



### ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

#### 1.0 **Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an annual report of the work of the Forum covering the period 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2016 to 7<sup>th</sup> March 2017.

#### 2.0 **Creating Early Learning Places for Two Year Olds**

- 2.1 Schools Forum confirmed its support to utilise the remaining balance, once the required number of 2 year old places were secured, to invest in supporting the creation of sufficient places for the 30 hours/extended offer. 20.09.16

#### 3.0 **Review of Schools Forum Membership**

- 3.1 In accordance with the Schools Forum Regulations 2010, the Forum undertook a review of the membership and it was noted that no change in schools membership or non-schools membership was required. 20.09.16

#### 4.0 **Universal Infant Free School Meals**

- 4.1 The Forum noted the remaining Universal Infant Schools Meals funding and agreed that all schools be informed that the capital fund was available for the final time before being integrated within the emergency fund. 20.09.16
- 4.2 Schools Forum were advised the funding had been spent for the benefit of schools. 07.03.17

#### 5.0 **SEN Updates**

Schools Forum agreed to include an SEN update as a standard agenda item at each meeting. .

- 5.1 Schools Forum requested that mainstream schools be involved in the short consultation window at the beginning of the SEN review prior to the matter being considered by Cabinet. Schools Forum was informed of the impact on Educational Psychologist provision within Walsall following staff sick leave resulting in some schools paying privately to get Education Health and Care Plans completed. 20.09.16
- 5.2 Forum members were advised the 'Home to School Transport Review' was out for consultation and included an area of focus on transport for children with special needs. They were also advised that over 1,000 statements of special education needs would have to be replaced with Educations, Health and Care (EHC) Plans by 11.10.16

31<sup>st</sup> March 2016, stressing the importance of them being carried out properly to avoid difficulties as children progressed through school.

- 5.3 A verbal update was provided and Forum Members were advised of and reminded of a number of issues including the end date of 21.03.18 for the transfer of SEN statements to EHCP; concerns about the high turnover of Education Psychologists which was not unique to Walsall. 06.12.16
- 5.4 Schools Forum received a verbal update and were advised that EHCP's covered young people up to the age of 25 which could have serious financial implications. Walsall also needed to scrutinise the current provision to prevent young people going out of the local authority to thus reduce out of borough assistance. 10.01.17
- 6.0 **Apprenticeship Levy**
- 6.1 Schools Forum was advised that schools must make provision for the impact of the levy (based upon 0.5% of the school pay bill) and to ensure they have proportionate access to the levy funds. Members suggested a letter be sent to the Members of Parliament representing the three constituencies located within Walsall to establish clarity in relation to the implementation of the levy and noting the Forums concern about the potential impact the levy could have. 28.09.16
- 6.2 Following concerns regarding the levy affecting school staffing budgets, a report was request to provide clarity on how the process would be administered locally. 11.10.16
- 6.3 The Forum received further information pertaining to the Government's published draft funding rules and the stipulations imposed in accessing the funding. A representative for the Forum was sought for the Council's Apprenticeship Levy Working Group to determine how schools would be affected and how they would be able to access the levy 06.12.16
- 6.4 Further verbal update provided. CMT to consider options pertaining to the preferred means of access to the levy. 07.03.17
- 7.0 **Continuation of Music Funding – Forest Arts Centre** 28.09.16
- 7.1 Schools Forum granted £38,000 music funding to Forests Arts Centre for 2017/18
- 8.0 **Update on Funding Formula Consultations and Impact on Walsall 2017/18 Local Funding Formulas**
- 8.1 Schools Forum approved that pending the planned start of a move to a national funding formula in April, 2017, a 2017/18 local Schools Funding Formula be prepared on the basis of no changes to the existing formula other that a review of the current approach to growth funding, and it was noted a detailed report would be presented to Schools Forum for approval in October 2016, prior to

Cabinet approval.

A working group was established to support the Council in reviewing, rebasing and updating the current High Needs banding values, pending the planning start of a move to a national funding formula in April 2018.

Schools Forum was advised a report on the 2017/18 local High Needs Funding Formula would be presented for consultation by January 2017, prior to Cabinet approval, and a working group was established to support the Council in reviewing and amending the existing local Early Years Funding Formula.

## 9.0 **De-Delegation 2017/18**

9.1 Schools Forum member representatives from maintained Secondary Schools and maintained Primary Schools considered and voted upon the de-delegation of funding for services recommendations. 11.10.16

## 10.0 **Review of Dedicated Schools Grant Surplus/Deficit**

10.1 Schools Forum were advised that Mr. M. Vlahakis and Dr. A. Bruton would be joining the SEN review working groups to consider the potential use of the DSG purples relating to high needs funding. 11.10.16

## 11.0 **Early Help in Walsall – Strengthening Collaboration, Effectiveness and Impact**

11.1 Schools Forum was advised a steering group had been established to focus on Early Help in Walsall, which would include a number of agencies. The importance of clarity in the area was stressed due to the emphasis placed by Ofsted on safeguarding. Officers had acknowledged the capacity to deal with this within schools was an issue and a strategy would be put in place. 11.10.16

11.2 The Forum was provided with the progress and impact to date on the development of a locality based Early Help approach aligned to school cluster arrangements, which had provided an opportunity for 10 schools to undertake the training; 95 schools were in regular contact with Early Help Advisors; development of 4 Integrated Partnership Panels to identify families in need of help; greater focus of supervision support and locality panel discussions around early identification of children at risk of exclusions. 06.12.16

## 12.0 **CLEAPSS**

12.1 The background to CLEAPSS was reported to Schools Forum and Members recommended that Walsall Council administered CLEAPSS membership for all Walsall Schools and academies and to absorb the administration costs of raising invoices to schools by charging a rate mid way between the lower and higher rates, estimated at 18p per pupil. 06.12.16

13.0	<b>Council Budget Saving Proposals 2017/18 – Cessation of Retirement Awards</b>	
13.1	Schools Forum were in agreement to the cessation of the Retirement Award Scheme due to the small number of staff who would be affected compared in comparison with the total savings which equated to approximately £26,000 or a salary.	06.12.16
14.0	<b>Responding to Increasing School Exclusions</b>	
14.1	Schools Forum's views were sought as part of a consultation on a proposal to align resources using the capacity available in the high need block to enable a multi-agency response designed to recognise risk factor early on for an early response to address the increasing trend of permanent exclusions.	06.12.16
14.2	Schools Forum considered recommendations made to standardise practices across agencies. It was noted the CME group met monthly and the New Leaf Centre would track long term pupils. The 2014/15 exclusions data would be published in July 2017.	10.01.17
15.0	<b>Admissions Service Update</b>	
15.1	Schools Forum received a report on the key functions of the Admissions Service and a number of key developments were highlighted including the secondary fair access protocol and the Council's 5 year strategy.	06.12.16
16.0	<b>Review of Current Balance Control Mechanisms</b>	
16.1	Schools Forum noted the current position for the level of maintained schools balances to the end of 2015/16, with only two maintained schools having breached the 8% level.	06.12.16
17.0	<b>Review of Local Government Pension Scheme Past Service Pension Costs Allocation</b>	
17.1	Schools Forum noted the current position for past service pension costs relating to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and the potential approaches for allocating the costs to individual schools. The current allocation method was discussed plus two potential, alternative options for allocation along with comparative costs.	06.12.17
17.2	Schools Forum resolved to maintain the current situation with further work to be undertaken in 2017/18 to be discussed in association with the National Funding Formula.	10.01.17
18.0	<b>Early Years Funding Formula Review</b>	
18.1	Schools Forum were advised of the work that had been undertaken with regard to the Early Years Funding Formula and Members were requested to feed back their views in relation to the proposed financial arrangements	10.01.17

19.0	<b>Sign Off Central Expenditure Budget</b>	
19.1	Schools Forum approved the proposed central expenditure for 2017/18 as determined by the EFA	10.01.17
20.0	<b>Schools Funding Formula</b>	
20.1	Schools Forum noted the overall level for DSG funding and the adjustments to funding factor values required for 2017/18 to ensure that allocations to mainstream schools via the local funding formula are affordable within the funding available and it endorsed and recommended the formula be included within the report to the Director of Children's Services, portfolio holder for Children's Services & Education, and the EFA.	10.01.17
21.0	<b>ESG – Centralisation of Retained Duties Funds 2017/18</b>	
21.1	Schools Forum approved the centralisation of funding of £700K for 2017/18 in relation to the statutory duties that the local authority provides to all schools. It was noted the services were previously funded through the Education Services Grant (ESG), which ceased from 2017/18 with funding for retained duties to be included within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).	10.01.17
22.0	<b>ESG – Centralisation of General Duties Funds 2017/18</b>	
22.1	Schools Forum approved the centralisation of funding for general duties for 2017/18 equivalent to £82.02 per 5 to 16 year old pupil (per place for special schools and Pupil Referral Units) for 2017/18 in relation to the statutory general duties that the local authority provides to maintained schools. These services were previously funded through the Education Services Grant (ESG), however this grant has ceased from 2017/18 with funding being removed.	10.01.17
23.0	<b>Children Missing Education (CME)</b>	
23.1	Schools Forum was advised of the current number of CME on the register. Members were concerned of potential financial implications pertaining to the large number of CME, albeit only a small number of CME may have challenging behaviour or required additional support as opposed to the higher number of children admitted under Fair Access Protocol.	07.03.17
24.0	<b>School Ready Fund</b>	
24.1	Schools Forum was informed the intended use of the School Ready Money was to ensure that outcomes for children by the end of EYFS improved each year in order to close the gap between Walsall and National levels. A breakdown of the initial year's take up was provided and members were advised additional information would be included on The Link.	07.03.17

- 25.0 **High Needs Special School Funding for 2017/18**
- 25.1 Schools Forum had no further views on the proposed adjustments to banded units of resource within the special schools funding matrix following an exercise to update the cost base, as contained within the report submitted at the meeting. 07.03.17
- 26.0 **Funding Formulas Working Groups**
- 26.1 Working groups were established to review the 2018/19 Schools Funding Formula and High Needs Formula in advance of April 2018. 07.03.17
- 27.0 **Recommendation**
- 27.1 That Schools Forum notes the report

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