

## Schools Forum

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> September, 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. S. Griffiths  
Mr. A.F. Cheminais  
Mr. M. Atkins  
Mr. S. Flynn  
Mr. J.P. Clarke  
Ms. H. Lomas  
Ms. M. Cryan  
Mr. G. Deakin  
Mr. E. Gee  
Mr. M. Barton  
Mr. F. Hodgkinson  
Mr. A. Bowater

**Observers:** Mr. D. Brownsword  
Ms. J. Gillen  
Mr. J. Murray  
Ms. L. Nickless  
Mr. D. Clough

**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)  
Mr. F. Barnes (Walsall Children's Services - Serco)

		Action
	<p>The Chairman informed Members of the sudden death of Kim Delaney who had sat on the Schools Forum and the Board of Children &amp; Co. for a number of years and he paid tribute to the good work she had carried out in Walsall.</p> <p>Members observed a minutes silence.</p>	

<p><b>1.</b> <b>29.9.09</b></p>	<p><b>Apologies</b></p> <p>Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Mr. M. Sweeney and Mr. G. Crowther.</p>	
<p><b>2.</b> <b>29.9.09</b></p>	<p><b>Minutes - 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2009</b></p>	<p>Approved as a correct record.</p>
<p><b>3.</b> <b>29.9.09</b></p>	<p><b>Matters arising from the minutes</b></p> <p><b>Item 13 - Harnessing Technology Grant</b></p> <p>As requested at the last meeting, a report showing the breakdown of the central contingency of the Harnessing Technology Grant was submitted.</p>	<p>Received</p>
<p><b>4.</b> <b>29.9.09</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>29.9.09</b></p>	<p><b>Membership</b></p> <p><b>(a) Mrs. Kim Delaney</b></p> <p>Members observed a minutes silence at the commencement of the meeting in memory of Kim Delaney.</p> <p><b>(b) Membership issues</b></p> <p>In response to points raised, the Clerk undertook to investigate whether the Chairmanship could be held for a two year period.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>(1) That the report and the action taken to fill vacancies on the Forum be noted;</p> <p>(2) That an item be included on the agenda for the next meeting for the appointment of Chairman.</p>	<p>Clerk to action</p>

<p><b>6.</b> <b>29.9.09</b></p>	<p><b>Urgency Sub-Committee - 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2009</b></p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That the minutes of the Urgency Sub-Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2009 be received as a correct record.</p>	
<p><b>7.</b> <b>29.9.09</b></p>	<p><b>Building Schools for the Future Finance Update</b></p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That this item be deferred to the October meeting.</p>	
<p><b>8.</b> <b>29.9.09</b></p>	<p><b>Carbon reduction commitment</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Ms. Taylor informed the Forum that a decision would be required on the method of payment of the costs involved being £532,000 in 2011. The carbon reduction commitment would affect all schools. Trusts and Foundation schools were maintained by the Local Authority and funded through the schools budget but Academies would need to be billed separately.</p> <p>Mr. Cheminais questioned the significance of the energy efficiency document as all the schools certificates looked very similar, this could cause a problem if schools were required to pay according to their energy efficiency document.</p> <p>Ms. Walton indicated that the Forum would need to decide whether each institution is responsible for their own energy as some are extremely different.</p> <p>Ms. Lomas requested a breakdown of the technical issues in order that certificates could be clarified prior to any decision being reached.</p> <p>Mr. Atkins requested more information on the costs for primaries, nurseries and special schools in view of the difference in the size of the buildings.</p>	

	<p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That the contents of the report be noted and that Ms. Alex-Eyitene be invited to attend a future meeting when this paper is considered in order that detailed information can be provided.</p>	
<p><b>9. 29.9.09</b></p>	<p><b>Implementing the Early Years Single Funding Formula - Guidance July, 2009</b></p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>In response to questions, Ms. Taylor confirmed that the Early Years Single Funding Formula would fund private, voluntary and independent school nurseries in the same way as we would fund Council nurseries in the future.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That the contents of the report be noted.</p>	
<p><b>10. 29.9.09</b></p>	<p><b>Implementing the Early Years Single Funding Formula - Progress Report</b></p> <p>Ms. Taylor confirmed that every Local Authority was required to have a basic hourly rate for every nursery child and this would be different depending on the type of setting and would be supplemented by a deprivation factor which was mandatory, an SEN factor was also proposed. The DCSF wanted Local Authorities to consider whether there should be a flexibility factor and as this was effective from September, 2010, all nursery aged children would be entitled to 15 hours nursery education rather than the 12½ hours already provided.</p> <p>With regard to the detail, Ms. Taylor reported that the affordability was being investigated as well as the sensitivity around increases in children turning 3 in the Autumn and starting sometime in January and the implications of this.</p> <p>A report would be submitted to 20<sup>th</sup> October meeting, including a consultation document and formula prior to its circulation to schools at the beginning of November.</p>	

	<p>The Chairman thanked all those involved in the work on the formula and the Sub-Groups. Ms. Taylor confirmed that the Sub-Group had looked special educational needs and the proposal will be included in the next report to the Forum.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That the work of the Early Years Funding Sub-Group be supported and provide feedback to the Group on the changes proposed at this stage of the development work.</p>	<p>Julie Taylor</p>
<p><b>11. 29.9.09</b></p>	<p><b>School Balances and Value for Money</b></p> <p>A report was submitted and amended spreadsheet circulated.</p> <p>Balances had reduced by £1.3 million in Walsall giving a total of £13.7 million. Ms. Taylor highlighted Paragraph 2 of the report and confirmed that the reduction in recovered sums was due to schools misinterpreting prior year commitments and properly assigned sums. Also, some properly assigned sums had been agreed due to significant change in programme costs. The new OFSTED framework included a need to demonstrate value for money for the use of resources in schools.</p> <p>Training sessions will be provided to schools around value for money and changes in the Local Authority accounting processes for year end balances whereby creditor provisions would be submitted at the end of the year. To replace the current prior year commitment process, when the outcome of the DCSF school balances survey is published, meetings of the Balances Sub-Group would be arranged to consider ways in which issues arising could be dealt with.</p> <p>In response to a question, Ms. Taylor confirmed that properly assigned sums were bids to the Local Authority at the end of the year for projects which schools had been saving for but were not completed by the end of the year. Most of the properly assigned sums in Walsall related to building projects. The Board that considers this issue would receive information on the building projects and</p>	

	<p>whether the proposals would raise standards and improve education. The criteria used was detailed in the Balance Control Mechanism.</p> <p>Members requested that a copy of the properly assigned formula be circulated to schools. Ms. Taylor confirmed that upon publication of the DCSF survey, the School Balances Working Group would hold a brainstorming session to ascertain whether any additional headings could be included.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That the work of the Local Authority proposed in the report to improve value for money in Walsall's schools be supported.</p>	Julie Taylor
<p><b>12.</b> <b>29.9.09</b></p>	<p><b>Forward Plan</b></p> <p>A copy of the Forward Plan was submitted.</p> <p>The Forum was informed that the consultation document on DSG formula review would be going to National Conference on 10<sup>th</sup> November at which point, the date for consideration would be amended.</p> <p>There were no other issues to add.</p>	
<p><b>13.</b> <b>29.9.09</b></p>	<p><b>Correspondence</b></p> <p>Correspondence from the DCSF Re: Consultation on the Schools Finance (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010 was submitted.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>That the contents of the correspondence from the Department for Children, Schools and Families Re: Consultation on the Schools Finance (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010 be noted.</p>	

The meeting terminated at 4.50 p.m.

