

Schools Forum

**Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 28th September, 2010 at 4.00 p.m. at
Blakenall Village Centre, Thames Road, Blakenall, Walsall**

Present:- Mr. M. Vlahakis
Mr. A.F. Cheminais
Mr. J. Baker
Mr. D. Brownsword
Mr. S. Flynn
Mr. G. Crowther
Dame M. Brennan
Mr. J.P. Clarke
Ms. H. Lomas
Ms. M. Cryan
Mr. A. Davies
Mr. G. Deakin
Mr. F. Hodgkinson
Mrs. M. Robinson
Mr. D. Clough
Mr. A. Basi

Observers:- Mr. A. Bowater
Councillor R. Andrew
Ms. E. Ingram
Mr. G. Thornton
Mr. J. Perrins
Mr. J. Murray

In Attendance:- Ms. A. Walton (Walsall Children's Services - Serco)
Mrs. J. Taylor (Walsall Children's Services - Serco)
Mrs. L. Hemus (Walsall MBC)
Mr. K. Reader (Walsall MBC)
Mr. M. Parrott (Walsall MBC)
Ms. D. Morris (Walsall Children's Services - Serco)
Mr. D. Mortiboys (Walsall MBC)
Mrs. S. Wedgwood (Walsall Children's Services - Serco)

		Action
1. 28.9.10	Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman Resolved That Mr. J. Baker be appointed Chairman of the Forum for the next twelve months ending with the first Autumn meeting in 2011.	

	<p>Mr. Baker in the Chair</p> <p>Election of Vice-Chairman</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That Mr. S. Flynn be elected Vice-Chairman of the Forum for a period of twelve months ending with the first Autumn meeting in 2011.</p>	
<p>2. 28.9.10</p>	<p>Apologies</p> <p>Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Ms. A. Barker and Mr. S. Onions.</p>	
<p>3. 28.9.10</p>	<p>Minutes - 15th June, 2010</p>	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on 15th June, 2010 be approved and signed as a correct record.</p>
<p>4. 28.9.10</p>	<p>Matters arising from the minutes</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	
<p>5. 28.9.10</p>	<p>Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)</p> <p>The Forum was advised that there were no items for consideration in the private session.</p>	
<p>6. 28.9.10</p>	<p>Election of School Governor representations on Schools Forum</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That Mrs. Silvester and Mrs. Birch be appointed as Primary Governor representatives on the Schools Forum for the period expiring 31st March, 2014.</p>	

<p>7. 28.9.10</p>	<p>Harnessing Technology Grant</p> <p>Mr. Read confirmed that the future annual costs for Broadband access would depend on the number of schools going forward.</p> <p>Schools did have the option to opt out and safeguarding children using the Internet would need to be investigated.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the Forum agree to support the allocation of funding for the replacement of Internet circuits to schools as indicated in the report.</p>	
<p>8. 28.9.10</p>	<p>Impact of the 2010-11 Emergency Budget on the Music Service</p> <p>The Forum was informed that the Primary Forum had expressed the wish to retain the music service rather than outsource it.</p> <p>It was confirmed that some £20,000 would be required for the current year and £38,000 from next year.</p> <p>Mr. Parrott confirmed that every school in Walsall had access to the music service and there was only one school not taking up the service, this was now an Academy.</p> <p>Members spoke in support of the music service.</p> <p>Members referred to the need for full information on the cost of the service and was of the view that this should form part of an annual review paper and include on-costs.</p> <p>Resolved (Unanimously)</p> <p>That financial support from the central element of the schools budget for 2010-11 and 2011-12 (up to 31st March, 2012) be approved.</p>	

<p>9. 28.9.10</p>	<p>Urgency Sub-Committee - 21st July, 2010</p> <p>The minutes of the Urgency Sub-Committee from its meeting held on 21st July, 2010 was submitted.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the Urgency Sub-Committee minutes of 21st July, 2010 be noted.</p>	
<p>10. 28.9.10</p>	<p>Transforming Learning in Walsall - Financial Update</p> <p>Members expressed concern at the late receipt of the report. Discussions with governing bodies had not been possible, although a number of colleagues contacted indicated that they were of the view that the matter would be finalised as early as possible and that funding would return to schools budgets that had made a contribution as this was urgently required prior to the end of the financial year.</p> <p>Members expressed concern that any funds returned late could create a balance control problem. Mr. Cheminais referred to the original decision to contribute funds to BSF on the basis of the model presented and on the principle that ultimately, every school in Walsall would benefit and in view of this, the money originally contributed should be returned and any other proposal for consideration should be submitted to the Forum.</p> <p>Members requested a report to the next meeting of the Forum setting out the sums spent and the percentage that schools would be receiving.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the money contributed by schools to BSF be returned to schools as soon as possible .</p>	
<p>11. 28.9.10</p>	<p>Pensions Policies - Local Government and Teachers</p> <p>Lisa Hemus outlined the contents of the report which aimed at bringing the early retirement age for teachers and Local Government staff to 55 rather</p>	

	<p>than 58 for teachers as previously agreed.</p> <p>Members were reminded that the policy had previously been approved and the discussion related to which body would be responsible for payment; consultation had taken place with the Unions.</p> <p>Members were also reminded of the redundancy policy and that costs would fall to the decision maker to cover. The opportunity was for schools to work together in order to prevent redundancy situations as far as possible. In the event of school closures, the Local Authority would cover the costs of the redundancies.</p> <p>Members considered that a 50/50 proposal for sharing the costs for a period of two or three years could be suggested with a review of this in five years.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the proposed changes to the premature retirement, dismissal and resignation costs be put out to consultation and that a Sub Group consisting of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Mr. Vlahakis be set up to consider the consultation paper.</p>	
<p>12. 28.9.10</p>	<p>Early Years Single Funding Formula</p> <p>Julie Taylor highlighted the main points contained in the report and confirmed that any grant left at the end of the financial year would be distributed to schools and other settings on the basis of an allocation per pupil.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>(1) That the current funding position and issues in respect of the pilot scheme be noted; the methodology for the distribution of the Standards Fund Grant be agreed in the sum of £600,000 as detailed in columns 2 and 3 of the Appendix to the report; that £90,000 be allocated to pilot innovative work; and that the remaining grant be allocated to schools and other settings, using actual school numbers, for the financial year;</p>	

	<p>(2) That the Early Years Funding Sub-Group be established to consider innovative work for suggestions to schools consisting of the following Members:-</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mrs. M. Cryan, Millfields Nursery Hilary Hastings, Birchills Children's Centre Mr. C. Cheminais, Rushall JMI School Ms. J. Morgan, Charlie Caterpillars Gary Thornton, Palfrey Junior School</p>	
<p>13. 28.9.10</p>	<p>Revised Constitution</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the revised Constitution be approved, subject to the following amendment:-</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Chairman, being ex-officio of the Urgency Sub-Committee, shall have the right to move, second matters and vote.</p>	
<p>14. 28.9.10</p>	<p>Consultation on School Funding 2011-12 and introducing a Pupil Premium</p> <p>Julie Taylor drew attention to the table summarising the deprivation indicator options, together with their merits as well as the suggested responses to the consultation document.</p> <p>Mr. Flynn expressed reservations regarding the response to Question 2 as free school meals does not reflect deprivation in every school in Walsall and would, therefore, not represent a true measure of deprivation.</p> <p>Mrs. Taylor stated that the last recommendation of the consultation response used IDACI for local pupil premium; she felt that an option that demonstrated the effect of the average IDACI score of pupils educated within a Local Authority area would provide a better determination of deprivation.</p> <p>With regard to free school meals information, Members asked whether this could be included on housing benefit forms to inform schools and that a</p>	

	<p>report be submitted to a future meeting on the use of free school meals as a deprivation indicator and that it be reviewed on an annual basis as numbers fluctuate greatly each year.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the Forum endorse the attached draft consultation response to the Department for Education, subject to an amendment to the last question as follows:-</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">That an option that demonstrates the effect of the average IDACI score of pupils educated within a Local Authority area would provide a better determination of deprivation in a Local Authority area.</p>	
<p>15. 28.9.10</p>	<p>Review of the Special School Funding Formula</p> <p>Julie Taylor circulated "Model 6 - average percentage allocations across bands using 2008-11 total pupils" paper and highlighted the contents of the report.</p> <p>After consideration it was,</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the Forum agree that the proposals detailed in the report be included in the formal school funding consultation document to be issued later in the Autumn term.</p>	
<p>16. 28.9.10</p>	<p>Proposed change to the Balance Control Mechanism and the final Balances Outturn Position as at 2010</p> <p>Julie Taylor outlined the contents of the report.</p> <p>The School Balances Working Group found that the vast majority of schools in Walsall were working well within the balance control mechanism and suggested that no change be made to the percentages contained therein and that from 1st April, 2011, a balance control mechanism standards fund grant be introduced, however, this would be incorporated in the dedicated schools grant from</p>	

	<p>April, 2011.</p> <p>Mr. Mortiboys confirmed that Grant Thornton had been looking into school balances and their report would be submitted to the Forum when it became available.</p> <p>The School Balances Working Group considered the percentages that schools were allowed to carry forward as uncommitted which at present were looked at in terms of total resources. It was felt that this should be made equal from 1st April, 2011 in order that schools were treated in the same way. This would need to go out to consultation with the two suggestions made earlier.</p> <p>Mrs. Taylor confirmed that the carrying forward of sums to cover single status would constitute properly assigned sums as this was a potential liability.</p> <p>Julie Taylor also confirmed that nurseries were included in the 8% figure.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the recommendations of the School Balances Working Group be supported and the draft consultation document attached to the report be noted.</p>	
<p>17. 28.9.10</p>	<p>Dedicated Schools Grant 2010-11 Final Settlement</p> <p>The Forum was advised that the report was for information and that there was contingency to pick up the variations.</p> <p>The Forum congratulated officers in achieving such a close projection in the number of pupils.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the dedicated schools grant 2010-11 final settlement be noted.</p>	

<p>18. 28.9.10</p>	<p>Schools Forum Annual Report 2008/09 and 2009/10</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the Annual Report for 2008/09 and 2009/10 setting out the work of the Forum be noted.</p>	
<p>19. 28.9.10</p>	<p>Forward Plan</p> <p>The Forward Plan was submitted.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the Forward Plan be noted and additional items be included relating to:-</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">School Funding Regulations 2011 - consultation</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">2011/12 formula review issues</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Standards Fund Grants - mainstreaming</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">School Development Grant</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">School Standard Grant</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">School Standard Grant Personalisation will go into DSG from 1st April, 2011, the Local Authority will give permission in their new funding Regulations to give a formula factor to provide the same cash sums that schools have received historically for those grants or could explore how these could be built into existing formula</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Options Paper on distribution of funding</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Carbon Reduction Scheme - funding on behalf of schools - penalties for Local Authorities</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">BSF</p>	

<p>20. 28.9.10</p>	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>The Chair referred to an article on Section 106 funding that had been drawn to his attention.</p> <p>Ms. Walton stated that Section 106 funding was capital money. Walsall Council had a policy on Section 106 funding and Serco was involved in negotiations with developers. Cabinet would be considering a report on Section 106 monies; it was necessary to demonstrate where resources were required. Walsall did benefit from capital funding from Section 106 agreements.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the information be noted.</p>	
<p>21. 28.9.10</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, 19th October, 2010 at 4.00 p.m. at Blakenall Village Centre, Thames Road, Blakenall, Walsall.</p>	

The meeting terminated at 5.45 p.m.