

# Worcestershire Schools Forum (WSF) Agenda 12 September 2024

2.30 pm

Remote Meeting

Via MS Teams invite

Contact: Rob Phillips

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## Date of next programmed WSF meeting

Thursday 21 November 2024 at 2.30 pm remote meeting via MS Teams

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## **Minutes of the Meeting of the Worcestershire Schools Forum (WSF)**

**Thursday 20 June 2024**  
**Remote Meeting Held Via MS Teams**

**The meeting started at 2.30 PM.**

### **In Attendance:**

#### **a. WSF Members**

Malcolm Richards (Chair) [MR]	- Governor, Bromsgrove
Phil Hanson (PH)	- Headteacher Pershore High School
Jo Kelleher [JK]	- Governor, Bredon Hill Academy
David Butler	- Principle Tudor Grange (Worcester)
Marie Pearse [MP]	- Headteacher Evesham Nursery School
Annette Summers [AS]	- Nursery Owner
Edward Francis	- Headteacher Fort Royal Special School
Elizabeth Dixon	- Headteacher Franche Primary School

#### **b. Local Authority (LA)**

Councillor David Chambers (DC)	- Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education and Skills, Worcestershire County Council
Sarah Wilkins [SW]	- Director of Education, Early Years, Inclusion and Pupil Place Planning Worcestershire Children First
Chris Bird [CB]	- Acting Director of Resources Worcestershire Children First
Rob Phillips [RP]	- Finance Business Partner - Schools - Worcestershire Children First

### **1. Welcome Councillor Chambers**

SW confirmed to the forum that DC has replaced Cllr T Onslow with responsibility as Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education and Skills.

DC gave a short update on previous history and involvement within the education sector.

### **2. Apologies**

Jay Hart [JH]	- HT Kingfisher School
Mel Barnet [MB]	- Director of All Age Disability Services – Worcestershire Children First

Bryn Thomas (Vice Chair) [BT]	- HT Wolverley CE Secondary School
Ruth Bessant [RB]	- Finance Business Partner - Schools - Worcestershire Children First
Chris King	-
Tim Reid	Director of Education – Diocese
Ruth Bessant	Finance Business Partner - Schools - Worcestershire Children First

SW gave apologies she would not be attending the whole meeting due to a headteacher meeting.

**3. Declaration of Interests**

CB as a Volunteer Foundation Director of Our Lady of Magnificat Multi-Academy Trust and has a family member who runs / owns a nursery provision.

**4. Declaration of Potential Conflict of Interests with Items on the Agenda**

MR confirmed a conflict of interest with Item 13, as the school that have raised this item.

PH confirmed a conflict on agenda item 6.a as a school that is within the Pershore Education Area Review

**5. Minutes of the Last Meeting (11 January 2024)**

Minutes agreed.

**6. Matters Arising From The Minutes**

None

**7. Any Other Business**

**a. Pershore Area Review Update**

CB confirmed to WSF that the briefing paper for the Pershore Education Planning Area, is currently live on the council website for the meeting on 27 June 2024, this was supported in October 2022.

The reason for this as the local authority were asked to coordinate the selective age ranges for the schools in the area, so that they will go to a two-tier system for education.

It was confirmed that an additional paper will be brought to the WSF in September. The timeline for the proposed changes in paragraph 52 of this document ([5 Pershore Cabinet Report June 2024 draft v3.0 final.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#))

**b. Worcestershire Association of Governors (WAG) and Conference**

MR confirmed that the WAG will be closing later this year. With the amount in the bank remaining, being used to be arranging an event in partnership with Worcestershire Children First (WCF) and Worcestershire County Council (WCC).

The aim being to improve the understanding of governance within Worcestershire schools and promote the WSF, and other strategic agenda for education.

With the ending of WAG the constitution of the WSF may need to be changed to make sure that it will fit with this body not being present. This is to be investigated and brought back to WSF. Information to come out at the beginning of the academic year 2024/25.

#### **8. Maintained Schools Balances**

RP went through the paper for those present and confirmed the balances, the budget position of schools for the end of financial year 2023/24, and financial year 2024/25. With financial year 2023/24 the balances increasing to over £9.3 million, and the budget position is showing an overall deficit, for the end of financial year 2024/25, of approximately £2.1 million.

No questions were raised on this topic.

#### **9. Schools Attendance**

CB gave a briefing on the paper, a discussion was raised and some concerns on if Headteacher would still be able to make decision, it was felt by members that it would still allow for that flexibility but would allow schools to have a standard approach.

It was discussed that this update could create additional workload and need for additional resources within WCC, with the increases in penalty notices and that the information supported that this is a service that is cost neutral for WCC it does not bring in more income than it costs, and in most cases is costing a small amount.

From research at the time of the pre-election release of this policy it was supported by other parties so not expecting this to be changed due to the general election, later this year.

It was also felt that the WSF would be the best place for the consultation to take place rather than needing to go out to a full consultation with all schools. The reason for this is that WSF felt they have a wide range of experience and knowledge and varying views to discuss and agree any consultation.

#### **10. Scheme for Financing Schools**

RP presented this item for the agreement of WSF to adopt the updated scheme. The reason for the changes is that the accounting standards for local authority are changing and the need to for the recording of "Finance Leases" within the local authority account under IFRS16.

Finances Lease have previously been counted as a loan, which schools are not able to take out without the Secretary of State approval. These changes allow for certain finance leases to be taken on without this approval, but schools would need to check the list of approved assets, and if it falls outside then they would still need to seek this approval. The other requirement is that schools also notify the local authority of any leases they take out.

WSF voted on this with a unanimous agreement to accept the updated scheme.

## **11. Wraparound Programme Verbal (Verbal Update)**

SW gave WSF a verbal updated of the latest position. With the Wraparound Expansion Programme moving at pace with regular returns to the DfE evidencing progress. Worcestershire has 217 schools with primary aged children:

- 50% of schools have a full wraparound offer (8am-6pm) already in place
- 40% of schools have a partial wraparound offer already in place

Following submission of a Delivery Plan to the DfE, we are now focusing on expanding the hours offered by those schools with a partial offer in place, as well as increasing the number of places available across the County. Support is available via the Early Years Team.

Sustainability of provision is a key challenge across the Childcare Expansion. Whilst funding is available to support wraparound provision during the next 1-2 years, it is important to ensure long-term viability. For the Early Entitlements Expansion, with the sector receiving the majority of their income from funded places, it is imperative that the funding rates are maximised, and the sector are supported to implement their offer in a way that maintains viability. We are developing our expertise as well as working in partnership with the School Finance Team and the Economy and Infrastructure Team of WCC to develop business support tools and resources.

Recruitment and retention of appropriately qualified and experienced staff is a significant challenge across the Childcare Expansion projects. Working with the Skills Team, we are looking for creative solutions to support the sector, including Bootcamps for Playworker qualifications.

Meeting the childcare needs of children and families with SEND is a challenge for schools but presents particular challenges for the early years and childcare sector. A focus group with special schools and alternative providers has been created to look for ways to support the expansion of wraparound provision; there are specific concerns around creating sustainable but affordable provision, as well ensuring that the needs of the children can be met.

It was also confirmed that this did not mean free wraparound but that this provision should be self-funding from parents paying for this provision, and this could be schools signposting to private provision that drop off/collected pupils from the school.

It was confirmed that schools, and providers would be able to apply for the Capital or Revenue funding that the Council has obtained from the Department for Education (DfE). The funding application forms will come out shortly.

If members would like to contact Sharon Jones ([Wraparound@worschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:Wraparound@worschildrenfirst.org.uk)) for any further information.

## **12. Early Years Expansion (Verbal Update)**

RP updated WSF verbally of the changes for working families with early years children. He explained that like the Wraparound programme that there was some

funding for this project from the DfE. With the funding being used to increase sufficiency with areas of insufficiency or areas taking up this insufficiency.

He also confirmed that the sector was being communicated with and that WCF was running two briefings with the sector on Thursday 20 June evening and the morning of the 21 June. This briefing to the provider would also share areas of insufficient provision.

For September 2024, the local authority within the county and district level have sufficient provision, the insufficiency is more at ward level, and building in additional capacity for future years.

It was confirmed that unlike the Wraparound programme this is for the funded children by the local authority, rather than parents funding this additional need.

### **13. De-delegated Services**

MR explained the reason that this item was being raised, as some schools had felt if they did not use the service, they should not pay for it or be able to claim a refund.

RP went through the paper and the reason for the funding and who could benefit from this and if it was open to other bodies, like academies to buy into this service.

A question was raised about the use of the supply cover, and it was explained that this support schools with any action that would need a union representative to attend meetings at the school, such as consultation, or discipline processes, to save the individual school having to pay the full amount.

The decision was agreed that it should go out as a consultation in the Autumn term to all maintained mainstream schools for their thoughts. The final decision on this still will sit with WSF members.

It was also felt that more information of the services being provided should be sent out to schools and what they will receive from some of the services.

### **Meeting ended.**

The meeting closed at 3.44 PM.

### **Date of next meeting**

The date of the next WSF meeting: - Thursday 12 September 2024 at 2.30 PM  
(Remote Meeting - /MS Teams)

## **Report to the Worcestershire Schools Forum (WSF) Transfer from School Block to High Needs Block**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 This is to request that the Local Authority (LA) can request approval from the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) with final approval from the Secretary of State for Education.
- 1.2 To request to transfer 0.5% from the School Block (SB) to the High-Level Needs Block (HLNB) within our Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for financial year 2025 to 2026.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1 The LA must seek agreement from their Schools Forum if they are requesting a transfer of a percentage of the SB to the HLNB.
- 2.2 The local DSG has an ongoing deficit within the HLNB, which is increasing year on year. The position at the end of financial year 2023/24 was a deficit of £43.6m.
- 2.3 This is planned to nearly double within financial year 2024/25.

### **3. Current Position**

- 3.1 The DSG has an increasing deficit within the HLNB.
- 3.2 The LA is requesting that we can transfer 0.5% from the SB to the HLNB, this would equate to approximately £20m transfer.

### **4. Recommendation**

- 4.1 We are seeking view and agreement of WSF on this proposal.

Robert Phillips  
Finance Business Partner – Schools.  
Worcestershire Children First  
September 2024



## **Report to the Worcestershire Schools Forum (WSF) Funding Mechanism for School Block Funding**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To seek agreement on the funding mechanism for the school block funding for schools.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1 At the last meeting a decision from WSF was not to consult with schools on the school block funding mechanism for financial year 2025 to 2026.
- 2.2 At this time we would normally have the proposed funding rates from the Department for Education (DfE) for the National Funding Formula (NFF). This year we have not received this yet and have not received an announcement on the funding rates to the Local Authority (LA) for the "Dedicated Schools Grant" (DSG).
- 2.3 This announcement we are hoping will come shortly and we have raised the issues this is causing with the DfE and Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).
- 2.4 The ESFA and DfE have no plans to extend the timescales for LAs to return the Authority Proforma Tool back to the ESFA in January 2025.
- 2.5 Due to the lack of this information it is causing us to have starting to make assumptions on funding levels, we are building in between 2% and 3%, with the DfE also announcing that the new grant for September to March will also be part of the funding rates.

### **3. Current Position**

- 3.1 We do not have any actual known funding rates to use, and timescales for the announcement of these rates.
- 3.2 We know that we will need to take to Council in December the proposed funding mechanism for mainstream schools within Worcestershire, and this will need to be in the public domain in November.
- 3.3 This is not leaving us time to agree matters as we would normally have liked, with giving you time to know this information in advance.

### **4. Recommendation**

- 4.1 We are requesting the following from WSF:
  - 4.1.1 That we keep with the current funding model that we use with our schools. Trying to match the NFF as possible, this may need to change depending on the outcome of Agenda Item 7a.
  - 4.1.2 That we can take your agreement forward to produce and publish the information necessary for our December Council Meeting.
  - 4.1.3 Once available we will share with WSF the funding rates, and if necessary, any decisions made over email.

Robert Phillips  
Finance Business Partner – Schools.  
Worcestershire Children First

September 2024

## **Report to the Worcestershire Schools Forum (WSF) Disapplication Request – Exceptional Premises**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The Local Authority (LA) needs to submit a disapplication request to the Education Skills Funding Agency for a disapplication for consideration and approval by the Secretary of State for Education.
- 1.2 To seek agreement from WSF that the LA can seek this approval from the ESFA and Secretary of State for Education.
- 1.3 This would also allow for the LA to include this within our request for the Council to approve this as part of Worcestershire Local Funding Formula (LFF) for financial year 2025 to 2026.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1 The current funding formula has an exceptional factor for premises.
- 2.2 The cost for this financial year 2024/25 is £26,121 compared to £103,599 in 2023/24. The current split is over 3 primary schools.
- 2.3 This factor supports schools who do not have facilities, for example a hall or sports hall so that they can meet the educational needs of their pupils.
- 2.4 The criteria for disapplication prescribed by the Department for Education are that it must be more than 1% of the School Block Funding and apply to fewer than 5% of the schools with the LA.

### **3. Current Position**

- 3.1 £26,121 is allocated through this funding factor to 3 primary schools.
- 3.2 WSF agreed this factor since 2012 for financial year 2013/14, the number of schools has reduced. The LA must apply annually for this funding factor as the ESFA are working with the DfE towards a national funding formula. They are looking at this factor closely as it does not fit with a totally formula driven funding formula.
- 3.3 Worcestershire Children First has undertaken modelling in this area of expenditure and contacted schools that will be affected by this funding.
- 3.4 We are awaiting the information from the schools as supporting information for the funding to share with the ESFA within our disapplication.

### **4. Recommendation**

- 4.1 We are seeking agreement from WSF that we can submit a disapplication with your agreement.

Robert Phillips  
Finance Business Partner – Schools.  
Worcestershire Children First  
September 2024

## **Report to the Worcestershire Schools Forum (WSF) Disapplication Request – Pershore Area Funding**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The Local Authority (LA) may need to submit a disapplication request to the Education Skills Funding Agency for a disapplication for consideration and approval by the Secretary of State for Education.
- 1.2 To seek agreement from WSF that the LA can seek this approval from the ESFA and Secretary of State for Education, without needing to comeback for further approval.
- 1.3 This would also allow for the LA to include this within our request for the Council to approve this as part of Worcestershire Local Funding Formula (LFF) for financial year 2025 to 2026.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1 The LA have been coordinating a review of the schools within Pershore Education Area on the implementation of two-tier system from the current mixture of two and three tier system. This request brought to the LA by the school in the area.
- 2.2 The LA has limited control over this process with only three schools being a LA decision with the remainder being the decision of the academy trust to the regional director and governing body decisions.
- 2.3 For the schools the LA are the decision maker these consultations are being undertaken by Worcestershire Children's First, on behalf of Worcestershire County Council, with a decision by the Cabinet Member with Responsible (CMR) in late October early November.
- 2.4 We have also been considering the potential of changing the funding mechanism for the schools in this area, for the financial year. This would not alter the amount of funding in the area but would potentially change the amount these schools would receive.
- 2.4 There was three options discussed with the schools that are within this area, these were as follows:
  - 2.4.1 No change to the current funding model and this would leave the funding as per the pupil number on the October 2024 census.
  - 2.4.2 The second option took the pupil that would have been on the October 2023 census in the top year group of the first schools, add a percentage split back to the first school and the remainder staying within the Middle School.
  - 2.4.3 This final option takes the pupils that were in the top year group on the October 2023 census and move them back to the first school and reduce the full number from the middle school.

### **3. Current Position**

- 3.1 If either of the final two options are progressed the LA will need to seek approval from the ESFA, and final approval from the Secretary of State for Education.
- 3.2 The LA is still collaborating with the schools to benefit the schools and pupils within the area, at present with majority of the Middle school amalgamating with the First schools this is making the process more complicated.
- 3.3 The LA are still collaborating with Abbey Park First and Abbey Park Middle School to confirm the position of if the outcome of the consultation show that this is the

preferred option the benefit to this schools as they could potentially be the only middle school.

**4. Recommendation**

- 4.1 We are seeking approval from WSF that, if necessary, we can with your support apply for a disapplication on these grounds and the preferred option of the schools with Pershore Education Area.

Robert Phillips  
Finance Business Partner – Schools.  
Worcestershire Children First  
September 2024

## Report to the Worcestershire Schools Forum (WSF) Early Years Consultations

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To update WSF on the current plans to consult concerning the changes within the Early Years sector on the funding of inclusion funding.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1 This is an area that we have not consulted with the sector on and would like to, as the process can be bureaucratic at time, and not always supply the most appropriate resource and support needed for the children and providers.
- 2.2 These aims are to simplify the process, minimising or having no adverse effects on the children of Worcestershire.
- 2.3 Use the money within the HLN budget to meet the needs of these children, especially with the expansion of the sector.
- 2.4 Allow for a clear understanding of the resources available and not available within Worcestershire. To allow for an open dialog with all.

### **3. Current Position**

- 3.1 The Early Years Inclusion Team are pulling together a proposed consultation which we would like to share with appropriate member of WSF before publishing these and to allow for constructive feedback.
- 3.2 The inclusion team to arrange and explain the consultation with the WSF appropriate member.
- 3.3 Publish this as soon as possible with a decision being made late January/Early February with the changes coming into effect either April or September depending on the outcome of the consultation.
- 3.4 If any other issues arise before this is published once more information is announced on the funding of Early Years later this year.

### **4. Recommendation**

- 4.1 We would like your agreement to request member with a nursery/Early Years provision to be involved in this.
- 4.2 Agreement to go out to consultation with the sector without needing to comeback to WSF for agreement.

Robert Phillips  
Finance Business Partner - Schools  
Worcestershire Children First  
September 2024

## Report to the Worcestershire Schools Forum (WSF) Core Schools Budget Grant (CSBG)

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to outline the methodology for the Core Schools Budget Grant (CSBG) allocation for the period from September 2024 to March 2025.
- 1.2 The funding, amounting to almost £1.1 billion, will be distributed among mainstream schools, special schools, alternative provision (AP) schools, and local authority centrally employed teachers (CETs). This funding aims to support schools with their overall costs, particularly considering the 2024 teacher pay award.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1 The CSBG is designed to support schools financially for the 2024 to 2025 financial year, covering the first seven months from September 2024 to March 2025. The funding is divided among different types of schools based on pupil and place numbers, and core funding amounts.
- 2.2 Additionally, £97 million is allocated for early years and post-16 provision, with separate methodologies for distributing these funds.
- 2.2 Eligibility for the grant includes various types of mainstream schools, special schools, and AP schools.
- 2.3 It give funding rates for different categories of schools and the methodology for calculating and distributing these funds.
- 2.4 The base funding rates for 2024 to 2025 financial year are:
  - a basic per-pupil rate of £76 for primary pupils, including pupils in reception
  - a basic per-pupil rate of £108 for key stage 3 pupils
  - a basic per-pupil rate of £122 for key stage 4 pupils
  - a lump sum of £2,900
  - a FSM6 per-pupil rate of £70 per eligible primary pupil
  - a FSM6 per-pupil rate of £100 per eligible secondary pupil

### **3. Current Position**

- 3.1 As of now, the CSBG funding for the 2024 to 2025 financial year will be paid in two instalments: one in November 2024 and another in March 2025. The allocations will be based on place numbers and other relevant data available by specific dates.
- 3.2 Local authorities will receive the funding and are responsible for distributing it to eligible schools, except for non-maintained special schools (NMSS), which will receive their allocations directly from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).
- 3.2 The document also specifies the funding rates for mainstream schools, special schools, AP schools, and CETs, including adjustments for geographical variations in labour costs. The funding for new and growing schools will be calculated based on pupil numbers from the October 2024 census, with allocations confirmed in February 2025.
- 3.3 Full information on this is available from the Gov.UK website:  
([https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/core-schools-budget-grant-csbg-2024-to-2025#:~:text=The%20core%20school%20budget%20grant%20\(%20CSBG%20\)%20](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/core-schools-budget-grant-csbg-2024-to-2025#:~:text=The%20core%20school%20budget%20grant%20(%20CSBG%20)%20))

[will%20provide%20almost%20%C2%A3,th](#)e%202024%20teacher%20pay%20award.  
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#### **4. Recommendation**

- 4.1 To note the new grant from the Department for Education for the financial year 2024 to 2025.

Robert Phillips  
Finance Business Partner - Schools  
Worcestershire Children First  
September 2024