

Schools Forum

**Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 22nd January, 2008 at 6.00 p.m.
at the Education Development Centre, Pelsall Lane, Rushall, Walsall**

Present: Mr. N. Chomyk (Chairman)
Mr. J. Baker
Mr. M. Barton
Miss S.M. Bradford
Mr. A.F. Cheminais
Mr. J.P. Clarke
Mr. G. Crowther
Mr. A. Davies
Mr. E. Gee
Mr. P. Heath
Mr. F. Hodgkinson
Ms. M. Letts
Ms. H. Lomas
Mrs. E. Maher
Mrs. R. Poyser
Ms. E. Stringer
Mr. M. Sweeney
Ms. S. Lupton (Education Walsall)
Ms. A. Walton

In Attendance: Ms. A. Walton (Education Walsall)
Ms. D. Morris (Education Walsall)
Ms. M. Harmitt (Walsall Council)
Mr. C. Holliday (Walsall Council)
Mr. L. Haynes (Walsall Council)
Ms. S. Edwards (Education Walsall)
Mr. S. Read (Education Walsall)
Mrs. K. Delaney (Observer - PVI)

		Action
1. 22.1.08	Election of Vice-Chairman AGREED That Miss S. Bradford be elected Vice-Chairman of the Forum for the remainder of the current Forum year.	
2. 22.1.08	Apologies Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Mr. S. Haywood and Mr. S. Holtam.	

<p>3. 22.1.08</p>	<p>Minutes - 4th December, 2007</p> <p>Mr. Baker referred to Item 11 - Diplomas, 14 - 16 Funding Review, and pointed out that the second paragraph was incomplete. Dawn Morris explained that, unfortunately, the following words had been omitted:-</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“now in difficulties”</p>	<p>Minutes approved as a correct record, subject to the addition of the words identified.</p>
<p>4 22.1.08</p>	<p>Matters arising</p> <p>Funding for E2L</p> <p>School Lunch Grant</p> <p>Some Members were of the view that a decision had already been made on this issue and that this was not accurately reflected in the minutes.</p> <p>Benchmarking</p> <p>The Chairman asked what progress had been made on this issue. Avril Walton indicated that the report had been circulated to all schools with an e-mail signposting them to the Website.</p> <p>Servicing of the Forum</p> <p>In reply to a question from the Chairman, Dawn Morris indicated that she had been in touch with other Local Authorities and would report further on this matter to the March meeting.</p> <p>School Meals</p> <p>Chris Holliday was invited to address the Forum on the current position on this item. He advised that Cabinet had decided against implementing a management fee but the Service would be implementing the rest of the Management Action Plan without the management fee. The decision would present the Service with financial problems as it would not be possible to close the gap. This issue was now being considered by Council officers and the Portfolio holder for Resources. Chris indicated his intention to write to all Head Teachers and notify</p>	<p>Item for March meeting</p> <p>To be considered in conjunction with agenda item.</p>

	<p>them of the decision. He could not give a guarantee that he would not come back later in the year to revisit the introduction of a management fee as the financial position of the service might necessitate it. The draft letter was currently with the Executive Director and the Portfolio holder for Children's Services and would be despatched by the end of the week, with forms for completion and return to him by 8th February.</p> <p>In reply to a question from Mr. Cheminais, Mr. Holliday indicated that he had received about 20 replies to the initial form he had circulated, the majority preferring to remain with Catering Services. He would not be making assumptions and would contact the remainder.</p> <p>Sue Bradford referred to the original form and pointed out that it made reference to the management fee. Mr. Holliday confirmed that the new form did not include reference to the management fee, however, Catering Services would treat all forms as ignoring the management fee.</p> <p>Mr. Holliday thanked the Forum for its patience and was thanked likewise.</p>	
<p>5 22.1.08</p>	<p>Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)</p> <p>There were no items on the agenda which the Forum considered should be dealt with in private session, although it was AGREED that the Forum would discuss issues relating to Cost Pressures without officers from SERCO and Walsall Council (excluding the Clerk) being in attendance.</p>	
<p>6 22.1.08</p>	<p>Cost Pressures</p> <p>Dawn Morris outlined the report and asked the Forum to give consideration to an additional cost pressure of Rate Relief. She explained that the Council was removing the 20% discretionary rate relief, in consequence of which, it would be necessary to find in the region of £225,000. This would affect about 10 of the denomination schools and it would be necessary to change the formula to allow the Forum to meet the cost. Avril Walton</p>	

	<p>indicated that if the £30,000 fee for servicing the Forum was removed, there would be no additional support available for developmental needs.</p> <p>At this juncture, the time being 6.30 p.m. non-Members of the Forum left the meeting with the exception of the Clerk and Kim Delaney who would become a Member of the Forum with effect from February.</p> <p>The Forum discussed the cost pressure relating to servicing the Forum and, following a period of discussion, AGREED UNANIMOUSLY:-</p> <p>That the cost pressure of £30,000 in relation to servicing the Forum to be removed. It was also decided that the expenses of the Forum be more effectively managed from the existing budget of £10,000.</p> <p>The non-Members of the Forum were re-admitted to the meeting at 7.00 p.m. and advised of the decision. The Forum then proceeded to discuss the remaining cost pressures.</p> <p>Dawn Morris explained the cost pressures for 2008/09 and it was AGREED as follows:-</p> <p>(a) That the following cost pressures for Funding Period 1 (2008/09) be approved:-</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th><u>Description</u></th><th><u>Retained/ Delegated</u></th><th><u>Cost £</u></th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Inflation - Pay and general</td><td>Delegated</td><td>3,232,215</td></tr> <tr> <td>Inflation - Pay and general</td><td>Retained</td><td>400,000</td></tr> <tr> <td>Deprivation Review</td><td>Delegated</td><td>1,625,000 (Minimum)</td></tr> <tr> <td>Personalised Learning</td><td>Delegated</td><td>1,940,000 (Government priority)</td></tr> <tr> <td>Looked After Children</td><td>Retained</td><td>217,500 (statutory requirement)</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Retained/ Delegated</u>	<u>Cost £</u>	Inflation - Pay and general	Delegated	3,232,215	Inflation - Pay and general	Retained	400,000	Deprivation Review	Delegated	1,625,000 (Minimum)	Personalised Learning	Delegated	1,940,000 (Government priority)	Looked After Children	Retained	217,500 (statutory requirement)	<p>Dawn Morris to action</p> <p>Dawn Morris to action</p>
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	<div>Business Rates225,000</div> <div><div>(b)That the cost pressure in relation to Increase in Union Support be removed; (Note:- Marion Letts, Staff Side Representative, abstained from voting on this item);</div><div>(c)That it be noted that details of the cost pressure in relation to Statementing - growth would not be available until the March meeting;</div><div>(d)That the remaining cost pressures be agreed in the following order of priority:-<table><thead><tr><th>Description</th><th>Retained/ Delegated</th><th>Cost £</th><th>Priority</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Increase in places - Mary Elliot</td><td>Delegated</td><td>500,000</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>Increase in places - new primary/ secondary</td><td>Delegated</td><td>115,000</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Education Recording Licence</td><td>Retained</td><td>10,000</td><td>3</td></tr></tbody></table></div></div> <div><div>(e)That the cost pressures for Funding Periods 2 and 3 (2009/10 and 2010/11 respectively) be agreed on the same lines as those for 2008/09 and the cost pressure for Secondary Sensory ARP be Priority 4 for each of those periods. At this juncture, it was AGREED that the Forum would consider Item 9 on the agenda relating to Standards Fund - ICT - Harnessing Technology Grant.</div></div>	Description	Retained/ Delegated	Cost £	Priority	Increase in places - Mary Elliot	Delegated	500,000	1	Increase in places - new primary/ secondary	Delegated	115,000	2	Education Recording Licence	Retained	10,000	3	<div>Dawn Morris to action</div> <div>Dawn Morris to action</div> <div>Dawn Morris to action</div> <div>Dawn Morris to action</div>
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9. 22.1.08	Standards Fund - ICT - Harnessing Technology Grant																	

	<p>Stephen Read and Sue Edward, from Education Walsall, were in attendance for this item and outlined the report and responded to questions.</p> <p>After a period of discussion it was AGREED:-</p> <p>(a) That additional funding over and above the 25% retention amount be held centrally to allow the following projects to be undertaken:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - E-safety - £70k - Upgrade of network circuits to schools - £105k <p>(b) That further consideration be given to the following projects:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self Review Framework - Community Wireless (contribution only towards cost - Partners to be included) <p>(c) That consideration of the SiF (Schools Interoperability Framework) be deferred until April, 2008;</p> <p>(d) That schools allocations be based on a lump sum of £1,000, plus a per fte pupil amount;</p> <p>(e) That, wherever possible, Service Level Agreements be negotiated.</p>	<p>Stephen Read to action</p> <p>Stephen Read to action</p> <p>Stephen Read to action</p> <p>Stephen Read to action</p> <p>Stephen Read to action</p>
<p>7. 22.1.08</p>	<p>Diplomas 14 - 16 Funding Review</p> <p>Avril Walton explained that a small amount was required to fund these pressures for 2008/09, in the region of £30k. Two schools were involved. There had been difficulty in extracting the view of how this should be done but the following options had been put forward:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Authority to retain the money and hold any risks; 2. A 'halfway house'; 	

	<p>3. Schools to have the money and hold any risks.</p> <p>She asked the Forum to consider these options.</p> <p>Schools had been consulted and only 4 replies had been received, the consensus being to start with Option 3 and then transfer to Option 1.</p> <p>She pointed out that it was not necessary to make a decision on this item tonight, in consequence of which, it was AGREED that this matter be deferred to the next meeting.</p>	<p>Avril Walton to action</p>
<p>8. 22.1.08</p>	<p>Standards Fund - School Lunch Grant</p> <p>A report was circulated.</p> <p>A short discussion took place, following which, it was AGREED that Option 3 detailed in the report be adopted for the distribution of the School Lunch Grant.</p>	<p>Dawn Morris to action</p>
<p>10. 22.1.08</p>	<p>Benchmarking - response from Primary and Secondary Heads Forums</p> <p>It was NOTED that the report had been distributed to all schools and that a response was awaited.</p>	<p>Avril Walton to action</p>
<p>11. 22.1.08</p>	<p>Funding Formula 2008 - 2011 - 'change of character'</p> <p>A report was circulated explaining the term 'change of character'.</p> <p>The report was noted.</p>	
<p>12. 22.1.08</p>	<p>Annual Report - 13th June, 2006 to 13th March, 2007</p> <p>A copy of the Annual Report was circulated.</p> <p>It was AGREED that the report be NOTED and circulated to all schools.</p>	<p>Avril Walton/Clerk to action</p>

