



f40 Executive Committee Meeting
Saturday, 20 January 2017 at Amerton Farm, Staffordshire

1. Attendance and apologies

Present: Alex Chalk MP, (Vice Chair); Doug Allan, (Secretary); Joe Jefferies, (NASUWT, Notts); Margaret Judd, (Dorset CC); Chris Chapman, (Cheshire governor rep); Zahir Mohammed (Bucks CC); Sally Bates, (Notts NAHT & Headteacher); Gillian Hayward, (Gloucs Schools Forum); Bernadette Hunter, (Staffs Headteacher); Gillian Allcroft, (NGA); Sue Alexander, (Worcs CC).

Apologies: Ivan Ould, Leics (Chair); Vernon Coaker MP, (Vice Chair); Caroline Brand (Worcs CC); Jon Pearsall, (independent rep); Stewart King, (Gloucs CC); Christine Atkinson, (ERYC); Edwina Grant, (LGA); Eunice Finney, (Staffs parent) and Richard Soper, (Worcester Community Trust); Linda Piggott-Vijeh, (Somerset) and Grant Davis, (Wiltshire CC).

DA reported that Ivan Ould was unable to attend as he is suffering from a virus illness. He sent his apologies and regrets that he would miss this important meeting. The Committee sent their best wishes for a speedy recovery.

DA reported that Cllr Joe Tildesley (Solihull) had resigned from the Executive due to a reshuffle of Cabinet within the authority. Members expressed their thanks to Joe for his valuable contribution to f40's campaign work over the years.

2. Minutes of the meeting held 5 March 2016

The minutes of were approved as a correct record of the meeting. It was noted that the meetings scheduled for 25 June, 1 October and 10 December 2016 were postponed pending the launch of the 2nd Stage Fair Funding Consultation.

3. Confirmation of appointment of Chair and Vice Chairs

DA reported that Ivan Ould had accepted the position of Chair for a final two-year period, which will conclude at the Autumn of 2018.

DA reported that Alex Chalk MP had agreed to take on the role of Vice Chair (Conservative). He was formally welcomed to his first meeting of the Executive Committee.

DA reported that Vernon Coaker MP had agreed to take on the role of Vice Chair (Labour).

4. Review of DTW Secretarial Role (via Doug Allan)

DA reported that at the Executive Committee meeting on 6 September 2014 it was agreed that the appointment of Doug Allan, an employee of DTW, as Secretary to f40, would be reviewed every two years. DA indicated that he was happy to continue in the role at least until the Autumn of 2018 when the Chair is scheduled to retire.

5 Activities since last Executive Committee

- Presentation to SW England Primary Headteachers – 18 March 2016
- Meeting of FMRT – 29 March 2016
- Meeting with DfE – 7 April 2016
- The Academies Show, ExCel, London – 20 April 2016
- LGA Special Interest Group – f40 submission & letter from LGA Chairman
- Early Years Consultation & f40 Submission
- National School Funding Consultation (Stage 1) – Schools and High Needs submissions
- High Needs Spending Pressures – Letter to Secretary of State – 22 September 2016

- ESG – Research among member LAs - potential for a Legal Challenge.

All of these items were duly **NOTED**.

6. National Fair Funding Formula Proposals

6.1 Meeting with Secretary of State – 29 November 2016

DA had previously circulated a note of this meeting and it is available on f40's website.

6.2 Meeting with Schools Minister – 14 December 2016

DA had previously circulated a note of this meeting and it is available on f40's website.

6.3 Meeting of FMRT – 12 January 2017

DA had previously circulated a note of this meeting and it is available on f40's website. The team commenced work on the approach to f40's response to the fair funding consultation – see item 6.5. DA announced that Martin Wade (Cambs) had resigned as Chair of FMRT due to changes in his job responsibilities, though he will continue to take an interest in the team's work. Margaret Judd (Dorset) has agreed to take on the role. MW was thanked for his invaluable contribution and MJ was thanked for agreeing to take on the Chair's role.

6.4 Round-Table discussion with Nick Gibb MP, Schools Minister

DA indicated that IO had been invited to attend one of only two round-table meetings with the Schools Minister, Nick Gibb MP on 16 January 2017. There were other representatives of education organisations and trade unions including ATL, NUT, NASBM, NASUWT, Teach First, Sutton Trust, Barclay Foundation and London Councils.

On behalf of IO, DA gave an idea of the discussion and the position taken on behalf of f40. The Minister was advised that due to the government's failure to develop a needs-led model, building from the base upwards, it appeared to f40 that the aim was more to do with restricting turbulence and maintaining the status quo via floors and ceiling than delivering a fair funding formula. It was emphasised that in f40's view the failure to define the real cost of running schools and the use of averages as distinct from a needs-led approach, was unacceptable. IO expressed concern that schools in poorly funded authorities were destined to lose out and he said he failed to understand how 'better funded' Leicester could gain more than 'poorly funded' Leicestershire.

IO had concluded that f40 would have to challenge the current proposals as they fail to offer fair funding. He suggested that f40 will have to be forthright and not be diverted from its principles, nor put off by other groups and individuals welcoming the current proposals.

6.5 Fair Funding Consultation Stage 2

The Stage 2 consultation was launched on 14 December 2016 and closes on the 22 March 2017. On 20 December 2016, IO wrote to all Lead Members of f40 LAs asking for their views on the proposals and guidance on how the Executive should respond. It is clear that many LAs are busy analysing the details of the proposals and reserving their judgement at this point. Some letters indicating views and comments have been received, and others are anticipated.

There was a general discussion about the proposals and the main concerns/disappointments as follows:

- f40 needs to indicate that it is grateful that the government has launched its consultation and is taking further steps towards a fairer funding formula. In our response we must concentrate on the main themes, not get bogged down in the details or the success or otherwise of individual schools. CC said we must be firm on the principle of fair funding, but flexible on the means of achieving it.
- It affects all LAs in different ways. Lump sum, MFG, 3% funding floor and double deprivation are key issues. It impacts on schools and LAs, and both can be winners or losers, even in poorly funded areas. In some LAs secondaries do well and in others primaries. F40 had not anticipated that schools in poorly funded LAs could possibly be losers. The reasons for some of the outcomes are not clearly understood, as yet. We are still needing datasets from DFE.

- AC suggested the proposed 72.5% main block resulted in macro-inequality (i.e. London to rest) with micro-inequality (i.e. within LA/schools areas) and it pits school against school. He is also very concerned about double deprivation and has even raised this point in passing with Nick Gibb MP. Overall, he is content that the government is determined to deliver a genuine consultation and will listen to well-reasoned argument.
- CC suggested that the proposals take us from opaque arbitrary formula to transparent arbitrary formula .
- GA suggested that the government has failed to provide the basic building blocks for school funding – if the formula doesn't provide enough to run a school, then something must be wrong! In respect of deprivation she pointed out that deprivation funding within the formula is about basic school funding, whilst pupil premium is specific to pupils. The NGA believes that sparsity is a significant issue: it's toxic and difficult, but we appear to be obsessed with keeping small schools, regardless. We need to encourage amalgamation but if both get large lump sums there's no motivation for change.
- BH could see where the NGA is coming from, but pressed the point that it is important that basic school funding is adequate. Schools are highly accountable for Pupil Premium funding but deprivation funding may be used by schools for other areas of budgeting.
- SB suggested we need to look at the effect of moving the funding for deprivation: it could be disastrous! We must be committed to accurate and efficient calculation of need. Equally, there are concerns about MFG and floors. GA Suggested the floor is 'concrete' – the gainers will never achieve fair funding: it's against the principle of fair funding. AC said that he saw it as a political method of reducing the impact of funding change. We have to be realistic about asking for change – maybe a 'plywood', rather than 'concrete' floor would be better!
- GH spoke about the pressures on funding being faced by all schools – the cuts ahead are extremely worrying. BH and GA mentioned The School & Academy Funding Group's Efficiency Team, which is suggesting schools can make around £1 billion of savings, but that's just unrealistic, especially in the poorer funded authorities where all the cuts that can be made were made long ago. We must make this clear to the DfE. We are about preserving the education of children and continued cutting will undermine the system.
- GH made reference to some research work underway in Gloucestershire to try and identify the real costs of running a school. Likely that this will be shared in due course. MJ thought DfE had considered creating a real costs model, but had decided it was not possible.

The Executive considered the draft response prepared by FMRT paragraph by paragraph and adjustments were made and ideas put forward for further consideration. The main points discussed are:

Answer 1: Add a paragraph about welcoming the consultation and redistribution of funding involved in the proposals, together with former cash gain. But emphasise that the proposals are not good enough. That revised AWPU means a reduction in what schools can deliver. That cuts have already been made by the worst funded LAs. Double deprivation needs to be highlighted at top of response. Refer to contradiction of 3% floor and fair funding in the long term. Change the order of responses – averages and real costs, deprivation and floor. BH suggested we should explore how the proposals lock in the worst elements of under funding. AC suggested we consider talking about the discrepancy – the extra-ordinary distortion you can have.

Answer 2 and 3 – Ok as presented

Answer 4 – MJ explained why the DfE is wanting to put more into additional needs. She said we have so far been unable to get hold of the dataset in order to see their calculations. GA suggested that we have no idea if the DfE started from the right place, or even with the correct figures! AC emphasised the importance of agreeing the level of funding for schools block. Agreed that part of answer 4 will be transferred to answer 1 as a key issue. CC emphasised that the under-funding of AWPU was

wrong rather than its over-funding. That ties in with the need to avoid the double funding for some parts of the deprivation allowances.

It is essential that we help the DfE find the answers to the problems, rather than just suggest what should be done. It is vital that what we suggest will genuinely lead to better solutions. It was noted that many LAs are doing modelling and the outcome will be shared and adopted into our final response.

Answer 5 – Best not to get too hung up on detail. Acknowledge the politics and keep the response tight.

Answer 6 – Mobility issues had not been discussed at FMRT so guidance was sought for this answer. MJ suggested Forums should have flexibility with school factors, ensuring local flexibility to reflect local situations. Although it was acknowledged that the government appears to have made up its mind about local flexibility, the group agreed that the use of local expertise would be advantageous, especially where there is no agreed national standard.

Answers 7 and 8 – ok as presented.

Answer 9 – if we achieve discussion with DfE this response may vary.

Answer 10 – MJ suggested that her research indicated that only a minority of schools (28) will face a 3% loss. She wondered if this is before transitional protection. AC suggested that the main issue is how many would have lost more than 3%. MJ said we need the datasets to really check the calculations. GA wondered why there would be a floor at all if only 28 were losing by that amount.

Answers 11, 12 and 13 – ok as presented

Answer 14 – other issues that need raising are – potential for movement between blocks and what Schools Forums would wish to see happen; Concerns about loss of local expertise and capacity if Schools Forum become redundant; inability of the local view to be taken nationally; capacity of EfA to consider local issues; need for a review mechanism to keep track of changing position year on year. SB and BH suggested that there ought to be auto-registration for free school meals.

Answers 15 and 16 – more work required.

Next Steps for Draft Response

- DA and MJ to urgently incorporate today's comments into draft 2.
- Urgent copy of revised draft to AC for use in Parliamentary discussions.
- DA to circulate revised draft (2) to all Executive Members as quickly as possible for further comment or approval – deadline Thursday 26 January.
- DA to circulate approved draft response to all member authorities for comment/approval. DA to set a deadline for comments.
- DA to talk to BBC's Ross Hawkins who wants to develop a piece for The Today Programme on Wednesday 25 January and has already contacted AC for comment. He has indicated that f40 will give a comment on Monday 23 January. DA will deal with RH and offer an appropriate comment based on the revised draft consultation response.
- DA to draft and issue a media statement expressing the key issues that f40 have identified.

In addition, when the draft is circulated to member authorities:

- All f40 member authorities will be encouraged to do all they can within their jurisdiction to increase the involvement of their schools (headteachers, teaching staff and parents).
- All f40 Member authorities to be encouraged to produce local briefing papers and template letters to guide local responses to the consultation.

7. MPs' Briefing in Parliament – 20 February 2017

DA reported that in conjunction with Alex Chalk's office he has begun making arrangements for a special briefing of Members of Parliament. It will be held in the Jubilee Room in Parliament on

Monday 20 February 2017. Initial 'save the date' invitations have been issued to MPs representing all f40 authorities and acceptances have started arriving.

AC, as sponsoring Member, will chair the meeting and IO will present f40's policy position before Margaret Judd makes a short presentation of the fair funding issues stemming from the government's proposals.

The number of f40 representatives at the Briefing must be limited, but it was **AGREED** that it should also be attended by the Secretary (DA) and Executive Committee members Gillian Hayward.

Also **AGREED** that DA will deal with further arrangements including communications with MPs, provide a Briefing Paper for the day and assisting in the preparation of a Powerpoint presentation.

8. Worth Less Campaign

DA reported on discussions that he has had with Jules White, the headteacher that leads the West Sussex-based Worth Less/Worth More campaign and he referred to a suggestion that f40 should coalesce around the school-based campaign. Members congratulated the campaign for its commitment and determination and welcomed the intensification of media coverage surrounding the West Sussex activity. It was **AGREED** that the two campaigns can successfully run alongside each other and that mutual support and interactivity should be encouraged. DA will circulate any materials produced by WL/WM to all f40 member authorities with encouragement for them to replicate the approach if it fits within their own strategy. DA to put a link on f40's website to the WL/WM site.

9. F40 Conference

The idea of a staging a national conference was discussed and rejected. **AGREED**

10. Westminster Education Forum - Fair Funding Conference – 7 March 2017

DA reported that FMRT member Andrew Minall (Hampshire CC) has agreed to represent f40 at the Westminster Education Forum conference. DA will work closely with him to ensure he has an appropriate presentation and handouts. **AGREED**

11. The Academy Show 26 April 2017

DA reported that he has been in discussion with organisers of the annual Academies Show, which is staged at the Excel Conference Centre in East London, about having a fair funding section, similar to one held in April 2016. The EfA and f40 are currently listed as the main contributors, though the final programme is yet to be agreed. SB said that NAHT had been asked to contribute. **AGREED** that Da should continue to negotiate with the organisers and when final details are available, seek an f40 Executive Committee member to represent f40's position.

12. Membership Report & Financial Update

DA reported that the group has 41 members and they have all paid their £1k fees for 2016-17. The group has a substantial balance in the bank. There was a discussion about subscriptions for 2017-18 and, in the light of the need to continue fighting for a fairer funding formula, **AGREED** that subscriptions should again be set at £1k for 2017-18.

13. Any Other Business

BH & SB asked if DA could circulate information about NAHT school funding workshops being staged across the country. **AGREED**

14. Dates of future Executive Committees

It was AGREED that DA should check possible dates for 2017 with the Chairman, IO, and then circulate them to all other members.