

GLOUCESTERSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of a meeting held on Friday 20 October 2017
in the Council Chamber - Shire Hall, Gloucester.

Present:

Melissa Bradshaw	-	Special School Headteacher
Martin Doidge	-	Primary School Governors
Andrew Harris	-	Secondary Head Teachers
Gillian Hayward	-	Secondary School Governors
Dan Johnson	-	Primary School Headteachers
Lisa Jones	-	Primary School Headteachers
Elizabeth Knox	-	Secondary School Governors
Karen Lewis	-	Primary Head Teachers
Ian Marshall	-	Primary School Governors
Will Morgan	-	Secondary School Headteachers
Sara Morris	-	Primary School Governors
Marie Owen	-	Special School Governors
Susan Padfield	-	Secondary School Governors
Rosy Savory	-	Clifton Diocese
Steve Savory	-	Primary Head Teachers
Andrew Steward	-	Trade Unions
Stuart Wilson	-	Secondary Head Teachers

Also in

Chris Widden, Gloucestershire Governors' Association

Attendance:

Observers:

Cllr Richard Boyles, Cabinet Member: Children and Young People

Officers:

Tim Browne, Head of Education
Stewart King, Lead Commissioner for Education and Skills
Neil Egles, Finance Manager, Schools, Strategy and Capital
John Reilly, Specialist Adviser (High Needs)
Jo Bolton, Democratic Services Officer

Apologies:

Colin Belford, Secondary School Headteachers
Graham Doswell, Primary School Governors
Amanda Horniman, Early Years Providers
Rachel Howie, Gloucester Diocese
Emma Jarman, 14-19 Provision
Gwyneth Keen, Early Years Providers

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

36. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions had been received.

37. MINUTES

37.1 The minutes of the previous meeting of 21 June 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

37.2 It was agreed that the following extract from the minutes would be added to the Action Sheet for this meeting, with a view to tracking progress: 'Colin Belford, Secondary headteacher representative, would be meeting with representatives of the Local Enterprise Partnership, to discuss opportunities for work-based training for young people, particularly those at risk of exclusion, and for capital investment'.
ACTION: Joanne Bolton.

37.3 The Forum noted that the existing guidance for schools on Multi Academy Trusts and other forms of collaborations would be circulated to the members of the working group for initial comments.
ACTION: Stewart King.

38. SCHOOL FUNDING 2018/19

38.1 Stewart King, Lead Commissioner for Education and Skills, presented the detailed report which outlined the government announcements on school funding and the resulting approach to the funding formula for mainstream schools in 2018/19 and 2019/20.

38.2 The Forum was informed that as a consequence of the announcements the Schools Block for Gloucestershire would increase by 1.94% for 2018/19 and a further 1.08% for 2019/20. The introduction of a minimum per-pupil element had had a major impact on the outcome of the NFF for Gloucestershire secondary schools, particularly those with low levels of additional needs. The Forum noted that all schools would gain from the 0.5% uplift in the baseline. Members of the Forum felt strongly however that whilst schools would see an increase to their budgets, in real terms, this would not cover the increasing costs for schools.

38.3 The Forum considered Annex A to the report which showed a comparison between the 2017/18 baseline funding and the NFF for each school in Gloucestershire. Annex B to the report showed a comparison between the current Gloucestershire and the revised NFF. The Forum noted that there were still significant differences between the two formulas; a key one being that the basic amount per-pupil was still lower in the NFF despite the uplift in the revised NFF.

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- 38.4 The Finance Manager, Schools Strategy and Capital, informed the Forum that for 2018/19 and 2019/20, as expected, the funding allocation would comprise of the NFF allocation for each school aggregated to local authority level. He tabled a copy of a spreadsheet which set out the DfE Schools Block Totals in each local authority in England; *(For Information: A copy has been uploaded to the Council's website and will be included in the signed copy of the Minute Book).*
- 38.5 The Finance Manager informed the Forum that officers across the local authorities had concerns about the Authority Proforma Tool (APT) which must be used to submit the formula to the DfE. Currently the tool did not include the capping and floor mechanisms used by the DfE to calculate the NFF and used different methods for certain calculations such as the minimum pupil funding. Numerous local authorities had asked the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) if they would provide a copy of the APT that they could use that replicated the NFF but they had been told this would not be possible and the ESFA confirmed that local authorities would not be able to replicate the NFF when they allocated funds to schools. He explained that as a consequence of this they would not be able to deliver a formula for Gloucestershire schools that, as proposed by the Forum, closely replicated the NFF.
- 38.6 A question was raised on whether a request could be made for a mechanism, to be included within the formula, to reallocate the total figure obtained through the capping of school budgets, back to schools, via an increase to the basic per-pupil allocation. In response, the Finance Manager explained that in theory, it would be possible to put in a disapplication for this. However, if the capped figure was put back in, then this would result in it being allocated back to the schools which had had their budgets capped, as otherwise this would need to involve two different funding rates within the formula. It was highly likely this would not be allowed; he emphasised that the main expectation was that the local authority used the ESFA's issued APT and the calculation and allocation methods within it to allocate funds to schools.
- 38.7 The Forum acknowledged that the proposed National Funding Formula did not represent what had been campaigned for. However, the Forum agreed that as the full implementation of the NFF was forthcoming it would be prudent to commence the adjustment towards it as rapidly as possible. The Forum therefore agreed that the school funding formula for 2018/19 should be calculated using the following methodology:
- Set the centrally retained budget for growth at exactly the same figure the DfE has included within the Schools Block for 2018/19 based on historic funding.
 - Ensure all schools receive a minimum 0.5% per pupil increase in 2018-19 compared to their baselines. This will be done by setting the MFG at plus 0.5%. NB this approach will need DfE approval.
 - Apply the DfE minimum per pupil rates quoted for 2018/19 at £3,300 Primary and £4,600 Secondary.

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- Apply all the NFF factors and data provided by the DfE (e.g. include the Sparsity factor and for Deprivation use the current FSM, FSM6 and all the IDACI measures).
- Set the cap at a level that exactly equals the MFG cost.
- Set the factor allocation rates in proportion to the NFF rates quoted by the DfE, but all scaled by the same percentage to equal the school block funding remaining available for delegation. This will be less than, 100%.
- Complete the APT provided by the ESFA to calculate the final allocations to schools.

38.8 Officers emphasised that the High Needs budget was under huge pressure. The latest forecast was for an overspend of around £800,000 in 2017/18. The Forum considered whether a transfer from the Schools Block to off-set the overspend, should be made. It was noted that the ability for movement between blocks under the NFF would cease from 2020/21. The Forum was therefore in support of no transfer being made for 2018/19. Members acknowledged that it could only be a one-off transfer and that school budgets were under great pressure too. As a result, members felt that the focus should continue to be on working with schools on new approaches to identifying and meeting additional needs.

38.9 The Forum considered the proposals for de-delegations. Andrew Steward, the Forum's Trade Union Representative, presented the report on Local Authority Teaching Union Facilities 2017. He was accompanied by Sarah Murphy (NUT / NEU).

38.10 Mr Steward emphasised the importance of the de-delegation for union facilities, explaining that the funding allowed teaching unions to provide Gloucestershire schools access to effective statutory and collective consultation, bargaining and individual representation from trained and accredited local teaching union officials. School leaders and managers also had access to a valuable resource in the resolution of workplace issues and disputes. The funding paid for the availability of county representatives to respond to schools' issues. He commented that he hoped the Forum would continue to support the unions through this de-delegation.

38.11 In response to a question, Mr Steward clarified that academies choose whether to procure the union facilities service, and the focus was on ensuring that they did, to avoid any ramifications for academies of not doing so.

38.12 The Forum noted the breakdown of how facilities time was spent in 2016-17 by NUT, ATL and NAS, trade unions

38.13 The Forum's maintained schools' representatives (by sector) agreed de-delegation at the per pupil rates shown in the report for:

- In-year increases in pupil numbers – primary.
- Targeted intervention – primary.
- Union facilities – primary.
- Local authorities' statutory duties for maintained schools.

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- 38.14 In response to a question, the Lead Commissioner for Education and Skills confirmed that he fully expected de-delegation to continue for the next two years, and also after full implementation of the NFF in 2020/21.
- 38.15 The Forum agreed that the policy for primary pupil number increases between October Census dates above thresholds, should remain unchanged.
- 38.16 It was reported that the Central Schools Services Block comprised funding for ongoing responsibilities to fund local authorities for the statutory duties that they held for both maintained school and academies. It was comprised of four budgets: Copyright License charge; co-ordination of admissions; Schools Forum costs, and centrally retained duties. For 2018/19 onwards, the central funding would be allocated to local authorities based on a national average rate. Officers reported that Gloucestershire would lose approximately £100,000 (4%) by the end of 2019/20 as a result.
- 38.17 The Forum was informed of the timetable of key events from now up until the submission of the formula to the DfE on 19 January 2018. It was reported that full consultation would be undertaken with schools in November and this would include evening briefing meetings on dates to be arranged. The Lead Commissioner for Education and Skills agreed to consult with Chris Widden, Chair of Gloucestershire Governors' Association (GGA) , outside of the meeting, to discuss how the GGA could assist with the consultation.
ACTION: Stewart King.

39. HIGH NEEDS

- 39.1 Stewart King, Lead Commissioner for Education and Skills, presented the report which provided an update on the High Needs Programme, and the implications of the proposed National Funding Formula for High Needs.
- 39.2 The Forum was informed that the Government had announced that there would be no changes to the proposed National Funding Formula for High Needs. However, in line with the NFF for schools, every local authority would receive a 0.5% increase per head in 2018/19 and a further 0.5% per head in the 2019/20 over the 2017/18 baseline.
- 39.3 As a result, Gloucestershire's High Needs Block would increase by 0.91% in 2018/19 and a further 0.47% in 2019/20. Whilst the Forum welcomed the additional funding for the two years, members acknowledged that it still represented a real term reduction of around 2.5% before allowing for population increases.
- 39.4 Officers explained that budget reserves would be used to cover the overspend in the High Needs Block for 2017/18. The Forum noted that other authorities were struggling to contain their spending on High Needs, with a number running into a significant deficit, and/or having to take emergency measures. Gloucestershire's

position meant that it could take a more measured approach, although the budget remained precarious.

- 39.5 The Forum noted that the areas of particular concern in High Needs were Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) top-ups in primary schools, and placements in independent special schools. Members were informed that the DfE had allocated Gloucestershire £1.9M to develop more in-county complex need places. At present there were only 70 specialist places attached to mainstream schools in the county, a figure which was much lower than in other comparable authorities.
- 39.6 In response to concerns raised about EHCPs ceasing in Early Years, officers explained that Early Years pupils would still obtain the support they needed, but without parents/carers needing to seek an EHCP.
- 39.7 The Forum received a verbal update on the High Needs project plan; the initial priorities had been Alternative Provision and exclusions, and engaging with schools on the inclusion issues. It was reported that focus would be on Post 16 next, where additional capacity would be sought. Officers explained that the current costs of Post 16 were out of line with the comparator group.
- 39.8 John Reilly, Specialist Adviser, gave an update on Restorative Practice. He read out a statement from the Headteacher at Tewkesbury School, where the approach had been implemented as part of the GCC pilot last year. In his statement the headteacher emphasised the positive effect the approach was having on both staff and pupils. The Forum was pleased to hear that the roll-out of the Restorative Practice approach at Tewkesbury School had progressed well and had good prospects of a positive impact on attendance and exclusions.
- 39.9 The Forum subsequently agreed the investment proposal for Restorative Practice, which would enable the programme to be expanded to other schools. The Forum noted that proposals for the other priority areas would be submitted to future Forum meetings.
- 39.10 The Specialist Adviser, informed the Forum that the Alternative Provision Schools Management Committee had agreed to disband. A new governance model would be in place from January 2018 with a management committee for each of the schools. The focus of the committee would be on improving the quality of provision, and meeting the needs of each individual pupil. Volunteer representatives from local schools were being actively sought.
- 39.11 The Forum considered a detailed report on exclusions which provided an analysis of the findings of the permanent and fixed period exclusions in Gloucestershire schools during the 2016/17 academic year. It was reported that Gloucestershire was the highest permanent excluding local authority when compared with its statistical neighbours, and was one of the highest nationally. The number of permanent exclusions was continuing to rise (there was a 2% increase in 2016/17 compared to 2015/16). The Forum was pleased to note that the County Council

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had set up a Scrutiny Task Group on exclusions which would begin its deliberations in November.

39.12 The Forum noted the progress of the High Needs Programme.

40. F40

40.1 The Chair provided the Forum with an update on the latest f40 news. Members were informed that the f40 Executive Committee had met following the government announcements. The mood during the meeting was one of disappointment. Members of the group did not feel that a fairer funding allocation to schools had been achieved, and consideration was now being given as to whether the f40 should continue to campaign for a fairer funding deal, and if so, how.

40.2 The Forum noted that a questionnaire had been circulated to all local authority members of the f40 group, to seek their views, with a deadline for responses of Friday 10 November 2017. Members of the Forum considered the questionnaire and the overwhelming consensus was that the campaign should continue.

Chairman

Meeting concluded at 3.40 pm