

## Schools Forum

**Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 5 December 2006 at 4.00 p.m.  
at the Education Development Centre, Pelsall Lane, Rushall, Walsall**

**Present:** Mr. N. Chomyk (Chairman)  
Mr. A.F. Cheminais  
Mr. J. Baker  
Mrs. E. Maher  
Mr. S. Holtam  
Mr. J.P. Clarke  
Mr. A. Davies  
Mr. E. Gee  
Mr. M. Barton  
Ms. H. Lomas  
Mr. F. Hodgkinson  
Mr. M. Sweeney  
Mr. S. Haywood  
Mr. A. Bowater  
Mr. R. Yeomans

**In Attendance:** Mr. G. McQueen (Education Walsall)  
Ms. D. Morris (Education Walsall)  
Ms. M. Harmitt (Walsall Council)  
Mrs. M. Letts (Pupil Support Centre)

		<b>Action</b>
<b>1. 5.12.06</b>	<b>Apologies</b>  Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillor Zahid Ali, Mrs. R. Poyser, Ms. C. Green and Miss S.M. Bradford.	
<b>2. 5.12.06</b>	<b>Minutes - 10<sup>th</sup> October 2006</b>	Minutes approved as a correct record
<b>2.1 5.12.06</b>	<b>Receipt of Papers</b>  Marion Letts indicated that she had not received papers for the meeting.  Anyone else who is not receiving papers, either by post or e-mail, to contact the Clerk.	Clerk to check postal address and e-mail address for Mrs. Letts

<p><b>2.2</b> <b>5.12.06</b></p>	<p><b>Budget 2006/07 - Extended Schools Funding</b></p> <p>Nothing to report.</p>	<p>Issue to remain on Forward Plan. Report to be prepared for future meeting</p>
<p><b>2.3</b> <b>5.12.06</b></p>	<p><b>Delegation of funds for school meals</b></p> <p>Nothing to report</p>	<p>Issue to remain on Forward Plan. Report detailing options and recommendations to be submitted to future meeting</p>
<p><b>2.4</b> <b>5.12.06</b></p>	<p><b>Deprivation Funding - Child Poverty Fair Funding for schools</b></p> <p>Ms. H. Lomas to arrange for nomination of special school representative to Working Group.</p>	<p>Preliminary report of Working Group to be presented to Schools Forum in March 2007</p>
<p><b>2.5</b> <b>5.12..06</b></p>	<p><b>Section 52 Table 4 Data for 2006/07</b></p> <p>The Forum was reminded that certain of the boxes in the Section 52 document were incomplete. A document in a more printable form was awaited. When received, the document would be circulated to all Forum members.</p>	<p>George McQueen to address</p>
<p><b>2.6</b> <b>5.12.06</b></p>	<p><b>Analysis of School Balances at the end of the 2005/06 year</b></p>	<p>A further report would be submitted to Cabinet in due course</p>
<p><b>3.</b> <b>5.12.06</b></p>	<p><b>Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)</b></p> <p>The Forum was advised that there were no items for consideration in the private session.</p>	

<p><b>3.1</b> <b>5.12.06</b></p>	<p><b>Change in order of agenda items</b></p> <p>At this juncture, with the approval of the Forum, item 7 relating to the Election of School Governor representative on Schools Forum, was considered.</p>	
<p><b>7.</b> <b>5.12.06</b></p>	<p><b>Election of School Governor representative on Schools Forum</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Results of election for primary and secondary school governor representatives on Schools Forum were noted.</p> <p>No nominations were received in respect of special school governor representation.</p>	<p>Report noted</p> <p>George McQueen to write to all Special School Governing Bodies seeking interest. In the event of more than one nomination being received, George McQueen and Clerk to arrange the necessary election. Should a ballot prove necessary, ballot papers to be numbered.</p>
<p><b>4.</b> <b>5.12.06</b></p>	<p><b>Deprivation Funding - Child Poverty: Fair Funding for Schools</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>In addition to head teacher and governor colleagues assigned to the Working Group, it was agreed to add the following officers:-</p>	

	<p>Education Walsall's Data Manager</p> <p>Education Walsall's Head of Policy and Planning</p> <p>Walsall Council's Senior Housing Strategy Officer</p> <p>Timetable for review agreed as per report</p>	<p>George McQueen to contact members of Working Group to agree suitable dates for meetings within the agreed timetable</p>
<p><b>5. 5.12.06</b></p>	<p><b>National Digital Infra-structure for Schools</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Forum members asked for details of any savings to schools, so that they could evaluate the proposals more effectively.</p> <p>It was agreed that the report be referred to the Primary and Secondary Forums for comment, that the author of the report be required to attend those meetings and that this item be included on the agenda for the next meeting of Schools Forum.</p>	<p>Report to be referred to Primary and Secondary Forums.</p> <p>Issue to remain on Forward Plan for report to Forum on 23 January 2007</p>
<p><b>6. 5.12.06</b></p>	<p><b>Financial Management in Schools Standard: Proposed time-table</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>While some Forum Members continued to express concern over the additional workload achievement of the standard would generate, there was general acceptance that schools would have to comply with the FMSiS standard on the timetable presented.</p> <p>Mr McQueen advised the Forum that a traded service development of a half-day FMSiS preparation visit to schools was planned. The Authority was also buying in to the service of HCSS to help assemble the evidence needed to complete the self assessment for the FMSi. He went on to say that schools could achieve "narrow-fail" and that they would be given a 20 day period to rectify the situation and achieve a pass.</p>	<p>Letters to be sent to all schools in first and second tranches.</p>

	<p>It was agreed that those schools identified as being as being in the first tranche be advised accordingly and should they wish to be included in the second tranche, they would be asked to identify exceptional circumstances to support their request.</p> <p>Nursery schools are not included in the timetable at the present time but that this item be included on the agenda for the next meeting on 23 January 2007 when a nursery Early Years representative would be able to attend.</p>	<p>Item to remain on agenda for 23 January 2007 - specific reference to nursery schools</p>
<p><b>8. 5.12.06</b></p>	<p><b>Revision to the Scheme of Financing Schools</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>The Forum accepted the recommendations of the report with regard to Multi Year Budgets, the FMiS and the Notice of Concern. There was further discussion over the Balance Control Mechanism.</p> <p>There was general agreement that it was unacceptable for schools to carry forward large amounts, if the schools were being paid the incorrect rate for the work they were doing, or if there were insufficient resources being spent on basic materials.</p> <p>Mr McQueen indicated that Education Walsall wished to deal in an open and transparent manner where requests were made for “assigned projects”.</p> <p>From the Chair, Mr Chomyk enquired who would decide whether a project would be deemed as “properly assigned”. Mr McQueen replied that this was the Authority’s decision, but took note of the view expressed by Forum members that projects should be scrutinized by a group, rather than one person.</p> <p>In relation to the proposed revision to Walsall’s Scheme of Financing Schools, namely :-</p>	

	<p><b>Balance Control Mechanism</b></p> <p>It was MOVED, SECONDED and subsequently agreed by a majority of 11 to 2 that the Balance Control Mechanism based on a sliding scale of applied threshold, as set out in the report now submitted, be approved for implementation with effect from 1 January 2007 and that this be incorporated into the Scheme.</p> <p><b>Multi Year Budgets</b></p> <p>It was agreed that the proposed amendment to the Scheme, outlined in the report, be approved.</p> <p><b>Financial Management in Schools Standard</b></p> <p>It was agreed that the proposed amendment to the Scheme, outlined in the report, be approved.</p> <p><b>Notice of Concern</b></p> <p>It was agreed that the proposed amendment to the Scheme, outlined in the report be approved, in principle, subject to a provision requiring details of unallocated resources to be annexed to the Notice of Concern and that a final version of the amendment to this element of the Scheme be e-mailed to Forum Members.</p>	<p>Amendment to be provided to Clerk for submission by e-mail to all Forum Members</p>
<p><b>9. 5.12.06</b></p>	<p><b>Forward Plan</b></p> <p>A copy of the Forward Plan was submitted.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Forward Plan be received and noted and that the following item be added:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secondary Resource Unit for hearing impaired pupils</li> </ul>	<p>Clerk to update Forward Plan for submission to next meeting</p>

	<p><b>Constitution</b></p> <p>Mrs. Letts asked why she was no longer listed as a Member of the Forum.</p> <p>Mr. McQueen advised that the Constitution had recently been reviewed following the Schools Forum Amendment Regulations 2005. The Constitution no longer required a Trade Union representative. The Clerk undertook to e-mail a copy of the revised Constitution to Mrs. Letts and to all Members of the Forum.</p>	<p>Clerk to e-mail copy of Constitution as requested</p>
	<p><b>Next Meeting</b></p> <p>It was noted that the next meeting of the Forum would be at 6.00 p.m. on Tuesday 23 January 2007 in the Small Hall at the Education Development Centre, Pelsall Lane, Rushall.</p>	

The meeting terminated at 6.30 p.m.