

Schools Forum

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 11th March, 2014 at 4.00 p.m. at Blakenall Village Centre, Thames Road, Blakenall, Walsall

Present:- Mr. M. Vlahakis (Chairman)
Dr. A. Bruton (Vice-Chairman)
Mrs. M. Sheehy
Ms. T. Coles
Mr. G. Crowther
Dame M. Brennan
Mrs. B.E. Westwood
Ms. M. Yates
Mr. F. Hodgkinson
Mr. B. Powell
Mr. M. Ison

Mr. T. Milovsorov attended as substitute for Mrs C. Fraser

Mr. E. Loft attended as substitute for Mr. R. Bragger

In Attendance:- Louise Hughes - Assistant Director, Children's Services, Walsall MBC
Jane Bonner - Walsall Children's Services, Walsall MBC
Dan Mortiboys - Education Finance, Walsall MBC
Dawn Morris - Education Finance, Walsall MBC

		Action
1. 11.3.14	Apologies Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Mrs. G. Healy, Mrs. M. Woodcock, Mr. S. Pritchard-Jones, Ms. H. Harnisch, Mr. A. Orlik, Mrs. C. Draper, Mr. R. Bragger, Mrs. C. Fraser and Mr. M. Allman.	
2. 11.3.14	Minutes - 11th February, 2014	The minutes of the meeting held on 11 th February, 2014 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.
3. 11.3.14	Matters arising from the minutes There were no matters arising from the minutes.	

4. 11.3.14	<p>Late items to be introduced by the Chairman</p> <p>There were no late items for introduction by the Chairman.</p>	
5. 11.3.14	<p>Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)</p> <p>There were no items for consideration in the private session.</p>	
6. 11.3.14	<p>Special Schools Funding Formula</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Ms. Morris highlighted the contents of the report and confirmed that Transition Method 3 would be applied to funding option No. 2 which would reduce the number of bandings from 15 to 10. Supplementary papers were circulated at the meeting. Supplementary paper 1 related to the summary of variation of modelled and proposed 2014-15 place numbers compared to 2013-14 Section 215 and Appendix 1 relating to the 2014-15 top-up values for Walsall Special Schools, prior to new delegations. These papers showed that the Working Group had looked at the place numbers that would be used and at changes since January, as well as potential changes during the Summer Term; the Group also considered what the place numbers might be in September in pre and post 16. The funded numbers would impact on the funded places in 2014/15 and the majority of schools would generate additional income over the forthcoming financial year.</p> <p>With regard to the numbers in Special Schools, the DfE had allocated 914 places for high needs in Walsall and would allow some movement for pre and post 16 and between institutions. Agreement from the DfE for those proposals were still awaited.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>(1) That the content of the report be noted;</p>	

	<p>(2) That Schools Forum supports proposed use of Option 2 from the review as the funding mechanism for the allocation of funds to special schools for 2014-15 financial year;</p> <p>(3) That Schools Forum support special head teachers preferred method of local transition as described in Method 3.</p>	
<p>7. 11.3.14</p>	<p>Approval of Central Expenditure (including Early Years)</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>In response to points raised by Mr. Ison, Mr. Mortiboys undertook to contact him with regard to licences held centrally.</p> <p>Mr. Mortiboys confirmed that funding had been held for advanced skills teachers should this be required but Forum could agree to include it in the formula if it so wished.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>(1) That Schools Forum approve Tables, 1, 2 and 3, subject to the cost in 2014/15 for advanced skills teachers moving back into the formula, to form the basis for central expenditure for the 2014/15 financial year;</p> <p>(2) That Schools Forum note the low level of central retained funds compared to previous years;</p> <p>(3) That Schools Forum note that Part 5 areas are the de-delegated funds that were reported and approved by Schools Forum in October, 2013.</p>	
<p>8. 11.3.14</p>	<p>Update on National Fair Funding Formula (NFFF)</p> <p>Mr. Mortiboys stated that a meeting with the EFA and Local Authority colleagues was anticipated to take place on 23rd April, 2014 on this issue but, as yet, no information had been made available.</p>	

<p>9. 11.3.14</p>	<p>Walsall Association of Governors</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Mrs. Yates informed the Forum that 18 Governors had attended a meeting at Queen Marys on 23rd February, 2014 out of which, 10 had volunteered to set up a Steering Group for Primary, Secondary and Academies and would be meeting again on 1st April, 2014 to agree a framework for the Association. The Constitution for the Association would also be reviewed. The Steering Group would be responsible for noting the success of the use of the funding and also be accountable for its use.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>(1) That approval be given to the use of 'surplus' to support £10,000 investment in Walsall Governors Association for 2014/15;</p> <p>(2) That Schools Forum support a request to the Secretary of State if required and the Education Funding Agency for approval for the use of the funding should that be required.</p>	
<p>10. 11.3.14</p>	<p>Achievement of Vulnerable Learners</p> <p>A report was tabled at the meeting.</p> <p>Ms. Hughes highlighted the content of the report. She stated that one of the five strands in the School Improvement Plan related to vulnerable learners; behaviour and attendance remained a significant issue for some schools and the sharing of good practice was required. The engagement of parents in children's learning was necessary and there was a need for more speech and language target areas for some families. The school improvement and operational plans contained outcomes which would be reported directly to the School Improvement Strategy Head Teachers Working Group. The programme would be funded from the underspend in the high needs block and progress on its use would be overseen by the School Improvement Strategy Head Teachers Working Group.</p>	

	<p>Mr. Mortiboys confirmed that the funded top-up forecast for 2013/14 had been carried out differently and was based on a learner by learner forecast.</p> <p>Ms. Morris confirmed that the forecast was based on certain numbers of children using different providers and whilst a number had been forecast, the actual take up had been lower and this created a surplus.</p> <p>In response to points raised, Ms. Hughes stated that vulnerable learners related to learners, including those with special educational needs.</p> <p>Mr. Mortiboys confirmed that the spend would be monitored closely, it would be measurable with an audit trail and reported to future meetings of Schools Forum for monitoring purposes. The Council would not spend ring fenced grant on any issues that it should not. The funding would be included on the correct line in the Section 251 statement and, therefore, reported appropriately, however, it would form an extension of DSG spend and reports could be submitted to Forum on that issue.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the contents of the report be noted and a further report be submitted to the next meeting to be held on 8th April, 2014.</p>	
<p>11. 11.3.14</p>	<p>Leadership Development - Funding Support</p> <p>A report was tabled at the meeting.</p> <p>Ms. Hughes outlined the content of the report and Mr. Mortiboys confirmed that there would be sufficient capacity left from the surplus to fund the proposal, however, in the event of that not being the case, the project would cease.</p> <p>Mr. Crowther asked if information could be submitted to the Forum regarding the responsibility for reporting in twelve months time on the success and accountability of the project.</p> <p>Ms. Hughes confirmed that the Assistant Director for School Improvement would report to the Forum</p>	

	<p>and that both operational plans could be submitted.</p> <p>Mrs. Coles questioned why schools had requested funding for middle leaders as schools should be carrying out this process.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the report be noted and that a report be submitted to the next meeting on the funding for middle leaders and accountability and progress in relation to the project.</p>	
<p>12. 11.3.14</p>	<p>Education Development Centre</p> <p>Mr. Mortiboys circulated the Cabinet report dated 11th December, 2013 relating to Rushall Primary School and the Education Development Centre for information.</p> <p>Members were informed that condition surveys and head teachers meetings had taken place in respect of the list of areas of maintenance and the schools that required additional capital. Rushall Primary School had been identified as one of the worst primary school buildings in the Borough and with regard to capital spend, approximately £¼ million would be used to make improvements to the Education Development Centre with the rest of the allocated funding being spent on Rushall Primary School.</p> <p>With regard to proposals for the Education Development Centre, Members were informed that these should be referred to the Primary Schools Forum and WASH for their views as it would be necessary to ensure that the scheme would be viable and self sustaining.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the report be received and noted.</p>	
<p>13. 11.3.14</p>	<p>Free School Meals</p> <p>Mr. Mortiboys informed the Forum that requests for all bids to be submitted to the Authority by 18th March had been made. These would be collated</p>	

	<p>and sent out. The bids would be evaluated and compared and that process should take place on 25th March, 2014.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the information be noted.</p>	
<p>14. 11.3.14</p>	<p>Dates for Future Meetings and Extended Forward Plan</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Mr. Mortiboys outlined the content of the report.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>(1) That Schools Forum endorse the draft meeting plan and extended Forward Plan as set out in the report and agree to cancel the Forum scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 25th March, 2014 and include an additional meeting to be held on Tuesday, 8th April, 2014 at Barr Beacon School commencing at 4.00 p.m. to consider the reports on vulnerable learners and leadership development in more detail;</p> <p>(2) That the meeting scheduled on the draft programme for 7th October, 2014 be changed to Tuesday, 14th October, 2014;</p> <p>(3) That a Sub-Committee be established for the purposes of monitoring the budget and reporting its findings to meetings of Schools Forum, the membership to be determined at the next meeting.</p>	
<p>15. 11.3.14</p>	<p>Forward Plan</p> <p>The Forward Plan was submitted.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the Forward Plan be noted.</p>	

<p>16. 11.3.14</p>	<p>Late items to be introduced by the Chairman</p> <p>There were no late items submitted.</p>	
<p>17. 11.3.14</p>	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>There was no correspondence circulated to the meeting.</p>	
<p>18. 11.3.14</p>	<p>Retirement of Louise Hughes</p> <p>The Forum was informed that Louise Hughes would be retiring from the Local Authority with effect from 31st March, 2014; 2 Assistant Directors had been appointed, Mr. Bill Robinson for Early Help and Lynda Poole for Access and Achievement and Integrated Young People's Service.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked Louise for her attendance at Forum meetings and the hard work she had carried out in Walsall.</p>	
<p>19. 11.3.14</p>	<p>Date and time of next meeting</p> <p>It was NOTED that the next meeting of Schools Forum would be held on Tuesday, 8th April, 2014 at 4.00 p.m. at Barr Beacon School, Old Hall Lane, Aldridge, Walsall, WS9 0RF.</p>	

The meeting terminated at 5.20 p.m.