

## Schools Forum

**Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2014 at 4.00 p.m. at Blakenall Village Centre, Thames Road, Blakenall, Walsall**

**Present:-** Dr. A. Bruton (Vice-Chairman)  
Mrs. M. Sheehy  
Ms. T. Coles  
Mr. S. Davies  
Mr. G. Crowther  
Mr. M. Allman  
Mrs. C. Fraser  
Mrs. W. Smith  
Mr. J. Bonhomme  
Ms. M. Yates  
Mr. F. Hodgkinson  
Mr. M. Ison  
Mr. A. Orlik  
Mr. Blackwell

**In Attendance:-** Mrs. L. Poole - Assistant Director, Children's Services, Walsall MBC  
Mr. D. Mortiboys - Education Finance, Walsall MBC  
Mrs. D. Morris - Education Finance, Walsall MBC  
Mr. L. Haynes - Senior Finance Manager, Walsall MBC  
Mrs. K. Grandison - Children's Services, Walsall MBC  
Mr. J. Stevens - Property Services, Walsall MBC

### Dr. A. Bruton in the Chair

		Action
<b>1. 9.12.14</b>	<b>Apologies</b>  Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Mr. M. Vlahakis, Mrs. C. Draper, Mr. K. Whittlestone, Dame M. Brennan, Mrs. B.E. Westwood, Mrs. G. Healy, Mr. B. Powell, Ms. H. Harnisch, Mr. J. Dwyer and Mr. R. Bragger.	
<b>2. 9.12.14</b>	<b>Minutes - 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2014</b>	The minutes of the meeting held on 14 <sup>th</sup> October, 2014 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

<p><b>3.</b> <b>9.12.14</b></p>	<p><b>Matters arising from the minutes</b></p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	
<p><b>4.</b> <b>9.12.14</b></p>	<p><b>Late items to be introduced by the Chairman</b></p> <p>The Chairman agreed that the following late items be taken at the end of the public session:-</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Learning Consortium</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Local Government Pension Scheme - Past Service costs</p>	
<p><b>5.</b> <b>9.12.14</b></p>	<p><b>Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)</b></p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That an item be considered in the private session in accordance with Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended) and at the relevant point in the meeting, the public and observers be excluded from the meeting.</p>	
<p><b>6.</b> <b>9.12.14</b></p>	<p><b>Update from Property Services and report to Cabinet 29 October, 2014</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Mr. J. Stevens, Interim Head of Property Services outlined the restructure proposals for Property Services which would come into effect on 1 April, 2015 which included a contract with Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council for the supply of works and services through two framework agreements. He outlined the benefits to schools as well as the Council and the savings that would be achieved the details of which were included in the Cabinet report attached. He presented a slide of the proposal which would be circulated to members of the Forum. It was expected that the restructure would achieve a corporate saving of £1m per year and a quality assurance process was also included.</p>	

	<p>Capital funded projects would be referred to the Customer Programme office and the appropriate route for the works to be executed would be determined at that point.</p> <p>In response to questions, Mr. Stevens confirmed that sub-contractors would be vetted by Solihull MBC and the Council.</p> <p>The cost of the service equated to a 7% to 12% fee by Solihull MBC which was lower than the current service provision and schools would be able to buy in to as much or as little as they wished.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That the report be noted.</p>	No action required
<p><b>7. 9.12.14</b></p>	<p><b>SEN update</b></p> <p>Ms. Grandison reported that the consultation process with special schools, which included staff, parents and young people at the schools, had been completed. Three open consultation sessions with colleagues from mainstream schools and any other interested parties had also been held and a fourth meeting was taking place at New Invention Infants School. Attendance at the consultation meetings had been quite good and a number of issues had been highlighted. In order to achieve increased involvement with school colleagues in the consultation, presentations had been given to the primary, nursery and special schools forum (PNS) and WASH. The next phase would involve a report to Cabinet on the outcome of consultation and the proposals to go out to formal consultation after February half term.</p> <p>The Forum was informed that extra meetings had been held with the Trades Unions at their request and Schools JNCC. Phase 2 of the consultation on the budget was circulated to schools and governors as the Council was ensuring that everyone was consulted on the budget changes, including SEN. The Council was still working on the September 2015 time line.</p>	

	<p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That the update be noted.</p>	Further update to 13 January 2015 meeting
<p><b>8. 9.12.14</b></p>	<p><b>The Role and Responsibilities of Schools Forum</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Mr. Mortiboys introduced the report and confirmed that Schools Forum had no powers around capital spend. In response to points raised, Mr. Mortiboys confirmed that an updated financial report based on S.251 could be submitted to Forum at every scheduled meeting.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>(1) That Schools Forum ensure that there is an election for a 14-19 representative when the term of office of the current member expires;</p> <p>(2) That Schools Forum note that a response from DfE was expected on revised Schools and Early Years Finance Regulations and when confirmed, appropriate changes be made to Schools Forum constitution;</p> <p>(3) That Schools Forum note that an updated induction pack will be developed in line with best practice;</p> <p>(4) That Schools Forum agree that an updated template be developed for reporting in order to ensure that all items would cross reference the reason for the report to Schools Forum, value for money issues and any other information required;</p> <p>(5) That name plates be adapted to indicate the status and sector represented by each member;</p> <p>(6) That Schools Forum note that where future items that were not under the remit of Schools Forum, the Chairman would be advised to reject those items and refer them</p>	<p>Noted and actioned</p> <p>Lloyd Haynes/Lynda Poole/Glenys Ensor</p> <p>Lloyd Haynes</p> <p>Glenys Ensor</p>

	<p>to the appropriate body;</p> <p>(7) That Schools Forum note that members were encouraged to contact officers if they felt they needed further development or training on some of the more complex financial issues;</p> <p>(8) That a S.251 financial update report be submitted to every scheduled meeting.</p>	Lloyd Haynes
<p><b>9. 9.12.14</b></p>	<p><b>Ofsted School Inspection letter</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Mrs. Poole informed the Forum that the action plan had been written and presented to the Challenge Board on 5 November, 2014 and a meeting would be taking place with the Independent Chairman on 10 December, 2014. The action plan was based on the actions identified in the Ofsted letter and a copy would be forwarded to school governors and Schools Forum in due course. After discussion it was,</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>(1) That Schools Forum ensure that sufficient work was planned to analyse and challenge balances;</p> <p>(2) That Schools Forum ensure that regular benchmarking takes place;</p> <p>(3) That Schools Forum consider school improvement when making decisions.</p>	<p>Lloyd Haynes/Lynda Poole</p> <p>Noted and to be actioned</p> <p>Noted and to be actioned</p>
<p><b>10. 9.12.14</b></p>	<p><b>Schools Forum dates and extended Forward Plan</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That the draft meeting plan and extended forward plan be endorsed.</p>	<p>To be used to formulate future agendas</p>

<p><b>11.</b> <b>9.12.14</b></p>	<p><b>Feedback from National Funding Conference</b></p> <p>Ms. Morris feedback to Schools Forum on the recent conference; the early years' pupil premium would be implemented in April 2015 and would be tracked by low income families that met the eligibility criteria. Parents would have to identify themselves as being eligible and would have to provide their national insurance number to enable checks to take place on whether parents were in receipt of the relevant benefits. Parents would be able to opt out and not provide the information that schools required. The rate for each child was 53p per hour for the maximum number of hours; the early years' pupil premium would be part of DSG and the amount of DSG attracted would be on an estimate basis provided by the DfE. There was no clarity on whether there would be claw back on the early years' pupil premium if the estimates were over and above the number of parents who applied. Seven local authorities had been identified as early years' pupil premium early implementers for three months from January to March. The DfE had undertaken to provide guidance on the development and administration of the premium; when this was available it would be included in the guidance which was under preparation which would include attracting the 2 year old entitlement.</p> <p>With regard to the longer term development of the SEN policy, the DfE was still committed to producing a national funding formula for high needs; the call for evidence came in during mid November and some field work had been commissioned with 13 local authorities. The outcome of the call for evidence and research would form the basis of advice given to the next Government on the basis of high needs funding going forward. Fundamental changes were expected in 2017 onwards. Demographics would be a challenge and it was expected that numbers would increase by 5% or more over the next 5 years.</p> <p>Early years funding requirements was still in the long term plan and the differing financial years of maintained schools and academies would be addressed with a view to bringing them together.</p>	
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	<p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That the feedback from the National Funding conference be noted.</p>	No further action at this stage
<p><b>12. 9.12.14</b></p>	<p><b>Early Years single funding formula and high needs funding formula</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Ms. Morris highlighted the contents of the report and confirmed that there would be no changes to the funding methodology next year; commissioned places would depend on responses at the end of December of high needs. Top up funding would be based on the needs of the child and the number of weeks the provision was taken up.</p> <p>Mr. Mortiboys confirmed that Cabinet would ultimately need to endorse the formulae; in view of the change in control at the Council it was appropriate to take these again. It was necessary to consult annually and this would be achieved by presenting it to Schools Forum.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>(1) That the contents of the report be noted;</p> <p>(2) That Schools Forum supports the funding methodology for special schools and early years' settings for 2015/16 as detailed in the annexed report.</p>	No further action at this stage
<p><b>13. 9.12.14</b></p>	<p><b>Update on Surplus</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>(1) That the update be noted and that a full monitoring report be produced in January 2015;</p> <p>(2) That Schools Forum note that further work will be carried out on Early Years budgeting and ensuring '2 year old monies' are committed.</p>	<p>Lloyd Haynes</p> <p>Dawn Morris</p> <p>Noted and to be actioned</p>

<b>14.</b> <b>9.12.14</b>	<p><b>Approval of Central Expenditure (including Early Years) and further De-Delegation commentary</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>After discussion it was,</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>(1) That approval be given for Tables 1 and 2 of the attached report to form the basis for central expenditure for the 2015/16 financial year;</p> <p>(2) That Schools Forum note that Part 5 areas were the de-delegated funds that were reported and approved by Schools Forum in October 2013;</p> <p>(3) That Schools Forum note that admissions were being discussed in the next report;</p> <p>(4) That Schools Forum note that Early Years Central Expenditure would be reported in January, 2015;</p> <p>(5) That the proposal for none teaching trade unions in relation to de-delegating for the 2015/16 budget be referred back to Primary/Nursery/Special schools Forum (PNS) and WASH;</p> <p>(6) That the maintained primary schools option of using contingency to fund premature retirement and redundancy costs subject to EFA approval be disregarded;</p> <p>(7) That Schools Forum note how rates adjustments would be dealt with from 1 April, 2015.</p>	<p>Noted and to be actioned</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Lloyd Haynes</p> <p>Noted and to be actioned</p> <p>Lloyd Haynes</p>
<b>15.</b> <b>9.12.14</b>	<p><b>Schools Admissions Funding</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p>	



	<p>Mr. Mortiboys outlined the content of the report and confirmed that work had taken place on the possibility of reducing the cost of the service by 10% and also improving the service. It was necessary to fund the service through DSG for the next two years. There were currently 9 posts in the Admissions service.</p> <p>Mrs. Poole stated that, by funding the service for two years, it would provide the opportunity to redesign the service.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>(1) That Schools Forum recognise that the current cost of the admissions service was more than the Dedicated Schools Grant funded provision;</p> <p>(2) That Schools Forum recommend to the EFA an increase in funding from DSG for the financial years 2015/16 and 2016/17 of c£90,000 to £331,000 per annum to run the admissions service in the short term and allow officers and schools to work together to develop the best service for children, parents and families.</p>	<p>Lloyd Haynes</p> <p>To be actioned</p>
<p><b>16.</b> <b>9.12.14</b></p>	<p><b>Forward Plan</b></p> <p>The Forward Plan was submitted.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That the forward plan of decisions be noted.</p>	
<p><b>17.</b> <b>9.12.14</b></p>	<p><b>Late items</b></p> <p><b>Learning Consortium</b></p> <p>Mrs. Poole referred to the £50,000 of Local Authority monies within the budget and confirmed that it had been agreed that this sum be shared out with the 10 clusters giving £5,000 each for literacy, numeracy, boys writing and closing the gap.</p>	

	<p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That the information above be noted.</p> <p><b>Local Government Pension Scheme – Past Service Costs</b></p> <p>A report was circulated at the meeting.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That the revised process for recovering past service costs 2015/16 be agreed.</p>	<p>To be actioned</p> <p>To be actioned</p>
<p><b>18.</b> <b>9.12.14</b></p>	<p><b>Correspondence</b></p> <p>There was no correspondence submitted.</p>	
<p><b>19.</b> <b>9.12.14</b></p>	<p><b>Date and time of next meeting</b></p> <p>It was <b>NOTED</b> that the next meeting of Schools Forum would be held on Tuesday, 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2015 at 4.00 p.m. at Blakenall Village Centre, Thames Road, Blakenall, Walsall.</p>	
<p><b>20.</b> <b>9.12.14</b></p>	<p><b>Private Session - Part II summary</b></p> <p><b>Exclusion of Public</b></p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That, during consideration of the remaining item on the agenda, the Forum considers that the item for consideration is exempt information in accordance with Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended) and Section 100A of the Local Government Act, 1972 and accordingly resolves to consider that item in private. Accordingly, the observers and staff present left the meeting.</p>	
<p><b>21.</b> <b>9.12.14</b></p>	<p><b>Use of High Needs ‘Surplus’ to fund place creation</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p>	

	<p>The Forum was advised that approval was required from the Education Funding Agency for the project and that updates would be submitted to future meetings.</p> <p>(Exempt information under Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972) (as amended)</p>	
	<p>Members were informed that this was Mr. Mortiboys last meeting of Schools Forum as he was leaving the Local Authority and they wished him every success in his new career.</p>	

The meeting terminated at 5.50 p.m.