

## **Schools Forum**

**September 2024**

### **Application for Continuation of Music Funding £38,000 in 2025/26**

#### **Purpose of report**

- To consider the work of Walsall Music Education Hub & Service in supporting Walsall schools and young people with music provision and opportunities.
- To consider continuing Schools Forum financial support for the Music Education Hub's activities at Walsall Arena and Arts Centre.

#### **Recommendations**

To approve £38,000 School Forum funding be granted to Walsall Music Education Hub & Service (WMEHS) in 2025/26 in line with previous years.

#### **Background**

Approximately 4,000 pupils take part in weekly music tuition and ensemble activities in Walsall through WMEHS's delivery programmes. Weekly after school opportunities provided at Music Centres for Choral, Vocal, Instrumental and Rock and Pop are firmly established.

The continued impact of financial and time pressures on schools, in combination with the shift in the musical, cultural and educational environments, mean that WMEHS is well positioned to continue to provide outlets for young people to rehearse, participate and perform outside of traditional school hours and settings.

This additionally enriches and enhances the musical opportunities for Walsall's children and young people (CYP) and enables further progression by bringing together young people from a variety of schools and other educational settings, to work collaboratively on music which may be limited within the constraints of individual schools.

Open-access programmes for music beyond the school setting enable Walsall's young people to engage in activities for extended periods of time, to fully develop their potential and, if appropriate, embark on vocational and continuation pathways into the creative industries and Higher Education.

As outlined in last year's report, the Department of Education (DfE) published an update to the National Plan for Music Education (NPME) in June 2022 where a new strategic approach was implemented introducing 43 prescribed geographic Music Hub areas (thereby reducing

the number of Hubs from 118). Our new geographical area, which will begin on Sept 1<sup>st</sup> 2024, will be the Black Country, comprising of Walsall, Wolverhampton, Dudley and Sandwell Music Services, forming one larger Hub called the Black Country Music Hub which Dudley Council will lead as the Hub Lead Organisation (HLO). WMEHS will remain largely unchanged. The funding mechanism will change, as Arts Council England (ACE)/DfE funding will be funnelled through Dudley, and upward reporting mechanisms into ACE will also alter going via Dudley as the HLO. Our delivery to students and schools will remain the same.

Guided by DfE, ACE, Headteachers, Hub advisory group and other stakeholders, WMEHS continues to develop a localised framework to support Walsall schools in maximising the impact of music, within a broad and balanced curriculum, the NPME, the Model Music Curriculum and the OFSTED framework in and outside the school. This plan helps schools identify and provide essential additional support for their children's musical needs.

Walsall schools have traditionally been recognised for high levels of musical engagement. This is testament to the cohesive bonds of the deeply embedded partnership arrangements that have existed for many years and have enabled WMEHS to continue to offer, stabilise and enhance the musical opportunities for Walsall's children and young people.

## **Proposal**

Schools Forum to continue to work in partnership with WMEHS to provide essential resources and support to Walsall schools and young people for their musical education.

## **Financial Implications/Value for Money**

The continued static funding/below-inflation increments of DfE/ACE grant funding, combined with increases in essential costs and very limited direct streams of local government funding, place increasing year-on-year pressure on the economy of scale required to sustain the core functionality and maintain a diverse portfolio.

The DfE formula funding of Walsall's music grant will remain approximately the same however from Sept 2024 we will see an additional 2% expenditure of our grant fund to support the new HLO (Black Country Music Hub). Working closely with our Lead Development Partners (LDPs - Wolverhampton Music Service, Sandwell (SIPS) and Dudley Performing Arts) this has been capped at 3% for all 4 services going into 2025 and beyond.

We are aware that schools are under greater economic pressure to provide the full breadth of educational provision. The Schools Forum funding ensures Walsall's CYP to have enhanced & enriched access to music education.

The proposed 2025/2026 revenue budget for Music is:

<b>Walsall Music Education Hub &amp; Service</b>	
<b>Budget 2025/26</b>	
(Indicative budget based on 2024/25 levels)	
<b>Income</b>	
<i>Schools Forum support?</i>	38,000
Income from schools	303,000
Income Concerts & Performances	12,000
ACE DfE Grant	484,072
Other earned /Generated Income	21,450
Other income	27,600
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>886,122</b>

A £38,000 contribution (~4.3% of WMEHS's budget) levers access to the broad spectrum of opportunities and schemes which normally would not be available within the core portfolio due to financial constraints. All Walsall schools CYP have access to this service. The contribution of £38,000 equates to just ~75p<sup>1</sup> per child per annum but collectively unlocks access to all the activities and services listed. Most importantly, it enables us to keep our Music Centre ensemble activities free for the CYP of Walsall where most of our neighbouring services are now charging.

### **Legal Implications**

There are no legal implications.

### **School Improvement**

WMEHS provides a range of opportunities and initiatives for Walsall's CYP and schools which are made possible by the provision of resourcing from Schools Forum.

These include:

- **Music Centres**  
WMEHS continues to provide after school activities at the Walsall Arena and Arts Centre to facilitate opportunities for ensembles, bands, vocal groups and orchestras which might otherwise be unavailable in schools. The provision of borough wide after school Music Centres enable young people to develop group skills and play alongside their peers, providing pathways for progress. Increased pressure within schools for time and resources means this outlet for musical development is increasingly important for Walsall's CYP.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on school census data (Jan 2024)

From Sept 2024 we will be expanding onto a third evening and a different location: Blue Coat Church of England Academy. It is envisaged that this central location will reduce barriers to access with easier public transport links.

Walsall Music Education Hub & Service offers:

- Open-access evening Music Centres throughout the school year for Choral, Vocal, traditional instrumental, Rock and Pop and Jazz
- Specialist provision for SEND, and Virtual School students to include large-scale events and workshops
- Continuation pathways for Vocal, Instrumental, Jazz and Rock & Pop
- Ensemble opportunities for orchestras, bands, percussion ensembles, vocal groups, choirs, musical theatre, rock and pop, world music and bespoke projects
- Use of a variety of rehearsal spaces, two auditoria as performance spaces, to include the Walsall Arena based at Walsall Arena and Arts Centre
- Opportunities to perform in different venues in the local community and the West Midlands region, such as Walsall Arboretum, Walsall New Art Gallery, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Lichfield Arts Festival, The Robin, etc.

- **Large Scale Events**

Walsall Arena and Arts Centre provide use of both of its large performance spaces for the Music Hub to organise and stage large-scale music events. This is in addition to a growing number of other local venues with our strengthening partnerships such as Walsall Arboretum, The Robin, Lichfield Fuse Festival, St Annes, Table Café, The New Art Gallery Walsall, and Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. Examples include:

- Walsall Schools' Massed Christmas Choir, a seasonal themed run of show style performances in the Walsall Arena typically involving around 17 schools annually with a live band
- Singing Festivals for all Key Stages, infant, junior and secondary
- Music Centre Concerts, at least 15 annual concerts spread through the year for Vocal, Instrumental, Jazz & Rock n Pop Music Centres
- Walsall Young Music Star (WYMS), a competition event for individual vocalists and instrumentalists
- Bandstand Bonanza in Walsall Arboretum, an annual festival for Music Centre ensembles/groups and WYMS winners
- Access to Music (ATM) Celebration, a bi-annual event to celebrate the *Access to Music* project for LAC CYP held in partnership with The New Art Gallery Walsall
- Rock and Pop Gig at The Robin, an annual gig for music centre rock bands on a professional stage
- Fuse Festival with Lichfield Arts, a large 3-day event each summer where WMEHS alternate between jazz performances from Project Jazz (outlined below) and rock and pop on a yearly basis

- Piano Spotlight Event – in partnership with Royal Birmingham Conservatoire involving students across Walsall schools and key stages
- High Scorer’s Concert – spotlighting the work of our highest achieving entrants for nationally recognised graded exams

- **Projects**

In addition to the above, Walsall Music Education Hub & Service organises and arranges the following projects:

- Live Music - a school-based project performed by professional musicians
- Collaborative projects in partnership with the other West Midlands Music Education Hubs – e.g. Youth Voice and work with the Welsh National Opera
- Composing with pictures at The New Art Gallery Walsall - an annual project to engage KS2, 3, 4 & 5 students with musical composition using visual art stimuli
- Project Jazz – features a youth big band, small youth Jazz Combo and weekly youth Jazz Improvisation classes. The groups regularly perform in Music Centre Concerts, local festivals, such as the Lichfield Arts Jazz & Blues Festival and at other venues in the local community, such as Table Café, Walsall Arboretum and St Anne’s, Chastown. Jazz@6 is a 'big band' for intermediate/advanced jazz musicians to explore challenging arrangements. Weekly Jazz Improvisation Classes help students to learn/experience/explore the art of improvisation. These skills are then used in the Jazz Ensembles. The Jazz Combo is a small ensemble that features the finest young jazz musicians from across Walsall. This group has worked collaboratively with the Midlands Youth Jazz Orchestra and Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

- **Partnerships**

WMEHS has active and collaborative working arrangements with the following:

- The New Art Gallery Walsall
- Black Country Music Education Hubs
- West Midlands Music Education Hubs
- Walsall Council
- Walsall Virtual School
- Black Country Dance Hub
- Charanga, online learning resource and ongoing CPD for schools
- Rainbow Rhyme, early years music education specialists
- BC Music, SEND music education specialist
- Lichfield Arts
- Exam boards, ABRSM, Trinity, London College of Music, Rock School
- Summers Song Ltd
- Forest Foundation
- The Stringcredibles
- BIMM Birmingham, Higher Education Institute for Modern Music
- Walsall Senior Citizens Orchestra
- Girl Grind UK, industry specialists focusing on closing the gender gap and promoting pathways into the music industry
- Royal Birmingham Conservatoire
- Walsall Arena and Arts Centre

- **CPD and Music Educator Networks**

WMEHS continues to facilitate the strong MusE (Music Educator) network groups for Walsall music teachers from primary, secondary and special schools. We collaborate on an increasing number of events and CPD opportunities for staff linking Key Stages, aiding transition and development work across the sector.

Some examples include:

- regular CPD within termly twilight meetings from resource sharing to specific strategies for OFSTED Framework, OFSTED Deep Dive assessment, Model Music Curriculum and NPME; early years teaching strategies; SEND focusses; specific genre teaching such as North Indian Classical music, etc...
- an ongoing “buddy” system to partner together music departments/schools/teachers
- improving joint working and mutual peer review
- moderation work across the key stages
- termly free Charanga training – a digital primary music scheme
- collegiate support and open forum discussions
- networking

- **Black Country Music Hub & West Midlands Music**

WMEHS has always worked collegiately with the Black Country Music Hubs and this partnership will be formalised this year under the ACE/DfE’s Music Investment Programme (outlined in the NMPE revision in June 2022). From 1<sup>st</sup> Sept 2024 Walsall will be working under the Hub Lead Organisation of the Black Country Music Hub. This will bring enhanced music opportunities for Walsall CYP to build on our events and strengthen our CPD support to schools.

WMEHS is also a pro-active member of West Midlands Music, a group of 14 Music Education Hubs based across the West Midlands who work in partnership with WMEHS, promote collaboration, enable collective music educational opportunities for CYP, CPD for schoolteachers, on-going training opportunities for music education staff, regional projects, and support networks for best practice within the music education sector.

- **Music Mark**

WMEHS is member of *Music Mark*, a nationally recognised organisation, advocating and lobbying at a national level to promote music and music education.

Walsall Music Education Hub & Service mediates and facilitates access to *Music Mark* school membership which is free to all Walsall schools (with all associated

costs borne by the WMEHS) and can only be accessed through engagement with the Music Hub.

The *Music Mark Award* is available to schools which appreciate the value of music education as part of a broad, balanced and relevant school curriculum and demonstrates a willingness to engage in the development conversations at a national level related to improving music provision for all children and young people.

### **Members eligible to vote**

All