

WORCESTERSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

The Schools Forum has met twice during the Autumn Term 2005, on 5 October 2005 and 6 December 2005. The main areas discussed are detailed in the following sections.

LMS CONSULTATION

The detailed consultation papers were considered by the Forum at its meeting on 5 October 2005 prior to circulation to all consultees.

The outcomes to the consultation were considered by the Forum at its meeting on 6 December 2005. The key issues discussed were as follows: -

- The Forum raised concerns over the level of responses, which was similar to previous years. However, they recognised that there were a number of detailed consultation meetings serviced by officers during the consultation period to support the consultation process. The Forum were keen to consider additional means of consultation
- The main area discussed by the Forum related to the proposed changes for supporting statemented pupils in mainstream schools. Some members of the Forum raised concerns on the proposals and the ability of the new formula to recognise and support SEN. Other Forum members welcomed the proposals and supported the need to allocate resource into core funding to support both early intervention and the provision of stable resources to support SEN in all schools. The Forum recognised the support arising from the consultation process in favour of the proposals
- The Forum welcomed the support shown in the consultation for their role in being the main source of additional consultation for the 2006/07 and 2007/08 budgets. The Forum noted it is due to meet on 25 January 2006 to consider further funding and budgetary issues.

In summary the Forum supported the outcomes of the consultation as detailed in Appendix 1. On the basis of these consultation responses the Forum resolved to support the recommendations for changes to the schools funding formula and scheme for 2006/07 and 2007/08 as detailed. However, they requested in respect of the new SEN formula factor to be introduced from 2006/07, that it be subject to further review in time for the second multi year budget period commencing from 2008/09.

NATIONAL FUNDING ISSUES 2006/07 AND 2007/08 AND OTHER ISSUES

The Forum in both of its meetings in the Autumn Term 2005 also considered a number of papers resulting from the national DfES proposals in relation to:-

- Multi-year budgets for schools from April 2006 including the varying of data sets in the period
- The continuation of the national Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) for schools and changes to the funding for school sixth forms

- Proposals for introducing the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) from April 2006 including its distribution, the baseline and associated transfers
- Changes to funding provided by specific grants from April 2006 including Teachers Pay Reform Grant.

Other areas considered by the Forum included: -

- New proposed powers for Schools Forums and a good practice guide
- Proposals for the introduction of a new financial management standard
- The management of surplus balances and strategies for supporting schools in deficit.