

Schools Forum

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 6th December, 2011 at 4.00 p.m. at Blakenall Village Centre, Thames Road, Blakenall, Walsall

Present:- Mr. S. Flynn (Chairman)
Mr. J. Baker (Vice-Chairman)
Mr. D. Brownsword
Mr. R.C. Yeomans
Dame M. Brennan
Mr. J.P. Clarke
Ms. H. Lomas
Mrs. P. Hunt
Mr. F. Hodgkinson
Mr. D. Clough
Ms. J. Mayo

In Attendance:- Mr. D. Mortiboys (Walsall MBC)
Ms. J. Taylor (Walsall Children's Services - Serco)

		Action
	The Chairman reminded Members that Mr. Joe Baker would be retiring on 31 st December, 2011. The Chairman and Members thanked Mr. Baker for his work on the Forum over a number of years and for his work as Chairman from November, 2008 to September, 2011.	
1. 6.12.11	Apologies Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Mr. M. Vlahakis, Mr. G. Crowther, Mrs. J. Ward, Mr. E. Gee, Ms. M. Yates, Mrs. M. Woodcock, Mrs. M. Robinson and Mr. J. Sharma.	
2. 6.12.11	Minutes - 8th November, 2011	The minutes of the meeting held on 8 th November, 2011 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

<p>3. 6.12.11</p>	<p>Matters arising from the minutes</p> <p>School Finance Regulations 2012-13</p> <p>The Chairman confirmed that this matter had been raised with the DfE and the final Regulations were awaited.</p> <p>16 - 19 Funding Consultation</p> <p>The Sub-Group meeting had taken place and the consultation responses formulised would be forwarded to the DfE in due course.</p> <p>2011-12 Per Pupil Funding Analysis</p> <p>The Chairman confirmed that the additional information requested on free school meals and IDACI in respect of all schools had been merged into the original document and circulated to Members. A letter to the local MPs and Secretary of State for Education had been drafted and would be circulated as soon as the final notes were available.</p> <p>Julie Taylor informed the Forum that another consultation document on deprivation funding was expected in the Spring, therefore, the response now proposed would be appropriately timed.</p> <p>Spending of contingency money 2011/12 (School to School Support)</p> <p>Mr. Brownsword confirmed that primary heads had discussed this and agreed that the money should be returned to schools. The Chairman confirmed that this item would be discussed later on the agenda.</p> <p>Correspondence</p> <p>The Chairman informed the Forum that he would meet with the Chair of the Scrutiny and Performance Panel informally later this week.</p>	
<p>4. 6.12.11</p>	<p>Late items to be introduced by the Chairman</p> <p>The Chairman agreed to take a late item in respect of a Freedom of Information request.</p>	

<p>5. 6.12.11</p>	<p>Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)</p> <p>There were no items for consideration in the private session.</p>	
<p>6. 6.12.11</p>	<p>Diploma Funding</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Ms. Taylor informed the Forum that Diploma Funding for 2011/12 had been held in the contingency fund as it was specific to individual pupils. The 14 - 19 team indicated that £40,000 would need to be allocated to schools running diploma courses leaving a balance of £19,815 which could be used to purchase licences for the schools listed in Paragraph 2.1 of the annexed report for “U-Explore”, online careers information.</p> <p>Ms. Taylor confirmed that the YPLA would need to be advised of any budget adjustments as Academy budgets were based on the Local Authority formula.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>(1) That the £19,815 balance of the 2011/12 diploma funding be re-distributed to secondary schools, including Academies and special schools with secondary aged pupils via the AWPU factor;</p> <p>(2) That £40,000 be held in contingency in 2012/13 to support learners at schools offering diplomas.</p>	
<p>7. 6.12.11</p>	<p>Spending of contingency money 2011/12 update (School to School Support)</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>The Forum was advised that the Primary Forum had requested an opportunity to consider this matter further at its next meeting.</p>	

	<p>Resolved</p> <p>(1) That the views of the Primary Forum, as indicated in Paragraph 2.1 of the annexed report, and the allocation of approximately £200,000 to eligible primary, nursery and special schools, be noted;</p> <p>(2) That the proposal to delegate the above funding to schools through the AWPU factor or hourly rate for maintained nursery schools with effect from 1st April, 2012 be deferred to enable the Primary Forum to consider this matter further at its January meeting and refer back to Schools Forum for further consideration.</p>	
<p>8. 6.12.11</p>	<p>School Funding Consultation Update</p> <p>A report was submitted.</p> <p>Further consultation on the future funding system would take place in Spring 2012.</p> <p>A report was published by the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) which suggested that schools with high levels of deprivation would gain through the DfE's current proposed funding reforms and that Walsall could see an 8% reduction in primary funding and a 3% reduction in secondary funding. However, the report is speculative and had made assumptions not included in the original DfE consultation document. At this stage, no ministerial decisions have been taken which would result in the outcomes predicted in the IFS report.</p> <p>Ms. Taylor informed the Forum that it was anticipated that all future deprivation funding would be distributed via the pupil premium. Until the Government's intentions are clear and we have no idea if this would create a relative reduction or increase in for Walsall schools.</p> <p>She stressed the importance of timely and accurate school census returns to Walsall Children's Services - Serco. A 100% return was required as a matter of urgency to enable us to fully complete the required data checks. Information on the minimum funding guarantee was still awaited.</p>	

	<p>With regard to free school meals eligibility, Members requested that the Head of Benefits be invited to attend the next meeting to update the Forum on any progress.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>(1) That the contents of the report and likely timescale for reform be noted;</p> <p>(2) That the Head of Benefits be invited to the next meeting to update Forum of progress with identifying FSM eligibility.</p>	
<p>9. 6.12.11</p>	<p>Forward Plan</p> <p>The Forward Plan was submitted.</p> <p>It was agreed to take off the items relating to the Education Endowment Fund and New Collaboration Initiative as no information had been forthcoming. It was also agreed to move the date of the next meeting from 17th January, 2012 to 31st January, 2012.</p>	
<p>10. 6.12.11</p>	<p>Late Items</p> <p>Mr. Mortiboys informed the Forum that the Council had received a Freedom of Information request regarding schools that were responsible for their own banking arrangements. Four primary schools had been identified and the head teachers of those schools were informed that the information would be passed on. Members were requested to alert other schools that similar requests could be made to them.</p> <p>The Forum noted the information.</p>	
<p>11. 6.12.11</p>	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>None received.</p>	

12. 6.12.11	Date and time of next meeting It was NOTED that the next meeting of Schools Forum would be held on Tuesday, 31 st January, 2012 at 4.00 p.m. in the Large Hall, Education Development Centre (EDC), Pelsall Lane, Rushall, Walsall, WS4 1NG.	
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The meeting terminated at 4.56 p.m.