

Schools Forum

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 15th October, 2013 at 4.00 p.m. at Blakenall Village Centre, Thames Road, Blakenall, Walsall

Present:- Mr. M. Vlahakis (Chairman)
Dr. A. Bruton (Vice-Chairman)
Mrs. M. Sheehy
Ms. T. Coles
Mr. G. Crowther
Dame M. Brennan
Mr. J.P. Clarke
Mrs. J. Ward
Ms. M. Yates
Mr. F. Hodgkinson
Mr. R. Bragger
H. Harnisch

Mr. Davies attended as substitute for Mr. G. Thornton

Ms. J. Garratt attended as substitute for Mrs. C Draper.

In Attendance:- Mr. D. Mortiboys - Education Finance, Walsall MBC
Ms. D. Morris - Education Finance, Walsall MBC
Mr. S. Flynn - Consultant
Ms. S. Egersdorff - Early Years and School Improvement

		Action
1. 15.10.13	Apologies Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Mrs. M. Woodcock, Messrs. N. Smith, M. Ison, A. Orlik, G. Thornton (Mr. Davies substituting) and Mrs. C. Draper (Ms. J. Garratt substituting).	
2. 15.10.13	Minutes - 24th September, 2013	The minutes of the meeting held on 24 th September, 2013 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.
3. 15.10.13	Matters arising from the minutes There were no matters arising from the minutes.	

<p>4. 15.10.13</p>	<p>Late items to be introduced by the Chairman</p> <p>There were no late items for introduction by the Chairman.</p>	
<p>5. 15.10.13</p>	<p>Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)</p> <p>There were no items for consideration in the private session.</p>	
<p>6. 15.10.13</p>	<p>Learning Consortium Update</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Mr. Flynn introduced the report and confirmed that the concerns that had been addressed related to Local Authority control of the project. The Learning Consortium was about schools working together and the ongoing good work between primary and secondary schools was noted. The £500,000 funding would be provided by the Council and if not taken up for this project it would revert back to the Council. He stated that head teachers should consider the best means to attract the match funding and for schools to drive this proposal forward. This would help the school improvement initiative to continue.</p> <p>The Chairman referred to a group meeting with Ms. J. Doughty, Interim Lead Officer for School Improvement and primary and secondary representatives; suggestions from this would feed into the project. The Primary Head Teachers Forum and Walsall Academy and Secondary Heads Forum (WASH) would need to discuss this issue.</p> <p>Dr. Bruton referred to anxieties that had been expressed regarding the match funding element and schools would need clarity on the use of their funds.</p> <p>In response to questions raised, Mr. Flynn confirmed that the issue was being discussed at Schools Forum as one proposal related to the top slicing funds if the Forum felt this was appropriate. If funding was not top sliced, the process would</p>	

	<p>become more complex.</p> <p>Mrs. Coles asked whether the funding would be a one-off as it would result in a considerable amount of work to set up and ensure accountability. Mr. Flynn confirmed the level of bureaucracy and accountability would need to be considered to ensure it was as burden free as possible. He stated that head teachers would decide where to spend the funding and for many schools it would be an extension of current practice.</p> <p>Mr. Flynn confirmed that funding would be based on per pupil numbers and would be reduced in respect of the number of pupils not taking part in the initiative.</p> <p>Members agreed that the issue would need to be discussed by the individual Head Teachers Forums.</p> <p>Mr. Clarke asked whether there would be some direction from a different source other than schools or whether a direction would be given.</p> <p>Ms. S. Egersdorff, consultant, referred to the Council's offer of £500,000 to develop a process that would cover 0 - 19 years and it would be necessary to consider how early years could be included. The proposal related to the improvement of children's learning outcomes across the board. The Local Authority would refer to data around learning needs, child poverty, etc and this proposal was about how the Council would work with schools on how the development would work with those priorities. This tied in with the Children and Young People Plan. The school improvement data would work alongside the Council data, there would be issues around leadership and management and it could take good and outstanding schools to a different dimension. In respect of vulnerable children, it would relate to more than school improvement data.</p> <p>Members expressed concern at the introduction of the 0 - 19 years range as this would reduce the amount of money that schools would receive.</p> <p>The Chairman indicated that this matter should be referred back to the Primary Forum and WASH and that they seek clarity.</p>	
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	<p>Resolved</p> <p>That at such time as the appropriate information relating to the Learning Consortium was available, it be discussed at the Primary Head Teachers Forum and WASH.</p>	
<p>7. 15.10.13</p>	<p>Finalisation of De-delegation discussions</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Members were requested to consider setting up a small Working Group to assess the merit in keeping the contingency; the Working Group would meet after half term.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) That the maintained secondary school Members of Schools Forum approve de-delegation of free school meal eligibility service estimated at £19.66 per free school meal eligible pupil; (2) That the maintained secondary school Members of Schools Forum approve de-delegation of licences/subscriptions (£3.23 per pupil); (3) That the maintained secondary school Members of Schools Forum approve de-delegation of staff costs - Union and public duties (£6.38 per pupil); (4) That the maintained secondary school Members of Schools Forum do not approve de-delegation of behaviour support services (£15.17 per pupil); (5) That the maintained secondary schools Members of Schools Forum approve de-delegation of insurance services only; (6) That maintained secondary schools note that library and museum services were included as part of secondary AWPU prior to recent funding changes and, therefore, were in effect already delegated; 	

	<p>(7) That maintained primary school Members of Schools Forum approve de-delegation of the free school meal eligibility service at approximately £16.38 per free school meal eligible pupil;</p> <p>(8) That maintained primary school Members of Schools Forum approve de-delegation of insurance services at approximately £17.98 per pupil;</p> <p>(9) That maintained primary school Members of Schools Forum approve de-delegation of licences/subscriptions at approximately £3.23 per pupil;</p> <p>(10) That maintained primary school Members of Schools Forum approve de-delegation of maternity supply cover at approximately £6.37 per pupil;</p> <p>(11) That maintained primary school Members of Schools Forum approve de-delegation of staff costs - Union and public duties at approximately £6.38 per pupil;</p> <p>(12) That maintained primary school Members of Schools Forum approve de-delegation of behaviour support services at approximately £12.64 per pupil;</p> <p>(13) That maintained primary school Members of Schools Forum approve de-delegation of library services at approximately £14.75 per pupil;</p> <p>(14) That maintained primary school Members of Schools Forum approve de-delegation of the contingency at a provisional value of £10 per pupil and that a Working Group be established consisting of the following Members:-</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mr. M. Vlahakis, Mrs. M. Sheehy, Ms. J. Garratt and Mr. J. Clarke</p> <p>to consider what would constitute an appropriate level of contingency;</p>	
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	(15) That maintained secondary school Members of Schools Forum approve de-delegation of contingency at a provisional value of £10 per pupil.	
8. 15.10.13	<p>Special Schools Funding Review</p> <p>Mrs. Morris reported on the outcome of discussions that had taken place with individual special schools on the impact of the funding review. In view of the impact of the model if imposed in one year transitional arrangements were being considered, it was anticipated that a meeting would take place before the next Schools Forum meeting.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the information be noted.</p>	
9. 15.10.13	<p>Review of Schools Forum Membership</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Mr. Mortiboys informed the Forum that the proposal was to ensure that all groups were represented appropriately on the Forum. Academy representatives were not categorised by primary and secondary phases in the Regulations and the Local Authority had no role in advising Academies who they should appoint.</p> <p>The Chairman questioned the head teacher/ Governor representative split and also that increasing Academy representations could result in multi Academy chains holding seven votes on the Forum.</p> <p>Mr. Crowther informed the Forum that Walsall secondary heads had always maintained that their representatives would be voted on the Forum by that body and had never determined membership on the mathematical basis set out in the report. It was felt that the way Academy and maintained secondary membership was addressed would ensure a fair process and that influence by Academy companies would not occur.</p>	

Mr. Mortiboys confirmed that there was an even split with maintained secondary and special schools on the head teacher/Governor representation. Primaries would have five head teachers and three Governors and there was no requirement for Academy Governor representation in the Regulations.

Members referred to the need to ensure broad representation on the Forum but also that representatives were committed and interested in working with the Forum. With regard to the proposal to change the status of the Church of England, Catholic, Staff side Associations and 14 - 19 representatives, Members were advised that these could be given observer status or remain as Members. The Forum was advised that observers would not be part of the quorum calculations, would be able to speak at meetings but not vote. The Chairman reminded Members that those representatives were not elected.

Resolved

- (1) That Walsall Schools Forum approves its membership as set out in table 5 of the annexed report, including the voting rights set out therein;
- (2) That WASH be approached to appoint a maintained secondary head teacher to replace Mr. Clarke upon his retirement;
- (3) That Mr. K. Whittlestone be appointed as a Schools Forum Member representing Academies;
- (4) That Schools Forum confirm the principle of 17 primary and secondary representatives, with 8 maintained primary, 2 Academy primary, 5 Academy secondary and 2 maintained secondary Members;
- (5) That Schools Forum acknowledge that the Local Authority has limited powers in relation to Academy membership of Schools Forum but recognises that Academies were formally contacted;

	<p>(6) That Schools Forum confirms that the term of Ms. Sharratt as a Member of Schools Forum has ended;</p> <p>(7) That Schools Forum contact Primary Forum for the nomination of 2 primary Academy representatives;</p> <p>(8) That Schools Forum confirm that there should be 2 special school representatives;</p> <p>(9) That Schools Forum agree that the none schools Members who are representatives of the Diocese and Trade Union and 14 - 19 years representative be given observer status on the Forum;</p> <p>(10) That the exact terms of voting rights on funding formulae be confirmed with the Education Funding Agency;</p> <p>(11) That an update of the Constitution be submitted to the next meeting of the Forum for approval.</p>	
<p>10. 15.10.13</p>	<p>Schools Funding Formula</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>(1) That Schools Forum note the results of the consultation on the schools funding formula;</p> <p>(2) That Appendix 2 as circulated at the meeting be approved as the Walsall schools funding formula for 2014/15, subject to changes demanded by the Education Funding Agency and updated for October, 2013 pupil census;</p> <p>(3) That Schools Forum note that the schools block funding formula principles remain as agreed for the 2013/14 financial year and that the only change remained the lump sum methodology;</p> <p>(4) That Schools Forum approve that the primary and secondary sectors may use different lump sums;</p>	

	<p>(5) That Schools Forum approves the reduction of the primary lump sum to £175k per school with the balance going to primary AWPU;</p> <p>(6) (Dame Brennan and Mr. Crowther voting against)</p> <p>That Schools Forum approves the reduction of the secondary lump sum to £175k per school with the balance going to secondary AWPU;</p> <p>(7) That Schools Forum approve that any use of surplus in 2014/15 and future years be based on a flat per pupil rate, achieved by pushing the funding through AWPU and requesting the Education Funding Agency to disapply the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) in regards to these funds;</p> <p>(8) That Schools Forum approves, for the purpose of submitting the formula to the Department for Education for 31st October, 2013, that it will be assumed that a surplus of £1.5m will be spread between secondary and primary schools; the balance to be decided before final submission, with the same per pupil rate going to special schools and nursery schools;</p> <p>(9) That Schools Forum unanimously endorses the revised schools funding formula to Cabinet on behalf of all Walsall schools;</p> <p>(10) That Schools Forum approve the Chair writing to the Director of Children’s Services and Chief Finance Officer of Walsall Council to communicate that Walsall Schools Forum were very satisfied with the revised formula;</p> <p>(11) That a vote of thanks be recorded for those who were involved in negotiations in respect of the termination of the Serco contract which resulted in the £1.5m surplus.</p> <p>Ms. Morris drew the Forum’s attention to the “prior attainment” section of Appendix 2 indicating that the old profile would have been used for assessing pupils other than those in Year 1.</p>	
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<p>11. 15.10.13</p>	<p>Forward Plan</p> <p>The Forward Plan was submitted.</p> <p>Ms. Sheehy informed the Forum that, with regard to premature retirement through redundancy, she had been advised by HR that the document would be referred to the Trade Unions for consultation and then to the 3rd December, 2013 Schools Forum. The Chairman stated that Schools Forum was disappointed that although the premature retirement through redundancy issue had been referred to and a report requested on a number of occasions over the last fifteen months, the Council had not come forward with advice in a timely fashion and better was expected from the Council in the future.</p> <p>Mr. Bragger confirmed that there had not been any official consultation with the Unions on the premature retirement through redundancy issue.</p> <p>The Forward Plan was agreed and it was confirmed that the 5th November, 2013 provisional meeting be cancelled and that the next meeting take place on 3rd December, 2013.</p>	
<p>12. 15.10.13</p>	<p>Late items to be introduced by the Chairman</p> <p>There were no late items.</p>	
<p>13. 15.10.13</p>	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>There was no correspondence received.</p>	
<p>14. 15.10.13</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, 3rd December, 2013 at 4.00 p.m. at Blakenall Village Centre, Thames Road, Blakenall, Walsall.</p>	

The meeting terminated at 5.10 p.m.

