

**Minutes of the Schools Forum – 17<sup>th</sup> January 2019**

**Walker Room, Meeting Point House, Southwater, Telford Town Centre**

**Status: Draft**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Establishment</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Helen Osterfield (HO) Chairperson	Tibberton Primary	Maintained Primaries - Small Schools
Claire Lamb (CL)	Redhill Academy	Academies
Michael Scott (MS)	Newport Girls High School	Academies
Shaun Tyas (ST)	St George's Primary	Maintained Primaries – North Cluster
Christobel Cousins (CC)	Lilleshall Primary	Maintained Primaries – Newport Cluster
Jo Weichelbauer (JW)	Ladygrove Primary	Maintained Primaries – Central Cluster
Lee Hadley (LH)	Haberdashers Abraham Darby	Academies
Gill Eatough (GE)	Learning Community Trust	Academies (Special Schools)
Heather Davies (HD)	The Bridge	Maintained Special Schools
Penny Hustwick (PH)	ABC Nursery	PVI Representative
Shirley Reynolds (SR)	Cabinet Member, Education & Skills, Telford & Wrekin Council	Telford & Wrekin Council
Heather Loveridge (HL)	T&W Assistant Director Education & Corporate Parenting	Representative of the Director of Children's Services
Simon Wellman (SW)	T&W SEND 0-25 Service Delivery Manager	Representative of the Director of Children's Services
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
Calum O'Sullivan (CO)*	Assistant Learning & Development Facilitator	Representative of the Director of Finance

\* Part of meeting

**1. Apologies - AW.**

1.1 Apologies were received from:

Sue Blackburn – Coalbrookdale Primary School.

Becca Butler – Dothill Primary School.

Tracey Smart – T&W Finance Manager.

**2. Minutes of the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2018 meeting and matters arising.**

2.1 The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record. The minutes can be found at the link:

[http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/7931/november\\_2018\\_-\\_minutes](http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/7931/november_2018_-_minutes)

2.2 There were no matters arising from the previous minutes that would not be covered on the agenda of this meeting.

### **3. Falling Rolls Fund for Financial Year 2019/20 - TD.**

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

[http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/8136/january\\_2019\\_-\\_falling\\_rolls\\_for\\_financial\\_year\\_2019-20](http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/8136/january_2019_-_falling_rolls_for_financial_year_2019-20)

3.2 ST asked how many of the schools that would attract funding have surplus balances. TD said he was not sure of the precise details but believed most of the schools are projected to have surplus balances [checking after the meeting confirmed that all schools are projected to end FY1819 with surplus balances]. ST pointed out that as there is only £50,000 to share between eight schools, the amounts allocated to each individual school are not going to make a material difference.

3.3 MS asked if schools could bid for funding based upon need. TD responded that this was a possible approach, but reminded the Forum of the protracted process that had resulted when we applied a similar process to the growth fund in a previous year.

3.4 CC stated that if schools experienced consistently falling rolls then they should restructure.

3.5 ST stated that if schools were excluding pupils in order to improve their exam results then they should not benefit from the falling rolls fund. This was agreed by members.

3.6 HO stated that there may be a need to amend the criteria so that to receive an allocation from the falling rolls fund, schools would need to justify why it was necessary.

3.7 The Forum then voted on the amended proposal that there would be a falling rolls fund of £50,000 with any allocations being approved by the Forum at the March 2019 meeting. There were nine votes in favour with none against.

### **4. High Needs funding for Financial Year 2019/20 – TD/SW.**

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

[http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/8132/january\\_2019\\_-\\_high\\_needs\\_funding\\_for\\_financial\\_year\\_2019-20](http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/8132/january_2019_-_high_needs_funding_for_financial_year_2019-20)

4.2 The paper presented was to inform the Forum of the proposed plans for utilising the additional funding allocated from the DfE, £418,170 for each of FY1819 & FY1920. The FY1819 allocation would be utilised in the current year with the intention to reduce (ideally eliminate) the brought forward DSG deficit of £544,000.

4.3 The proposals were on the basis that the high needs budget for 2019/20 included the £586,000 (0.5%) transfer of funds from the schools block to high needs agreed at the last Forum meeting, but in the context of the additional funds, the local authority were not proceeding with a further request for a transfer of an additional £250,000 from the schools block to high needs.

- 4.4 The proposals regarding the FY1920 allocation have been developed in the context of feedback received from schools and are aimed at building capacity in the mainstream sector and providing additional funding where schools are working inclusively.
- 4.5 SW stated that the proposals are about putting funding back into our mainstream schools for the work that they are doing with high needs pupils. Additional capital funding is being used for the Haughton project and for resourced provision.
- 4.6 GE asked if this meant that special school budgets will remain as they were set as all special schools are now full and are operating on very lean staffing structures already. HL responded by saying that she is to meet with all heads and governors to discuss the new banding funding methodology. The LA is not looking to reduce the amount of funding allocated to special schools.
- 4.7 SW stated that we have reduced the costs of out of county provision and the LA are looking at reinvesting this into the special schools.
- 4.8 JE stated that specials will need additional funding to support outreach.
- 4.9 ST stated that the Forum were asked to make the decision on the transfer of 0.5% of schools block funding without the knowledge (by either the Forum or LA) that there would be the additional £418K funding. Given the pressures on special school budgets, which mainstream schools need to remain viable, should we be using the additional funding to support the special schools rather than providing additional costs and provision to the system? Mainstream schools can operate without outreach but cannot function without the special schools.
- 4.10 CC asked if it is sustainable to spend on the new proposals with the pressures on high needs over recent years.
- 4.11 SW responded that the proposals were designed to build capacity in mainstream schools, thus taking pressure (including budgetary pressure) off special schools and ensuring that where mainstream provision is the most appropriate option for a child, that is where they are educated.
- 4.12 JW & CL stated that schools will not want to give another 0.5% in FY2021 in the context of the additional funding received. CL stated that some schools felt that they should have been asked if they still wanted to give up the 0.5% for FY1920 in light of the additional funding received.
- 4.13 CL stated that she felt that outreach should be on a traded service basis. HD responded that there is already a traded service in place (SLE) with some schools. The problem comes when budgets get tight and the schools still need the service.
- 4.14 CC stated that schools needed the funds in their budgets to buy into a service if they felt they needed it.

- 4.15 HL responded that if we allocated the funding to schools on a formulaic basis then the schools that are not so inclusive, and therefore will not use it for high needs, would receive equivalent funding to more inclusive schools. Outreach will support the schools that are inclusive and working with high needs pupils.
- 4.16 GE said that special schools are currently 'maxed out' and are frustrated that some pupils are being passed to special schools that could be dealt with in mainstream settings.
- 4.17 SW stated that there was a paper from the DfE which acknowledged problems with the current principle that the first £6,000 of additional support for high needs came from schools general budget. A review was promised. The paper will be forwarded to members for information.
- 4.18 LH asked how the figure of 16 additional resourced places had been arrived at. SW responded that research had shown that the optimal number of pupils within a unit was eight. Ideally resourced provision would be across both the primary and secondary sector, thus a minimum of two units.
- 4.19 CC stated that we need resourced provision in the primary phase for those pupils that cannot cope with school. We also need provision in the secondary sector as those pupils that cannot cope in primary need to have somewhere to go when they reach secondary age. Currently there are examples of children being supported in mainstream primary schools who struggle when they enter the mainstream secondary sector.
- 4.20 ST that schools need to be challenged when they are excluding pupils and he is glad that HL is willing to do this. HL responded that she will challenge any school that is not properly sharing the responsibility to support high needs.
- 4.21 GE explained that LCT has set up a year six to seven transition programme which costs around £100K per year and is similar to resourced provision, and which is very effective in enabling successful moves from primary to secondary for pupils who might otherwise struggle.
- 4.22 LH explained that Abraham Darby have a unit to manage those pupils that are not coping with transition.
- 4.23 HD advised that special schools are struggling with their budgets and are likely to end the financial year with deficit budgets.
- 4.24 LH stated that he has reservations about the amount allocated to outreach, training and the contingency fund.
- 4.25 Forum members were thanked for their contributions which the LA will reflect upon.

## **5. Growth Funding for Financial Year 2019/20 - TD.**

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

- 5.2 The ESFA now allocates a discrete amount of funding for growth within the schools block allocation, albeit not ring-fenced for growth. For FY1920 this amounted to £1.022M. Within the funding formula the LA will fund eight schools on estimated pupil numbers for the period September 2019 to March 2020. Four of these schools were already funded on estimates. The ESFA will provide funding for the remaining 5 months of the year for academies, reflecting the additional lag in funding for academies.
- 5.3 Any school which is funded on estimates will have their allocation in FY2021 adjusted for any variation between the October 2019 census and the estimated numbers.
- 5.4 HL stated that the schools being funded on estimates were asked to take on additional pupils and increase their PAN to accommodate this. The alternative to this was to build a new free school which would also have to be funded from the schools block on an estimates basis.
- 5.5 GE added that the Trust was involved in the strategy and declined the option to take on a free school as it was too risky in the longer term.
- 5.6 TD confirmed that the formula funded schools on estimated pupils rather than the increased PAN i.e. not funding on places. The LA strategy of not proceeding with an additional school would have the benefit of enabling the creation of larger, more financially sustainable secondary schools.
- 5.7 The revised approach to funding growth in T&W would mean that growth within PAN would be funded on the usual lagged basis. Forum members did not object to this as a principle.

## **6. De-delegation for Free School Meal Assessment 2019/20.**

- 6.1 A paper outlining the de-delegation proposal was presented and can be found at the following link:  
[http://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20025/school\\_information/3619/schools\\_forum\\_meeting\\_papers\\_-\\_2019](http://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20025/school_information/3619/schools_forum_meeting_papers_-_2019)
- 6.2 The group were advised that this item only relates to maintained mainstream schools and that there is a separate vote for primary and secondary phases.
- 6.3 As we only have one secondary member who is not in attendance, the Forum agreed to ask PB to vote by email as soon as possible.
- 6.4 The primary phase voted unanimously in favour of de-delegation. Subsequent to the meeting, PB voted in favour of de-delegation for the two remaining maintained secondary schools, Burton Borough and HTA.

## **7. Apprentice Levy (AL) - CO.**

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

[http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/8139/january\\_2019 - apprentice levy update](http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/8139/january_2019_-_apprentice_levy_update)

- 7.2 CO stated that the plan was to pool all unspent allocations for FY1920 in a similar fashion to FY1819. Schools would be asked for nominations and allocations would be on a priority basis.
- 7.3 JW stated that the courses available through providers were very expensive and similar courses could be obtained cheaper without using the AL funding.
- 7.4 CC stated that currently there are no courses that take TAs beyond level three, such as HLTA qualifications.
- 7.5 The Forum understood the basis for pooling funds, to ensure that as far as possible apprentice levy funds raised from T&W schools were spent on T&W schools.

**8. AOB - HO:**

- 8.1 AW asked if anyone had any objections to the removal of papers from the T&W website that had been published prior to 2015. There was no objection so the older papers will be removed.
- 8.2 There being no further business the meeting closed at 11:30

**9. Next Meetings**

The dates of the future meetings in academic year 2018/19 are as follows:

Thursday 14 March 2019	9.30 am	Meeting Point House
Thursday 23 May 2019	9.30 am	Meeting Point House

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

[http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/507/forum\\_meetings](http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/507/forum_meetings)