

## Schools Forum

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2010 at 4.00 p.m. at Room TR1, Beechdale Lifelong Learning Centre, Stephenson Square, Beechdale

**Present:-** Mr. J. Baker (Chairman)  
Mr. S. Flynn (Vice-Chairman)  
Mr. M. Atkins  
Mr. A.F. Cheminiais  
Mr. G. Crowther  
Dame M. Brennan  
Mr. J.P. Clarke  
Ms. H. Lomas  
Ms. M. Cryan  
Mr. A. Davies  
Mr. G. Deakin  
Mr. E. Gee  
Mr. F. Hodgkinson  
Mr. D. Clough

**In Attendance:-** Mr. D. Mortiboys (Walsall MBC)  
Mr. A. Butcher (Walsall MBC)  
Ms. A. Walton (Walsall Children's Services - Serco)  
Ms. J. Taylor (Walsall Children's Services - Serco)  
Ms. J. Griffiths (Walsall Children's Services - Serco)  
Ms. D. Morris (Walsall Children's Services - Serco)  
Ms. S. Wedgwood (Walsall Children's Services - Serco)

		Action
<b>1.</b> <b>19.1.10</b>	<p><b>Apologies</b></p> <p>Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Mr. M. Barton, Ms. V. Richardson (Black Country LSC) and A. Basi.</p> <p>The Chairman announced the resignation of Ms. Rhoda Poyser as she no longer represented any group on the Forum as the Early Years Development Child Care Partnership no longer existed.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That, as Schools Forum membership consists of at least one representative of a Nursery School and that this is fulfilled, the membership in respect of</p>	<p>Ms. Cryan and Ms. Taylor undertook to approach the PVI sector with a view to identifying a</p>

	Early Years Development Child Care Partnership which has now ceased, be deleted.	representative for the Forum.
<b>2.</b> <b>19.1.10</b>	<b>Minutes - 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2009</b>	The minutes of the meeting held on 8 <sup>th</sup> December, 2009 be approved as a correct record, subject to an amendment in respect of those in attendance relating to Mr. K.C. Alex-Eyitene who is an employee of Walsall Council Property Services.
<b>3.</b> <b>19.1.10</b>	<p><b>Matters arising from the minutes</b></p> <p><b>Contract Management Board</b></p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That Mr. F. Hodgkinson be appointed as the Schools Forum representative on the Contract Management Board.</p> <p><b>Balance Control Mechanism</b></p> <p>Ms. Taylor informed the Forum that the guidance and notes affecting year end procedures should be forwarded to Members by the end of the week. Additional training had been arranged for 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2010.</p> <p><b>Transforming Learning in Walsall - Financial Update</b></p> <p>Members requested that regular reports on funding and expenditure in respect of this item should be submitted in order for transparency and should include information on interest, together with details of contractors where this was possible.</p>	<p>Dan Mortiboys to submit a report to each meeting of the Forum.</p>

	<p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That a report on Transforming Learning in Walsall - Financial Update be submitted to every meeting of the Forum.</p>	
<p><b>4. 19.1.10</b></p>	<p><b>Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)</b></p> <p>There were no items to be considered in private session.</p>	
<p><b>5. 19.1.10</b></p>	<p><b>Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Julie Griffiths stated that the funding formula had one year left to run and it was expected that funding for EMAG would cease at that point.</p> <p>The Forum's attention was drawn to the centrally retained element of the grant and it was confirmed that the staffing levels at Walsall were much lower than those at neighbouring Sandwell and Wolverhampton Authorities. A copy of their structures were circulated at the meeting.</p> <p>It was noted that Wolverhampton had a slightly larger ethnic minority whilst Sandwell's numbers were slightly smaller than Walsall.</p> <p>Mr. Flynn thanked officers for the information provided.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That the report be received.</p>	
<p><b>6. 19.1.10</b></p>	<p><b>Charity of the School Holiday Camp Fund of Walsall (Bryntysilio)</b></p> <p>Correspondence from the Head Teacher of St. James Primary School was submitted.</p> <p>Mr. Atkins outlined the position to date and confirmed that the outcome of the Cabinet meeting of 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2010 was awaited. Ben Percival,</p>	

	<p>from Sports and Leisure, had been given the contact details of the suggested consultants, together with the brief to be covered and provisional costings.</p> <p>Mr. Davies spoke in support of assisting Bryntysilio in order to keep the facility for the benefit of young people.</p> <p>Ms. Taylor confirmed that any over or underspend from Schools Forum was ringfenced and would be carried forward. The small amount agreed in principle at the last meeting could be used for curriculum development at the Outdoor Education Centre with schools buying back use of the facility from their budgets.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b> (Mr. Davies voting against)</p> <p>(1) That further consideration of this matter be deferred pending the decision of Cabinet from its meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2010;</p> <p>(2) That further information be submitted to the next meeting of the Forum relating to the Trust and the funding arrangements.</p>	
<p><b>7. 19.1.10</b></p>	<p><b>Early Years Funding Reforms - Pathfinder Status</b></p> <p>A report was submitted. Ms. Taylor outlined the content of the report and steps required to achieve a smooth transition. Cabinet on 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2010 agreed the funding formula as proposed and supported the view that an application be made to become a wave two pathfinder Authority.</p> <p>The increase in provision from 12½ hours to 15 hours a week will be introduced for all Authorities from September, 2010 despite the deferral of the funding reforms. The early years requirements are included in the Apprenticeship, Skills, Learning and Children Act, 2009.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That Schools Forum formally supports the Local Authority proposal to apply for second wave pathfinder status in respect of the Early Years Funding Reforms.</p>	

<p><b>8. 19.1.10</b></p>	<p><b>School Balances Initial Draft Guidance</b></p> <p>A report was submitted. The Initial Draft Guidance was included in the report and more information be circulated when available.</p> <p>Ms. Taylor confirmed that the Working Group did have a vacancy for a Governor representative and, following the appointment, a meeting would be convened as soon as possible to draw down benchmarking information and look at comparisons with other similar Authorities to enable an Action Plan to be drawn up.</p> <p>The guidance had provided information around percentages and recognised that schools needed working capital but not excessive sums as the money should be used for the benefit of young people.</p> <p>Ms. Taylor confirmed that the national funding review should mainstream a number of grants, for example, EMAG, but the detail included in the document would need to be available prior to a view being given to the Forum. The criteria on properly assigned sums would also need to be examined in order that clear advice could be given to schools.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>(1) That Mr. F. Hodgkinson be appointed to the Working Group to consider the implications of any nationally proposed changes on the Walsall balance control mechanism;</p> <p>(2) That the membership of the School Balances Working Group as set out in the report, with the inclusion of Mr. Hodgkinson, be confirmed with a remit to discuss the implications of any national guidance on the Walsall balance control mechanism and that a meeting of the Group be convened as soon as possible.</p>	
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<p><b>9.</b> <b>19.1.10</b></p>	<p><b>Dates for future meetings 2010/11</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>(1) That, subject to a availability of the venue identified, the timetable for meetings of the Forum be agreed for the year as follows, the meetings to be held at 4.00 p.m. at the Beechdale Lifelong Learning Centre, Stephenson Square, Beechdale:-</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2010 (Summer)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> September, 2010 (Autumn)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> October, 2010 (Autumn)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2010 (Autumn)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2011 (Spring)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2011 (Spring)</p> <p>(2) That, in the event of additional meetings proving necessary, a provisional date be agreed as follows:-</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tuesday, 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2010</p>	
<p><b>10.</b> <b>19.1.10</b></p>	<p><b>Forward Plan</b></p> <p>The Forward Plan of decisions was submitted.</p> <p>The Forward Plan was approved and it was <b>agreed</b> that the following items be included:-</p>	

	<p>Benchmarking</p> <p>Building Schools for the Future</p> <p>Balance Control Mechanism</p> <p>Bryntysilio</p> <p>14-19 Funding</p> <p>Single Status</p>	
<p><b>11.</b></p> <p><b>19.1.10</b></p>	<p><b>Correspondence</b></p> <p>A copy of correspondence was submitted.</p> <p>The Chairman read out an e-mail which had been received from PVI sector giving their support to the implementation of the Early Years Funding Formula.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That the correspondence be noted.</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, 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2010 at 4.00 p.m. at Room TR1, at Beechdale Lifelong Learning Centre, Stephenson Square, Beechdale, Walsall.</p>	

The meeting terminated at 5.10 p.m.