



**f40 Executive Committee Meeting**  
**Saturday, 28 February 2015 at Amerton Farm, Staffordshire**

**1. Attendance and apologies**

**Present:** Ivan Ould, Leics (Chair); Doug Allan, (Secretary); Joe Jefferies, NASUWT, Notts; Chris Chapman, Cheshire; David Harty, Cambs; Margaret Judd, Dorset; Gillian Allcroft, NGA; Steph Simcox, Worcs; Sally Bates, NAHT; Liz Eyre, Worcs.

**Apologies;** Robin Walker MP, Worcester (Vice Chair); Nic Dakin MP (Vice Chair); Stewart King, Gloucs; Tony Norton, North Lincs: Gillian Hayward, Gloucs; Christine Atkinson, ERYC.; Helen Donovan, independent rep; Jon Pearsall, independent rep; Edwina Grant, Central Beds; Pauline Hibbert, Stockport;. Bernadette Hunter, Staffs/NAHT; Eunice Finney, Staffs.

**2. Minutes of the meeting held 6 December 2014**

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

**3. Lobbying**

IO circulated a news release issued on 27 February by Communities Secretary, Eric Pickles, that states that he intends to outlaw the use of public funds for lobbying purposes. IO believes that f40 will not be included in the specific definition of “lobbying” proposed, but nonetheless he will check this out with his LA’s lawyers.

**4. New Funding Formula Activities**

**4.1 f40 Briefing for MPs – January 2015**

It was NOTED that an updated Briefing Paper, was prepared and circulated to MPs and all f40 members in early January 2015.

**4.2 Meeting with DfE Funding Unit – 21 January 2015**

DA’s notes of this meeting had previously been circulated. The main purpose was to present f40’s proposals for a new funding formula. It was reported that the meeting had been very positive and f40’s contribution had been much welcomed by Funding Director, Susan Acland-Hood. IO added that, in his opinion, f40 had come across as a sensible organisation articulating an intelligent argument. SA-H had stated that officials would like to see the £390m extra cash for 2015-16 incorporated into base budgets for future years. This may happen, but the decision is one for the Secretary of State in the next government.

**4.3 MP’s Briefing – 3 February 2015**

DA’s note of this meeting in the House of Commons had previously been circulated. DA Reported that it had been extremely well attended by MPs or their political assistants. Members had welcomed f40’s campaigning and formula proposals. They had particularly asked for packaged information showing the impact on their own constituency. (See below).

**4.4 Funding proposals update**

MJ explained that the initial funding proposals had been based on 2014-15 figures, taking no account of the £390m extra funding. The formula needs to be updated but this can’t happen until the DfE releases 2015-16 details, probably mid to late April 2015. SS explained that Worcestershire CC has included some prior years' underspend to increase the value of the 2015/16 AWPU for one year only and it must be careful to ensure that this doesn’t give the impression that it has been better funded than it actually has been. MJ noted this and agreed that it and similar local initiatives, will have to be dealt with when updating the formula. SB she was concerned that many academies were not joining in joint discussions, preferring simply to deal with their own budgeting arrangements.

#### 4.5 Packaging of f40 formula information

MJ said she was considering how best to present a spreadsheet that MP's could easily access to obtain appropriate information relating to their own constituencies. She suggested that she should be able to adapt current spreadsheets to accommodate this. **AGREED.**

The main problem is pressure on her time. DA flagged up the fact that he has been putting tremendous pressure on just a few finance managers, particularly MJ and SK, who had worked diligently to support f40. IO said the group had to be careful it did not pressure any "volunteers" and that we ought to be able to spread the load among a greater number of people. **AGREED** that DA will write to the finance managers on the FMRT to ask them to try and ease the load on MJ and SK.

#### 4.6 Modelling Paper

MJ presented a new paper she had prepared, partly in response to MP's questions at the Briefing on 3 February and also in response to the need to provide further detail stemming from f40's proposals. The paper explains the basic methodology and why certain assumptions were made. It supports the proposals Spreadsheet, the Narrative and the Technical Note. There was some discussion about the need for a simple explanation capable of being understood by those not steeped in education finance. Subject to minor adjustments to the text and presentation, the paper was **AGREED** and will be used to support the general thrust of our campaign to get a new formula introduced.

DA suggested that in due course, the Narrative, Technical Note and Modelling papers might be combined into one document supporting the final spreadsheets. **AGREED.**

#### 4.7 News Release – 2 February 2015

DA confirmed that f40 had issued a news release on 2 February 2015 following the announcement by the PM on flat cash schools budgets. **AGREED**

#### 4.8 Proposed Meeting with Secretary of State

In line with committee members wishes, DA had written to Nicky Morgan MP seeking a meeting in order that we could present our current position on new formula proposals and seek a Manifesto commitment to fair funding. He reminded the committee that a request for a meeting last Autumn had been turned down.

The Secretary of State is still unable to meet f40 but has invited the group to meet the Minister for School Reform, Nick Gibb MP, on 4 March 2015. This invitation has been accepted and a delegation comprising Ivan Ould (Chair), Robin Walker MP Vice Chair, Sir Nick Harvey MP (Vice Chair) and Marin Wade, Cambridgeshire, will attend. **AGREED**

#### 4.9 Backbench Debate on Fair Funding

DA reported that Robin Walker MP has been successful in securing a three hour debate in the main chamber of the House of Commons on either the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> March (budget week). This is a tremendous opportunity for the campaign and the Executive congratulated Robin on his achievement. It is intended that all f40 MPs will be provided with "packaged information" as described in 4.5, plus an updated f40 Briefing Paper. **AGREED**

#### 4.10 Conservative Network for East Midlands

IO reported that the Secretary of State had attended a meeting of the Network, which he thought was quite unprecedented, but very welcome. He had discussed f40 with her and agreed to keep her informed of the campaign's activities. IO will email the Secretary of State in advance of the meeting with Nick Gibb to brief her on our planned discussions. **AGREED.**

#### 4.11 Oxfordshire and the Prime Minister

There was a short discussion about how well informed the PM is about f40 and the campaign for fairer funding. As he represents an Oxfordshire constituency that is poorly funded, it was felt he should be in favour of a fairer deal. IO will email the Lead Member for Oxfordshire for advice on how the group could ensure the PM is informed and fully aware of the campaign. **AGREED**

#### 4.12 Role of Academy Trusts

At the MP's Briefing in early February, Graham Stuart MP, chair of the Education Select

Committee, asked what was being done to ensure that academy trusts got involved in the campaign for fairer funding. He suggested that the large multi-academy Trusts have a great deal of clout and could potentially be a great ally. DA reported that he had asked the DfE for contact details for these Trusts, but had not yet received them. There was a short debate about the value of involving these Trusts at this point and it was **AGREED** that this matter would be left until after the election and placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

#### 4.13 Information Flyers

DA had previously circulated copies of two information leaflets – one targeted at parents and another at professionals. These will be widely distributed via LAs and schools, and also by all organisations with an interest in fair funding. **AGREED.**

#### 4.14 Total Politics Magazine

DA reported that the Chair had approved a further advertorial to be placed in the pre-election edition of the Total Politics magazine. He had agreed an early page close to an article by the Prime Minister. **ACTION AGREED**

#### 4.15 Education Journal

DA reported that he has submitted a 500 word article to this magazine and he anticipated its publication in early March. **AGREED**

#### 4.16 Party Political Commitment to Fair Funding

DA reported that he had made several attempts to get a Manifesto commitment to fairer funding from the five main political parties but without any real success. Responses have been received from the Conservative, Labour and Lib Dem parties, but no specific commitments were forthcoming. **NOTED**

#### 4.17 Election Candidates

DA said he is researching the email addresses of main party candidates standing for election in f40 constituencies and he aims to circulate to them a copy of the f40 Briefing Paper. **AGREED**

### **5. Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND): Call for Evidence**

DA reported that f40's response was submitted on 27 February 2015 and has been acknowledged. The Committee expressed its gratitude to Simon Pleace (Kent) and Gillian McKee (Oxfordshire) for their assistance in drafting the submission.

### **6. Membership Report and Finances**

DA reported that the group now has 35 members following the application from Lincolnshire County Council. Following a programme of work aimed at recruiting more new member authorities it is hoped several more LAs will join.

DA asked committee members to decide on the level of subscription for 2015-16. It was **AGREED** that subs would remain at £1,000 per LA for the fourth year running (this is a reduced figure introduced as an acknowledgement of the financial difficulties being experienced by member LAs.

### **7. Any Other Business**

DA reported that at the December meeting there had been a preliminary discussion about the idea of staging an annual conference but a decision was deferred. There was a short discussion about the best time for such an event and it was **AGREED** that this matter should be added to the agenda for the 6 June meeting with a view to considering an Autumn conference.

GA said that she would be inviting f40 to present its case in an editorial in the NGA's may magazine.

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

The next meeting is scheduled for Saturday 6 June. Further meetings are scheduled for 5 September and 5 December.