



**f40 Executive Committee Meeting**  
**Saturday, 6 June 2015 at Amerton Farm, Staffordshire**

**1. Attendance and apologies**

**Present:** Ivan Ould, Leics (Chair); Doug Allan, (Secretary); Joe Jefferies, NASUWT, Notts; Jon Pearsall, independent rep; Chris Chapman, Cheshire Schools Forums; Gillian Allcroft, NGA; Steph Simcox, Worcs CC; Gillian Hayward, Gloucs Schools Forum; Christine Atkinson, ERYC; Graham Stuart MP for Beverley & Holderness.

**Apologies;** Robin Walker MP, Worcester; Nic Dakin MP (Vice Chair); Stewart King, Gloucs CC; Margaret Judd, Dorset CC; Sally Bates, Notts NAHT & Headteacher; Liz Eyre, Worcs CC; John Champion, Worcs CC; David Harty, Cambs CC; Tony Norton, North Lincs; Helen Donovan, independent rep; Edwina Grant, LGA; Pauline Hibbert, Stockport School; Bernadette Hunter, Staffs Headteacher; Eunice Finney, Staffs parent.

**2. Changes to Executive Committee**

DA reported on several resignations and requests to join the committee.

- Cllr Liz Eyre, Worcestershire, has stepped down as Lead Member for Childrens Services and has resigned from the committee. Her replacement at Worcestershire CC, Cllr John Champion, has agreed to join the committee, but was unable to attend today.
- Sir Nick Harvey, who was our Lib Dem vice chair, failed to be re-elected to his Devon seat.
- Robin Walker MP, has been appointed Parliamentary private Secretary to Education Secretary, Nicky Morgan and has had to resign as Conservative Vice Chair.
- Graham Stuart MP (Beverley & Holderness), who attended the meeting, was welcomed as the new Conservative Vice Chair.
- Cllr Joe Tildesley, Lead Member for Childrens Services at Solihull has asked to join the committee, but was unable to attend today's meeting.

Graham Stuart presented his credentials, spoke about his hopes and aspirations for fair funding and outlined some of the actions that in his opinion f40 will need to take in the next few months. He stated that f40 is in a strong position and despite the difficult financial situation, he believes the government will wish to deal with the inequity and unfairness of the present allocation arrangements. He thanked the committee for having the confidence in him to take a lead on fair funding in Parliament.

IO expressed the view that Robin Walker had been a hardworking and confident Vice Chair who had progressed f40's case enormously. Other committee members added praise for Robin's commitment, determination and professionalism in presenting f40's position.

**AGREED:** the changes were noted, Graham Stuart was welcomed as our new Vice Chair and the Secretary will write a letter of thanks to Liz Eyre, Robin Walker and Sir Nick Harvey.

**3. Minutes of the meeting held 28 February 2015**

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

**4. Lobbying**

The Secretary had previously circulated a legal view prepared by lawyers at Leicestershire CC, which IO had requested following statements published by former Communities Secretary, Eric Pickles about "outlawing the use of public funds for lobbying purposes". It is now the firm belief that f40

would not be included in the specific definition of “lobbying” proposed. The Executive expressed their appreciation to LCC for the advice.

#### **5. Outcome of Elections: impact on f40**

The Secretary reported on the outcome of the election and reported that he had updated and circulated a list of all MPs representing f40 areas, and included some MPs in areas of poor funding which ought to be in membership of this group. There were 43 new Conservative MPs representing f40 authority areas and about half of them attending a special briefing arranged in Parliament by Robin Walker MP. It is clear that these new MPs are extremely committed to fair funding and that they will play an important part in the future of the campaign.

IO mentioned that post-election he had had a meeting with a few councillors at the LGA and the issue of turbulence had been raised. IO pointed out that most types of change create turbulence but if it is well managed it can be coped with.

SG suggested that it will be important to understand the opposition as we move forward. We must be able to argue convincingly that change is fair and equitable, even when talking to losers. We should be identifying Labour MPs representing constituencies/LA areas that gain, to ensure they are on board. **AGREED** that the Secretary will check this out.

There was a reference to fact that our Labour Vice Chair has found it difficult to attend Executive Committee meetings and that we have missed having a Labour Parliamentary view during discussions.

CC suggested that we ought to review our stance, or adjust the emphasis of the campaign, in the light of the Conservatives winning an outright majority. There was some discussion about this. The Secretary suggested that the Briefing Paper (May 2015) reflected current accepted policy, though if members thought additional points needed to be included, or clarification of existing text is needed, he would be happy to receive emails with suggestions for consideration. The Secretary also informed the committee that the FMRT would be raising a whole raft of points – base-lining of extra funding, future of MFG and maintained schools, Early Years, SEND consultation and Pupil premium - at their meeting on 15 June with Civil Servants at the DfE (see 6.7).

IO repeated the fact that a child in Shropshire with pupil premium is still worse funded than a child in Birmingham without pupil premium. That cannot be right! CA reminded committee members that in ERYC it was historic decisions on deprivation funding that had led to the LA suffering under current arrangements.

GS emphasised the importance of ensuring that MPs get regular and strong messages about the importance of fair funding. All f40 members should be in touch with their MP(s) on a regular basis and f40 should encourage sympathetic members of other organisations, such as the NGA, Trade Unions, PTA to “hassle” their MP. That’s what gets attention and action!

GS added that f40 must clearly demonstrate to Ministers that what we propose in terms of a new funding formula is deliverable. Minister must be able to argue from a position of moral and political strength.

GH flagged up that in Gloucestershire the Schools Forum is intending to meet the county’s MPs soon and the various Schools Forums in the south west have set up a regional network for occasional meetings of Chairs and Lead Officers for discussion and sharing of ideas/problems/opportunities. She would use this to share f40 progress and seek support when there is a need to lobby MPs and

Ministers. She suggested all f40 members could benefit from a similar approach in their regions. **AGREED** that the Secretary will find out more about the Gloucestershire initiative and circulate it to other member authorities.

GH also asked why it was that ASCL and NAHT were so active on fair funding, but the other teaching unions, such as NUT, didn't appear to have a position. **AGREED** that the Secretary will approach the NUT to check their policy on fair funding.

GA said that the NGA attends a Heads, Education and Governance meeting each quarter and suggested that f40 might be able to attend and participate occasionally. **AGREED** that GA should check this out.

The Secretary suggested that f40 should organise its own Briefing for returning and new MPs representing poorly funded areas at an early date. **AGREED** that the Secretary should liaise with SG to find a suitable date and agree a venue in the House of Commons.

## **6. New Funding Formula Activities**

### 6.1 Meeting with Nick Gibb MP, Minister of State on 4 March

Notes of this meeting were circulated. **NOTED**

### 6.2 Back Bench Debate – 10 March

Robin Walker led a very successful debate in the House of Commons. Many supporters of fair funding contributed. **NOTED**

### 6.3 ASCL Statement of fair funding

On 16 March ASCL published a statement in support of fair funding and its wording mirrored f40's own position. The statement achieved massive attention in the media. **NOTED**

### 6.4 f40 Briefing for MPs – May 2015

A further Briefing Paper was prepared and circulated to all returning and new MPs in f40 authorities after the May election. It was also circulated to all f40 members. This version of the Briefing Paper can be used by f40 members at any funding meetings or events. **NOTED**

### 6.5 f40 Funding Calculator

It was reported that in the run up to the election Margaret Judd, Dorset, had created a calculator spreadsheet for use particularly by MPs. This calculator could be used to check any constituency/LA area funding and compare with others. It proved extremely useful. MJ was thanked for her time and effort. **NOTED**

### 6.6 Information Flyers

The two flyers produced and circulated in April were well used though there is no evidence at present as to how many people contacted the Secretary of State, Schools Minister or Shadow Secretary of State. **NOTED**

### 6.7 Meeting with DfE Funding Unit – 15 June

The Secretary reported that f40's Finance Managers Research Team has been invited to a further meeting with the Funding Unit within the DfE to discuss the development of a new formula for school funding. The Unit now has a new Director, Tony Foot, who wishes to pick up where his predecessor (Susan Acland-Hood) left off pre-election. There is an extensive agenda and we will present an updated spreadsheet incorporating f40's proposals for formula change. **AGREED** that the Secretary should circulate a note of this meeting as soon as possible after it takes place.

### 6.8 Meeting with Sam Gyimah MP, Education & Childcare Minister

The Secretary reported that a request for a meeting has been received from the Under Secretary of State for Education & Childcare, Sam Gyimah. We have agreed to see him at 11.30am on Thursday 18 June. IO, GS, ND, GH, GA, SK, MJ and DA will be invited to attend. GS suggested that this invitation could be highly significant and he is hoping for a very positive

outcome. However, he also said that there is a lot of work to be done before the current Parliamentary session ends late July.

#### 9 Parents4Fair School Funding

The Secretary reported that this new organisation, originating in Worcestershire, was now operating and had launched its website. The parent-based organisation hopes to expand to other areas over time. Several f40 members have offered advice and guidance. **NOTED**

#### 6.10 NGA Magazine

The Secretary reported that the NGA had agreed to publish an f40 article on fair funding. This was printed adjacent to a supporting article by NGA CEO Emma Knights. Copies have been circulated to all members. The Executive is extremely grateful for the NGA's support. **NOTED**

#### 6.11 Proposed meeting with County Councils Network

A meeting with Cllr Jane Scott, CCN Spokesman for Children and Young People and Leader of Wiltshire Council, had to be postponed, but an alternative date is being sought. **NOTED**

#### 6.12 NAHT Presentation

Anton Hodge, a member of the FMRT is making a short presentation to the NAHT at its meeting in Newcastle on 16 June. **NOTED**

#### 6.13 Total Politics

An advertorial has been purchased in the special post-election edition of Total Politics magazine, which is published in July. The publisher has promised to position f40's article adjacent to a piece prepared by the Secretary of State for Education. A copy of the text approved by the Chairman, has been circulated. **NOTED**

### **7. Role of Academy Trusts**

At the MP's Briefing in early February, Graham Stuart MP, then chair of the Education Select Committee, asked what was being done to ensure that academy trusts got involved in the campaign for fairer funding. At that time he suggested that the large multi-academy Trusts have a great deal of clout and could potentially be a great ally. Although this matter was raised at the Executive Meeting on 28 February, it was decided to postpone discussion until post-election.

SS flagged up a concern about whether the EFA were aware of the financial situation a number of academies were in and were ready and prepared to support them financially and operationally and was concerned that the support being given is now less than they could have got under the maintained arrangement. She suggested that the EFA isn't very active at a local level and schools might be suffering significantly as a result of reductions in post 16, ESG and the tapering reduction of financial support given to them when they converted.

IO said he had always been concerned about wiping away the excellent support that LAs traditionally have offered. Once it has gone it will be difficult to ever reinstate. He warned the previous SoS that dismantling the support mechanisms would lead to major problems...and it is now proving to be the case. Problems with the EFA are beginning to manifest themselves and it is not too unrealistic to anticipate school bankruptcies at some point. He added that the media are very interested in the success or otherwise of academies at the moment.

GS stated that he is a supporter of the academies programme because the old system was antiquated and faulty. The system simply had to change. Some LAs wouldn't be challenged and that was unacceptable. There are some exceptional academy groups and some less so. The poorer ones have to be challenged and he is sure that the government will deal with this.

**AGREED** that the Secretary should write to all 23 Academy Trusts on the list obtained, plus the Catholic Education Service and Church of England Schools Service, to introduce them to f40 and its fair funding campaign. He will provide them with a copy of the May version of the Briefing

Paper. He will also contact again the Independent Academies Association to try and establish a link and working relationship.

#### **8. Autumn Conference**

It is several years since f40 organised a full conference, preferring to concentrate its efforts on briefing MPs. The Secretary raised the idea of a conference in the autumn of 2015 to bring together all members. He sought the committee's views. IO suggested that many LAs have embargoes on conference attendance and GH suggested that it would only be worth doing if there was significant news to report. The view was expressed that rather than holding a conference, with all the extra costs involved, it might be better to invite f40 members to a Briefing in Parliament (as we have done in the past). **AGREED** that this matter will be reconsidered in the light of the meeting with Sam Gyimah on 18 June and after the special budget in early July.

#### **9. Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)**

This consultation closed on 28 February 2015. A check with the DfE elicited the following response: "We are currently looking at the findings and proposals following the research we commissioned from ISOS Partnership, together with the responses from the wider call for evidence that we received earlier this year. We have yet to discuss either of these with new government ministers. Our plan is to publish the outcome of both exercises, but when that will be, and what kind of government response will accompany that publication, is very difficult to predict just now." **NOTED**

#### **10. LGA Special Interest Group – Annual Report**

The Secretary reported that on 15 May 2015 he had submitted an annual report on f40's activities to the Leadership Board at the LGA. **NOTED**

#### **11. Membership Report and Finances**

The Secretary reported that the group now has 36 members following the application from Northamptonshire County Council. Work aimed at recruiting more new member authorities it is underway. It is hoped that several more LAs – Hampshire, Wiltshire and Surrey, in particular, will join. All 36 members have been invoiced for the agreed £1,000 subscription for 2015-16. Over half have paid and a reminder has been issued to those that have yet to pay.

#### **12. Any Other Business**

JJ said that Sally Bates (chair of the Notts Schools Forum) is working with headteachers in Charles Clark's Rushcliffe constituency to see if they can gain his support for fair funding.

IO indicated that he is trying to recruit the Labour Leader of Nottinghamshire County Council to the Executive Committee.

The Secretary reported that it is five years since the current f40 website was created and a proposal has arrived from DTW, who developed and manage the site, for a major update. The proposal had arrived too late for circulation to committee members for full consideration today. The cost of a new, modern website will be in the order of £8-9,000. **AGREED** that the Secretary should consider the details of the proposal and reach a conclusion on how the f40 might proceed, making a recommendation to the next Executive Committee.

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

The next meeting was scheduled for Saturday 6 June, but this date is not now convenient, so members were asked to approve an alternative date – Saturday 19 September. **AGREED** The final Executive Committee scheduled for 2015 is on 5 December.