

Schools Forum

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 7th July, 2015 at 4.00 p.m. at Blakenall Village Centre, Thames Road, Blakenall, Walsall

Present:- Mr. M. Vlahakis (Chairman)
Mrs. M. Sheehy
Ms. T. Coles
Mr. S. Davies
Dame M. Brennan
Mrs. W. Smith
Mrs. M. Woodcock
Mrs. M. Yates
Mr. F. Hodgkinson
Mr. B. Powell
Mr. M. Ison
Mr. T. Milovsorov
Ms. R. Davies
Mr. R. Bragger
Councillor C. Towe

In Attendance:- Mr. L. Haynes - Education Finance
Ms. D. Morris - Education Finance
Mr. P. Gordon - Money Home Job
Mrs. A. Potts – Early Help, Children’s Commissioning and Action Workforce Development
Mrs. E. Vanderheeren – Early Help
Mr. M. Morris – Group Manager, SEND, Children’s Services

		Action
1. 7.7.15	Apologies Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Mrs. C. Fraser, Mrs. G. Healy, Ms. H. Harnisch, Messrs. K. Whittlestone, M. Allman, A. Orlik, J. Bonhomme, G. Crowther and J. Dwyer. Mrs. Poole also submitted her apologies.	

<p>2. 7.7.15</p>	<p>Minutes - 13th January, 2015</p>	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on 10th March, 2015 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.</p>
<p>3. 7.7.15</p>	<p>Matters arising from the minutes</p> <p>Ms. Coles referred to page 6 of the minutes (Free School Meals Service) and asked if schools paying twice for the service had been resolved. It was reported that a further report was included on today's agenda regarding this matter.</p>	
<p>4. 7.7.15</p>	<p>Late items to be introduced by the Chairman</p> <p>Update on Walsall Link.</p>	
<p>5. 7.7.15</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. 7.7.15</p>	<p>School Ready and Early Help in Walsall</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Mrs. Vanderheeren expanded on the contents of the report.</p> <p>In response to points raised regarding 'clusters', Mrs. Vanderheeren explained that schools clusters, location clusters and outreach from Children's Centres would all be considered.</p> <p>The Chairman supported a task and finish group, but wanted additional information on criteria.</p> <p>Ms. Coles stated that where, how and when was missing.</p>	

	<p>Resolved</p> <p>That the report be noted and a further report be submitted to the next meeting of the Forum.</p>	<p>Mrs A. Potts/Mrs. Vanderheeren to provide report</p>
<p>7. 7.7.15</p>	<p>Update on SEN (Standing Item) - Review</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Mr. Morris, Group Manager of SEND enlarged on the report. He drew attention to discussions which had been held with the Phoenix School and indicated that Shepwell School would be expanded to cater for Walsall's needs with a 20 place ASD unit.</p> <p>An external grant had been applied for and a report would be submitted to Cabinet in September. Discussion ensued over numbers of places required and it was suggested that Manor Farm be included in the next report to the Forum.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the information be noted.</p>	<p>Mr. Morris to provide report</p>
<p>8. 7.7.15</p>	<p>Schools Forum Membership</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Mr. Haynes enlarged on the report. He added that using figures from the 2014 Census no changes in membership were required. The situation would be reviewed again in July 2016 as academy conversions could change the situation.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That Schools Forum notes:-</p> <p>(a) That no change in schools and non-schools membership was proposed;</p>	<p>Lloyd Haynes to report to July, 2016 meeting.</p>

	(b) That membership will be reviewed again in July, 2016.	
9. 7.7.15	<p>Dedicated Schools Grant update on 2014/15 Surplus and 2015/16 position</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Mr. Haynes enlarged on the report and indicated that £2.5m of surplus was currently unallocated.</p> <p>Referring to High Needs, Mr. Haynes reported that an underspend of £18,000 was projected and an overspend of £421,000 was projected on Early Years.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p>	
10. 7.7.15	<p>Creating Free Education for eligible 2 year olds</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>It was reported that by March 2015 67% of places for eligible 2 year olds had been filled.</p> <p>In response to a question about the proposed transition funding, Mr. Haynes reported that the additional support was being provided for the 2015/16 academic year only.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That Schools Forum:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Agrees that the process for the allocation of '2 year old capital and revenue' ensures economic, efficient and effective use of funding and safeguards the Local Authority's assets and interests; (2) Has an awareness of the current status of all projects; (3) Agrees the way forward regarding further place creation due to the potential risk to funding; (4) Agrees the proposed funding process 	Dawn Morris to arrange

	outlined for supporting 2 year old providers incurring costs whilst places that have been created are being filled.	
11. 7.7.15	<p>Induction Pack for Schools Forum Members</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Mr. Haynes, enlarged on the report for the benefit of the Forum. It was agreed that Mrs. J. Ward be removed from the 2014/15 membership of the Forum.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the proposed Induction Pack be approved with the removal of Mrs. J. Ward from the 2014/15 membership.</p>	
12. 7.7.15	<p>Free School Meal Support – Increase Take Up option</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Mr. Gordon enlarged on the report for the benefit of the Forum. He indicated that customers had been listened to and offered the service they required. The next step was to go into schools and report back on how the scheme was working in practice.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That Schools Forum:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Note the pilot results and proposed improvements; (2) Note and take advantage of the current service provision and proposed improvements; (3) Continue to work collaboratively with Walsall Council to maximise free school meal take up, pupil premium and to ensure pupils continue to get the support they need when they need it; 	Mr. Gordon to report back on the progress.

	<p>(4) Consider the invitation to participate in the further development of the service to secure mutually beneficial outcomes.</p>	
<p>13. 7.7.15</p>	<p>Scheme for Financing Schools – DfE proposed directed revisions</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Ms. Morris enlarged on the report and drew the Forum’s attention to paragraphs 3.7 and 3.8. She added that a further report would be submitted following receipt of the outcomes from the DfE consultation.</p> <p>The Chair asked if credit/debit cards were included in the scheme. Ms. Morris stated that schools were allowed to use debit cards only.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p>	<p>Ms. D. Morris to provide report to a future meeting.</p>
<p>14. 7.7.15</p>	<p>Future process for Properly Assigned sums</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Ms. Morris enlarged on the report and indicated that the process in respect of the submission of Properly Assigned Sums requests was to change and schools would be required to submit their requests by February half term, this would enable the approval, or otherwise, of the local authority to be confirmed before the end of the spring term.</p> <p>Mr. Haynes reported that surplus balance would remain at 8% for 2015/16 balances.</p> <p>Further detailed guidance would be sent out to schools during the autumn term.</p>	

	<p>Resolved</p> <p>That the changes to the process and deadlines in regard to the submission of Properly Assigned Sum requests as outlined in the report be approved.</p>	
<p>15. 7.7.15</p>	<p>Update on Early Years funding review</p> <p>Ms. Morris reported that the Working Group had met twice. At the first meeting the cost model for hourly funding had been agreed and the areas of expenditure highlighted. Staffing amounted to the largest area of spend and was calculated using statutory staffing ratios. The model was deemed fit for purpose.</p> <p>Further costings had been carried out prior to the second group meeting with hourly rates reviewed. Little change had been noted. The deprivation factor would continue to be based on the post codes of children in each setting during the summer term prior to the beginning of the financial year.</p> <p>There were a number of outstanding issues in respect of private, voluntary and independent providers as many providers were reluctant to share information in regard to what they spend in particular areas. The working group want to ensure any cost model will over fund these providers.</p> <p>A further report would be submitted to the September meeting with a revised model.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the above information be noted.</p>	<p>Ms. Morris to provide report to September meeting.</p>

<p>16. 7.7.15</p>	<p>Review of schools funding formula for primary and secondary schools</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Ms. Morris enlarged on the report and indicated that Mr. Vlahakis and Mrs. Sheehy would be invited to join the funding review working group. It had been hoped to arrange a meeting of the group before the end of term but this had been unsuccessful. At the recent National Funding Conference the DfE again raised the issue of primary/secondary funding ratio and indicated that although not considering a regulatory change at this time, they were encouraging local authorities to increase funding to the secondary sector where their ration was below 1:1.27.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the Forum notes the contents of the report and agrees a review of the current main funding formula and membership of the funding review working group as follows:-</p> <p>Ms. T. Coles, Dr. A. Bruton, Mrs. C. Fraser, Mr. M. Vlahakis, Mrs. M. Sheehy.</p>	<p>Ms. Morris to report to a future meeting on the outcome of the working group.</p>
<p>17. 7.7.15</p>	<p>Forward Plan</p> <p>The Forward Plan was submitted.</p> <p>It was suggested that De-delegation and the Funding Formula be added to the Plan for consideration in October, 2015.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the forward plan of decisions be noted and amended as set out above.</p>	

<p>18. 7.7.15</p>	<p>Late Item Update on Walsall Link</p> <p>It was reported that £74,000 was available and bids should be submitted by 12 September, 2015. Decisions would be provided by 2 October, 2015.</p> <p>Funding would be offered to schools as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) With the facility to provide hot meals; (2) Health and Safety concerns; (3) Operational difficulties. <p>Reference was made to the modular building to be accommodated at New Invention School. The £300,000 cost was not supported by the DfE.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the information above be noted.</p>	
<p>19. 7.7.15</p>	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>There was no correspondence submitted.</p>	
<p>20. 7.7.15</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, 22 September, 2015 at 4.00 p.m. at Blakenall Village Centre, Thames Road, Blakenall, Walsall.</p>	

The meeting terminated at 5.20 p.m.