

Minutes of the Schools Forum – 3rd October 2017

Meeting Room, Severn Teaching School Alliance, Park Lane, Madeley

Status: Agreed

In attendance:

Name	Establishment	Representing
Sue Blackburn (SB) – Chairperson	Coalbrookdale & Ironbridge Primary	Maintained Primaries – South Cluster
Becca Butler (BB)	Dothill Primary	Maintained Primaries – Wellington Cluster
Christabel Cousins (CC)	Lilleshall Primary	Maintained Primaries - Newport Cluster
Claire Lamb (CL)	Redhill Primary	Maintained Primaries - North Cluster
Helen Osterfield (HO)	Tibberton Primary	Maintained Primaries - Small Schools
Shaun Tyas (ST)	St George's Primary	Maintained Primaries
Jo Weichlbauer (JW)	Ladygrove Primary	Maintained Primaries – Central Cluster
Chay Davis (CD)	Ercall Wood Secondary	Maintained Secondary Schools
Heather Davies (HD)	The Bridge Special	Special Schools
Ros Garner (RG)	Newport Girls' High	Academies
Lee Hadley (LH) *	Abraham Darby Academy	Academies
Mark Hazlehurst (MH)	Kickstart PRU	Academies
Penny Hustwick (PH)	ABC Nursery	PVI Representative
Louise Lowings (LL)	Madeley Nursery	Nursery Schools
Heather Loveridge (HL)	Assistant Director Education & Corporate Parenting	LA Observer
Tim Davis (TD)	Group Accountant	LA Observer
Andy Wood (AW)	Senior Accountant - Schools	LA Observer

* Part of meeting

1. Apologies - AW.

1.1 Apologies were received from the following:

Shirley Reynolds – Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Regeneration
Tracey Smart - Finance Manager – Telford & Wrekin
Paul Roberts – HLC Secondary Phase – Maintained Secondary Schools
Paul Broomhead – Burton Borough - Governors

2. Election of Chairperson – TD.

2.1 SB stated that if there were no volunteers she was willing continue in the role as Chairperson. There were no other volunteers so SB was elected as Chairperson for academic year 2017/18.

3. Minutes of the Schools Forum held on 26th May 2017 and matters arising – SB.

3.1 The minutes of 26th May 2017 were accepted as a true and accurate record of events. The minutes can be found at the Schools Forum section of T&W's website at the following link:

[http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/5888/may_2017 - forum minutes](http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/5888/may_2017_-_forum_minutes)

3.2 There were no matters arising.

4. Membership of the Forum AY1718 – TD.

4.1 The Forum was presented with a paper showing the current membership which can be found at the following link:

[http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/6229/october_2017 - membership of forum](http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/6229/october_2017_-_membership_of_forum)

4.2 ST was welcomed to the Forum.

4.3 TD explained that the make up of the Forum is determined by The School Forum (England) Regulations 2012 which states that the membership needs to be in proportion to the pupils within the authority. As there are likely to be several maintained schools converting to academies in the near future there will need to be a realignment of place allocations from maintained schools to academies.

4.4 RG reminded the group of her impending retirement in December 2017. TD said that the LA would facilitate elections for academy representatives on the Forum by contacting local academies and inviting nominations.

5. School Funding FY2018/19 – TD.

5.1 The group were presented with two papers; the first a word document outlining the potential allocations of funding for FY1819, the second a set of modelling to show comparison of the LA's current schools block funding formula with the DfE National Funding Formula (NFF) allocations for FY1819.

5.2 The papers can be found at the following links:

[http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/6231/october_2017 - school funding words](http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/6231/october_2017_-_school_funding_words)

[http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/6233/october_2017 - school funding numbers](http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/6233/october_2017_-_school_funding_numbers)

5.3 TD informed the group that the modelled allocation for Lawley Village Primary was incorrect and would be corrected and reloaded to the Forum site – the revised figure would show a much smaller difference between the LA and NNF formula totals. The modelling has been balanced to the DfE's school by school figures rather than the total Schools Block allocation – there is a difference of around £0.1m between the two totals due to the DfE using inconsistent data sets.

Schools Block

- 5.4 TD emphasised that whilst the DfE had made much of a minimum increase of 0.5% per pupil for each school, this is only at the level of calculating LA allocations – the only national guarantee at school level remained the minus 1.5% minimum funding guarantee.
- 5.5 As noted in the paper, the indicative allocations to T&W showed a 2.7% increase in funding in 2018/19 with a further increase in 2019/20 taking the total increase, compared to the 2017/18 baseline, to 5.6% . The indicative increase if and when the NFF is fully implemented (compared to the 2017/18 baseline) is shown as 7% for T&W. This represents the thirteenth highest increase out of 150 LAs. In response to a questions from ST, TD commented that this provides some vindication for T&W's view that the area has historically been underfunded.
- 5.6 The actual allocations for 2018/19 will be based on October census data. There is likely to be a further increase in the sum allocated to T&W for the Schools Block as pupil numbers continue to rise.

Central School Services Block

- 5.7 The allocation is based upon a combination of historical spend and a per pupil rate. T&W's indicative allocation for FY1819 will be in the region of £1.06m, subject to changes in pupil numbers comparing the October 2017 census to October 2016.
- 5.8 T&W had assumed that the formation of a Central School Services Block would mean that the funds would be available for central school services, but it turns out that as for 2017/18, when funds were within the Schools Block, Forum approval is required on a line by line basis. If approval is not obtained then monies from the block can be moved into another DSG block or the LA can appeal to the Secretary of State.

High Needs Block

- 5.9 TD informed the group that the indicative allocations for T&W for 2018/19 show a 2.8% increase for T&W. However the increase of around £0.6m is similar to the current projected overspend in the area for 2017/18.
- 5.10 Historically we have been able to support high needs by transferring funds from the school block, following consultation with the Forum, but for 2018/19 Forum approval will be required for any transfer and there will be a limit of 0.5% of the schools block, representing just over £0.5m. it appears that any such transfer would not form part of the next year's baseline, and so would not alleviate cumulative expenditure pressures.
- 5.11 ST commented that historically T&W has been above average for numbers of pupils with SEN statements (now EHCPs) and numbers of pupils excluded. In this context ST highlighted the need for schools to be genuinely inclusive. HL stated that the LA is aware of the need to support schools to be inclusive whenever possible and is considering how best to achieve this as part of the review of the high needs area.

- 5.12 JW stated that when schools receive children with high needs the intervention services that the LA previously provided can be more difficult to access, presumably as a result of budget driven cutbacks.
- 5.13 HO stated that high needs can cause particular issues in smaller schools, not least because of a lack of physical space available for specialist or individual support.
- 5.14 HL commented that the high needs issues facing T&W are not unique to T&W. A working group has been set up to examine the issues.

Modelling.

- 5.15 The group were then presented with the modelling paper which shows the funding that was allocated for FY1718 as a baseline and the local funding formula rolled forward to FY1819. The FY1819 local funding formula was balanced to DfE total Schools Budget allocations by increasing the AWPU.
- 5.16 TD highlighted that for the majority of schools there was a modest difference between the revised local formula and the DfE NFF allocations. In this context the LA was currently minded to move the 2018/19 local funding formula as far towards the NFF as possible within funding constraints, etc. The Forum were asked to express any views favour of an alternative approach, but none were expressed. Further modelling will be made available for the November 2017 meeting.
- 5.17 CL asked if the modelling figures could be made available for the cluster meeting prior to the Forum meetings so that clusters could have a meaningful discussion with Forum representatives.

6 Arrangements for funding statutory services provided by the Local Authority – TD.

- 6.1 TD presented a paper which explained the historic funding position for the last five financial years. The paper can be found at the following link:
http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/6234/october_2017_-_funding_central_services
- 6.2 The paper presented was for information purposes, to inform the decision on 2018/19 funding for statutory services, currently scheduled for the November meeting of the Forum.
- 6.3 CL asked if the papers could be made available as early as possible to enable clusters to discuss and make an informed decision. TD asked if the cluster leads could confirm the cluster meeting dates to him/AW.
- 6.4 ST asked for an update on the situation regarding remissions. HL confirmed that at present the local authority was paying for this from its own funds. To her knowledge T&W is one of few LAs continuing to do this, in the context of the introduction of pupil premium grant (PPG) funding for schools some years ago and LA budgetary pressures.
- 6.5 There was a general consensus from the Forum that remissions should be covered from schools own PPG budgets

6.6 CL stated that if remissions were to be withdrawn it could be done in a staged manner via some kind of capping on rates used for the payments to providers.

6.7 ST stated that entitlement for remissions is complicated by the use of working tax credits being used as a criteria. ST also pointed out that Arthog would need to be know well in advance of any changes to procedures.

7 AOB - SB.

7.1 AW informed the group that the meeting in November 2017 has moved forward to the 16th due to a clash with the Primary Head's Forum. The meeting in September 2018 had also moved forward to the 20th.

7.2 The meeting closed at 11:45

7.3 The full list of forthcoming meetings can be found at the following link:

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