

## Schools Forum

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2009 at 4.00 p.m. at Room TR1,  
Beechdale Lifelong Learning Centre, Stephenson Square, Beechdale

**Present:-**

- Mr. J. Baker (Chairman)
- Mr. A. Davies (Vice-Chairman)
- Mr. M. Barton
- Mr. A. Basi
- Dame M. Brennan
- Mr. A.F. Cheminais
- Mr. J.P. Clarke
- Mr. G. Crowther
- Mr. G. Deakin
- Mr. S. Flynn
- Mr. E. Gee
- Mr. S. Griffiths
- Mr. F. Hodgkinson
- Mrs. M. Letts
- Ms. H. Lomas
- Mrs. E. Maher
- Mrs. E. Stringer

**In Attendance:-**

- Ms. A. Walton (Walsall Children's Services - Serco)
- Ms. J. Taylor (Walsall Children's Services - Serco)
- Ms. D. Morris (Walsall Children's Services - Serco)
- Miss A. Butcher (Walsall MBC)
- Mr. D. Mortiboys (Walsall MBC)

		Action
1. 16.6.09	<b>Apologies</b>  Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Dame M. Brennan, Mr. A. Bowater, Councillor Flower, Mr. H. Seaton and Mr. M. Sweeney.  (Note: Dame M. Brennan joined the meeting at 5.00 p.m.)	
2. 16.6.09	<b>Minutes - 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2009</b>	Approved as a correct record.

<p><b>3.</b> <b>16.6.09</b></p>	<p><b>Matters arising from the minutes</b></p> <p><b>Item 3 - Start up costs for Building Schools for the Future/Primary Capital Programme</b></p> <p>Mrs. Letts referred to a comment in the minutes attributed to her relating to ‘increasing DFC contributions should be re-examined .....’. She asked for the word ‘increasing’ to be removed.</p> <p><b>Item 7 - Start up costs for Building Schools for the Future/Primary Capital Programme</b></p> <p>Mrs. Maher referred to the fact that Martin Atkins had attended the last meeting of the Forum as her substitute but had not been allowed to vote. The Chairman pointed out that, at that time, the issue of substitutes had not been agreed by the Forum. Mr. Atkins was, therefore, attending the last meeting as an observer.</p> <p><b>Item 8 - Dates and venues for future meetings</b></p> <p>Julie Taylor asked the Forum to give consideration to re-scheduling the September and October meetings to enable the reporting of the work undertaken by the Early Years Funding Sub-Group to be reported back to the full Forum for consideration.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That the September and October meetings of the Forum be amended as follows:-</p> <table border="0" data-bbox="331 1512 1053 1697"> <thead> <tr> <th><u>Original Date</u></th> <th><u>Revised Date</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>15<sup>th</sup> September, 2009</td> <td>29<sup>th</sup> September, 2009</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6<sup>th</sup> October, 2009</td> <td>20<sup>th</sup> October, 2009</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<u>Original Date</u>	<u>Revised Date</u>	15 <sup>th</sup> September, 2009	29 <sup>th</sup> September, 2009	6 <sup>th</sup> October, 2009	20 <sup>th</sup> October, 2009	<p>Clerk to action</p>
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<p><b>4.</b> <b>16.6.09</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.</b> <b>16.6.09</b></p>	<p><b>Extended Services Disadvantage Subsidy</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Heather Lomas questioned the involvement of Special Schools. In reply, Avril Walton explained that it was geographical areas that were being targeted rather than individual schools.</p> <p>Mr. Cheminaiis referred to the recommendations in the report and asked whether the funding was to be spent equally through the three clusters. Avril Walton drew the Forum's attention to the schedule at the end of the report and indicated that it would be at the discretion of the individual cluster, how the subsidy was spent.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That it be noted that the Next Practice Network supports the proposals to pilot the Extended Services Disadvantage Subsidy on the following premise:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The disadvantage subsidy should be piloted across 3 extended school clusters</li> <li>• The pilot is based on eligible children across the Borough, as opposed to the most deprived areas</li> <li>• The pilot should be used to investigate factors of diversity and spread that would help the successful roll-out of the disadvantage subsidy to all schools in 2010/11</li> <li>• The pilot should be used to establish the needs for successful co-ordination of activities</li> </ul>	<p>Carol Boughton</p>
<p><b>6.</b> <b>16.6.09</b></p>	<p><b>Building Schools for the Future Update</b></p> <p>Alison Butcher, Walsall MBC, addressed the Forum and indicated that formal engagement was awaited before the programme could be progressed. A meeting had been held with PFS setting up dates in</p>	

	<p>the diary around formal notification to proceed. A core writing group was being launched and this would be built in to the process.</p> <p>A number of visits to schools had been undertaken. The PFS had visited the schools and were impressed at the way they had presented themselves. There had been consultation at Wave 6A schools and good feedback had been received. A BSF stakeholder group had been set up and the Forum was asked if they wished to nominate someone to the group. It was suggested that any nomination should be from the Forum not necessarily from Head Teachers. Mr. Basi asked whether Higher Education was included. Alison indicated that an invitation would be sent.</p> <p>Mr. Cheminais expressed the view that the Primary Capital Programme was important for primary schools and needed to be included. Avril Walton replied that Walsall intended to combine with BSF and primary schools were leading the way. She went on to say that the Forum needed to acknowledge that we are still working to ensure that 6A funding was achieved and that Primary Heads were not being sidelined.</p> <p>Mrs. Letts asked if the criteria for the first wave could be e-mailed to all Forum Members.</p> <p>Avril Walton went on to say that 6A schools were doing well and that permission had been granted to add another school. This would be Frank F. Harrison. Mr. Crowther asked when the issue would be discussed. Forum Members were informed that the issue would be dealt with at a future meeting.</p> <p>By way of explanation, Julie Taylor said that the Asset Management Team had made a judgement based on 5 schools. This had now been revisited in the light of the addition of Frank F. Harrison. An allocation of £100k over a 2 year period had been suggested from Frank F. Harrison.</p> <p>Mr. Crowther expressed the view that there were too many questions unanswered. He asked whether, with the introduction of a sixth school, this would reduce the contribution of the other five. In reply, Mr. Mortiboys explained that, at the present time, he could not give an answer as to whether</p>	<p>Avril Walton to action</p>
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	<p>there would be a reduction. He would need to discuss this with the auditors. It was suggested that this be an item for a future meeting of the Forum.</p> <p>Heather Lomas asked whether a Memorandum of Understanding had been produced and whether it was possible to include provision for deputies to attend in the event that the Forum's first nomination was unavailable.</p> <p>Alison Butcher replied that Terms of Reference were being drafted and this would be included in the document. The point was made that the Forum would need to know what the remit of the Stakeholder Group was and that, until that was known, a temporary nomination should be made.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>(a) That the issue of whether the introduction of a sixth school would reduce the contribution of the other five, be considered at the Forum meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2009;</p> <p>(b) That, until such time as the Forum is made aware of the remit for the Stakeholders Group, the Chairman, Mr. J. Baker, be nominated to attend the Group on behalf of the Forum.</p>	<p>Clerk to arrange</p> <p>Alison Butcher</p>
<p><b>7. 16.6.09</b></p>	<p><b>14-19 Funding</b></p> <p>A report was submitted, together with a presentation. Mr. Amarjit Basi gave the presentation and Rosemary Myers outlined the report.</p> <p>Ms. Lomas made the point that three Special Schools had 6<sup>th</sup> Forms and there was a need to revisit the funding issue.</p> <p>Julie Taylor explained that the DCSF had given Local Authorities money for Special Schools. Local Authorities had been pushing the LSC to review that element of funding but it had never responded. As part of the National Formula Review, DCSF is looking at 14 - 16 funding in schools with a view to possibly replicating the 16 - 18 LSC funding methodology. This would be a regular item on the agenda for the Forum over the next 18 months.</p>	<p>Clerk to arrange</p>

	<p>The point was made that there was a need to nominate a representative of the Forum to the 14 - 19 Finance Group to support the design of a spending plan for the Consortium Support Grant.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>(a) That Sean Flynn be nominated to represent the Forum on the 14 - 19 Finance Group;</p> <p>(b) That Forum receive regular updates on the changing face of 14 - 19 funding.</p>	Rosemary Myers
<p><b>8. 16.6.09</b></p>	<p><b>Early Years Funding Reforms</b></p> <p>A report was submitted and outlined by Julie Taylor. The report provided an update on the current Early Years work in Walsall and a draft project plan and timeline.</p> <p>The report requested the approval of the methodology put forward to distribute the 2009-10 Standards Fund Grant for the Extended and Flexible Offer for 3 and 4 year olds. Heather Lomas questioned whether the figures had been amended, bearing in mind previous misunderstandings. Dawn Morris confirmed that the figures quoted had been amended and were January, 2009 figures as submitted to the DCSF. The report from the DCSF was not yet available. Julie Taylor went on to say that this was a one-off funding proposal. The situation would be different in 2010 when the new early years funding formula would govern the distribution of these funds.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>(a) That approval be given to the distribution of the Early Years Extended and Flexible Offer Standards Fund Grant, as detailed in Paragraphs 1.4.2 and 1.4.3 of the report;</p> <p>(b) That a presentation event be organised to be held at the end of September, 2009.</p>	Julie Taylor

<p><b>9.</b> <b>16.6.09</b></p>	<p><b>Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Sean Flynn indicated that he had asked for this item to be included on the agenda on the basis that he felt the issue needed to be revisited.</p> <p>He asked for the original consultation exercise with Head Teachers to be repeated possibly giving Head Teachers options for consideration and comment and the issue be re-considered by Forum at its October, 2009 meeting.</p> <p>It was <b>Resolved</b> accordingly.</p>	<p>Dawn Morris Clerk to arrange</p>
<p><b>10.</b> <b>16.6.09</b></p>	<p><b>Post 16 Abatement</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Sean Flynn indicated that he had also asked for this item to be included on the agenda because Post 16 funding had reduced over the years.</p> <p>Dawn Morris explained that the Post 16 Abatement was a factor within the Walsall funding formula applied to secondary schools only. She also pointed out that the calculation of the abatement took account of the total value of site specific factors for each secondary school and each schools total was reduced in proportion to their number of Post 16 pupils recorded on January census data.</p>	
<p><b>11.</b> <b>16.6.09</b></p>	<p><b>Facilities Time</b></p> <p>Avril Walton undertook to provide information on this item to the Clerk for circulation to Forum Members.</p>	<p>Avril Walton/Clerk</p>
<p><b>12.</b> <b>16.6.09</b></p>	<p><b>School Balances</b></p> <p>A report and amended paragraphs were submitted and Julie Taylor outlined the main points. In doing so, she referred to Paragraph 4.6, bullet points 1, 2 and 3 and suggested that Forum set up a Working Group to consider the issues and produce options</p>	

	<p>for consideration by the Forum on the proposed changes to the Balance Control Mechanism.</p> <p>Mr. Crowther referred to Section 6, School Specific Contingency and sought confirmation that this did not include any other funding generated by schools.</p> <p>At this juncture, the Clerk referred to Paragraph 6.2 of the report and advised the Forum that it would be unsafe to delegate powers to the Chairman because the Council had previously taken Counsel's Opinion on this practice and the practice was deemed to be illegal. He suggested that the Forum could either delegate to an officer in conjunction with the Chairman or invoke the provisions of the Constitution and establish an Urgency Sub-Committee to consider the issue, make a decision and report the decision to the next scheduled Forum meeting.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>(a) That, in respect of the proposed changes to the Balance Control Mechanism, a Working Group be set up to consider the issues and produce options for consideration by the Forum, the Working Group to comprise the Chairman (Mr. J. Baker) , Mr. A. Cheminais, Ms. H. Lomas, Dame M. Brennan and Mr. G. Crowther;</p> <p>(b) That, in respect of the School Specific Contingency, the provisions of the Constitution be invoked and an Urgency Sub-Committee be established to consider the issue, make a decision and report the decision to the next scheduled Forum meeting; the composition of the Urgency Sub-Committee to be in accordance with the terms of the Constitution;</p> <p>(c) That with regard to the recovery of school balances, approval be given to increasing the school specific contingency by £175,000, this sum to be used to offset BSF.</p>	<p>Julie Taylor to arrange</p> <p>Clerk to arrange</p> <p>Julie Taylor</p>
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<p><b>13.</b> <b>16.6.09</b></p>	<p><b>Harnessing Technology Grant</b></p> <p>A report was submitted. Stephen Read outlined the main points to the Forum.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>(a) That, with regard to central retention, additional funding over and above the 25% retention amount centrally, be retained to meet the key investment priorities which include:-</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Self Review Framework - £40k Shibboleth - £50k Internet connection to Schools - £140k</p> <p>(b) That a breakdown of the Central Contingency be provided for the next scheduled meeting of the Forum;</p> <p>(c) That, with regard to allocation to Schools, Academies be not funded at the same proportion as identified in Paragraph 2.2 of the report.</p>	<p>Stephen Read</p> <p>Stephen Read</p> <p>Stephen Read</p>
<p><b>14.</b> <b>16.6.09</b></p>	<p><b>Constitution and Membership Issues</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>(a) That the re-establishment of the Forum by Walsall Council be noted;</p> <p>(b) That consideration be given to asking the current Academy representative to represent all three Academies now operating within the Borough of Walsall;</p> <p>(c) That the decision of the Forum in March, 2008 extending the term of office of Heather Lomas (Special School Head Teacher), Elaine Stringer (Nursery Head Teacher), Rhoda Poyser (Early Years Development Childcare Partnership), Vacancy (Catholic Diocese) and Marion Letts (Staff Side) to 31<sup>st</sup></p>	<p>Clerk and Julie Taylor to action</p>

March, 2011 be re-affirmed;

- (d) That consequent upon the exercise undertaken by officers in respect of Governor representatives, approval be given to extending the terms of office of Messrs. G. Deakin and M. Lee (Primary Governors) and Messrs. F. Hodgkinson and M. Barton (Secondary Governors) to 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2011;
- (e) That the respective Head Teacher Forums be requested to identify which of their current Members on the Forum will have their terms of office extended to 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2011;
- (f) That individual schools Members be invited to nominate substitutes to attend Forum meetings on their behalf, it being noted that the Primary Heads Forum has nominated Martin Atkins, St. James Primary and David Brownsword, Leamore Primary as substitute Members for their current representatives;
- (g) That it be noted that the terms of office of the following remaining Members will be as indicated below:-

<u>Member</u>	<u>Term of office</u>
Mr. M. Sweeney, Secondary School Governor	31 <sup>st</sup> March, 2010
Vacancy, Secondary School Governor	31 <sup>st</sup> March, 2010
Mr. A. Davies, Primary Governor	31 <sup>st</sup> March, 2010
Mr. E. Gee, Primary Governor	31 <sup>st</sup> March, 2010
2 Primary Head Teachers (to be identified)	31 <sup>st</sup> March, 2010
2 Secondary Head Teachers (to be identified)	31 <sup>st</sup> March, 2010

	<p>(h) That it be noted that consequent upon (b) to (g) inclusive, officers will prepare a draft Terms of Reference and Operational Guidance document for the Forum for endorsement at a future meeting.</p>	
<p><b>15. 16.6.09</b></p>	<p><b>Forward Plan</b></p> <p>A copy of the Forward Plan was submitted.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That, subject to the inclusion of the following , and to the amendment of dates previously agreed, the Forward Plan be noted:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BSF Update - addition of a sixth school;</li> <li>- 14 - 19 Funding;</li> <li>- Early Years Funding Reforms - presentation</li> <li>- EMAG;</li> <li>- School Balances:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Balance Control Mechanism - recommendations of Working Group ;</li> <li>- School Specific Contingency - decision of Urgency Sub-Committee;</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Harnessing Technology Grant - breakdown of central contingency.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>16. 16.6.09</b></p>	<p><b>Correspondence</b></p> <p><b>(a) Bursars Group</b></p> <p>The Chairman reported receipt of a request from the Bursars Group for representation on the Forum. The Clerk reminded the Forum that the Schools Forum (England) (Amendment) Regulations, 2008 contained an option for Head Teachers to be represented at Forum meetings by senior schools staff. Bursars could, therefore, only attend Forum meetings as substitutes for Head Teachers and not</p>	

	<p>as Members in their own right.</p> <p><b>(b) Consultation on the Schools Forums (England) Regulation 2009</b></p> <p>A copy of a letter from Margaret Judd, School Funding Policy Adviser, DCSF was submitted, together with a consultation draft of the Schools Forums (England) Regulations, 2009. The Forum was advised that consultation responses should be sent to <a href="mailto:Schools.Forums@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk">Schools.Forums@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk</a> by 28<sup>th</sup> August, 2009.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That the documents be noted.</p>	<p>All</p>
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The meeting terminated at 7.18 p.m.