



**Schools Forum**  
**Date:** 26 January 2023  
**Time:** 8.30 am  
**Venue:** Via MS Teams

Item/Paper  
**A**  
 Public

**MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON 1 DECEMBER 2022 – HELD VIA MS TEAMS**

**Present**

**School forum members**

- Bill Dowell (Chair)
- Caroline Clode – Association secretaries
- Mark Cooper – Academy headteacher
- John Hitchings – Academy governor
- Marilyn Hunt – Primary headteacher (From 09.00)
- Sandra Holloway – Primary governor
- Stephen Matthews – Primary governor (From 09.20)
- James Pearson – TMBSS
- Michael Revell – Academy governor
- Mark Rogers – Primary headteacher
- James Staniforth – Post 16
- Brian Thomas – Special academy headteacher
- Carla Whelan – Academy representative
- Sue Lovecy – Academy headteacher

**Members**

Gwilym Butler

**Officers**

- David Shaw
- Jo Jones
- Neville Ward
- Stephen Waters
- Phil Wilson
- Helen Woodbridge

**Observers**

- Roger Evans
- John Boken (from 09.17)
- Steve Barnard

The chair welcomed all to the meeting. Steve Barnard from the ESFA was introduced.

		<b>ACTION</b>
<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Apologies</b>            Apologies had been received from Shelly Hurdley, Karen Levell Sian Lines, Kerry Lynch, Alan Parkhurst, John Parr, Kirstie Hurst-Knight and Andrew Smith. Marilyn Hunt had advised that she would be late. Nick Bardsley sent late apologies as he had connection issues.</p>	
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Minutes and Matters Arising</b>            The minutes were accepted as a true record.             The actions had all been completed.             Phil Wilson added that further funding (phase 2) has been received from the DfE for Ukrainian refugees and this will be distributed to qualifying schools.</p>	
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>School Funding Arrangements 2023-24</b>            Jo Jones presented her paper. There were several areas where a vote was required:</p> <p><b>Split site funding</b>            Schools Forum approved the recommendation that the lump sum split site factor</p>	

value of £15,000 for Ludlow Primary School continues to be allocated in 2023-24.

### **Transition of funding between blocks**

A discussion was held with several colleagues voicing concern about the rising levels of SEN.

James Staniforth requested assurance that the high needs for 2023-24 has been modelled and understood. He was pleased that Post 16 issues had been worked on by David Shaw. He suggested ensuring that needs have been identified at transition stages and wondered if there is a contingency position to cover rising costs.

David Shaw acknowledged that this is a difficult judgement call. There is a need to recognise school and SEN challenges against a backdrop of a 12% increase in high needs funding last year. He advised that there is sufficient headroom to manage this for 2023-24. He undertook to bring a three-year forecast to Schools Forum in January following detail received in December.

John Hitchings and Brian Thomas spoke of the need to ensure that high needs is affordable before the decisions are made.

James Staniforth asked that the abnormal levels of NEET at Post 16 are factored into the modelling.

Mark Rogers expressed concern about the stress being caused to school staff when they are having to cope with children who should be in a different specialist provision.

Schools Forum agreed that until it could be proved by officers that the High Needs Block does not need any further transfer of funding, the recommendation that any remaining balance of the Schools Block, after fully funding individual schools in line with the NFF will be shared to schools by increasing their Basic Entitlement factor, would not be approved.

Schools Forum therefore agreed to the transfer of up to 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs block once all schools have been fully funded in line with the NFF as in previous years.

### **Affordability of the funding formula**

Schools Forum approved the recommendation to reduce the MFG as necessary, and within allowable limits, to ensure affordability, and following this, if also required, to reduce the AWPU factor on a consistent basis across all Shropshire schools.

## **4. Consultation on the Central Retention of Dedicated Schools Grant from April 2023**

Phil Wilson presented his paper and several votes were held.

### **Pupil Growth Contingency**

Maintained primary school representatives on Schools Forum approved the recommendation to de-delegate funding of £35,000 from maintained primary school budgets for a pupil growth contingency for maintained primary schools in 2023-24.

### **Maternity cover**

Maintained school representatives approved the recommendation to de-delegate

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funding of £250,000 from maintained primary and secondary school budgets for a centrally managed maternity budget for maintained schools in 2023-24.

### **Trade Union Duties (referred to as facilities time)**

Maintained school representatives approved the recommendation to de-delegate funding of £25,000 from maintained primary and secondary school budgets for a centrally managed trade union duties budget for maintained schools in 2023-24.

Mark Rogers asked about academies (and this had been raised in previous years). He was concerned that union members in academies are still supported yet some academies are not paying. The chair requested a paper from Caroline Clode at a forthcoming meeting for clarity and Caroline Clode agreed to put this together.

CC

### **School improvement**

Phil Wilson advised that responses from schools on this area were split with only just over half of schools responding. He proposed to go back to the 40 schools that did not respond.

Mark Rogers and Marilyn Hunt suggested that schools may have been confused by the questions/permutations. They suggested that the consultation be simplified and repeated with all maintained schools.

Maintained school representatives agreed that a revised two option consultation would take place and further agreed to approve the preference of the majority of schools.

PW

### **Redundancy fund.**

Maintained school representatives approved the top-slicing of funding from maintained primary and secondary school budgets in 2023-24, based on reducing the redundancy fund to £150,000.

### **Statutory school finance**

Maintained school representatives approved the top-slicing of funding for a statutory school finance budget from maintained primary and secondary schools in 2023-24, based on an estimated unit value of £2.48 per pupil.

### **Statutory Human Resources and Health and Safety**

Maintained school representatives approved the top-slicing of funding for a centrally held statutory human resources and health and safety budget from maintained primary and secondary schools in 2023-24, based on a unit value of £4.40 per pupil.

### **Education Access Service**

Maintained school representatives approved the top-slicing of funding for a centrally held budget for EAS from maintained primary and secondary schools in 2023-24, based on an increased unit value of £13.90 per pupil.

## **5. Central School Services Block 2023-24**

Stephen Waters presented his paper and votes were held for several areas:

## **Historic commitments:**

### **Contribution to combined budgets**

Maintained and academy school representatives agreed that there will be a £45,220 reduction and therefore no contribution to combined budgets as per the detail of these costs outlined in Appendix C of the report presented to Schools Forum.

### **Termination of employment costs**

Maintained and academy school representatives agreed to contribute £582,169 to fund a portion of these ongoing pension commitments in the event that the appeal to the ESFA to protect the value of ongoing prudential borrowing and termination of employment costs is not successful, a reduction of £174,160 compared to 2023-24.

### **Prudential borrowing costs**

Maintained and academy school representatives agreed to continue to contribute £295,350 to fund the ongoing revenue costs of funding prudential borrowing for the Monkmoor Campus Project.

## **Ongoing responsibilities:**

### **School admissions**

Maintained and academy school representatives agreed to the increased charge of £271,600 for the provision of a School Admissions Team.

### **Servicing Schools Forum**

Maintained and academy school representatives agreed to the budget of £10,000 for the servicing of Schools Forum.

### **Copyright Licences**

Maintained and academy school representatives agreed to the increased charge of £241,450 for the annual copyright licensing fees.

### **Ongoing responsibilities that LA hold for all schools**

Maintained and academy school representatives agreed to continue to contribute £794,677 to ongoing responsibilities that the local authority provides for maintained schools and academies as per the detail of these costs outlined in Appendix D of the report to Schools Forum.

## **6. Early Years Provision in Shropshire**

Neville Ward presented his paper which provided an update on Early Years provision.

He explained that there is a long term concern around recruitment and that low funding levels continue as a key area of concern for providers with Shropshire remaining in the lowest funded group of LAs.

Early Years settings are seeing increased levels of speech and language needs and behaviour issues. Two thirds of settings have accessed Talk Boost support

to help with speech and language.  
The quality of provision remains good.

The chair congratulated the Early Years team on their achievements.

**7. Government's Autumn Statement and Implications on School Funding**

Phil Wilson provided an update.

The main points were that:

- the increase of 4% is lower than inflation levels
- there is no news regarding funding for early years or further education
- capital funding will increase but then decrease
- the Household Support Fund remains in place for a further year.

**8. Communications**

- The chair confirmed that the work of f40 is continuing. Phil Wilson undertook to share recent communications from f40 with Schools Forum
- The chair asked about meetings with MPs and was advised that these continue.
- The chair asked that Kirstie Hurst-Knight is briefed regarding Shropshire's position (f40 report) and the EY/FE funding levels.
- It was agreed that a letter is sent from Schools Forum to the DfE and ESFA.

**PW**

**PW**

**Chair**

**9. Future meeting dates:**

Thursday 12 January 2023 (since cancelled)

Thursday 26 January 2023 (since confirmed)

Thursday 16 March 2023

Thursday 15 June 2023

The meeting closed at 10.08