

## MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON 12 DECEMBER 2024 – HELD VIA MS TEAMS

NOTES WERE PRODUCED USING AI VIA COPILOT AS AGREED BY FORUM AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MEETING

<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies</b>	
	Apologies had been received from Gwilym Butler, Stephen Matthews, Sarah North, Sarah Finch, John Hitchings, Shelly – explorers' childcare	
<b>2</b>	<b>Minutes and Matters Arising</b>	
	The minutes were accepted as a true record	
<b>3</b>	<b>School Funding Arrangements 2025-26 Update</b>	<b>SB</b>
	<p>SB provided an update on the funding arrangements, noting that primary and secondary school levels have increased. However, they are still awaiting the APT from the DfE to finalise the details. She expressed hope that the NFF should be affordable</p> <p>SB mentioned that they do not have additional data to share until they receive the APT and complete the process. She apologised for the brief update and asked if there were any questions</p> <p>WD highlighted the significance of the anticipated affordability of the NFF, emphasizing that the increases in values suggest it should be affordable</p> <p>DS asked the school forum colleagues to approve the school funding arrangements as outlined in the NFF paper. He highlighted that Shropshire has been following the national funding formula for many years.</p> <p>DS mentioned that if there is a significant issue with the affordability of the NFF, a meeting would be convened on January 9th to address it. <b>Schools forum colleagues then voted and approved the funding arrangements with no changes.</b></p> <p>DS explained the proposal to transfer any remaining balance up to 0.5% to the high needs block after fully funding individual schools in line with the NFF. He noted that this approach has been consistently taken in previous years</p>	

	<b>Schools forum colleagues agreed to the proposal, ensuring that any remaining balance would be transferred to the high needs block after funding individual schools inline with the NFF.</b>	
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Consultation on the Central Retention of DSG from April 2025</b></p> <p>SB presented the results of the consultation on central retention of DSG, which had 20 responses out of 76 maintained schools.</p> <p>The forum discussed the pupil growth contingency, with concerns raised about the number of schools sharing their views in the consultation and the significant rise in costs.</p> <p><u>Pupil Growth Contingency</u></p> <p>The forum discussed the pupil growth contingency, with concerns raised about the number of schools sharing their views in the consultation and the significant rise in costs. MR expressed discomfort with the voting results, suggesting that the numbers might be more like 9:9, leading to a tie.</p> <p>Concerns were raised about the accuracy of the voting, with some members questioning who was eligible to vote and whether the votes were correctly attributed. It was noted that some schools in the process of becoming academies had voted, which might affect the results.</p> <p>Due to the points raised, it was decided to go back for a second consultation on the pupil growth contingency item. <b>Schools forum agreed that more information and clarity were needed before making a final decision. SB to reissue the consultation information and include the names/contact details of mainstream primary Headteachers on Schools Forum so school leaders could make contact with these representatives for further information, if they wish. The decision on this item would then be taken in the new year.</b></p> <p><u>Maternity Budget</u></p> <p>The forum voted on whether the maternity budget should cover full pay elements of shared parental leave for 2025/26. <b>The majority voted in favor of de-delegating the budget.</b></p> <p><u>Trade Union Duties</u></p>	<b>SB</b>



	<p>The forum voted on the trade union duties budget for 2025/26. <b>The majority voted in favor of de-delegating the budget.</b></p> <p><u>School Improvement</u></p> <p>The forum voted on the school improvement budget for 2025/26. <b>The majority in favor of de-delegating the budget.</b></p> <p><u>Redundancy Funding</u></p> <p>The forum voted on the redundancy funding for 2025/26. <b>The majority voted in favor of top slicing the budget for this item.</b></p> <p><u>School Finance</u></p> <p>The forum discussed and voted on the statutory school finance budget for 2025/26.</p> <p>MR raised questions about the clarity of the role, questioning why the amount has stayed fixed despite the decline in the number of schools</p> <p>DS explained that the costs of the functions have remained the same, and even though the number of schools has declined, other costs have risen. He noted that the budget is a contribution, not the entire cost of the work</p> <p><b>The majority voted in favor of top slicing the budget for this item.</b></p> <p><u>Human Resource and Health and Safety</u></p> <p>The forum voted on the statutory human resources and health and safety budget for 2025/26. <b>The majority voted in favor of top slicing the budget for this item.</b></p> <p><u>Education Access Service</u></p> <p>The forum voted on the education access service budget for 2025/26.</p> <p>MR raised questions about whether maintained schools are making a similar level of contribution to academies for the education access service. DS assured that there is consistency between the traded elements and maintained schools.</p>	
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	<p>MR suggested moving the education access service to an SLA for transparency. DS agreed that this could be considered for the following year, 2026/27.</p> <p>The forum voted on the education access service budget for 2025/26. <b>The majority voted in favor of top slicing the budget for this item.</b></p>	
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Central School Services Block 2025-26</b></p> <p>SW presented the Central School Services Block (CSSB) for the 2025/26 financial year. The forum voted on various elements, including termination of employment costs, prudential borrowing costs, school admissions team, servicing of schools forum, copyright licenses, and ongoing responsibilities. <b>All items recommended for approval were approved by schools forum with no changes.</b></p>	<b>SW</b>
<b>6</b>	<p><b>Communication</b></p> <p>WD will be preparing and sending a detailed joint letter with the leader of the Council to MPs regarding the ongoing funding of Shropshire schools and early years</p>	
<b>7</b>	<p><b>Follow Up Tasks</b></p> <p>SB to send out a revised consultation on the pupil growth contingency, including context and contact details for primary maintained representatives, to all relevant schools.</p> <p>DS to organise a training session for forum members to provide context and history on the ongoing responsibilities, de-delegation and top slicing and funding decisions to primary and secondary heads prior to decisions being required in the Autumn term 2025/26.</p>	<p>SB</p> <p>DS</p>
<b>8</b>	<p><b>Future Meeting Dates</b></p> <p>Thursday 20 March 2025  Thursday 19 June 2025  Thursday 11 September 2025 (tbc)  Thursday 13 November 2025 (tbc)</p>	

