



### 1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an annual report of the work of the Forum covering the period 23 September, 2020 to 9 March, 2021.

**Date of  
meeting**

### 2.0 Election of Chair and Vice Chair for the 2020/2021 academic year

Mr Max Vlahakis was appointed Chair of Schools Forum and Dr Alison Bruton was appointed Vice Chair of Schools Forum for the 2020/2021 academic year

23.09.20

### 3.0 School Music Service 2021/22

- 3.1 Schools Forum granted £38,000 music funding to Walsall Music Education Hub & Service in 2021/22 in line with previous years.

23.09.20

### 4.0 High Needs Funding Formula 2021/22

- 4.1 Schools Forum noted the work undertaken by officers and the working group and recommended the local High Needs Funding Formula (Walsall Rights 4 SEND guidance document) and the timetable that was proposed for the 2021/22 be recommended to Cabinet to seek approval and agreement to consult on the proposed model. Schools Forum noted and agreed the proposal for consultation on the formula, subject to Cabinet approval and proposed bandings to be used to support all (existing and new) EHCPs going forward. Schools Forum also agreed the proposed MFG disapplication request to enable increased flexibility around the implementation of a revised High Needs Funding Formula for April 2021.

23.09.20

Schools Forum was provided with a proposed updated Walsall High Needs Funding Formula for schools supporting pupils with identified special educational needs and disability (SEND) from that present at its meeting on 23.09.20 (see above). The report had taken into account the consultation process, further analysis and moderation undertaken and detailed any recommended changes to the model.

12.01.21

Schools Forum:-

- i. Recommended the revised local high needs funding formula (Walsall Rights 4 SEND guidance document) that was proposed for 2021/22 as set out in the report;
- ii. Recommended the revised local high needs funding formula to Cabinet to seek approval and agreement to implement the proposed model from 1 April 2021;
- iii. Agreed the proposed formula, subject to Cabinet approval and proposed bandings to be used to support all (existing and new)

- EHCPs going forward;
- iv. Noted the previously agreed MFG disapplication request to enable increased flexibility around the implementation of a revised high needs funding formula for April 2021;
- v. Recommended the implementation for existing special school pupils and new EHCPs from 1 April 2021 and implementation for mainstream pupils through scheduled Annual Returns for existing EHCPs from 1 April 2021 onwards

## 5.0 **Financial Transparency of Local Authority Maintained Schools – Government Consultation Outcome.**

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| 5.1 | A detailed report highlighting the changes to be implemented by the DfE for maintained schools had been submitted to the meeting and these were noted by members. | 23.09.20 |
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## 6.0 **Maintained Schools De-delegation**

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| 6.1 | Schools Forum members representatives from maintained Primary Schools and maintained Secondary Schools considered and voted upon the de-delegation recommendations. | 14.10.20 |
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## 7.0 **Proposed for Mainstream School Local Funding Formula 2021/22**

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| 7.1 | Schools Forum endorsed the recommended local funding formula to distribute funding to mainstream schools and academies within Walsall for 2021/22. It noted that once the final Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocations for 2021/22 had been issued, a further report would be presented. Schools Forum also supported the recommendation that any residual funding available within the final 2021/22 DSG allocation would be invested in the Low Prior Attainment factor. The recommendations from the report would be reported to Cabinet on 21 October 2020 to seek their approval. | 14.10.20 |
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Following the endorsement of the local funding formula by Schools Forum in October, 2020 (see above), the DfE published details for the amount of DSG that Walsall would receive in 2021/22. The report set out the changes to the local funding formula factor values for 2021/22 to ensure allocations remained within available Schools Block DSG funding. Schools Forum noted the adjustments to funding factor values that were required for 2021/22 to ensure that allocation to mainstream schools via the local funding formula were affordable within the funding that was available (as set out in the report submitted at that time) and recommended the formula, including the changes to funding factor values set out in the report to the Director of Children's Services, the Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills and the ESFA.	12.01.21
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## 8.0 **Central Expenditure Budgets for 2021/22**

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| 8.1 | Schools Forum were advised and approved the basis for the central expenditure for the 2021/22 financial year. | 12.01.21 |
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## 9.0 **Schools Forum Membership**

- 9.1 Maintained Secondary School Member 14.10.20  
Following the conversion of Brownhills Secondary School to academy status, the maintained secondary Schools Forum member from Brownhills School stood down in accordance with the Schools Forum Operational and Good Practice Guide.

The appointment of a secondary school representative was undertaken by the Secondary Forum (WASH). Mrs Bowen, Head Teacher of St. Thomas More Catholic School was appointed.

### Secondary Academy Members

Following the resignation of a Secondary Academy Headteacher and the sad passing of a second Academy Headteacher, in accordance with the Constitution, the election of two Secondary Academy representatives was carried out by the Secondary Forum (WASH). At its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020, (WASH) appointed Ms Helen Keenan, Principal of Brownhills Ormiston Academy and Mr. Billy Downie, Head Teacher of Streetly Academy to the two vacant positions. 08.12.20

### Academy Special School Member

Following the resignation of the previous Academy Special School member, the proprietor body of Phoenix Special Academy appointed Miss Elyse Philips as its member on Schools Forum. 08.12.20

### Special School Governor.

Following the resignation of the previous Special School Governor, an election of a Special Schools Governor had taken place. The report detailed how the election process had been carried out in accordance with the Constitution. Ms Jay Barr was nominated as Special School Governor. 12.01.21

## 10.0 **SEND Improvement Programme Updates**

- 10.1 A detailed report updated members on developments in relation to the Local Area Inspection Written Statement of Action (WSoA). Schools Forum were advised that a DfE monitoring visit had taken place in August, when representatives from the Department for Education (DfE) and NHS England had attended the Local Area Improvement Board (LAIB) to assess the progress that had been made against the actions outlined in the WSoA and how the LAIB and the Improvement Programme were functioning. The DfE had been impressed with the drive and enthusiasm of all involved and commented that the LAIB had been effective. 14.10.20

## 11.0 EHCP Timelines and Performance

- 11.1 The Forum was updated on the position at that time of the EHCP timeliness, actions that had been taken to reduce the backlogs and it was provided with details of progress on the actions required for improvement. The report included a breakdown of the EHCP plans and an EHCP Timeliness Recovery Plan Dashboard. 14.10.20

On 8 December, 2020, Schools Forum received an update on the EHCP timeliness and performance. Members were advised that at that time, 505 plans had been issued over the twelve month period which had resulted in the clearing of the backlog. 08.12.20

It had been reported that Walsall had achieved 62.1% compliance of EHCP plans within 20 weeks. The national target was 60%. The number of plans in progress had been reduced from 380 at the start of 2020 to around 170 at that time. The Interim SEND Lead advised that moving forward, there would be a single dashboard focusing on the targeted compliance rate of 60% or above for all newly issued plans in accordance with the delivery plan. Hard to place pupils would be reviewed on a daily basis to find placements. 12.01.21

## 12.0 Review of Maintained Schools Balances 2019/20

- 12.1 Members were provided with a summary of balances held by maintained schools at 31 March 2020 as reported to the DfE under consistent financial reporting regulations. Following a query raised, it was confirmed that a termly summary was produced to set out planned budgets. Should all balances be utilised, schools would be contacted and support offered. 14.10.20

## 13.0 Review of Dedicated Schools Grant – Update on 2020/21 Forecast Position

- 13.1 Schools Forum were advised of the DSG forecast outturn position for 2020/21. Taking account of previous decisions by the Forum to allocate/utilise a large proportion of the surplus, the overall balance would continue to be regularly reviewed. 14.10.20

## 14.0 Early Help Collaborative Response to Supporting Vulnerable Pupils

- 14.1 The Group Manager – Early Help provided members with a progress report on the ‘Collaborative Response to Supporting Vulnerable Pupils’ work merged with the Walsall Right 4 Children (WR4C), Promoting Inclusion & Reducing Exclusions Collaborative Response to Supporting Vulnerable Pupils. 08.12.20

An update was provided on the impact and the delivery of the programme over the last couple of years, around the future and future focus and how the team would look at pathways and the sustainability of the work piloted and how that would be brought forward into the

mainstream offer around the early help service.

**15.0 Proposed Early Years Funding Formula for Two, Three and Four Year Olds 2021/22**

- 15.1 A report set out the allocation of the Early Years block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding that the Council received to the early years' providers in Walsall. The report advised that operational guidance set out the funding factors permitted within the early years' local funding formula and those included a universal hourly base rate, a mandatory deprivation factor, discretionary supplements and an additional funding supplement in respect of maintained nursery schools. 09.03.21

The local authority would work with nurseries to look at their 3 year funding position and a wider meeting with all maintained nursery schools would be arranged. With regard to contingency funding for two year olds having missed their nursery provision due to COVID difficulties, potential catch up funding would be available for children who did not meet the criteria for SEN funding.

Schools Forum recommended the proposed Early Years Funding Formula for 2021/22 and noted the recommendation would be reported to Cabinet to seek their approval.

**16.0 Recommendation**

- 16.1 That Schools Forum notes the report.

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