

Schools Forum

Urgency Sub-Committee

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 24th May, 2011 at 4.00 p.m. at Lower Farm Primary School, Bakewell Close, Bloxwich, WS3 3QH

Present:- Mr. J. Baker
Mrs. V. Birch
Mr. D. Brownsword
Mr. G. Deakin
Ms. H. Lomas

In Attendance:- Mr. E. Richards (Walsall Children's Services - Serco)
Ms. J. Taylor (Walsall Children's Services - Serco)

		Action
1. 24.5.11	Apology There were no apologies submitted.	
2. 24.5.11	Appointment of Chairman That Mr. J. Baker be appointed Chairman of the Urgency Sub-Committee for the duration of the meeting.	
3. 24.5.11	Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended) There were no items which the Sub-Committee considered should be dealt with in private session.	
4. 24.5.11	Declarations of Interest Mr. Deakin declared an interest in the item relating to Membership of the Forum and took no part in the discussion and voting thereon.	

<p>5. 24.5.11</p>	<p>Membership of Forum</p> <p>The Sub-Committee was informed that the term of office for a number of Members had expired on 31st March, 2011. In view of the number of schools converting to Academy status and the requirement that a ballot of School Governors be held, it was felt that the period of office for those Members be extended to 27th September, 2011 in order that a review of the membership can be carried out and the necessary ballots held.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>(1) That the Sub-Committee agree to extend the term of office of those Members whose term expired on 31st March, 2011 and for those Members whose school was in the process of converting to Academy status to enable any necessary ballot to be carried out;</p> <p>(2) The Sub-Committee agreed to extend the term of office of Mr. G. Crowther, as Secondary Head representative, until the review of the Constitution was completed.</p>	
<p>6. 24.5.11</p>	<p>Funding for support for Primary Schools</p> <p>Mr. Richards informed the Sub-Committee that funding was requested to support schools that were potentially under-performing. Eleven primary schools that were the responsibility of the Local Authority had been listed as under-performing as a result of the Plan that had been submitted to the Government. Each school would have an additional nine days support in the first instance and if the impact of that could not be justified, the schools would return the funding and no more would be provided. The support equated to £4,500 per school.</p> <p>It was envisaged that Walsall Children's Services - Serco staff would be the provider of the additional nine days support but in the event of a school having specific issues, an external provider could be sought and the funding would be used to broker such support. All the schools had common criteria</p>	

and would require assessment in tracking because they were not making Level 2 progress and were below the floor targets. The vast majority had been identified as unsatisfactory and required support. The nine days of support would also include a review of the School Development Plan and any refinements made in order that the Plan reflected recent changes. It would be necessary to develop the role of the critical friend as well as the Chair and senior and middle leadership within the schools. Teaching in the schools had been identified as insufficient, therefore, development of teaching and learning would take place over a twelve week term.

To support the schools in Term 1, the issues would be formally discussed and a Service Level Agreement entered into to identify areas to be covered. The school would work to the Service Level Agreement but if they failed to do so, the funding would be clawed back.

Julie Taylor confirmed that the funding was from the Schools Specific Contingency within the central element of the Schools Budget, and earmarked for additional support to nursery, primary and special schools.

Mr. Richards confirmed that the schools had been identified by the Minister for Education's criteria and had been informed that they were included on the list. Funding for the schools to use the model proposed would cost £49,500 and would come from the £240,000 previously agreed for this purpose.

The Chairman indicated the importance of schools having an element of choice in the provision of support.

Mr. Richards indicated that the support will be provided in half day per week sessions and would look at leadership and management. Members referred to the importance of the person supporting the school being acceptable as well as appropriate. The Chairman re-iterated the importance of schools having an element of choice as every Primary, Special and Nursery School had contributed to this scheme. Mr. Richards confirmed that he would be looking at quality assurance in respect of the provision. Members indicated that, in order to monitor progress, an assessment should take place

	<p>every four weeks to ascertain whether the provision was making a difference.</p> <p>Mr. Brownsword referred to the need for discussion, negotiation and support for the schools within the scheme and schools would need to be challenged in an appropriate way.</p> <p>Mr. Richards informed the Sub-Committee that the support packages would be tailored to meet the needs of individual schools and it was anticipated that a further fifteen schools would come on-stream for support in the current financial year. It was also anticipated that schools going through this process would have their Plans refined after approximately six weeks to ensure they were current.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) That Mr. Richards hold discussions with the schools involved in the additional support scheme in order to establish and draw up a suitable Service Level Agreement for each school; (2) That a Memorandum of Understanding be drawn up for the parties to the provision to enter into, to include the Service Level Agreement, and to inform the parties of the process for claw back if the requirements were not met. The Memorandum of Understanding to include the termly review process; (3) That schools taking part in the scheme be advised that any concerns they have could be raised with the Chairman of Schools Forum; (4) Any Members of Schools Forum who receive feedback from the schools on the provision be requested to inform the Chairman of Schools Forum; (5) That the minutes of this meeting, including the draft Service Level Agreement and information on claw back, be submitted to the next Schools Forum meeting. 	<p>Mr. E. Richards</p>
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The meeting terminated at 5.20 p.m.

