



## Schools Forum

Date: 8 November 2018

Time: 8.30 am

Venue: STDC, Monkmoor,  
Shrewsbury

Item/Paper

# A

Public

### MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON 13 SEPTEMBER 2018

#### Present

##### School Forum Members

Bill Dowell (Chair)  
Phil Adams – Academy Headteacher  
Alan Doust – Secondary Headteacher  
John Hitchings – SSGC  
Sabrina Hobbs – Academy Headteacher  
Sandra Holloway – Primary Governor  
Shelly Hurdley – Early Years Representative  
Samantha John – Academy Representative  
Kerry Lynch – Academy Headteacher  
Stephen Matthews – Primary Governor (and headteacher)  
Alan Parkhurst – Primary Headteacher  
Michael Revell – Primary Governor  
Mark Rogers – Primary Headteacher  
Andrew Smith – 16 -19 Representative  
Charles Thomas – Professional Association Rep

#### Members

Cllr Nick Bardsley

#### Officers

Karen Bradshaw  
Phil Wilson  
Julia Dean  
Gwyneth Evans  
Jo Jones  
Chris Mathews  
Stephen Waters  
Neville Ward  
Helen Woodbridge (Minutes)

#### Observers

Roger Evans – Shropshire Council  
Amy Jones – Shropshire Star

#### 1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Marilyn Hunt, Samantha John, Pete Johnstone, Ed Potter and Geoff Renwick.

Subsequently apologies were received from John Eglin.

#### 2. Election of Chair

Karen Bradshaw asked for nominations for chair.

There was one nomination – Bill Dowell. Karen Bradshaw advised that Bill Dowell will become a Member of the newly formed Central Shropshire Academy Trust.

Schools Forum unanimously voted Bill Dowell as chair.

There was one nomination for vice chair – John Hitchings.

Schools Forum unanimously voted John Hitchings as vice chair.

#### 3. Minutes and Matters Arising (Paper A)

The minutes were accepted as a true record.

Phil Wilson advised that he would be bringing a paper on place planning to the next meeting of Schools Forum. He explained that a countywide position statement had been produced in 2016 and that work has been ongoing in the areas where pressure on school places was forecast. Surplus places have been filled in many of the market town primary

#### ACTION

schools and the LA is expanding several schools in Shifnal, Market Drayton, Whitchurch, Baschurch, Hadnall and Shrewsbury. There are ongoing conversations with other schools re the future. It is possible that a new school will be required for south Shrewsbury early in the next decade. The primary bulge in numbers has largely gone through and a secondary bulge is now expected.

Karen Bradshaw added that any new school would need to go through a free school presumption process and would be an academy. The LA would need to work with DfE/ESFA/RSC and invite proposers for running the schools. There would be an interest for Schools Forum as there are revenue issues. Funding for free schools is released in phases. Shropshire is also bidding for a special school in wave 13 of free schools.

John Hitchings advised of the uneven bulge as the growth in numbers only applies in certain areas. Large swathes of the county are still reducing in terms of pupil numbers. Phil Wilson confirmed that the growth is largely in urban settings and new housing is the main driver for pupil growth.

Phil Adams asked if local people have any influence over who runs a new school and it was confirmed that they would be consultees in any free schools process..

Karen Bradshaw reported that there was a positive working relationship with the RSC. The Chair had a concern around the quality of provision especially in rural areas, Chris Mathews confirmed that Schools Forum can have confidence in processes and the application of processes in the area of place planning as Shropshire's model is tried and tested.

The Chair agreed to write to the RSC in this term re understanding of deficits in academies in order to establish pattern across Shropshire.

Gwyneth Evans confirmed that consultation around school balances/claw back would be going out shortly.

Julia Dean's report will cover high needs block funding issues.

Phil Wilson advised that the MP meeting in July received a paper re high needs block.

Peter Nutting then wrote to MPs seeking support. He agreed to share the letter with Schools Forum.

Gwyneth Evans had circulated the f40 briefing paper.

Chair

Phil  
Wilson

#### **4. Funding Arrangements for Severndale Academy and Woodlands School**

Phil Wilson presented his paper and the appendices.

He confirmed that special schools would face the same funding pressures as mainstream schools in terms of inflation.

The banding has been set based on the current budgets. There is some uncertainty as funding will depend on the needs (and therefore band) of new children who come in.

Sabrina Hobbs expanded on the uncertainty of bandings and advised that special school headteachers would prefer to see a shift towards resourcing provision rather than need.

Charles Thomas asked about the stability of numbers in bandings.

Phil Wilson explained that places are commissioned by the LA and if more are required they will be commissioned and more funding would follow. Julia Dean added that

planning for this takes place a few years in advance. She added that there had been a change in needs – challenging behaviour (which is not a need but an effect) is growing. Banding is fairly consistent for Woodlands.

John Hitchings added that this highlights need for more funding.

Julia Dean explained the graph of banding distribution for Severndale. There had been a change in allocation since 2014. The needs of children have not changed, the way the funding was allocated has.

Gwyneth Evans explained appendix E. No inflation had been added.

Sabrina Hobbs explained that she would have liked a closer like for like comparison but no-one will share financial information. Severndale is the biggest special school in the country but is in a county which is poorly funded. She understands the LA position and is doing as much as possible nationally to secure more funding. A benchmarking exercise has shown that Severndale is efficient.

The Chair thanked schools staff and officers for all the work that has been undertaken and noted the additional pressure on the high needs block.

**5. Schools Revenue Funding 2019-20**

Gwyneth Evans went through the paper which was for information only. She advised that until PUF/SUF calculations are done based on October 2018 census figures, she won't know if there is enough to deliver the NFF (last year there was a surplus of £784k which Schools Forum had agreed to transfer into high needs). Mark Rogers highlighted background information (in paragraph 8) from which schools are protected at present. He felt that the core unit funding for being a school needs to be increased and there is a need to lobby re variables of formula - the scale of the reduction is scary.

Gwyneth Evans reported that f40 think that the formula is too heavily weighted on deprivation and that core funding needs to increase. She agreed to produce more information on a single page demonstrating the effects of the formula.

John Hitchings suspected that the spin will be that the amount of pupil funding is increasing. The need is increasing but funding is not keeping pace. He asked how the teachers' pay award will be funded.

Gwyneth Evans advised that there was not yet any detail on the basis on which it will be funded. Schools are budgeting for 1% and anything above that will be funded outside of DSG. This will also need to be sorted for special schools through the high needs block. Sabrina Hobbs advised that she will be attending the headteacher rally on 28 September in London focusing on need for increased funding. She will also meet with the Education Select Committee at the end of November.

Nick Bardsley advised that it will be really helpful to be able to present the information sheet prepared by Gwyneth Evans to politicians.

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**6. Dedicated Schools Grant 2018-19 Update**

Stephen Waters presented the paper which was for information only.

Phil Adams registered concern around EHCPs reducing to an average and suggested that Shropshire has an above average number of pupils who need EHCPs.

Julia Dean advised that data suggests that this is not the case.

Mark Rogers' view was that the use of the graduated support pathway to avoid EHCP (which is hard to remove once awarded) is a good principle.

Neville Ward commented on the shifting of power to parents.

Phil Adams confirmed that school funding has not increased in real terms so the amount schools are able to access has reduced and some needs cannot be met.

It was confirmed that Shropshire pays more high needs into mainstream schools than other local authorities do.

Julia Dean highlighted the need to identify whether there are SEN or socio-economic needs.

Alan Doust felt that secondary schools are well placed to assess the needs of children.

Sabrina Hobbs added that cuts to social care are also having an effect.

The chair recognised that this issue needs to be reconsidered by Schools Forum. He and the vice chair will meet with officers to consider and to scope any work to be commissioned.

Mark Rogers asked which would happen to any deficit.

Gwyneth Evans advised that it would roll forward within the high needs block.

**7. Schools Revenue Funding Arrangements for 2019- 2020, Lord Hill Hotel, Wednesday 10 October**

Phil Wilson advised of the event. Items to be covered include:

- A summary of revenue arrangements (as per today) – including concerns raised by Mark Rogers
- Consultation on de-delegation/top slice with maintained schools
- Forward financial planning (including government tools)
- SFVS
- High needs updates.

**8. Communications**

This had been covered during the meeting.

Phil Adams advised that the North West secondary heads are meeting with Owen Paterson and then Nick Gibb.

**9. Future meeting dates:**

**Postscript: following the meeting it was decided to cancel the meetings on 8 November and 6 December, and to set a new single meeting date of 22 November**

<del>8 November 2018</del>	<del>8.30 am</del>	<del>STDC, Monkmoor</del>
<del>6 December 2018</del>	<del>8.30 am</del>	<del>STDC, Monkmoor</del>
<b>22 November 2018</b>	<b>8.30 am</b>	<b>STDC, Monkmoor</b>
17 January 2019	8.30 am	STDC, Monkmoor
31 January 2019 (provisional)	8.30 am	STDC, Monkmoor
21 March 2019	8.30 am	STDC, Monkmoor
6 June 2019	8.30 am	STDC, Monkmoor

The meeting closed at 10.25 am.