



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM (WSF)

Wednesday 19 January 2023
Remote Meeting Held Via MS Teams

The meeting started at 2.30 pm

IN ATTENDANCE:

a. WSF Members

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Malcolm Richards (Chair) [MR] | - Governor, Bromsgrove |
| Bryn Thomas (Vice Chair) [BT] | - HT Wolverley CE Secondary School |
| Marie Pearse [MP] | - HT Evesham Nursery School |
| Paul Essenhigh [PE] | - Executive HT Catshill Middle, Catshill First and Nursery Schools |
| Jeff Robinson [JR] | - Governor, Malvern Hills |
| Phil Hanson | - Headteacher Pershore High School |
| John Bateman [JB] | - Governor, Aspire Alternative Provision (AP) |
| Nathan Jones [NJ] | - HT Meadow Green |

b. Local Authority (LA)

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Councillor Tracey Onslow [TO] | - Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education and Skills, Worcestershire County Council |
| Phil Rook [PR] | - Director of Resources - Worcestershire Children First |
| Sarah Wilkins [SW] | - Director of Education and Early Help Worcestershire Children First |
| Rob Phillips [RP] | - Finance Business Partner - Schools - Worcestershire Children First |

1. Apologies

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| Ed Francis [EF] | - HT Fort Royal Primary School |
| Adrian Ward [AW] | - CEO/Exec Head of Bordesley MAT |
| Annette Summers [AS] | - Nursery Owner |
| Caroline Brand [CB] | - Schools Finance Manager – Worcestershire Children First |
| Lorraine Petersen [LP] | - Governor, Bromsgrove |
| Mel Barnet | - Director of All Age Disability Services – Worcestershire Children First |

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None.

3. DECLARATION OF POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTERESTS WITH ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

None.

4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (23 November 2023)

Minutes agreed.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

c. Date of next week.

This was originally booked for the middle of half-term break so to be re-arranged.

d. New member

To fill the position of Governor for Middle Schools, Jo Kelleher from Bredon Hill Academy.

7. Cabinet Decisions

a. 8 December 2022 – Fair Funding for Schools 2023/24 National and Local Funding Arrangements for Schools (PR)

Cabinet agreed the local funding arrangements for schools. With Government announcement in the autumn statement allocated and additional £2b for school this was split £1.4b for schools and the remainder to HLN.

b. 5 January 2023 - Budget and Council Tax 2022/23 (PR)

Cabinet discussed the budget for the council, and it will now progress through the normal process. The local authority have again received another one-year settlement.

On 12 December 2022 the Government announced the DSG override for additional 3 years.

The council needs to make an additional £22m savings, due to the increased pressures of £64m next year.

PR and MB have again met with CIPFA and Newton Europe to progress our Delivering Better Values in SEND.

8. Provisional School Funding Settlement (RP)

RP went through the report with member of WSF. The main headline for this area is that the school block funding is affordable again this year to match the National Funding Formula.

Mainstream School Additional Grant 2023/24 is a new grant for the financial year 2023/24. It is expected to become part of the school block in financial year 2024/25.

A discussion on the impact on schools of this funding took place, it is the biggest one-off funding into schools and TO agreed to support further lobbying of Government if necessary for schools.

TO agreed, to take the concerns of WSF back to Cabinet that the funding is still insufficient for schools. When more details of the additional amount needed is available this is to be provided, as will aid the case going forward whilst discussing with local MP and other forums.

NJ raised that Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) funding has not increased, and the requirement for this funding to schools need to be raised with Government, that it is not allowing schools to meet the needs that this funding is set out for.

SW confirmed that the timeline for sufficiency reports going forward to WSF.

9. Schools Block Allocation 2023/24 (PR)

PR went through the report, with WSF, and that we have needed to use some of the Growth Funding to meet the National Funding Formula.

No queries where raised.

10. SEND - Accelerated Action Plan Verbal Update – Verbal (SW/MB)

SW gave a verbal updated stating that the 12-month review is due at the end of March.

SW gave a quick overview of the four work streams.

- Mainstream inclusion, we are confident that there is an improvement in this area with strong evidence base.
- Suitable provision, this is still progressing, the capital for this is £10m over the next two years.
- Relationships with parents/careers, this has progressed well and involving parents in all areas is progressing.
- Quality of Education Health and Care Plans, the local authority has increased investment in additional resources within SEND. Work on the improvement on the quality of these, Health have just announced additional funding for therapeutic staff to address the assessment issue. The annual review backlog has been addressed.

We will fall back into the normal Ofsted inspection review cycle from March.

SW confirmed that care notes is back online. Health have suggested that they should be working on the backlog by April with the additional resource of staff they have just announced.

11. School attendance and absence – Legal action – Verbal (RP)

RP gave a verbal update explaining the following.

Within 2020/21 the local authority made a loss within this area due to the pandemic, with the member of staff cost still sitting within this area, then member of staff was redeployed to support children missing education.

Within 2021/22 the local authority had a very small surplus, with 102 fines raised by the local authority. The average cost of these fines was £84, including court cost. This raised a debate around the subject.

Also confirming that any surplus should be given back to the secretary of state for Education.

The attendance guidance will continue as part of the government's ongoing work to improve attendance. SW suggested that the local policy is brought to WSF, to assist with an agreed approach around the local authority.

It was noted that the pandemic has affected attendance, and we now need to take a systematic approach to support and work with families to help with this issue, which needs to support and sanctions where necessary.

12. Agenda Item 12. Outcome of Early Years Consultation on Deprivation Funding – Verbal (RP)

RP gave a verbal update on the Early Years (EY) consultation on changing the deprivation funding model for schools.

The current model for 3-&-4-Year-olds includes 10p to the Early Years Pupil Premium factor and a one-off amount calculated on the pupils within the provision on the January census based on their home postcode using the IDACI information. The overall funding pot for this is £150,000.

The consultation was to move away from this for to having a specific weighting for pupils based on the IDACI factor for the top four levels. So, this funding will move with the funding and potentially pick up children who live in areas of deprivation but don't claim for additional support from Government. We also requested that we were able to double the deprivation factor in 2023/24 to £300,000.

Seventy percent of responses agreed to move to the new funding mechanism. With 100% agreeing that the funding pot be increased to £300,000.

The changes were noted by the school forum.

13. Agenda Item 13. EY Funding rates 2022-23 – Verbal (RP)

RP gave a verbal update on the proposed Early Year (EY) funding changes for 2023/24, the forum asked for a written update to also be sent out for them to agree the process of the calculation.

This was done after the meeting, and the process was agreed.

Meeting ended

The meeting closed at 3.49 PM

Date of next meeting

The date of the next WSF meeting: - Thursday 22 June 2023 2.30 PM
(Remote Meeting - MS Teams)