

Schools Forum

**Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 24th June, 2008 at 400 p.m.
at the Blakenall Village Centre, Thames Road, Blakenall, Walsall**

Present: Mr. N. Chomyk (Chairman)
Mr. A.F. Cheminais
Mr. J. Baker
Mr. S. Flynn
Mr. G. Crowther
Mr. J.P. Clarke
Mrs. E. Stringer
Mr. A. Davies
Mr. G. Deakin
Mr. E. Gee
Mr. F. Hodgkinson
Mrs. M. Letts
Mrs. K. Delaney

In Attendance: Ms. A. Walton (Education Walsall)
Mr. S. Starrs (Walsall MBC)

		Action
1. 24.6.08	Apologies Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Mr. P. Heath, Miss S.M. Bradford, Mrs. E. Maher, Mr. M. Barton, Mr. M. Sweeney, Mr. S. Haywood and Mr. A. Bowater.	
2. 24.6.08	Minutes -11th March, 2008 Mrs. Letts pointed out that, although she was shown as being in attendance at the meeting on 11 th March, 2008, she had not attended due to the change in the time of the meeting. Mrs. Stringer referred to Item 4 on page 3 of the minutes and the fact that the item relating to Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAg) had apparently been considered in private session. She suggested that this was not the case as officers were present during the discussion on the item. The Clerk pointed out that the Local Government (Access to	Subject to amendments - minutes approved as a correct record

	<p>Information) Act, 1985 allowed for consideration of issues in private session where members of the press and the public were excluded. Officers were in attendance at the meeting to advise the Forum on issues and to answer questions and were not classed as either press or public.</p> <p>The issue referred to by Mrs. Stringer was, therefore, considered in private session in accordance with the legislation.</p>	
<p>3 24.6.08</p>	<p>Matters arising</p> <p>Item 5 - Key points and dates for schools for budget planning.</p> <p>Avril Walton indicated that the deadlines referred to in the report had been met.</p> <p>Item 6 - School Organisation</p> <p>Avril Walton indicated that since the last meeting, a bid for primary funding had been made and the Authority had also been successful in a bid for 'Building Schools for the Future'.</p> <p>Item 6(a) - Academies</p> <p>Avril Walton indicated that the proposals for the establishment of Academies at Shelfield and Darlaston were going ahead.</p> <p>Item 6(b) - Early Years</p> <p>Avril Walton confirmed that the Early Years Sub-Group had been meeting and a Conference had also been attended. She added that there would be a funding lead review and this Group would have a very important input to the review.</p> <p>Item 7 - Funding mechanism for 14 - 19 Diplomas</p> <p>Avril Walton confirmed that this issue had been actioned.</p> <p>Item 8 - Scope of School Specific Contingency</p> <p>Avril Walton confirmed that this issue had been actioned.</p>	

	<p>Item 9 - Standards Fund</p> <p>(a) Harnessing Technology Grant</p> <p>Avril Walton confirmed that Cabinet had now approved distribution of the Harnessing Technology Grant.</p> <p>(b) National Grid for Learning</p> <p>Avril Walton indicated that this issue had been actioned.</p> <p>(c) Computers for Pupils</p> <p>Avril Walton confirmed that this issue had been actioned.</p> <p>(d) Post LIG Transition Funding</p> <p>Avril Walton confirmed that this issue had been actioned.</p> <p>Item 10 - Dedicated Schools Grant Formula</p> <p>Avril Walton confirmed that the review was proceeding and that minutes of the Review Group were posted on 'Teachernet'.</p> <p>Item 11 - Schools Forum Membership - Terms of Office</p> <p>The Clerk indicated that a report would be submitted to the next scheduled meeting of the Forum.</p> <p>Item 12 - Schools Forum (England) (Amendment) Regulation, 2008</p> <p>(a) Avril Walton indicated that efforts were being made to obtain a representative from the 14 - 19 Partnership.</p> <p>The Chairman suggested and it was subsequently AGREED that, until such time as a 14 - 19 Partnership representative is identified, a representative from Walsall College be invited to attend future meetings of the Forum as an observer.</p>	<p>Clerk to action</p> <p>Avril Walton to action</p>
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	<p>9(e) EMAG</p> <p>The Chairman asked if a Steering Group had been set up.</p>	<p>Avril Walton to contact David Taylor</p>
<p>4 24.6.08</p>	<p>Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)</p> <p>The Forum AGREED that the public be excluded from the private session during consideration of the agenda item indicated for the reasons shown on the agenda.</p>	
<p>5 24.6.08</p>	<p>Changes in Membership</p> <p>The Forum NOTED the resignation of Stuart Holtam and the subsequent appointment of Sean Flynn and AGREED that a letter be sent to Stuart expressing the Forum's appreciation of his service to the Forum during his period of office.</p> <p>The Chairman indicated that this would have been Melanie Harmitt's last meeting of the Forum before going on maternity leave. Unfortunately, she was unable to attend this meeting.</p> <p>It was AGREED that the Forum's best wishes be conveyed to her.</p>	<p>Clerk to action</p> <p>Clerk to action</p>
<p>6(a) 24.6.08</p>	<p>Deprivation Review</p> <p>A report was submitted and outlined by Avril Walton.</p> <p>Joe Baker expressed the view that there was still confusion about how the 'notional' target was made up and that schools were being asked to use the same amount of money twice. He questioned whether there was potential for overlap. Avril Walton confirmed that there was potential for overlap in that activities could be duplicated. She undertook to provide Forum Members with details of the degree of overlap.</p> <p>It was AGREED that the Deprivation Sub-Group be asked to discuss this issue further with a view to</p>	<p>Dawn Morris to action</p>

	<p>producing guidance and that the guidance be subsequently provided to the Schools Forum and the Primary and Secondary Heads Forums.</p> <p>It was also AGREED that the Secondary Heads Forum be asked to nominate a representative to the Sub-Group to replace Stuart Holtam.</p>	Avril Walton to action
<p>6(b) 24.6.08</p>	<p>Deprivation and additional grants to Secondary Schools</p> <p>A report was submitted and outlined by Sean Flynn.</p> <p>The point was made that the Sub-Group had spent several days looking at advice in respect of this issue and had come up with a formula based on best advice and Government policy.</p> <p>The Chairman made the point that the whole of schools funding was going through a consultation exercise at present and that there would be something new in place by 2011.</p> <p>Sean Flynn, in referring to the first Appendix to his report at Column 5, expressed the view that the key issue was SDG Main Funding for 2008/09 and asked the Forum to make strong representations to the DCSF about the differentials caused by freezing funding.</p> <p>It was subsequently AGREED unanimously.</p>	Dawn Morris to action
<p>6(c) 24.6.08</p>	<p>Use of Standards Fund Headroom</p> <p>A report was submitted and outlined by Avril Walton.</p> <p>It was subsequently AGREED unanimously that Model 3, namely, the distribution of available headroom funding using the same number of notionally identified pupils included in allocating social deprivation funding in main budgets, is the Forum's preferred option.</p>	Avril Walton to action
<p>7. 24.6.08</p>	<p>Early Years Funding Review Group</p> <p>A report was submitted and outlined by Avril Walton.</p>	

	It was AGREED that the report be NOTED and that this item remain as a standing item on future agendas.	
8. 24.6.08	<p>ISB and Budget Allocations 2008 - 2011</p> <p>Avril Walton confirmed that the spending pressures previously approved by the Forum had been met. She indicated that looking at comparisons to projected figures, there might have been an over-estimation due to the fact that the population drop in Walsall had been more masked than expected.</p> <p>It was NOTED that a report would be submitted to the next scheduled meeting.</p>	Dawn Morris to action
9. 24.6.08	<p>School Specific Contingency - Request from Park Hall Junior</p> <p>At this juncture, Gerry Deakin declared an interest in this item, in his capacity as Governor of Park Hall Infants. He indicated that this had arisen due to the fact that the school had lost one pupil and had, therefore, lost funding for that child, but that another child had been admitted the same day for which funding was not available.</p> <p>Avril Walton indicated that colleagues were looking at this. If it was found that Education Walsall was at fault, the Forum would be asked to pick up the bill and a recommendation would be made in due course.</p> <p>It was suggested that the same option for excluded children could be adopted and that invoices between schools for transferred children could be raised.</p> <p>It was AGREED that consideration be given to this in 2009/10.</p> <p>In respect of the request by Park Hall Junior School, it was subsequently AGREED that if, after investigation, it is found that Education Walsall are at fault, approval be given to the Forum bearing the cost.</p>	<p>Dawn Morris to action</p> <p>Dawn Morris to action</p>

<p>10. 24.6.08</p>	<p>National Funding Conference - Feedback</p> <p>Avril Walton advised the Forum that there was great emphasis, at the Conference, on 14 - 19 funding. There was an expectation that post 16 funding would also come back to Local Authorities. The message was that the budget in the current three year cycle was tight and that the situation would get even tighter.</p> <p>The Chairman referred to DCSF and DIUS (Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills) and pointed out that consultation on the issue finished on 6th June. The results had not yet been released.</p> <p>The LSC (Learning and Skills Council) was being abolished from September, 2010 and would be replaced by two separate organisations, YPLA (Young Peoples Learning Agency) dealing with pre 19 budgets and SFA (Skills Funding Agency) dealing with post 19 budgets.</p> <p>He went on to say that there was an intention that the formula currently used for funding of schools 6th Forms would be extended to all 14 - 19 funding. Various options had been discussed regarding how this would go to Local Authorities. In the consultation paper, DCSF indicated that Local Authorities would have to work in clusters.</p> <p>Initially, the YPLA was to be a high level planning and process driven organisation to channel funding to Local Authorities. The indication now was that all of the work would be done by the YPLA and Local Authorities would be passporting authorities.</p> <p>Elaine Stringer advised the Forum that she had attended the Conference for the Early Years issue. She indicated that there would be feedback in July which would be submitted to the Minister who would decide what to do. Government Agencies were trialling everything.</p> <p>Dawn Morris was trying to bring things together in a constructive manner. There would not be one formula that fits all.</p> <p>The feedback was NOTED.</p>	
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11. 24.6.08	<p>Annual Report 2007/08</p> <p>The report was submitted.</p> <p>It was AGREED that the report be NOTED and circulated to all Head Teachers for information.</p>	
12. 24.6.08	<p>Forward Plan</p> <p>A copy of the Forward Plan was submitted.</p> <p>It was AGREED that the Plan be NOTED with the addition of the following items:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Schools Forum Membership - Terms of Office - Schools Forum (England) (Amendment) Regulations, 2008 - School Specific Contingency - request from Park Hall Junior School 	
13. 24.6.08	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>A copy of Walsall Council's publication 'Every Child Matters - Children and Young People's Service' was submitted.</p> <p>It was AGREED that a copy of the publication be circulated to all Members of the Forum.</p>	Clerk to action
	<p>Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)</p> <p>It was AGREED that the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item under Section 100A of the Local Government Act, 1972.</p>	
	Gary Crowther left the meeting at 5.42 p.m.	

<p>14. 24.6.08</p>	<p>Draft Children and Young Persons Plan</p> <p>A copy of the draft Plan and consultation letter were submitted.</p> <p>Members were advised that the Forum was identified in the Regulations as a statutory consultee.</p> <p>It was AGREED that any individual comments be referred to Wayne Sheargold at sheargoldw@walsall.gov.uk by 10.0 a.m. on Monday, 7th July, 2008.</p> <p>(Exempt information under Paragraph 6(b) of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972) (as amended)</p>	
	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>It was NOTED that the next scheduled meeting would be held on Tuesday, 7th October, 2008 at Blakenall Village Centre at 6.00 p.m.</p> <p>It was also NOTED that if an additional date is required on the interim period, a meeting has provisionally been arranged for Tuesday, 16th September, 2008 in Room TR1, Beechdale Lifelong Learning Centre at 6.00 p.m.</p>	

The meeting terminated at 5.45 p.m.