissioning	LA Observer
Anna Plummer* (AP)	Project Manager Single Status	LA Observer
Andy Wood (AW)	Senior Accountant - Schools	LA Observer

* Part of meeting

1. Apologies – AW.

1.1 Apologies were received from the following:

Jo Weichlbauer – Ladygrove Primary – Central Cluster (MG Covering)

Paul Broomhead – Governor Representative

Tracey Smart – Finance Manager

2. Minutes of the 23rd September 2016 meeting and matters arising– SB.

- 2.1 The minutes of the 23rd September 2016 were accepted as a true and accurate record of events. The minutes can be found at the following link:

[http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/4785/september_2016 - minutes](http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/4785/september_2016_-_minutes)

Matters arising: Agenda Item 2 – Membership of Forum 2016/17

- 2.2 The LAs had approached Paul Broomhead (PB), Chair of Governors at Burton Bough school, asking whether he would be willing to take up the role of the Governor representative on the Forum. PB had agreed to do this and was duly appointed.
- 2.3 MG reported that Jo Weichlbauer (JW) had been elected to replace him as the maintained primary representative for the Central Cluster. As JW was not able to attend this meeting, he had attended as her substitute.

Matters arising: Agenda Item 4 – Single Status

- 2.4 At previous meetings it was requested that an update on the progression of single status be provided. JE and AP attended this meeting to provide an update and the major points of the update were as follows:
- 2.5 Work is continuing towards the implementation of the Single Status Agreement. As this is an extremely complex process it is difficult to give a definite implementation date, but it could be into 2018 before the arrangements are finally implemented.
- 2.6 At present the locally developed job evaluation scheme is being discussed with Trade Unions nationally. It looks like it is going to be helpful to develop a new style Job Description and Person Specification as the basis for the information to be used when working with the Unions to evaluate jobs.
- 2.7 Schools help and support will be needed in order to see if this can be done across school support roles. Initially the focus will be on National Profile roles and volunteers are sought from schools to work with the LA in developing these.
- 2.8 T&W is committed to supporting affected schools through this process and the team would be pleased to visit schools to talk to support staff about Single Status and to school management teams about any planned re-structures that might be under consideration.

3. 2017/18 Central Expenditure from Schools Block DSG – all schools – TD.

- 3.1 The Forum were presented with a paper which can be found at the following link:

[http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/4972/november_2016 - centrally retained all schools](http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/4972/november_2016_-_centrally_retained_all_schools)

3.2 TD summarised the paper. The group then discussed each proposal.

Falling Rolls.

3.3 The funding for falling rolls had reduced from £450,000 in 2015/16 to £75,000 in 2016/17. The paper presented proposed discontinuing the falling rolls contingency, as looking at indicative pupil numbers for FY1718 it would appear that few schools would qualify for an allocation and those schools generally had higher than average balances to support them.

3.4 The group discussed the merits of retaining a falling rolls contingency. Several members felt that that schools with falling rolls should not be penalised for having balances, which could reflect their robust financial management.

3.5 SB proposed, and CD seconded, that a top slice be taken to create a falling rolls fund of £50,000. Allocations would be calculated using the same methodology as in previous years, described in the paper, limited to a maximum of £50,000 in total (not per school) with any allocations above this sum being funding being scaled back pro-rata. If allocations did not reach £50,000, remaining funds would be allocated to all schools through the general funding formula.

3.6 The Forum voted in favour of this proposal.

Schools' Admission Service.

3.7 The funding requested for the Admissions service is £35,000 less than previous years in the context of the restructure of the service area leading to savings in management costs. The service has experienced an increase in workload in recent years arising from the general increase in pupil numbers in T&W.

3.8 BB commented that even with the reduction in costs T&W is still higher than the average. TD responded that although the limited information available from other LAs made it difficult to reach a definitive verdict, factors such as diseconomies of scale due to T&W's smaller than average size, and some evidence of higher than average mobility pupil mobility, could contribute to this.

3.9 CL asked if additional staff have been employed to cope with the increased workload. JC confirmed that this is the case.

3.10 The Forum approved a top slice of £357,356 in 2017/18.

Pupil Growth.

3.11 In accordance with the September 2016 Forum meeting the LA have applied to fund Hadley Learning Community (HLC) Primary and Holy Trinity Academy (HTA) on estimated numbers which if successful would remove them from the growth fund allocations. The request for £100,000

assumes that the DfE will approve the requests to disapply the regulations. If this is not the case then it may be necessary at the next meeting to ask for further funding.

- 3.12 TD reminded members of the extensive discussions around the methodology for distributing the growth fund in 2016/17.
- 3.13 MG expressed his view that the approach adopted in 2016/17 had generally worked well but that the evaluation process for any applications in 2017/18 should focus solely on the written evidence provided by applicants.
- 3.14 The group decided to defer the growth fund decision until the January 2017 meeting as the LA should know by then whether the application to fund HLC and HTA based on estimated pupil numbers has been accepted.

Safeguarding Training.

- 3.15 The amount requested has remained constant for the last four years and DfE rules do not allow it to be increased.
- 3.16 MG queried schools entitlement to courses and stated that he found it difficult to find anything clearly stating what schools were entitled to without having to make additional payments. JC explained the workings of the service and CC stated that she had booked herself onto a course online.
- 3.17 The Forum agreed to top slice £25,000 for 2017/18.

Forum Support.

- 3.18 TD pointed out that this is another of the top slices that cannot be increased in years according to DfE rules.
- 3.19 The Forum agreed to top slice £17,124 for 2017/18.

Statutory duties for all schools formerly funded by Education Support Grant (ESG).

- 3.20 TD summarised the situation described in the paper. In the Education Funding Agency's (EFA's) 'Schools Revenue Funding 2017 to 2018 Operational Guide', paragraph 71 includes the following:

"The split of former ESG duties to be funded from centrally retained schools block funding (for all pupils) and from the mechanism set out below (for maintained school pupils only) will be set out when we consult on the Schools and Early Years Finance Regulations later this year"

We still await these revised regulations and so are not yet able to put specific requests to the Forum. For now, we are providing the Forum with contextual information in preparation for the January 2017 Forum.

3.21 CL asked if the Forum could have a breakdown of how the costs of the services were made up, particularly the staff that were being funded in each area. TD explained that this would take some time to complete as many costs were CECs, i.e. estimates of overhead costs that were apportioned to service areas. The LA would aim to compile this data for Forum members in time for cluster meetings early in the new year.

4. 2017/18 Central Expenditure from Schools Block DSG – Maintained schools – TD.

4.1 The group were presented with a paper which can be found at the following link:

[http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/4973/november_2016 - centrally retained maintained schools](http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/4973/november_2016_-_centrally_retained_maintained_schools)

4.2 The main points of the paper were discussed but as noted in 3.20 above, we await the issue of revised regulations from the DfE before we can present the Forum with specific proposals.

5. 2017/18 De- Delegation from Schools Block for Maintained Schools – TD.

5.1 The group were presented with a paper which can be found at the following link:

[http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/4974/november_2016 - de-delegation](http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/4974/november_2016_-_de-delegation)

5.2 The group were reminded that in 2016/17 the only de-delegation was for free school meals eligibility (FSME) assessment for maintained primary schools.

5.3 TD stated that this year we are not asking for de-delegation for the Behaviour Support and Multicultural Development Teams. As yet the LA has not been approached by unions to ask for Union Facility Time De-delegation.

5.4 The secondary phase members decided to defer a vote until able to discuss the issue with colleagues at the Secondary Heads and Principals group (SHAP). The primary phase voted to approve de-delegation at £8.50 per eligible FSM pupil, based on data for each school on the October 2016 census.

6. Application to DfE to disapply Schools Finance Regulations – TD.

6.1 The group were presented with the disapplication request in relation to the Minimum Funding Guarantee for 2017/18 for Lawley Village Academy. This can be viewed at the following link:

[http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/5022/november_2016 - mfg disapplication](http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/5022/november_2016_-_mfg_disapplication)

6.2 The reason for the application, described on the application itself, was outlined and it was explained that the application asked whether the Schools Forum agreed with the request.

6.3 The Forum was therefore asked to vote on whether they supported the request. The vote confirmed that they did.

6.4 The LA will submit the application to the EFA and inform the Forum once a decision has been notified.

7. AOB – SB.

7.1 TD reminded the group that the national EYNFF consultation is still ongoing and that notification of the outcome and confirmation of 2017/18 funding is awaited. The LA would consult with providers once the new regulations were issued. It is likely that there will be an increase in funding per hour for the sector, in addition to additional funds for the extension of the free entitlement from 15 hours per week to 30 hours for working families.

7.2 SB raised the issue of T&W's special schools being at full capacity. HD added that The Bridge could have an intake of 30 pupils in September 2017, with only six leavers. This would significantly increase pupil numbers at the school, beyond the point of its current capacity. The extension of the early years entitlement described in 7.1 above will also add to the pressure on nursery places at the Bridge's Assessment Nursery.

7.3 JC stated that T&W has 50% above the average number of special school places per 1,000 pupils and that the LA's Group Manager for SEND, Simon Wellman, was looking into the thresholds for entry to special schools.

8. Future Meetings – AW.

8.1 The proposed meeting dates for the academic year 2017/18 were distributed. If any members would prefer different meeting dates/times, they were asked to contact AW by 12th December 2016.

8.2 The confirmed future meeting dates can be found at the following link:

http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/507/forum_meetings