

## Schools Forum

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2009 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. S. Griffiths  
Mrs. E. Maher  
Ms. V. Barnes  
Dame M. Brennan  
Ms. H. Lomas  
Ms. M. Cryan  
Mr. A. Davies  
Mr. G. Deakin  
Mr. E. Gee  
Mr. M. Barton  
Mr. F. Hodgkinson  
Mr. M. Sweeney  
Mr. D. Clough

**Observers:** Ms. M. Jones  
Councillor Walker

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

		Action
<b>1(a)</b> <b>20.10.09</b>	<b>Election of Chairman</b>  The Forum was reminded that the Constitution for Schools Forum stated that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman be elected at the first Autumn term meeting for a period of twelve months.  <b>Resolved</b>  That Mr. J. Baker be appointed Chairman of Schools Forum until the first meeting of the Autumn term 2010.	

**Mr. Baker in the Chair**

<p><b>1(b)</b> <b>20.10.09</b></p>	<p><b>Election of Vice-Chairman</b></p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That Mr. S. Flynn be appointed Vice-Chairman of Schools Forum until the first meeting of the Autumn term 2010.</p>	
<p><b>2.</b> <b>20.10.09</b></p>	<p><b>Apologies</b></p> <p>Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Mr. G. Crowther and Mrs. R. Poyser; Ms. S. Wedgwood, Mr. Frank Barnes and Ms. J. Taylor (Walsall Children's Services - Serco).</p>	
<p><b>3.</b> <b>20.10.09</b></p>	<p><b>Minutes - 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2009</b></p>	<p>Approved as a correct record</p>
<p><b>4.</b> <b>20.10.09</b></p>	<p><b>Matters arising from the minutes</b></p> <p><b>Apologies</b></p> <p>That Mrs. E. Maher be included in the list of apologies for the 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2009 meeting.</p> <p>Mr. Flynn referred to his request for an item to be included on the agenda relating to the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant requesting that discussions take place with Head Teachers and consultation undertaken in relation to the climate facing schools and the need for additional funding in the future. Mr. Flynn requested officers to consult with Primary and Secondary Heads for their views on EMAG as a matter of urgency so that action could be taken in line with the April, 2010 budget.</p> <p>Ms. Morris informed the Forum that as schools had already been informed of their indicative budgets, any review would be unlikely to be implemented until April, 2011.</p>	<p>It was agreed that an item be included on the agenda for the December meeting</p>

<p><b>5.</b> <b>20.10.09</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>6.</b> <b>20.10.09</b></p>	<p><b>Building Schools for the Future - Finance Update</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Ms. Butcher highlighted the contents of the programme update notes. The remit meeting had been postponed to 17<sup>th</sup> November, 2009; a further meeting would take place to fine tune key areas around school organisation and proposals for BSF. Strategy for Change Part 2 was progressing some of the high level concepts included in Part 1. Site option appraisals would kick in during the next few months on transforming learning in the school environment. Teaching and learning colleagues have had an input into SFL and would be engaged in the wider framework document. Mace Group had been appointed as technical advisors and briefed by officers of the Council and schools within Wave 6a in order to familiarise themselves with and validate the mix of building works.</p> <p>Following the regeneration, co-locations and partnership working workshop, investigations were taking place into sustainable provisions on school sites to augment community use on those sites within Wave 6a. The funding allocation model and Local Education Partnership highlighted two key aspects of Building Schools for the Future showing capital allocations that would go to Partnerships for Schools and defends the Local Authority's allocation for the scheme, relying on mixed building works and pupil numbers; these would be analysed, evaluated and put to the funding allocation model. The key themes would be submitted to Schools Forum to enable an understanding of those aspects. The Local Education Partnership was an important part of the Building Schools for the Future programme and how private sector partners were attracted as well as the framework for delivering capital projects and including schools.</p>	

Mr. Mortiboys confirmed that the Local Education Partnership should be established around March/April, 2012 at a cost of £6.2 million and, at this stage, the project was within budget. The remit meeting scheduled for October, 2009 was delayed to November, 2009 which may incur a small additional cost. With regard to an earlier presentation to Schools Forum regarding the split between capital and revenue, changes to that could not be made and an update would be provided in the event of any changes to the nature of the spend within the next two years. The primary capital programme funding would be delivered through more traditional frameworks rather than through technical advisers within BSF, and Primary Schools would be consulted where necessary.

In response to questions, Ms. Walton confirmed that Cabinet would consider projects for Primary Schools that should be funded by the primary capital programme. It was anticipated that the £1.2 million would be allocated by April, 2010.

Ms. Lomas referred to budget management and the amounts being held that had been contributed by schools and whether the interest would go into the system to offset any increases rather than schools being asked to provide additional funds. She requested that Schools Forum be informed of how funding would be rolled out with regular updates on the projects are what was happening to the funding that had been provided by all schools.

Mr. Mortiboys undertook to report back on this matter and stated that any variations would need to be referred to the Forum. Ms. Walton confirmed that set up costs had been covered by the contribution from Schools Forum and that the money held by the Council was from the primary capital programme. The funding for BSF projects and the interest on the allocation provided by schools was being monitored closely and would be reported back to the next meeting. Mr. Mortiboys confirmed that at the last check, only two schools had taken up the Bond scheme which had had a minimal impact on contributions.

Mr. Flynn referred to the schools contributions to BSF and the apparent failure of transparency; there had been no balance to show the funds that had

been provided by Walsall and Schools Forum. The funding from Schools Forum was time limited for two years. Clarity was required around Building Schools for the Future and the funding that had been top sliced from schools, together with the anticipated spend and whether funding was on target; it was anticipated that BSF projects could slow down in view of lack of funding. It was felt that more financial information and strategic analysis was required.

In response to a question from Mr. Mortiboys, the Forum agreed that Mr. Mortiboys work with Ms. Julie Taylor (Children's Services - Serco) on this matter.

Ms. Walton informed the Forum that, following a request from Primary Heads, more information will be provided on the recommendations being made to Cabinet on the Capital Programme which would enable schools to see how information was used to reach priorities. With regard to the use of mobile classrooms, Members were advised that this would be part of the strategy for change and the use of mobiles would cease wherever possible. Ms. Walton confirmed that there were no separate priorities for primary capital programme; the primary strategy for change did not include a separate priority list. The primary strategy for change would take up opportunities to amalgamate infant and junior schools and primary schools would be built.

When the leisure sports strategy came on stream, it would link with strategy for change Part 2 and would include an outline business case. The leisure audit was in train and had a BSF focus within it factoring in what schools would like included on their site from a leisure perspective.

Ms. Butcher informed the Forum that work was taking place with schools around the curriculum analysis and their aspirations on schools strategy for change. BSF funding was exclusively for that purpose but as a Council, best use for funding was necessary, although BSF funding could not be siphoned off and it was confirmed that the funding would be used for BSF, primary capital programme and the Academies programmes.

	<p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That the progress that primary capital programme and Building Schools for the Future are making be noted.</p>	Dan Mortiboys/Julie Taylor to provide funding update for next meeting and include on alternate agendas
<p><b>7. 20.10.09</b></p>	<p><b>Early Years Single Funding Formula - Consultation Document and Formula</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Ms. Walton informed the Forum that the Sub-Group had been working on the draft consultation document.</p> <p>Ms. Morris confirmed that the document included a proposal to phase in 80% of the funding reductions to nursery schools over a 2 year period using transitional funding arrangements. Forum were also asked to agree to an increase of £360,000 in School Specific Contingency. The funding was required to ensure that sufficient funds would be available should a reconciliation of termly estimated pupil numbers to actual pupil numbers resulted in additional funding being needed to pay to providers.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>(1) That the annexed consultation document be approved for circulation;</p> <p>(2) That approval be given to an increase to the 2010-11 school specific contingency of £360,000 to manage any in-year budget adjustments that may arise as a result of this responsive participation led funding model.</p>	
<p><b>8. 20.10.09</b></p>	<p><b>Facilities Agreement for Walsall Schools</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Ms. Walton informed the Forum that the report was as a result of an action from the June, 2009 meeting on facilities agreement that Schools Forum contributed funding towards.</p>	

	<p>Ms. Walton stated that DSG monies was used to pay to the Unions agreed sums for their activities with different memberships receiving different amounts and the Unions would decide how those amounts would be used and distributed; consultation was carried out on behalf of schools. Discussions had taken place with the Unions and it had been agreed that the documents would be refreshed to ensure they were more appropriate. No additional funding was involved.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That the Facilities Agreement for Walsall Schools be noted.</p>	
<p><b>9. 20.10.09</b></p>	<p><b>Forward Plan</b></p> <p>A copy of the Forward Plan was submitted.</p> <p>Ms. Lomas informed the Forum that, with regard to the education contract, an Executive Board led by the Chief Executive and various Portfolio Holders had been established to deal with variations. The arrangements prior to that included representatives from Secondary and Primary Heads, together with other stakeholders. There was a strategy now coming through, including various other groups, that would be feeding in on a two-way system into a contract management side where information is received, clarified and discussed, however, Schools Forum was not represented on this body.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>(1) That an item be included on the agenda for the next meeting to nominate a representative to the Monitoring Board and in the meantime, Ms. Lomas would continue in her role and represent the Forum as she already sat on the Board in a different capacity;</p> <p>(2) That an item be included on:-</p> <p>Early Year Consultation Results</p> <p>Emag</p>	

	<p>Building Schools for the Future - funding held from Schools Forum</p> <p>Facilities Time</p>	
<p><b>10. 20.10.09</b></p>	<p><b>Correspondence</b></p> <p>None submitted.</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, 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2009 at 4.00 p.m. at Room TR1, at Beechdale Lifelong Learning Centre, Stephenson Square, Beechdale, Walsall.</p>	

The meeting terminated at 5.00 p.m.