



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

Thursday 12 September 2024
Remote Meeting Held Via MS Teams

The meeting started at 2.30 PM.

In Attendance:

a. WSF Members

David Butler [DB]	- Principle Tudor Grange (Worcester)
Edward Francis [EF]	- Headteacher Fort Royal Special School
Jo Kelleher [JK]	- Governor, Bredon Hill Academy
Malcolm Richards (Chair) [MR]	- Governor, Bromsgrove
Marie Pearse [MP]	- Headteacher Evesham Nursery School
Phil Hanson [PH]	- Headteacher Pershore High School
Stacey Carter [SC]	- SEAT
Vivek Shah [VS]	- Nursery Owner

b. Local Authority (LA)

Chris Bird [CB]	- Acting Director of Resources Worcestershire Children First
Holly Hancock [HH]	- Senior Finance Business Partner
Matt Stiles [MS]	- Virtual School Headteacher & Education Engagement Lead Education, Early Years, Inclusion and Education Place Planning
Rob Phillips [RP]	- Finance Business Partner - Schools - Worcestershire Children First
Sarah Wilkins [SW]	- Director of Education, Early Years, Inclusion and Pupil Place Planning Worcestershire Children First

1. Apologies

Annette Summers [AS]	- Nursery Owner
Bryn Thomas (Vice Chair) [BT]	- HT Wolverley CE Secondary School
Councillor David Chambers (DC)	- Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education, Worcestershire County Council
Lorraine Petersen (has resigned on the (29/6/2024)	- Governor Maintained Special Schools

Annette Summers also would like to also give her support for Agenda Item 9.

2. 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.

3. Declaration of Potential Conflict of Interests with Items on the Agenda

PH declared that he had an interest in agenda item 8b Pershore Area Review.

4. Minutes of the Last Meeting (20 June 2024)

Minutes agreed.

5. Matters Arising from The Minutes

None

6. Indicative DSG Rates for 2025/26

RP apologised that at present we don't have any of the normal information to supply to WSF concerning the funding for next year, as this has not yet been published by the Department for Education.

7. School Block Consultation

a. Transfer from School Block to HLN

The paper was presented and confirmed that this is a WSF decision and if LA wanted to change this without their agreement it would need to go to the Secretary for State for Education.

EF Suggested that this should be considered this transfer this year and that, if possible, to seek clarity that it would go to the pupil's top-up funding rate and if this is not possible that it is a recommendation, rather than being used reduce the deficit.

WSF discussed this in depth and felt that without all the information, which was not available due to delays in publishing the information to the Council by the Department for Education (DfE) that they were unable to decide at this time. Once all the information is available, they will reconsider it.

b. Funding Mechanism for School Funding

The paper was presented and linked back to agenda item 7a that if this is agreed would have an impact on the meeting of the National Funding Formula.

WSF discussed this and it was agreed to continue as previously funding mechanism and if necessary, the changes would need to be implemented to meet the funding restraints. This decision was unanimous by member of the WSF.

8. Disapplication Request

a. Exceptional Premises

The paper was presented to the WSF, and that we still have three primary Schools that would be eligible to receive this with the current funding model.

WSF unanimously agreed to continue this for another year.

b. Pershore Area Funding

The paper was presented to WSF, and it was explained that at present the review is under consultation, and that this is to put agreement in place in case either option 2 or 3 was needed. It was also acknowledged that Phil Hanson, is headteacher of a school in this area but would not be affected by this disapplication.

WSF unanimously agreed to allow for the disapplication to be applied for if necessary to meet the agreement of the schools in the Pershore Education Planning Area Review.

9. Early Years Consultations

The paper was presented to WSF, the Council are asking for agreement from WSF, that they can ask member of the forum to join a working group with Early Years Inclusion Team to create a consultation, and then to publish this and come back to the school forum with the outcome of this consultation.

The current mechanism is sometime over bureaucratic for a small amount of funding, which does not cover the staff cost. It was felt to be overdue and appreciated it was being looked at.

This was discussed and an agreed that member of WSF could be approached and the consultation published when ready.

10. Early Years and Childcare Expansion

This is a standing item, and SW gave an update on this and still in line with the government policy, we have just passed the next part of the process, for the Early Years Expansion with children of working families the term after they turn 9 months.

The Government are looking onto what is necessary for the need of the wraparound and their new policy of Breakfast Clubs. A concern is around now that the morning session is funded where it is being considered how the universal offer for the Breakfast Club, will be funded and effect the sustainability of this key area.

11. Core Schools Budget Grant

The briefing paper was presented to WSF, for information so that they were aware of the new funding stream for schools for the final two terms of this financial year, and that the Government are intending on including this within the School Block 2025/2026

12. School Attendance Code of Conduct

MS gave a brief update on the new school attendance code of conduct and has been agreed and signed off by Cabinet.

MS agreed to look at arranging training for governors on the new updated code of conduct.

13. WSF transfer back to WCC

CB has given a brief update on the latest position and that we are still on track to transfer back into Worcestershire County Council. This has been communicated to the schools through a few different mechanisms.

14. Conference Governance

This was discussed at the last meeting, as part of the closure of the Worcestershire Association of Governors (WAG), as they are winding up after many years of supporting maintained school's governors.

The event will be held at the Cricket Club within Worcestershire, the invitation will be going to all maintained schools' governors to attend an open forum, with key speakers.

15. WCC Cabinet Forward Plan

SW clarified that this was to give a quick update around the forward planning of the Cabinet Forward Plan, we are not expecting anything for this term, but we have new schools in the pipeline. The other item that will go through is the school funding formula for

16. Any other business

- a. Maintained School Employee Assistance Programme.

The local authority is opening an Employee Assistance Programme is going live shortly with this information going to the maintained schools shortly, for all staff. This is for a 12-month pilot and if used this will be reviewed with the hope to justify continuing this in the future.

- b. Health and Safety Compliance Update Session

An invitation has been sent to all maintained schools around the H & S training session after a review of the local authority and schools to confirm what schools can expect from WCC and WCC can expect of maintained Schools. This is a one-hour session, and already receiving plenty of acceptances to attend this.

Meeting ended.

The meeting closed at 15.44.

Date of next meeting

The date of the next WSF meeting: - Thursday 21 November 2024 at 2.30 PM
(Remote Meeting - /MS Teams)