



f40 Executive Committee Meeting
Saturday, 6 December 2014 at Amerton Farm, Staffordshire

1. Attendance and apologies

Present: Ivan Ould, Leics (Chair); Doug Allan, (Secretary); Joe Jefferies, NASUWT, Notts; Chris Chapman, Cheshire; Stewart King, Gloucs; Jon Pearsall, Worcs; Francis Loftus, North Yorks; David Harty, Cambs; Margaret Judd, Dorset; Gillian Hayward, Gloucs; Christine Atkinson, ERYC.

Apologies; Robin Walker MP, Worcester (Vice Chair); Nic Dakin MP (Vice Chair); Tony Norton, North Lincs; Gillian Allcroft, NGA; Helen Donovan, Worcs; Edwina Grant, Central Beds; Steph Simcox, Worcs; Pauline Hibbert, Stockport;. Bernadette Hunter, Staffs/NAHT; Sally Bates, NAHT; Eunice Finney, Staffs; Liz Eyre, Worcs.

2. Retirement of Francis Loftus, North Yorkshire

The Secretary reported that long-serving committee member Francis Loftus has decided to retire from the committee now that he is no longer on the NY Schools Forum. Although he wishes to continue to receive information about the campaign, he will not be continuing to attend meetings. The Committee asked for Francis's contribution to the fair funding campaign to be noted in the minutes...and Ivan Ould presented him with a small gift and card signed by committee members.

3. Minutes of the meeting held 6 September 2014

The minutes of were approved as a correct record of the meeting. The Secretary flagged up the fact that he had not so far followed through on his planned training in the use of Twitter.

4. Actions to be noted

- f40 Briefing for MPs – September 2014
It was NOTED that an updated Briefing Paper, including reference to the £390m extra funding, was prepared and circulated to MPs and all f40 members in early September 2014.
- Letter to all f40 LAs
At the last meeting it had been agreed that the Secretary should prepare a letter from the chair to be sent to all member authorities (Lead Members, Directors and Chairs of Schools Forum) to outline f40's position re Fairer Schools Funding and the work of the Finance Managers Research Team. This was sent on 22 September 2014.
- Lobbying Act 2014
The above Act was recently brought to the attention of the Secretary, resulting in investigations to test whether its restrictions on activity impacted on the role of f40's campaign. Lawyers in Leicestershire CC had been consulted and they had advised that f40 was not affected and could continue to campaign as at present.
- Fairer Schools Funding
Ivan Ould commented that schools in some LAs appear to be unhappy about the way the extra funding for 2015-16 is being allocated, though their criticisms are generally unfounded. He expressed concern that none of these schools appeared grateful and failed to appreciate the major overall success that f40 had achieved in persuading the government to make the extra funding available. He also raised the matter of whether the extra cash is a 'one-off' payment or will form part of the future education allocations. Nobody was entirely clear about the government's intentions with regard to this. **AGREED** that the Secretary should try to establish the position.

- f40 advertorial printed in Total Politics Magazine
The Secretary presented a copy of the magazine including the full page advertorial authorised by the committee at the 6 September meeting.
- New Membership Drive
Ivan Ould reported that he and the Secretary had commenced a programme of work aimed at recruiting new member authorities. Several approaches were underway, including letters to Lead Members and personal contacts at national committees etc. (The following LAs qualify for f40 membership:
 - **County Councils:** Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Rutland Surrey, West Sussex and Wiltshire.
 - **Unitaries:** Bath & North East Somerset, Bournemouth, Bracknell Forest, Medway, North Somerset, Poole, West Berkshire and Wokingham.
 Ivan Ould said that he had recently met the Leader of Rutland CC who had agreed his authority would join. As the Chair of the Unitary Councils Association, he would encourage other unitaries to join. The above actions were welcomed and **APPROVED**.

5. Finance Managers Research Team

Notes of a meeting of the Finance Managers Research Team held on 8 October 2014 were considered and **APPROVED**.

6. Proposals for a new school funding formula

Stewart King, Chair of the Finance Managers Research Team, assisted by Margaret Judd, made a presentation on the detailed work that the team has undertaken on the development of proposals for a new fair funding formula. The following extracts from the presentation indicate the approach proposed:

- The aim is to demonstrate that a formula approach to funding education is feasible and demonstrate that the current distribution is seriously flawed and unfair. The Finance Managers Research Team (made up of representatives of 14 f40 authorities) believes that the model achieves these aims, is fair, based on reasonable assumptions and can be defended against challenge
- The key features are:
 - Based on 2014-15 funding
 - Retains the current Dedicated Schools Block structure – schools, early years, high needs
 - Allocates funding to local authority level i.e. not to individual schools
 - Full local discretion on shifting funding between the blocks
 - Formula for each block (but in effect one big formula)
 - Takes no account of current patterns of spending, or of early years or high needs provision.
- How it works: The Schools Block
Core costs:
 - Core entitlement – based on standard class cost
 - Lump sum – based on ‘normal minimum’ school size for primary (60 pupils) and secondary schools (600 pupils)
 - Sparsity (based on current DfE model, pending further work)
 Pupil specific:
 - Deprivation
 - SEN/prior attainment
 - English as an additional language.

- The core entitlements

	Key Stage 1/2	Key Stage 3	Key Stage 4
Basic class cost	£54,005	£56,921	£56,921
Standard learners per teaching group	29	22	19
Class cost per pupil	£1,862	£2,587	£2,996
Leadership cost per pupil	£504	£466	£478
Exam fees per pupil			£275
Other costs per pupil	£591	£916	£1,042
Total core entitlement per pupil	£2,957	£3,969	£4,791

- The Lump Sum

	Primary	Secondary
Normal minimum school size (pupils)	60	600
Additional cost of headteacher over standard size school (210/900 pupils)	£34,658	£5,435
Administration and finance	£10,000	£40,000
Premises and supplies and services	£25,000	£100,000
Additional half class	£26,344	n/a
Total lump sum	£96,002	£145,435

- Early years

The formula:

- £4.68 for each 2 year old
- £3.90 for each 3 and 4 year old
- Allowance for deprivation using EY Pupil premium data = 3% of total

Takes no account of provision e.g. maintained nurseries or other costs charged against the EY block

- High Needs

Interim proposal pending completion of the DfE research commissioned from ISOS. For time being, based on PriceWaterhouseCooper work 2009.

The formula:

- Pupil numbers 51.4%
- Prior attainment 33.9%
- Deprivation 14.7%

Note: the Research team believes this weights the prior attainment and deprivation too highly.

- The Impact: Winners and Losers

- Range of winners and losers – from around +10% to around -20%
- Significant redistribution from inner London to Shire Counties in particular
- Mixed picture for outer London, Metropolitan and Unitary authorities – reflects inconsistencies in historic funding.

- Other Issues needing consideration

- Employment and other costs increases 2015-16 and 2016-17 will need additional funding
- Transition to a new formula over 3 years
- Common funding year for maintained schools and academies
- Formula replication by Education Funding Agency must cease

- Rates to be removed from school funding or funded at LA level for maintained schools and academies
- More research needed on sparsity
- The ISOS research on high needs – track progress/issues
- Next Steps
 - Wider consultation with f40 members
 - Meeting with DfE early January
 - Briefings for MPs early February
 - Update the model following consultations with member LAs and meeting with DfE.

Following the presentation there was a discussion about the proposals and how they work when modelled for all local authorities. As expected, most f40 authorities would gain significantly from a move from historic funding to a formula-based approach. London authorities would lose heavily. The high needs formula produces big gains for those low-funded authorities that gained little or nothing from the Fairer Schools Funding distribution for 2015/16.

Several members raised the fact that there are considerable cost increases in the pipeline for 2016/17 and beyond and wondered if the formula could manage these changes. Stewart King suggested that the formula can be adjusted to reflect changing situations.

Chris Chapman had some reservations about how the proposals would be viewed overall: do they move from our goal of achieving fairness to a position of demanding that this is how schools should be funded? The government and losing LAs may not see the outcome as being as fair as f40 sees it! But the consensus was that the proposals are about fairness, which is what we seek. It is inevitable that losers won't like the proposals and they will wish to have a "no change" arrangement. But what's fair about that!

Christine Atkinson suggested that the research undertaken by the research team will not present any shocks or surprises to the DfE, who know our position and will understand where we are coming from. They are prepared for change and will welcome the contribution that f40 is making. Although they may not accept everything we propose, they will consider our modelling and adopt the best and most acceptable elements.

Joe Jeffries pointed out that f40's proposals make no reference to post-16 education. Stewart King said that whilst accepting that the funding of post-16 is a vitally important matter, it is not central to f40's declared commitment to achieve fairer school funding. It may well be an issue that f40 may wish to consider at a later stage.

Stewart king reiterated a point made at the previous meeting: the work on modelling a new formula had clearly shown that the existing formula is not coherent and that f40 is on the cusp of providing a solution.

Ivan Ould thanked Stewart and Margaret for the excellent presentation and for all the work they and the rest of the Research Team has undertaken. He said that real progress has been made and we now need to move to the next stage – getting the proposals approved by f40 member LAs, presenting it to the DfE and briefing MPs on the proposals.

AGREED that:

- The presentation and information describing the principles embedded in the proposals should be immediately circulated to all member authorities for comment/approval.

- Simultaneously, the proposals will be shared with the DfE team that the Research Team has been working closely with during recent months. A request for an early January meeting (to include Executive and Research Team members) will be made.
- Attempts will be made to ensure that other organisations involved in education, particularly the NGA, will support the f40 proposals for fair funding and do what they can to influence the debate at local, regional and national levels.
- Ivan Ould will write a personal letter to Graham Stewart MP, chair of the Education Select Committee to introduce f40's proposals and request that they be included in the committee's business at some point early in the New Year.
- In early February 2015 there will be an MPs Briefing (all MPs to be invited) in Westminster to reinforce the campaign for fair funding and to show how f40 is working to influence the development of a new approach to school funding. Vice Chairs will be asked to advise on the agenda and assist in persuading Members to attend.
- The Secretary will write to the Secretary of State to request a meeting in February or March.
- An f40 Conference on Fair Funding for Schools will be staged in May 2015.

7. Party Political Commitment to Fair Funding

The Secretary reported that, as instructed at September's meeting, he had written to the five main political parties on 20 September 2014 to ask if they planned to make a commitment to fair funding for schools in their election manifestos. Responses have been received from the Conservative, Labour and Lib Dem parties, but no specific commitments were included. Ivan Ould, supported by other members, said the lack of clarity from political parties was very disappointing. It was **AGREED** that the Secretary should write to all contacts again and also ask our three Vice Chairs to also speak to their respective party contact to request a clear commitment.

The Secretary said that, as suggested by vice chair, Robin Walker MP, he had written on 20 September 2014 to Natascha Engel MP, Chair of the Parliamentary Back Bench Business Committee to ensure she is aware of f40's agenda. Because of pressure of work in advance of Christmas, she has asked that contact be made with her office in January 2015.

The Secretary reported on a proposal to circulate a Briefing Paper to all candidates standing for election in f40 constituencies next May. He indicated that he was arranging to collect details and would circulate information early in the New Year. **AGREED**

Jon Pearsall suggested that in addition to making use of the Briefing paper, we should consider producing an electronic flyer to promote the basic case for fair funding. The flyer could be made available to all members of f40 so that they can circulate it widely within their own organisation - constituency, authority, school, trade union, board of governors, school forum etc. **AGREED** that the Secretary should write and design a flyer as soon as possible for approval by the Executive Committee.

8. Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND): Call for Evidence

The Secretary reported that the government launched its SEND review on 13 November 2014 and that responses were required by 27 February 2015. The government is endeavouring to work out ways in which it can distribute SEND funding in a more formulaic way, based less on past levels of allocation that have become outdated. This review is critical to f40's own proposals for a fairer funding formula for schools. The Secretary stated that he had approached several Finance Managers in f40 LAs to ask them to draft f40's submission...and he was awaiting their response. (They have now agreed to assist). Once a draft is available it will be circulated to all f40 members for comment, before being submitted.

9. Membership Report and Finances

The Secretary reaffirmed that all 34 member authorities had paid their subscription and that the group has a healthy balance sheet.

10. Any Other Business

The Secretary said that on 5 December he had circulated information about activities being taken by Cllr Joe Tildesley, Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Culture at Solihull Council. Specifically, he has raised a Motion of Council which was passed with almost unanimous support. The Council is now asking for support from local MPs and will be seeking a meeting with the Secretary of State. The Secretary mentioned that other member authorities had in the past taken similar action. He suggested that it would be welcomed if all members would consider this sort of action as it can achieve considerable publicity in local newspapers, encourage MPs to get on board and maintain pressure on Minister. **AGREED.**

11. Dates of future Executive Committees

The next meeting is scheduled for Saturday 28 February. Beyond that, dates are in the diary for 6 June, 5 September and 5 December.