



# Walsall Council

## Walsall Children's Services

### SCHOOLS FORUM

### ANNUAL REPORT 2013/2014

1.0	<u>Purpose of Report</u>	
1.1	The purpose of the report is to provide an annual report of the work of the Forum covering the period 11 <sup>th</sup> June, 2013 to 8 <sup>th</sup> April, 2014.	
2.0	<u>Premature Retirement Update</u>	
2.1	Schools Forum was informed that there was no legal necessity for the enhancement of premature early retirement to be offered to teaching staff in the 55 years plus category. Premature early retirement usually related to teachers selected for redundancy.	11.6.13
2.2	The Forum noted that the decision to grant premature retirement rested with the Governing Body of each school as did the decision on whether or not premature retirement compensation would be offered, however, this decision must be endorsed by the Local Authority.	3.12.13
3.0	<u>Schools Funding Formula</u>	
3.1	Schools Forum noted the new rules introduced by the Education Funding Agency to ensure that all schools received a certain level of funding at Key Stages 3, 4, primary AWPU and funding per pupil. Your schools funding formula met all the criteria.	11.6.13

4.0	<u>Walsall Learning Consortium</u>	
4.1	Schools Forum was informed of proposals to establish a Learning Consortium, its aim was to gain value from working with colleagues on key areas to drive forward attainment and achievement between schools.	11.6.13
4.2	The Walsall Association of Head Teachers (WASH) felt that the image and vision of the Consortium almost mirrored existing arrangements in the secondary phase.	
4.3	It had been hoped that the Consortium would strengthen liaison between the primary and secondary education phases.	
4.4	An update on progress of the proposed Learning Consortium was received.	15.10.13
5.0	<u>2012/13 DSG surplus</u>	
5.1	A Sub-Group was set up to consider options for the disbursement of DSG surplus 2012/13.	11.6.13
6.0	<u>Revised School Funding Formula Consultation</u>	
6.1	A consultation document was sent out to all schools on changes to the Schools Funding Formula, including views on the division of the surplus funding.	9.7.13

7.0	<u>Arrangements for the funding of Early Years Education for two year olds</u>	
7.1	Schools Forum noted that free early education would become a statutory entitlement for eligible two year olds from 1 <sup>st</sup> September, 2013. Funding for this provision was agreed with a balance being retained for the commissioning of speech and language support and play in the home learning environment across the providers delivering two year old places.	9.7.13
8.0	<u>DSG 2012-13 outturn statement sign off and 2013-14 DSG budget statement</u>	
8.1	The audited 2012/13 outturn statement was signed off and the 2013/14 DSG budget statement confirming that the budget had been allocated correctly was noted.	24.9.13
9.0	<u>Walsall's Scheme for Financing Schools 2013-14 further revisions</u>	
9.1	The revised Scheme for Financing Schools 2013/14 was submitted requesting approval for consultation with all maintained schools. It was noted that with effect from September, 2013, the budget share would be made available to Governing Bodies of schools operating within the Authority's financial systems termly in advance. Those schools operating external banking arrangements would continue to receive budget payments in monthly instalments. Top up for pupils with high needs would be paid termly in advance, subject to pupil	24.9.13

	data held at the beginning of each term. Any adjustments to reflect changes would be made at the end of each term.	
10.0	<u>Finalisation of de-delegation discussions</u>	
10.1	<p>The Maintained Secondary School Members of the Forum approved the de-delegation of:-</p> <p>Free school meals eligibility service;  Licences/subscriptions;  Staff costs - Union and public duties;  Contingency at a provisional value of £10 per pupil;  Insurance services.</p>	15.10.13
10.2	The maintained secondary sector did not approve the de-delegation of behaviour support services.	
10.3	<p>The Maintained Primary School Members of the Forum approved the de-delegation of:-</p> <p>Insurance services;  Licences/subscriptions;  Maternity supply cover;  Staff costs - Union and public duties;  Behaviour support services;  Library services;  Contingency at a provisional value of £10 per pupil.</p>	

11.0	<u>Membership Review</u>	
11.1	Membership of the Forum was reviewed to ensure that all groups were represented appropriately.	15.10.13
12.0	<u>Schools Funding Formula</u>	
12.1	The Schools Funding Formula for 2014/15 was agreed, subject to changes by the Education Funding Agency and updated for October, 2013 pupil census. The schools block funding formula principles remained as agreed for the 2013/14 financial year. It was agreed that the primary and secondary sectors could use different lump sums. The primary and secondary lump sum was reduced to £175,000 per school with the balance going to primary and secondary AWPU. The use of surplus in 2014/15 and future years would be based on a flat rate per pupil, achieved by pushing the funding through AWPU and requesting the Education Funding Agency to disapply the Minimum Funding Guarantee in regards to those funds.	15.10.13
12.2	For the purposes of submitting the formula to the Department for Education, it was assumed that a surplus of £1.5m would be spread between secondary and primary schools, the balance to be decided before final submission, with the same rate per pupil going to special and nursery schools.	
12.3	The allocation of the whole 2012/13 prior year surplus through the formula, including allocations to special and early years was endorsed.	14.1.14

13.0	<b>Review of Special School Funding Formula</b>	
13.1	Work had been undertaken with special school head teachers to develop a funding mechanism for 2014/15.	3.12.13
13.2	Consideration had been given to the outcome of the review of the funding mechanism for the allocation of funds to special schools for the 2014/15 financial year. The Head Teachers preferred method of local transition of Method 3 was supported and the proposed use of Option 2 from the review was also supported.	11.3.14
13.3	This had now been approved by Cabinet.	8.4.14
14.0	<b>Revised Schools Forum Constitution</b>	
14.1	The revised Constitution, which reflected the changes in membership previously approved, was agreed.	3.12.13
15.0	<b>Music Service Contribution</b>	
15.1	It was agreed that a continuation of funding for the music service for the 2014/15 financial year be approved without prejudice to other services.	3.12.13

16.0	<b>Contingency Feedback</b>	
16.1	It was noted that the contingency included in the budget for 2013/14 had not been taken up. In view of this, it was agreed that the contingency figure for 2014/15 be reduced by 50% to £125,000.	14.1.14
17.0	<b>Implementation of a Social Value Policy</b>	
17.1	The implications of the Social Value Act, 2012 were considered. The new procurement process which included a “Look Local First” approach to help reduce the carbon footprint included a list of contractors that schools might want to work with. Schools could also discuss with contractors the possibility of taking pupils on work experience or other appropriate activities through the procurement process.	14.1.14
18.0	<b>Principles of future surplus use and proposals (principally early years)</b>	
18.1	Schools Forum approved the use of £1m underspend from 2013/14, two year old place funding (Time 2 Start) on School Readiness activities to be delivered through Children’s Centres (Early Help Areas). This would ensure that two year olds received the benefit of funding that was intended for them.	11.2.14
18.2	A Sub-Group had been established to monitor the development of plans to use the funding and to ensure value for money. This would also ensure the effectiveness of the investment.	

18.3	The Forum would need to decide whether the funds were a windfall or surplus and, following that decision, would decide upon its dispersal. The investment could require approval from the Secretary of State.	
19.0	<b>School to School Support</b>	
19.1	Schools Forum had discussed and raised questions about the appropriateness of provision for pupils with special educational needs in both special and mainstream schools.	11.2.14
20.0	<b>Capital implication of school meals requirement for maintained schools</b>	
20.1	The Universal Infant Free School Meals Government Scheme was considered and the Forum was advised that a bidding process for resources had been introduced. Catering contractors would also be involved in the process in order to assist with accurate costings and the identification of need.	11.2.14
21.0	<b>Approval of Central Expenditure (including Early Years)</b>	
21.1	Approval has been given to central expenditure, as determined by the Education Funding Agency, for the 2014/15 financial year, subject to the cost for advanced skills teachers moving back into the formula. The low level of central retained funds, in comparison to previous years, was noted.	11.3.14



22.0	<b>Walsall Association of Governors</b>	
22.1	Following a request from Governors, approval had been given to the use of 'surplus' funds to support £10,000 investment in Walsall Association of Governors for 2014/15. A request in respect of this had subsequently been forwarded to the Secretary of State.	11.3.14 8.4.14
23.0	<b>Education Development Centre and Rushall Primary School</b>	
23.1	As a result of a condition survey on Rushall Primary School highlighting works required, a decision had been made by Cabinet on works to be carried out which also included improvements to the Education Development Centre adjacent to the school. The views of Primary Schools Forum, WASH and schools head teachers would be sought on the project as it would be necessary to ensure that the scheme would be viable and self sustaining.	11.3.14
24.0	<b>Dates for future meetings and Extended Forward Plan</b>	
24.1	An extended Forward Plan setting out work for the Forum over the coming twelve months, together with the schedule of dates for consideration of those matters, were agreed.	11.3.14
24.2	Approval was also given to the establishment of a Sub-Committee to monitor the budget and report its findings to Schools Forum.	

25.0	<b>Vulnerable Learners</b>	
25.1	An update on proposals to support vulnerable learners had been received and additional information on the way funding would be utilised to support their achievement was requested.	11.3.14 8.4.14
26.0	<b>Leadership Development - Funding Support</b>	
26.1	Consideration was given to proposals to support school middle leaders, including funding for bespoke research seminars on specific identified topics. Consideration was also given to the use of the “cluster” structure to develop support for the eight strands contained in the School Improvement Recovery Programme. More detailed information on the proposals was requested.	11.3.14 8.4.14
27.0	<b>National Fair Funding Formula</b>	
27.1	It was noted that consultation on the National Fair Funding Formula had been published by the Department for Education which confirmed that the formula would not be in place until 1 <sup>st</sup> April, 2016 at the earliest. A draft response to the consultation included acknowledgement of the role of Schools Forums in setting block funding formulae, addressing local issues, allocation of monies between notional blocks in order to achieve best value solutions and the best outcomes for children. The response also referred to fairness on a national level but flexibility on a local level for schools to work together for the right outcomes for children. It was felt that a timeframe should be included in this process in order to give all schools financial certainty into the medium term.	8.4.14

27.2	Concern was raised on the issue of the capping of central expenditure under the current regulations as the Local Authority was not allowed to increase a charge to DSG for schools admissions, despite increases nationally in salaries and Local Government pension scheme costs increasing.	
28.0	<b>Licences 2014/15</b>	
28.1	Schools representatives on the Forum were requested to advise their phases of schools of the Licences covered centrally and the remainder of licences which remained their responsibility.	8.4.14
29.0	<b>Teachers' Pension contributions</b>	
29.1	The increase in the employer contribution rate for the teachers' pension scheme from September, 2015 was noted.	8.4.14
30.0	<b>Education Services Grant (ESG)</b>	
30.1	It was noted that consultation on the Education Services Grant had been released and any comments from the Council that might impact on DSG would be referred to Schools Forum as some statutory duties were funded by ESG and some by DSG.	8.4.14

31.0	<b>Further Information to Schools</b>	
31.1	The Forum was in the process of considering the most appropriate method for distributing information to schools to ensure the widest audience was reached, this was particularly relevant to maintained secondary schools and information on the Local Government Pension Scheme.	8.4.14