

## Schools Forum

**Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 10 October 2006 at 6.00pm  
at the Education Development Centre, Pelsall Lane, Rushall, Walsall**

**Present:** Mr N Chomyk (Chairman)  
Mrs M Letts  
Mr A F Cheminais  
Mr J Baker  
Mrs E Maher  
Mr S Holtam  
Miss S M Bradford  
Mr J P Clarke  
Mr P Nickless  
Mr A Davies  
Mr E Gee  
Mr M Barton

**In Attendance:** Mr G McQueen (Education Walsall)  
Ms D Morris (Education Walsall)  
Ms M Harmitt (Walsall Council)  
C G Holliday, Head of Leisure and Culture (Walsall Council)

		<b>Action</b>
<b>1. 10.10.06</b>	<b>Apologies</b>  Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Mr G Crowther, Mrs R Poyser, Mr S Haywood and Mr A Bowater (Walsall Academy).  An apology for non-attendance had also been submitted on behalf of Mr Philip Moss, DfES.	
<b>2. 10.10.06</b>	<b>Minutes - 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2006</b>	Minutes approved and signed as a correct record
<b>2.1 10.10.06</b>	<b>Scheme of Local Management (Consultation)</b>  Mr McQueen referred to the debate which had occurred at the last meeting on this issue and reminded members that they had endorsed three of the four proposed changes to the Scheme of Local Management of Schools. The proposal not supported by the Forum was the requirement of local authorities to include a balance control mechanism in their scheme. He advised the DfES had received support for responses from consultation.	Forum to receive report at meeting on 14 November

<p><b>2.2</b> <b>10.10.06</b></p>	<p><b>Budget 2006/2007 – Extended Schools Funding</b></p> <p>The Forum was advised that no further information was available on this issue. Mr Cheminais advised the Forum that he had been to a meeting where allocations of approximately 30,000 were detailed. Dawn Morris confirmed that allocations would be allocated to clusters of schools with one school acting as a 'banker'.</p>	<p>Issue to remain on Forward Plan. Report to be prepared for next meeting on 14 November</p>
<p><b>2.3</b> <b>10.10.06</b></p>	<p><b>Governor representation</b></p> <p>Mr McQueen informed the Forum that ballot papers for governor representatives on the Forum had been despatched and the votes returned to Constitutional Services of Walsall Council. The closing date for receipts of the ballot papers was 22 October and the votes counted at the Council House on 1 November. Pupils from Queen Mary's High School would be assisting in counting the votes.</p>	
<p><b>3.</b> <b>10.10.06</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>4.</b> <b>10.10.06</b></p>	<p><b>Delegation of Funds for School Meals</b></p> <p>Mr C Holliday was attended the meeting for this item.</p> <p>With regard to his duties in relation to school catering, Mr Holliday indicated that he was looking after the catering for primary and secondary schools, the Town Hall restaurant, meals-on-wheels and the Art Gallery café. This was formerly the responsibility of Catering DSo and 2.7m meals were served per year, together with 800 meals-on-wheels. He advised the Forum that any findings from the meeting would be taken back and looked at. He referred to the campaign by Jamie Oliver regarding school meals and the resultant School Foods Standard. He added that this had impacted on the way children buy meals. There was a cost and he indicated that he wanted to increase the amount spent on meals by 50p per meal. Walsall's current cost per meal is 60p. He went on to say that the money given by the Government to do this was</p>	

	<p>never enough and he needed to look at the service and undertake a full and thorough review and work out how to stem the flow of money out of the service. He added that he was finding now that there was a drop in the number of meals bought by children as there are now no chips on the menu. He expressed the view that schools meals were essential. From the Forum's point of view, they were expecting an SLA. Mr Holliday said that there was no such thing at present but he would work with the Forum to formulate an SLA.</p> <p>Members of the Forum outlined the situation in relation to their schools. Mr Holliday expressed the need to look at the funding of school meals to ensure that the necessary service was provided. He added that the service at present was budgeted from Council reserves but this was only short term. The Chair questioned whether the service was cost neutral. In reply, Dawn Morris indicated that it was only free school meals which were cost neutral but the cost of that was not fully covered. The endorsed the need to look at funding and how it was allocated.</p>	<p>This item to be included in the Forward Plan.</p> <p>A further report detailing options and recommendations to be submitted to future meeting.</p>
<p><b>5. 10.10.06</b></p>	<p><b>Deprivation Funding – Child Poverty Fair Funding for Schools</b></p> <p>A reported was circulated to the meeting (attached).</p> <p>Mr McQueen outlined the contents of the report and pointed out that special needs had not been included because he was of the view that there was no correlation between deprivation and special needs. He went on to say that there was a need to reach a view on what was to be included in the statement. There was a tight timescale, this needed to be done before the 2008 spending review takes effect. He suggested that there was a need to commence work on this before and after Christmas and possible have road shows to give details of the implications for both governors and parents. It was not possible to seek guidance from other local authorities on the methods they were using since there was a lack of commonality between local authorities on how to tackle this issue.</p> <p>It was suggested that information on deprivation held by Spur (part of the WBSP) could be useful in drawing up proposals, as could a mapping exercise undertaken by Tim German.</p>	

	<p>Working group of primary, secondary and special school headteachers and Forum members to be convened to draw up proposals for wide consultation on the mechanism to be adopted in Walsall for the distribution of funding linked to deprivation. Working Group to comprise:</p> <p>Mr Cheminais Mr Baker Mr Holtam Mr Clarke Mr Gee Mr Davies A special school representative</p>	<p>Preliminary report of Working Group be presented to Schools Form in March 2007.</p>
<p><b>6.</b> <b>10.10.06</b></p>	<p><b>Section 52 Table 4 Data for 2006/2007</b></p> <p>A reported was circulated to the meeting (attached).</p> <p>Mr McQueen outlined the contents of the report and suggested that the document be despatched to all schools.</p> <p>An additional sheet entitled 'Age Weighted Pupil Units 2006 – Radio table underpinning the distribution of the pupil led element of the ISB for 2006' was circulated.</p> <p>The point was made that certain of the boxes in the Section 52 document were incomplete.</p>	<p>Copies, together with additional sheet, be circulated to all schools.</p> <p>Dawn Morris to address</p>
<p><b>7.</b> <b>10.10.06</b></p>	<p><b>Analysis of School Balances at the end of the 2005/2006 year</b></p> <p>A reported was circulated to the meeting and Mr McQueen outlined the contents.</p> <p>The question of whether extended schools should be included was raised and it was pointed out that this would depend on how they were dealt with and what the schools chose to include in their balances.</p> <p>The point was made that there was a need to be very specific in the scheme, particularly in relation to unspent balances.</p> <p>In relation to this, the point was made that school balances showed a cumulative balance and that schools could be criticised for showing a nil balance.</p>	<p>Further report, including details from schools for spending plans on balances greater than 5% be submitted to a</p>

	Dawn Morris indicated that this was shown in figures to the DfES but it depended on how the underspend was presented.	future meeting of the Forum.
<b>8. 10.10.06</b>	<p><b>Forward Plan</b></p> <p>A copy of the draft Forward Plan was submitted (attached).</p> <p>It was resolved that the draft Forward Plan be received but that the following items should be added:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget 2007/2008</li> <li>• Finance management in Schools Standard</li> <li>• National Digital Infra-structure for Schools</li> </ul>	
<b>9. 10.10.06</b>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>The Forum was advised that as the Forum meetings were governed by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended), issues could no longer be raised under any other business and discussed at the meeting. Under the legislation, only items included on the agenda and accompanied by a report could be discussed.</p>	All items to be notified to Clerk in sufficient time to be included on the agenda and a report to be prepared.
<b>10. 10.10.06</b>	<p><b>Date of next meeting</b></p> <p>The next meeting of the Forum to be held on Tuesday 14 November 2006, commencing at 6.00 pm to be held in the Small Hall of the Education Development Centre, Pelsall Lane, Rushall.</p>	

The meeting terminated at 7.35pm.