

Schools Forum

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 10 January, 2017 at 4.00 p.m. at Blakenall Village Centre, Thames Road, Blakenall, Walsall

Present:- Dr. A. Bruton (Vice Chairman) in the Chair
Mrs C. Draper
Mrs M. Sheehy
Ms T. Coles
Mr. S. Davies
Mr. K. Whittlestone
Dame Brennan
Mrs H. Keenan
Mrs C. Fraser
Miss L. Emery
Mrs M. Yates
Mr. B. Powell
Mr. I. Baker
Ms. D. Clarke
Mr. S. Pritchard-Jones
Mr R. Bragger
Mr. A. Orlik

In Attendance:- Mrs. L. Poole – Assistant Director - Access & Achievement
Mr. L. Haynes - Education Finance
Ms D. Morris – Education Finance
Ms C. Goss – Head of SEND and Inclusion
Mrs C. Guest –
Ms. K. Stokes -
Mrs B. Mycock – Legal and Democratic Services

		Action
1. 10.01.17	Minutes – 6 December, 2016 The minutes of the meeting held on 11 th October, 2016 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.	
2. 10.01.17	Matters arising from the minutes (a) Ms Coles referred to page 2 and advised that the Apprenticeship Levy Working Group would meet every 2 to 3 weeks. She stated Walsall had a comparable approach to Sandwell and advised that monies not spent within two years would be returned to the Government. (b) Dame Brennan referred to page 3, paragraph 42 and enquired if there had been progress on recruitment and Mr Davies enquired of the number of EPs in Walsall	

	<p>In response, Mrs Poole confirmed a review of the service was taking place and Members would be advised of any appointments via the Link.</p> <p>Ms Goss confirmed Walsall was 2 posts down and using agency staff in the interim and she would provide the Forum with the number of EPs within Walsall.</p> <p>(c) In response to Dame Brennan's query on page 6, Admissions Service Update, Mrs Poole confirmed that Cabinet deadlines dictated report and publication dates</p> <p>(d) Mrs Poole referred to page 7 and advised members she had received 8 bids for Universal Infant Free School Meals.</p>	<p>Mrs Poole to provide details on the Link when appointments made.</p> <p>Ms Goss to provide number of EPs in Walsall</p>
3. 10.01.17	<p>Apologies</p> <p>Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Mr. M. Vlahakis (Chair), Mrs B.E. Westwood, Mrs G. Healy, Mr. F. Hodgkinson, Councillor Burley</p>	
4. 10.01.17	<p>Late Items (urgent) to be introduced by the Chairman</p> <p>The Chair agreed to take a late item at the end of the meeting from Mr. R. Bragger in relation to Financial Publications</p>	
5. 10.01.17	<p>Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)</p> <p>There were no items for consideration in private session.</p>	
6. 10.01.17	<p>Responding to Increasing School Exclusions</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Ms Guest outlined the contents of the report and sought the Forum's views on the proposal to align resources using the capacity available in the high needs block and to enable a multi-agency response designed to address the increasing trend of permanent exclusions with greater emphasis on early recognition of high risk factors and refocusing on resources to address the root causes at an early stage.</p> <p>Members considered the recommendations made to standardise the practice across agencies and the following</p>	

	<p>comments were made:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • immediate need for service with the emphasis on 'rapid' • geared towards KS3 / KS4 - KS2 does not seem to have been acknowledged • need clear definitions of reasons • what happening to children out of school (CME) • schools share the aims but issues remained when there were no other options other than to exclude a pupil • why was New Leaf Centre's ceiling age at 25 and whether some money could be utilised to increase its capacity • when would the 2014/15 exclusion data be available <p>In response to questions, Mrs Poole reported that the CME group met monthly and she would provide data for the next Schools Forum, the New Leaf Centre would be tracking long term pupils, additional money to be invested but the ethos should be on pupils remaining in a school.</p> <p>Ms Guest advised the 2014/15 exclusions data would be published in July 2017.</p> <p>Mr Davies reported the overall feel from Primary Heads was to back the recommendations contained in the report. This was seconded by Mrs Sheehy.</p> <p>Schools Forum noted the recommendations made to standardise practice across agencies.</p>	<p>Mrs Poole to provide CME data to March meeting.</p>
<p>7. 10.01.17</p>	<p>School Ready Investment and Update on Two Year Old Expenditure</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Ms Stokes outlined the contents of the report.</p> <p>In response to questions, Ms Stokes stated the EY Improvement Plan and the EY/LAC Plan had not been shared but would be included on the Link and that she would confirm/clarify details of attendees of the SLE/hub leaders programme and the literacy and numeracy specialist programme.</p> <p>In relation to the Schools Forum's position regarding payments towards refreshments for training and conferences, the Chair stated attendees should be valued and refreshments must continue to be provided.</p>	<p>Ms Stokes to include EY info on Link and confirm detail of attendees on training programmes</p>

<p>8. 10.01.17</p>	<p>SEN Update (verbal)</p> <p>Ms Goss gave a verbal update and advised Forum Members of the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortage of EPs remains a challenge • 735 (SEN) statements remaining for transfer (46%) • Statutory time scales remain a challenge – currently 35.7% completed • 262 requests for needs assessments since January 2016 - 205 agreed • EHCPs taken on colleges / FE, 16+ have EHOPS • SEN support is being looked at in relation to retainment levels as Walsall is below the national average • Linking with CCG and looking for assistance from the Health Authority • Significant additional school places required and discussions taking place – meeting next week with Headteachers – difficulties around Years 1 and 2 and Years 10 and 11 (significant behaviour difficulties), trying to commission special school places • Looking at EHCPs to make more streamlined and will meet with workers and officers <p>The Chairman requested clarification regarding the commissioning of additional places. In response, Mrs Poole stated Walsall needed to scrutinise its current provision to prevent young people going out of the local authority and thus reducing out of borough assistance. Ms Guest added that EHCPs now covered young people up to the age of 25 and this could have serious financial implications. Officers were working with WAC and Walsall College on this issue.</p>	
<p>9. 10.01.17</p>	<p>Early Years Funding Formula Review</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Mr Haynes informed Schools Forum of the work that had been undertaken with regard to the Early Years Funding Formula and he highlighted the salient points contained therein and sought the Forum's views of the proposed financial arrangements for 2017/18.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government commitment was for 3 years with no commitment after this period • Mrs Draper informed Schools Forum of a 'Save State Funding Nursery Schools' petition and asked members to support either through Facebook or via petition.parliament.uk/petitions 	<p>All to note petition.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dawn – part of funding and requirements is a social exclusion fund to capture SEN and how schools access the fund - £600 per child identified – proforma for parents if in receipt of disability allowance and also social exclusion funding <p>Resolved</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) That Schools Forum note the work that had been undertaken in reviewing the Early Years Funding Formula in advance of 2017/18 2) That Schools Forum fed back their views in relation to the proposed financial arrangements for 2017/18 3) That School Forum note that following the meeting, the proposed financial arrangements will be communicated with all early years providers and be reported to the Council's Cabinet for decision on 8th February, 2017. 	
10. 10.01.17	<p>Sign Off Central Expenditure Budget</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That School Forum approve tables 1, 2 and 3 as set out in the report to form the basis for central expenditure for the 2017/18 financial year</p> <p>All elected members with voting rights voted as follows:-</p> <p>FOR = 13 votes AGAINST = 0</p>	
11. 10.01.17	<p>High Needs Funding Formula Review</p> <p>This item was postponed until the next meeting.</p>	That the report be submitted to the March meeting
12. 10.01.17	<p>Schools Funding Formula</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Mr. Haynes outlined the contents of the report and drew attention to paragraph 4 which detailed the 2017/18 Schools Funding Formula Pro-forma.</p> <p>In response to questions asked, Mr Haynes and Ms Morris confirmed that 4 x secondary schools and 26 x primary schools would see reduced funding with other schools seeing</p>	

	<p>an improvement in their funding; the IDACI element was calculated on post codes and worked out in the proportion of pupils within the schools; the consideration of deprivation of particular areas was not taken into consideration by the DfE only historical spending.</p> <p>The Chairman expressed concern that Schools Forum would have to make a decision with a lack of information in relation to the change of methodology.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) That Schools Forum noted the overall level of DSG funding 2) That Schools Forum noted the adjustments to funding factor values that are required for 2017/18 to ensure that allocations to mainstream schools via the local funding formula are affordable within the funding that is available (updated values set out at Appendix B of the report) 3) That Schools Forum endorsed and recommended the formula (as set out at Appendix B of the report) including the changes to funding factor values that are indicated above and set out within the report to the Director of Children's Services, portfolio holder for Children's Services and Education, and the EFA <p>All elected members with voting rights voted as follows:-</p> <p>FOR = 12 votes AGAINST = 3 ABSTAIN = 0 votes</p>	
<p>13. 10.01.17</p>	<p>ESG – Centralisation of Retained Duties Funds 2017/18</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Mr. Haynes outlined the contents of the report and it was:-</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That Schools Forum approves the centralisation of funding of £700k for 2017/18 in relation to the statutory duties that the local authority provides to all schools. These services were previously funded through the Education Services Grant (ESG), however, this grant has ceased from 2017/18 with funding for retained duties now included within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)</p>	

	<p>Elected members with voting rights voted as follows:-</p> <p>FOR = 12 votes AGAINST = 0 votes</p>	
<p>14. 10.01.17</p>	<p>ESG – Centralisation of General Duties Funds 2017/18</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Mr. Haynes outlined the salient points contained therein.</p> <p>In response to questions, Mr Haynes stated that should the local authority and Schools Forum be unable to reach consensus on the amount of funding to be retained, the local authority will need to consider its position and any other options available to it, with the operation guidance setting out that if no agreement can be reached the matter will need to be referred to the Secretary of State.</p> <p>Maintained school members only of Schools Forum with voting rights voted unanimously against the officers recommendation within the report as follows:-</p> <p>FOR = 0 AGAINST = 9</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That Schools Forum asked the local authority to seek to utilise unallocated DSG reserves to fund the services set out in the report for 2017/18 only, with further work to be undertaken during 2017/18 with Schools Forum members to look at options for future years.</p> <p>FOR = 10 AGAINST = 0</p>	
<p>15. 10.01.17</p>	<p>Review of Local Government Pension Scheme Past Service Pension Costs Allocation</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Mr Haynes provided additional information as requested by Schools Forum in regard to the level of current service pension contributions for school staff. The information provided within the report supplemented previous information regarding past service pension costs relating to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and the potential approaches for allocating these costs to individual schools.</p> <p>Comments raised included:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vast differences in options, concerns already lean on 	

	<p>staffing and schools do not have the money</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option 2 seems too blunt a tool and was Option 3 as it based on now? • A transition period is required and therefore more time is needed to consider due to the large cost implications • Would like to see a model with the full data included (least hurting) • Website available for comments – schoolcuts.org but not many people aware of it <p>Maintained school members only of Schools Forum with voting rights voted on all options as follows:-</p> <p>a) To maintain the current situation with further work to be undertaken in 2017/18, to be discussed in association with the National Funding Formula - FOR = 7</p> <p>b) Option 1 - FOR = 3</p> <p>c) Option 2 - FOR = 0</p> <p>d) Option 3 - FOR = 0</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That Schools Forum maintain the current situation with further work to be undertaken in 2017/18, to be discussed in association with the National Funding Formula</p>	
<p>16. 10.01.17</p>	<p>Dates of Future Meetings</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>(a) That, subject to availability of the venue identified, the timetable for meetings of the Forum be agreed for the year as follows and to be held at 4.00 p.m. at Blakenall Village Centre, Thames Road, Blakenall, Walsall:-</p> <p>Tuesday, 27 June, 2017 (Summer) Tuesday, 19 September, 2017 (Autumn) Tuesday, 17 October, 2017 (Autumn) Tuesday, 16 January, 2018 (Spring)</p>	

	<p>(b) That, in the event of additional meetings proving necessary, provisional dates be agreed as follows:-</p> <p>Tuesday, 5 December, 2017 (Autumn) Tuesday, 6 March, 2018 (Spring) Tuesday 26 June, 2018 (Summer)</p>	
<p>17. 10.01.17</p>	<p>Forward Plan</p> <p>The Forward Plan was submitted.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the Forward Plan be noted.</p>	
<p>18. 10.01.17</p>	<p>Late Items</p> <p>Russ Bragger enquired if Schools Forum could be informed of all future school financial forecasts particularly if the forecasts may have financial implications on other schools' budgets; he cited the example of the increased PAN of 5 schools</p>	
<p>19. 10.01.17</p>	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>There was no late correspondence.</p>	
<p>20. 10.01.17</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, 7 March, 2017 at 4.00 p.m. at Blakenall Village Centre, Thames Road, Blakenall, Walsall.</p>	
	<p>The meeting terminated at 6.25 p.m.</p>	
	<p>Signed:</p>	<p>Date:</p>