

Schools Forum

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 14th January, 2014 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
Dame M. Brennan
Mrs. J. Ward
Mrs. B.E. Westwood
Mrs. G. Healy
Ms. M. Yates
Mr. S. Davies
Mr. A. Orlik
Mr. R. Bragger

In Attendance:- Mr. D. Mortiboys - Education Finance, Walsall MBC
Mr. L. Brazier - Procurement
Ms. I. Woods - Regeneration

		Action
1. 14.1.14	Apologies Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Mrs. C. Draper, Ms. H. Harnisch and Messrs. G. Crowther, N. Smith, E. Gee, M. Ison and S. Pritchard-Jones. Mr. Bragger submitted an apology for leaving the meeting early.	
2. 14.1.14	Minutes - 3rd December, 2013	The minutes of the meeting held on 3 rd December, 2013 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to an amendment to Paragraph No. 12 as follows:- Delete "NJC" and insert "JNC".

<p>3. 14.1.14</p>	<p>Matters arising from the minutes</p> <p>Mr. Bragger informed the Forum that the premature retirement policy had been referred to the Schools JNC, Unions were consulted and a number of suggestions put forward to the Council but a response was awaited.</p> <p>Dr. Bruton informed the Forum that WASH had not yet nominated a representative in place of Mr. J. Clarke.</p>	
<p>4. 14.1.14</p>	<p>Late items to be introduced by the Chairman</p> <p>The Chairman informed the Forum that a late item had been suggested by Ms. L. Hughes relating to the Ofsted letter in respect of Wakefield Schools Forum and that this would be included in discussion later in the meeting and on the agenda for the next meeting.</p>	
<p>5. 14.1.14</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. 14.1.14</p>	<p>Contingency feedback</p> <p>Mr. Mortiboys informed the Forum that a number of meetings had taken place to discuss the contingency of £250,000 included in the budget for 2013/14. This had not been taken up and it was, therefore, recommended that the contingency for 2014/15 be reduced to £125,000. This figure had also been included in the report for 2014/15.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That Schools Forum note that the contingency figure for 2014/15 be reduced to £125,000.</p>	

<p>7. 14.1.14</p>	<p>Implementation of a Social Value Policy</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Mr. Brazier, Procurement Manager and Ms. I. Woods (Employment (Sector) Growth - Regeneration and Housing Services) briefly outlined the contents of the report. Mr. Brazier invited comments from Members and asked whether schools would like contractors to supply places for work experience or other appropriate activities through the procurement process. Ms. Woods outlined her role; she could assist colleagues to make links with the business community and request them to provide opportunities for young people by introducing them into the world of work. The Local Authority would work with businesses to request them to provide assistance to schools under their social responsibility. Schools Forum could help to support this approach and she drew attention to examples of activity listed under Paragraph 2.9 of the report. In response to questions, Mr. Brazier confirmed that the social value allowed the Authority to take certain other aspects of service into account but this had to be linked to the nature of the service being tendered. The procurement service would ensure that the activity was legal and compliant with the contract rules and procurement legislation. Schools could also look at not only what they could achieve during a procurement process but also what benefits they may like to secure for their students (i.e. work placements etc.). Ms. Woods informed Schools Forum that she could provide a list of contractors they might wish to contract with. The process would help reduce the carbon footprint and encourage a “look local first”. Schools would still manage due diligence and Local Authority checks and the Local Authority would compile a local directory. Schools would be encouraged to ask contractors if they could provide any additional assistance that would help schools as this level of information would not be included on contractor’s websites.</p> <p>Mr. Brazier informed the Forum that procurement had introduced a new tendering portal in “Think Walsall” which gave guidance to staff prior to them going out to tender. There was also a Council-wide</p>	
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	<p>contract register that the public and businesses could access. The Chairman thanked Mr. Brazier and Ms. Woods for their presentation and stated that the Primary and Secondary Heads Forums would be the appropriate bodies to consider this matter.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the implications of the Social Value Act, 2012 be noted and referred to Primary Forum and WASH for comment.</p>	
<p>8. 14.1.14</p>	<p>National Funding Formula Consultation</p> <p>Mr. Mortiboys informed the Forum that he had written to the Education Funding Agency regarding consultation on the national fair funding formula and free school meals initiative. They had advised the Council that they had nothing to report at present.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p>	
<p>9. 14.1.14</p>	<p>Final Schools Funding Formula for 2014/15</p> <p>A report and appendices relating to the Walsall Funding Formula 2013/14 and 2014/15 were circulated at the meeting.</p> <p>It was necessary for the final submission to be with the Education Funding Agency by 21st January, 2014.</p> <p>Mr. Mortiboys outlined the contents of the report and drew attention to funding to be moved from the “notional” high needs block to support the “schools block”.</p> <p>Members raised the issue relating to capacity at special schools and questioned whether some children could be re-integrated into mainstream school to enable children with higher or special education requirements to transfer into the special school system. Mrs. Fraser, Head Teacher of Castle School, referred to her personal experience in relation to numbers that could be accommodated</p>	

within the school and felt that a revised net capacity was required. There was also a danger of losing specially trained staff within the specialist education field.

Mr. Mortiboys stated that Walsall schools received a much higher rate of funding than schools in the Black Country but it seemed that Walsall funding would reduce.

It was agreed that a meeting take place with Dame Brennan, Mrs. Coles and Mrs. Fraser with Lesley Wright in order to promote an investigation into this issue and that a report on the outcome be submitted to Schools Forum.

The Forum continued to discuss the report and it was highlighted that there had been an increase in age weighted pupil unit (AWPU) as a result of the lump sum and the behaviour support funding moving into that area. The free school meals figures had reduced for both sectors and moved to AWPU and more secondary pupil funding would move to "prior attainment".

Mr. Mortiboys reported that no funding was included for school improvement in the dedicated schools grant (DSG). He referred to the "Wakefield model" as they had applied to the Secretary of State to retain funding from DSG for school improvement and Ofsted found that their Schools Forum had not monitored its use. Walsall could introduce a similar model if it so wished.

Mr. Mortiboys confirmed that funding for the learning consortium was still in place, the surplus had arisen as a result of Serco transition. In response to points raised, Mr. Mortiboys confirmed that school improvement in Walsall was funded through the education development grant and as schools transferred to Academy status, the funding followed that transfer.

Resolved

- (1) That Schools Forum endorse allocating the whole 2012/13 prior year surplus through the formula at £73.06 per pupil (including allocations to special and early years);

	<p>(2) That Schools Forum endorse the allocation of £0.252 million of anticipated 2013/14 financial year surplus at £6.22 per pupil (including allocations to special and early years);</p> <p>(3) That Schools Forum endorses and recommends the 2014/15 Schools Funding Formula Proforma to the Director of Children’s Services, Cabinet and the Education Funding Agency;</p> <p>(4) That Schools Forum endorses that any underspend on ‘2 year trajectory funding’ be ‘ring fenced’ to 2 year old activities for 2014/15 and that further reports will be received through 2014/15;</p> <p>(5) That secondary and primary maintained representatives endorse the level of contingency under de-delegation rules;</p> <p>(6) That Schools Forum Members note their responsibility to ensure those they represent are informed that this funding is one off funding;</p> <p>(7) That Schools Forum note and endorse that Walsall Council will continue to look for ways to ensure surpluses are prevented and that where surpluses arise, the Council will look at ways within regulations to deploy surpluses as fast as possible to schools.</p> <p>In view of there being no maintained secondary representative at the meeting, the Clerk undertook to advise the maintained secondary representative of the decision relating to the level of contingency in order that the documents can be forwarded to the Education Funding Agency within the timescale required.</p>	
<p>10. 14.1.14</p>	<p>Forward Plan</p> <p>The Forward Plan was submitted and agreed as set out.</p>	

<p>11. 14.1.14</p>	<p>Late items to be introduced by the Chairman</p> <p>Mr. Mortiboys referred to the new funding arrangements announced in December, 2013 relating to capital allocations and based on information from the Department for Education and the Education Funding Agency additional places at primary level would be allowed in years to come and a further £9 million allocated for 2015/16 and 2016/17 for extra primary places. There would also be additional funding for improvements to primary school kitchens linked to the provision of free school meals to all infant children.</p> <p>The Forum noted the information and requested confirmation that the additional funding for improvements to kitchens related to all infant schools from 1st April, 2014. The Chairman also agreed to contact Mr. Holliday regarding the use of catering contractors who were based outside the Borough and report back to Primary Forum.</p>	
<p>12. 14.1.14</p>	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>There was no correspondence received.</p>	
<p>13. 14.1.14</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, 11th February, 2014 at 4.00 p.m. at Blakenall Village Centre, Thames Road, Blakenall, Walsall.</p>	

The meeting terminated at 5.15 p.m.