

## Special Schools Forum

**Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2011 at 4.00 p.m. at Blakenall Village Centre, Thames Road, Blakenall, Walsall**

**Present:-**

- Mr. J. Baker (Chairman)
- Mr. S. Flynn (Vice-Chairman)
- Mr. A.F. Cheminais
- Mr. D. Brownsword
- Mr. G. Crowther
- Dame M. Brennan
- Mr. J.P. Clarke
- Ms. H. Lomas
- Ms. M. Cryan
- Mrs. V. Birch
- Mr. S. Onions
- Mr. F. Hodgkinson
- Mr. N. Stubbs
- Mrs. M. Robinson
- Mr. D. Clough
- Ms. J. Morrow (substitute for Mr. Basi)

**In Attendance:-**

- Mr. D. Mortiboys (Walsall MBC)
- Ms. J. Taylor (Walsall Children's Services - Serco)
- Ms. C. Draper (Short Heath Federation) (shadowing Mr. Cheminais)

		Action
1. 16.3.11	<b>Apologies</b>  Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Mr. M. Vlahakis, Mr. A. Bowater, Ms. J. Morgan and Mr. A. Basi.	
2. 16.3.11	<b>Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)</b>  <b>Resolved</b>  There were no items for consideration in the private session.	

<p><b>3. 16.3.11</b></p>	<p><b>Central retention of former National Strategies Grant Matched Funding</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Ms. Wedgwood informed the Forum that the funding was in respect of schools about to go into a category and becoming vulnerable. The scheme would support any schools going into a category with a view to schools coming out of that category at the earliest possible opportunity. Vulnerable schools often had funding problems and the proposal related to procuring support for staff from other schools which would require brokerage.</p> <p>Mr. Brownsword informed the Forum that the primary, special and nursery schools agreed that the funding goes into the schools specific contingency to support the named schools initially up to £10,000 each and this be given to Schools Forum for approval for one year and, if necessary, support other schools that came forward.</p> <p>Mr. Flynn gave the secondary schools view as believing that this resource would be best delegated to the schools. They agreed with collaboration, helping and supporting the secondary forum, which was working well. They were of the view that resources be delegated to schools in the secondary sector to help them deal with any issues of under-performance, raising achievement, etc.</p> <p>In response to points raised, Ms. Wedgwood confirmed that the package of support would be designed specifically to assist the schools in question. It was confirmed that the support equated to £10 per pupil irrespective of phase. £163,000 would be allocated to the secondary sector and £258,000 to the primary, special and nursery sectors. The delegation to secondary schools would increase the AWPU for years 7 - 11 by £10 per pupil. The remainder would go into the school specific contingency and sit within the ISB but would require formal approval by the Forum.</p> <p>Mr. Crowther informed the Forum that although members of the Brownhills cluster were unanimous that the funds be delegated, they felt it was possibly a retrograde step by dividing secondary and primary</p>	
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	<p>phased funding.</p> <p>After consideration it was,</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>(1) That, with regard to the primary, special and nursery schools, the additional funding be held in the schools specific contingency to be used to support named schools initially up to £10,000 each, this to be given to Schools Forum for approval for one year and, if necessary, to support other schools that come forward;</p> <p>(2) That funding for secondary schools be delegated to the schools at £10,000 per school.</p>	
<p><b>4. 16.3.11</b></p>	<p><b>School Finance (England) Regulations 2011</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Ms. Taylor highlighted the contents of the report and, in view of the previous resolution, the central expenditure limit as indicated at Paragraph 3.1 of the report in respect of retention of former national strategies funding be amended from £421,000 to £258,000. The changes previously agreed bring the total contingency to £1.178 million.</p> <p>After consideration it was,</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>(1) That the “National Strategies Funding Combined Services” be renamed the “School to School Support Services”;</p> <p>(2) That approval be given to the schools specific contingency of £1.178 million, as detailed in Paragraph 4.1 of the report, and amended to include the retention of the former national strategies funding in the sum of £258,000 to allow the schools budget to be managed effectively and all mid-year school funding adjustments to be made;</p> <p>(3) That approval be given to the retention of £258,000 of former national strategies</p>	

	<p>funding to allow the Local Authority to continue to support all schools at risk or schools causing concern in the primary, special and nursery phase;</p> <p>(4) That approval be given to a breach to the 2011-12 central expenditure limit, subject to the central retention of £258,000 of former national strategies funding.</p>	
<p><b>5. 16.3.11</b></p>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p><b>(a) Membership of the Forum</b></p> <p>The Forum was informed that, in view of the number of schools applying for Academy status, the membership of the Forum would be considered and amendments suggested to the June meeting, in line with the Schools Forum Regulations.</p> <p><b>(b) Serco contract</b></p> <p>Mr. Flynn referred to a meeting he had attended when discussion on information for Schools Forum on the Serco contract was raised.</p> <p>The Forum was involved that representatives from secondary, primary, special and nursery schools were on the contract board where this information was available.</p> <p>Mr. Flynn asked for an historic picture from 2001/2 showing profit margins for Serco.</p> <p>Officers undertook to investigate the matter and inform Schools Forum in due course.</p>	
<p><b>6. 16.3.11</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, 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2011 at 4.00 p.m. in the Large Hall, Education Development Centre (EDC), Pelsall Lane, Rushall, Walsall.</p>	

The meeting terminated at 5.15 p.m.

