



## **f40 Executive Committee Meeting**

**Saturday, 18 November 2017 at Amerton Farm, Staffordshire**

### **1. Attendance and apologies**

**Present:** Ivan Ould, Leics (Chair); Doug Allan, (Secretary); Margaret Judd, (Dorset CC); Gillian Hayward, (Gloucs Schools Forum); Bernadette Hunter, (Staffs Headteacher); Michael Appleyard (Buck CC); Caroline Brand (Worcs CC).

**Apologies:**; Alex Chalk MP, (Vice Chair); Vernon Coaker MP, (Vice Chair): Sally Bates, (Notts NAHT & Headteacher); Joe Jefferies, (NASUWT, Notts); Chris Chapman, (Cheshire governor rep). Gillian Allcroft, (NGA): Sue Alexander, (Worcs CC): Jon Pearsall, (independent rep); Stewart King, (Gloucs CC); Christine Atkinson, (ERYC); Edwina Grant, (LGA); Eunice Finney, (Staffs parent); Richard Soper, (Worcester Community Trust); Linda Piggott-Vijeh, (Somerset) and Grant Davis, (Wiltshire CC).

The Chair welcomed Mike Appleyard to his first meeting with the group. DA reported that Alex Chalk had intended to be present but unfortunately urgent last minute business needed his attention.

### **2. Minutes of the meeting held 23 September 2017**

The minutes of were approved as a correct record of the meeting.

### **3. National Funding Formula - update**

Those present gave a verbal update of their experiences and concerns about NFF. It was noted that all these issues are covered in the recently completed survey undertaken by the group (see item 4). In a nutshell, the main points raised were:

- The NFF is a top down from government to LAs and onwards to schools.
- There are many unexpected and illogical consequences from NFF – secondaries have tended to be significant gainers and primaries have lost out.
- National rates won't be totally implemented until 2020.
- The balance between the blocks is wrong and the DfE has ignored f40's case for a better balance.
- Most LAs are involved in consultations at present – there's still many "what if" questions being considered and for the DfE to answer.
- There are still huge gaps in the funding of different authorities and individual schools. The NFF protections are significant and will maintain unfairness. The gap is not being bridged!
- LAs will continue to have difficulty balancing the books. Virement between blocks is a considerable issue and number of EHCs is a major concern. It was suggested that the DfE is deliberately trying to reduce High Needs expenditure by LAs. LAs are having to consider a radical review of provision. Many using dwindling reserves to top up budget.
- The cost of exclusion is a major issue and special provision is extremely expensive.
- There is considerable concern about transition and post 2020 situation. The prospect of delay of "hard option" until 2021 was raised (legal complications of achieving change!).
- Questions were asked about baselining of the additional £1.3 billion. Some thought it was baselined but others questioned if it was only agreed for two years 2018-19 and 2019-20. Clarification will be required from DfE.
- The Chair expressed concerns about some statements made by MPs about the gains in their constituencies. He anticipated that many would be proved incorrect over time. It was suggested that maybe MPs had been instructed to write to their schools to welcome the NFF

and additional cash being gained, but if that is the case it is a dangerous and misleading practice.

- The next set of Datasets from the DfE are expected to arrive with LA Finance Managers in December. (These are the APT tool for each individual LA to complete for their return to DfE in January with their final 2018-19 formula for schools).
- There was some discussion about whether MATs would operate the NFF – they receive funding and allocated in accordance with their own formula to individual academies.
- NAHT view is that quantum is inadequate and there can't be fairness until that is changed.
- It was agreed that we have been successful in achieving a national funding formula, but we haven't achieved fairness.
- The way in which sparsity is applied is a nonsense!
- Chair reminded members that f40 had called for the mainstreaming of Pupil Premium to avoid double funding of deprivation. No action had been forthcoming.
- Most LAs appear to be moving towards implementation of the NFF as quickly as possible.
- F40 will take a pragmatic approach as we have to make NFF work.

#### **4. f40 Survey**

DA reported that he had undertaken research among f40 member authorities as requested at the last meeting. The purpose was to get views on the NFF and the future role of f40. All 42 members were invited to participate: 41 completed the response forms and indicated a determination to continue to fight for fair funding. One LA rang to explain why they hadn't returned a completed form! So a 100% response rate overall.

DA presented the raw data and asked for instructions on how it should be presented.

**AGREED** – that DA will produce a short report containing the main outcomes and themes for future campaigning. This will be used to inform member LAs, MPs representing f40 areas and the media.

**AGREED** – that DA will organise a conference in London in the New Year (probably late February or early March) to which all member authorities will be asked to attend (Lead Member and Director-level support, in particular, but also including MPs, Chairs of Schools Forum and school finance managers).

**AGREED** – that the conference would consider the future campaign issues and who/how it will be delivered. The campaign requires a new, fresh Executive Committee to move forward.

**AGREED** – that the Secretary of State should be invited to be the Keynote speaker and other speakers to consider will include Tony Foot (Director of education Funding at the DfE); Jo Yurky (Fair Funding for all Schools); ASCL/NAHT; WorthLess Campaign; a Chair of a Schools Forum; Margaret Judd on f40 technical matters.

#### **5. Retirement of Chair and Secretary**

Again, committee members were reminded that the Chairman, Cllr Ivan Ould, will be stepping down as Chair of the group in the Autumn of 2018 and that consideration must be given in the near future to identify a replacement chairman. The recent survey identified that many member LAs would be prepared to give greater support to the Executive Committee. These offers need to be realised in the near future to ensure smooth transition.

DA also reminded the group that he is minded to "retire" at the same time as the Chair, and certainly no later than December 2018. F40 and DTW (who currently have the contract to provide secretarial services) will need to consider how the secretarial service is provided thereafter.

#### **6. Meeting with DfE on 27 November 2017 at 11.30**

DA reported that representatives of f40 have been invited to a further meeting with Tony Foot, the Director of Education Funding at the department. It is intended that the meeting will be attended by the Chair, Secretary, Margaret Judd (Dorset) and Andrew Harris, a headteacher from Gloucestershire. Mike Appleyard (Bucks CC) will check his diary to see if he is able to attend. If he is, DA will ask DfE to extend the size of the delegation. DA to draft an agenda which will be circulated to Executive Members for agreement in advance.

Chair is to meet Neil O'Brian MP for Market Harborough on 27 November.

#### **7. Westminster Education Forum – Fair Funding Conference 16 January 2018**

DA reported that f40 has received an invitation to speak at this conference and the Chair has agreed to accept. The 5-minute presentation will be on the f40 survey and the future of f40's campaign. DA and MJ to assist in the preparation of appropriate slides and notes.

#### **8. Membership Report & Financial Update**

DA reported that the number of members in 2017-18 is 42 and that all have paid their annual subscription. The group has a healthy bank balance.

#### **9. Any Other Business**

IO intends to follow up on the suggested meeting he previously proposed with Tim Laughton MP to see if there is a role he may be prepared to take on with f40.

DA to check what stance ASCL and NAHT are adopting to NFF and future campaigning.

#### **10. Dates of future Executive Committees**

IO asked if the meeting scheduled for 21 April 2018 could be altered as he would be unable to attend. Agreed that he should provide an alternative date. (please note that the alternative date is Saturday 14 April 2018).

Other dates that members should put in their diaries are:

21 July 2018

20 October 2018

19 January 2019