

## Schools Forum

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 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. C. Draper  
Mrs. M. Sheehy  
Ms. T. Coles  
Mr. S. Davies  
Mr. K. Whittlestone  
Mr. G. Crowther  
Mrs. C. Fraser  
Mrs. J. Ward  
Mrs. B.E. Westwood  
Mr. J. Bonhomme  
Ms. M. Yates  
Mrs. M. Woodcock  
Mr. F. Hodgkinson  
Mr. B. Powell  
Mr. J. Dwyer  
Mr. R. Bragger

**In Attendance:-** Mrs. L. Poole - Assistant Director, Children's Services, Walsall MBC  
Mr. D. Mortiboys - Education Finance, Walsall MBC  
Mrs. D. Morris - Education Finance, Walsall MBC  
Mr. M. Parrott - Music Service  
Mr. N. Johnson - Forest Arts Centre

		<b>Action</b>
	<p>Mrs. Poole informed Schools Forum that the new Director of Children's Services, David Haley, was unfortunately unable to attend this meeting as was the new portfolio holder, Councillor Cassidy, as they were attending Cabinet and CMT. She reminded the Forum that it was a legally constituted meeting, publicly recorded where visitors and guests could attend. She referred to the importance of the meeting and that focus would have to include value for money and the impact of the money on young people. At present, Walsall was not giving value for money. She referred to the collective responsibility of Schools Forum representing the different schools and the key priority to have an impact on children and young</p>	

	<p>people in Walsall by the use of public funds. Some difficult conversations and decisions would need to be made.</p> <p>Mrs. Poole asked Schools Forum if, in representing the community of schools, they could provide information on what the collective groups required. The dialogue would be helpful in moving forward and ensuring that the community of schools felt engaged with the Forum, the Council, partners and other agencies. She also expressed the importance of challenge and debate and the need for the Chair to be inter-active both pre and post meetings and that the voice of the Forum be heard. Different ways of working needed to be considered. The performance of schools did not equate to value for money.</p> <p>Mr. Mortiboys referred to the Ofsted letter in relation to the use of resources and challenges to school balances which recognised that there was good financial control.</p>	
<p><b>1.</b> <b>23.9.14</b></p>	<p><b>Election of Chairman</b></p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That Mr. M. Vlahakis be elected Chairman of the Forum for a period of twelve months.</p> <p>Mr. Vlahakis in the Chair</p> <p><b>Election of Vice-Chairman</b></p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That Dr. A. Bruton be elected Vice-Chairman of the Forum for a period of twelve months.</p>	
<p><b>2.</b> <b>23.9.14</b></p>	<p><b>Apologies</b></p> <p>Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Dame Brennan, Mr. Allman, Mrs. Healy, Mr. Ison, Mr. Pritchard-Jones, Ms. Harnisch, Councillor Cassidy and Mr. Orlik.</p>	

<p><b>3.</b> <b>23.9.14</b></p>	<p><b>Minutes - 8<sup>th</sup> July, 2014</b></p>	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> July, 2014 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.</p>
<p><b>4.</b> <b>23.9.14</b></p>	<p><b>Matters arising from the minutes</b></p> <p>Page 2, Item 6 - the Forum was reminded of the need to declare interests and leave the meeting in items relating to their individual schools.</p> <p>Page 5, Item 11 - Mr. Mortiboys stated that the costings would be the same as contained in the previous report and information on the statutory requirements would be submitted to Primary Forum on 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2014 and WASH on 6<sup>th</sup> October, 2014.</p> <p>Page 7, Item 17 - Mrs. Sheehy asked whether the meeting of the Working Group had taken place, Mr. Vlahakis confirmed that the meeting took place earlier that day when it was established, after full investigation, that the bid was scrutinised, the process was found to be accurate in the way it was carried out. He undertook to write to the Head Teacher of Whetstone Field to explain the process and confirm that there had been nothing untoward in the process and assure him that he had not been singled out.</p> <p>Members were informed that not all the funding from the original bids had been used and any balances would be considered by the end of the calendar year and in the event of any surpluses, schools could put forward additional bids.</p> <p>Mrs. Poole indicated that the Department for Education and the Education Funding Agency could be requested to provide additional funding and asked that schools use the funding already allocated for the purposes applied for.</p>	<p>Mr. Mortiboys / Chairman</p>

<p><b>5.</b> <b>23.9.14</b></p>	<p><b>Late items to be introduced by the Chairman</b></p> <p>There were no late items for introduction by the Chairman.</p>	
<p><b>6.</b> <b>23.9.14</b></p>	<p><b>Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)</b></p> <p>There were no items for consideration in the private session.</p>	
<p><b>7.</b> <b>23.9.14</b></p>	<p><b>Application for continuation of music funding for 2015/16</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>In introducing the report, Mr. Parrott stated that the service organised music and music related opportunities for young people that schools would not be in a position to organise and carry out those activities; the work was successful and critically important for young people. The service ran CPD for Heads of Music. He outlined some of the activities run by the service, including that the service was a champion for the “BBC Ten Pieces” which was a BBC initiative and Forest Arts provided its cinemas, concert halls premises, CPD and test days and it wanted to support schools in this initiative. The service provided an enormous opportunity to a very large number of students and major benefits to teachers in schools.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That Schools Forum continue to support the Forest Arts Music Support Service with £38,000 for the 2015/16 financial year.</p>	
<p><b>8.</b> <b>23.9.14</b></p>	<p><b>Education Services Grant (ESG)</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That the contents of the report be noted.</p>	

<p><b>9.</b> <b>23.9.14</b></p>	<p><b>Maintained schools - De-delegation decision</b></p> <p>Mr. Mortiboys informed Members that it would be necessary to make a de-delegation decision at the next meeting; he stated that the matter will be referred to Primary Forum on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2014. The matters related to the library service and free school meals eligibility service and the appropriate maintained primary representatives would vote at next Schools Forum on the decision. He reminded the Forum that there were only two representatives from the maintained secondary sector on the Forum and they may wish to make arrangements to discuss this matter.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That the information be noted and a report be submitted to the next meeting.</p>	<p>Mr. Mortiboys</p>
<p><b>10.</b> <b>23.9.14</b></p>	<p><b>Dedicated Schools Grant minimum funding changes - Fairer schools funding - arrangements for 2015-2016</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Mrs. Morris informed the Forum that Walsall would receive pupil DSG funding in the 2015/16 financial year at the same level as that received in 2014/15. She drew attention to Table 3 in the report showing the indicative allocation for 2015/16 against the indicative DSG funding and showing a potential shortfall of £2.1 million.</p> <p>With regard to funding for high needs places for mainstream pre 16 and post 16 provision, special schools, additionally resourced provision, specialist providers and non-maintained special schools will remain at 914 places but Local Authorities could request additional funding by 17<sup>th</sup> October. The review of high needs places was still ongoing and any request would need to be made before consultation on the matter was complete.</p> <p>Mrs. Poole undertook to take this forward, including a bid for additional funding.</p>	<p>Mrs. Poole</p>

The DfE was hoping to produce a national early years funding formula in April, 2015 and until then, there would not be a clear understanding of the cost of the early years provision. There were no significant changes anticipated in 2015/16, although places would be funded from actual pupil data rather than estimates; the October and January censuses would be used and would show a significant reduction in DSG. This should not have a huge impact.

Members questioned the progress on the review that was currently taking place on high needs provision. Mr. Bragger pointed out that the lack of places available in Key Stage 2 had a dramatic impact on maintained primary schools and a knock-on effect to the school community.

Members stressed the need to obtain a true picture of the numbers of children requiring special education provision as the system was, at present, failing them.

Mr. Bragger stated that he had been advised that no changes could be made until September, 2016 but there was concern that the children's issues were not being addressed now.

Mr. Mortiboys stated that Walsall had capacity to build extra places as the allocation had not been spent.

Mrs. Coles referred to an increase in the number of autistic pupils in mainstream reception, information on the numbers of children was required as well as the way schools were coping as support would be required in order to prevent the pupils being failed. Members agreed to raise the matter at Primary Forum and WASH in order to establish any specific issues.

After consideration it was,

**Resolved**

That the contents of the report be noted.

<p><b>11.</b> <b>23.9.14</b></p>	<p><b>Dedicated Schools Grant Minimum Funding Levels - Walsall's Funding Formula for Mainstream Schools and Academies for 2015/16</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Dr. Bruton stated that successful schools were missing out on funding as the focus of funding was on deprivation.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b> (Dr. Bruton abstaining)</p> <p>That the funding factors to be used in the Walsall Funding Formula 2015/16 be approved.</p>	
<p><b>12.</b> <b>23.9.14</b></p>	<p><b>2013/14 Surplus report and 2014/15 Forecast</b></p> <p>A report was tabled at the meeting.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>(1) That Schools Forum note the contents of the report and agree to consider this in future decision making;</p> <p>(2) That Schools Forum endorses officers discussing with the Education Funding Agency the opportunity to devise a surplus by a "one-off windfall" as in 2014/15 to ensure legal and technical compliance;</p> <p>(3) That Schools Forum endorses officers preparing future reports based on utilising surpluses on the basis that the "money follows the child";</p> <p>(4) That Schools Forum agree to consider the annexed report in addition to the reports showing that high needs funding had been used to support the schools block in previous years.</p>	<p>Mr. Mortiboys</p>
<p><b>13.</b> <b>23.9.14</b></p>	<p><b>Traded Services</b></p> <p>Mr. Mortiboys informed the Forum that Walsall Council was considering an on-line traded services going forward. The booklet would still be produced</p>	

	<p>but services could be viewed on-line.</p> <p>Mrs. Poole stated that the traded services offer to schools, Academies and other settings, would increase and work was ongoing on the process. Facilities available would be across all the Council, some services would be core and some free in terms of statutory legal requirements and would be available for school staff, Governors and parents.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That the information be noted.</p>	
<p><b>14.</b> <b>23.9.14</b></p>	<p><b>Forward Plan</b></p> <p>The Forward Plan was submitted.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That the forward plan of decisions be noted.</p>	
<p><b>15.</b> <b>23.9.14</b></p>	<p><b>Late items to be introduced by the Chairman</b></p> <p>There were no late items.</p>	
<p><b>16.</b> <b>23.9.14</b></p>	<p><b>Correspondence</b></p> <p>There was no correspondence received.</p>	
<p><b>17.</b> <b>23.9.14</b></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, 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2014 at 4.00 p.m. at Blakenall Village Centre, Thames Road, Blakenall, Walsall.</p>	

The meeting terminated at 5.25 p.m.