



## **f40 Executive Committee Meeting**

**Tuesday, 14 May 2019 at LGA Offices, Smith Square, Westminster**

### **1. Attendances, apologies and changes to committee membership**

**Present:** Cllr James McInnes (Chair); Doug Allan, (Secretary); Karen Westcott (DTW); Margaret Judd, (Dorset CC); Cllr Michael Appleyard (Bucks CC); Carole Thomson, (Oxfordshire Schools Forum); Julia Harnden (ASCL); Cllr Roger Gough (Kent CC); Cllr Nicole Meardon (Chester & Cheshire West); Cllr Gordon Jones (Suffolk CC); Jackie Smith (CEO Brunel SEN MAT & Uplands Educational Trust); Cllr Alex Dale, (Derbyshire CC); Steve Edmonds (NGA); Phil Haslett, (Glos CC).

**Apologies:** Sir Gary Streeter MP (Vice Chair); Laura Smith MP (Vice Chair); Cllr Ivan Ould (Leics CC); Bernadette Hunter, (Staffs Headteacher); Bob Standley (East Sussex CC); Edwina Grant (Education Consultant); Joe Jefferies (Nottinghamshire); Richard Soper (Worcester Community Trust); Caroline Brand and Sue Alexander (Worcs CC); Christine Atkinson (ERYC); Sara Harding (Head, Regency High School); Andy Mellor (NAHT); Deborah Myers (Head of Education & Schools, ERYC); Leora Cruddas (CEO The Confederation of Schools Trusts); Gwyn Williams (Lymm High School, Warrington); Will Morgan (Gloucestershire Schools Forum & The Cotswold School); Keith Myers (Executive Member, City of York); Cllr Peter Downes (Cambs Schools Forum); Jon Pearsall (Regency High School Gov, Worcs); Judy Shaw (President, NAHT).

**New Members:** Chairman JMcl welcomed Steve Edmonds, Phil Haslett, Alex Dale and Jackie Smith to their first Executive Committee meeting. He also welcomed Karen Westcott as the new Secretary of f40.

### **2. Minutes of the meeting held 19 January 2019**

The minutes were **APPROVED** as a correct record of the meeting.

### **3. Appointment of a Deputy Chairman**

The committee welcomed Executive Committee member Michael Appleyard as Deputy Chairman of the f40 group.

### **4. Confirmation of Liberal Democrat MP Layla Moran as Vice Chair of f40**

Layla Moran was welcomed as Vice Chair of the group, along with Conservative MP Gary Streeter and Labour MP Laura Smith. JMcl said it was excellent that the three main political parties were represented on the group.

### **5. Membership fees**

DA said it had been agreed by the Executive to retain the f40 membership fee at the current level of £500 per year. He said the process of collecting membership fees from the 42 local authorities had begun.

### **6. Matters to be Noted**

- Minutes of Collaboration meeting – 23 January 2008. Noted.
- Minutes of FMRT meeting – 28 January 2019. Noted.
- Notes of Campaign Strategy meeting – 18 February 2019. Noted.
- NGA's Funding the Future campaign - 25th Feb to 2nd March 2019. Noted. SE thanked f40 for its support during the past year, particularly around the NGA's Week of Action.

- Parliamentary Petition on School Funding and Debate on 4 March 2019. Noted.
- Report on Collaboration discussion on shortfall figures – 14 March 2019. Noted.
- NEU/f40 councillors’ letter to Secretary of State – handover 2 April 2019. Noted.
- Notes of meeting with DfE Funding Team – 9 April 2019. Noted.

## **7. Agreed Strategy Statement**

DA explained that some members of the Executive had met in February to discuss and plan the campaign strategy and objectives for f40 for 2019. The key aim was working with Government to achieve increased and fairer funding for schools in the Comprehensive Spending Review later this year. The three objectives are:

- Campaign for changes to the National Funding Formula to make it fairer and to remove historic factors that lead to disparities in the way that schools are funded.
- Increased funding for the mainstream Schools Block by £2.3billion.
- Increased funding for the High Needs Block by £1.4billion.

The one-page strategy and campaign plan was widely welcomed by the group. JMcl said he would welcome comments later in the year when the document is about to be updated and re-edited.

The group agreed that f40 should continue on its positive route, working with the DfE to improve school funding and make it more equitable. JMcl said it was important that f40 worked collaboratively with other organisations involved in school funding, to ensure campaign groups worked together for the best outcome, but said it was also important that it retained its independence and nurtured positive relationships with the DfE.

JMcl said it may be a good idea if all members of the Collaboration Group worked on a joint statement around fair and increased funding for schools, which they could each use in their campaigning, similar to the approach they are taking in agreeing the shortfalls in Schools Block and High Needs Block. KW and MJ to raise it at the Collaboration Group on May 22. NM agreed, saying everyone needed to speak with one voice.

GJ said it was High Needs Block that really concerned him and asked if the f40 campaign objectives were equally as important. JMcl confirmed they were.

MA said he was concerned about the hidden extra costs of High Needs, which were not visible to Government and schools, but which had to be met by local authorities, such as school transport. He said he would like f40 to raise this issue whenever it could.

JS said the lack of SEN funding was not just a school issue, it was also a health and social care issue. She said more needed to be done to ensure different services, including schools, worked together to the betterment of children.

She said it was difficult for local authorities to make the decision to spend so much money on new special schools in order to extend provision.

But CT said it wasn’t a difficult decision for local authorities to spend money on new special schools because it was a way of ensuring the services and budgets remained within the local authority area, rather than having to send children to specialist facilities in neighbouring authority areas.

PH said the issue was that more places needed to be created for SEND children because as more children leave mainstream education, there are insufficient places, and many were having to be educated out of their local authority area.

NM said in Cheshire East and West all of the specialist schools were full to capacity and in Chester and Cheshire West they were reviewing SEN provision. She said they were looking to take some children back into mainstream education. SEN budgets were so tight, she said it was important that mainstream schools were more inclusive.

CT said it was difficult for mainstream schools to be more inclusive because funding for SEND was so poor. She said schools had to pick up the cost of the first £6,000 for SEND pupils, so even if they wanted to be more inclusive, they just couldn't afford it. It was causing real tensions, she said.

JH said she supported CT's view. She said the majority of schools wanted to be more inclusive but the unprecedented levels of uncertainty around funding, and lack of funding, made it very difficult.

JS said funding for SEND had to be organised differently. She said it was no good having a fixed pot of money for SEND when needs were constantly growing. In Swindon, for example, 27,000 new homes were being built and statistically some of those homes would have children with SEND, which needed to be catered for. She said the population was growing, but disability was also changing. She said medical advances meant that many more people with complex needs were surviving and living longer, and they deserved the best education and care possible.

JS said we can't meet needs under the current structure. "How do I get central government to understand that we want to do it differently? The current structure is too constraining."

NM said in Cheshire West they were looking at ways of redirecting funding that would be made available after a child was excluded. She said they wanted to access that funding earlier to try to prevent that child from becoming excluded at all. She said it would not cost more money but would enable them to use the money earlier to prevent some exclusions.

JMcl said while the f40 objective had always been fairness of funding, the lack of funding in mainstream education and SEND were such huge issues for local authorities, they each also had to be prime targets now for the f40 group.

JMcl said all of f40's member local authorities should be encouraged to submit evidence to the Government's latest consultation on SEND. DA/KW to urge local authorities to respond to the consultation by the end of July.

## **8. Updated School Briefing Paper – Noted.**

### **9. MPs' Briefing being held in House of Commons**

DA outlined the MPs briefing that was taking place that day at the House of Commons and said all members of the executive committee were invited to attend.

JMcl also reiterated to members how important it was for schools and headteachers to be speaking to their MPs about the lack of fairness in school funding, and the need for more funding. He said he had encouraged all schools in Devon to meet with their MPs on Friday afternoons, when they were usually in their constituencies, to share examples and stories with their elected members.

### **10. f40 Funding Formula Modelling – Revised Narrative and spreadsheet**

The funding formula narrative and briefing paper was noted and agreed.

#### **11. Together for Education – collaboration campaign day in House of Commons on June 22**

JMcl and MA are attending the day and JMcl has agreed to be one of the speakers. KW to liaise with main organiser NEU beforehand to make arrangements.

#### **12. Meeting with Robert Halfon MP, Chair of Education Select Committee**

DA said he had tried again to set up a meeting with Robert Halfon MP, but to no avail and correspondence to him has so far elicited no response. MA agreed to speak to Robert's constituency team in Harlow, Essex, in a bid to arrange a meeting.

#### **13. LGA Conference – Bournemouth – 2 to 4 July 2019**

JMcl is to be included on the panel at a fringe event discussing fair funding in education. KW agreed to provide copies of the 'Strategy' that he could take along to the event.

#### **14. Pupil Premium & Free School Meals take-up**

JMcl said in Devon the take up of free school meals had gone down and he wondered if the trend was similar across other local authority areas. He wondered if families who had previously received free school meals were now working and so no longer eligible to receive them.

NM said the decrease in the take-up was down to Universal Credit and changes to the system. CT also said because all children in KS1 got free school meals anyway, it meant schools were not getting the Pupil Premium they would have previously received for each child on free school meals. However, she said Government had the information and should be able to calculate and decipher how much Pupil Premium each school should receive.

GJ said in Suffolk they had carried out an exercise to look into this issue and it had raised an additional £250,000. He agreed to share the information with KW so that it could be shared among the group.

#### **15. National f40 conference**

It was agreed that f40 would hold a national conference in spring 2020, after Brexit was finalised. JMcl and KW to look at possible dates to get something in the diary.

#### **16. MATs**

DA said he had invited Leora Cruddas, of the Confederation of School Trusts, to attend the Executive Committee a number of times, but she had so far been unable to attend.

It was agreed that the inclusion of JS on the Executive Committee, with her extensive knowledge of SEND and MATs, was a great addition to the group.

#### **17. Membership and Financial Update**

DA informed members that f40 now had 42 local authorities as members. Annual subscription fees for 2019-20 had been requested and would be followed up in the coming weeks. f40 has a healthy bank balance.

#### **18. Retirement of Secretary/Handover to new Secretary Karen Westcott**

DA was thanked for his 25 years' service to f40, during which time he had played an integral role in achieving fairer funding for the lowest funded local authorities across the country. MJ said DA had been instrumental in forging links with the DfE and achieving many successes, ensuring that f40 business had been carried out to the highest standard, and with integrity and passion. JMcl said it had been an honour and a privilege to work with Doug. He welcomed KW to the role.

**19. Date of future Executive Committee Meetings**

Dates of future meetings were agreed as 17 July 2019, 16 October 2019, and 22 Jan 2020

**20. Any Other Business**

There were no additional points raised.