

## DUDLEY SCHOOLS FORUM

Tuesday, 2nd June, 2009 at 6.00 p.m. at Saltwells Education  
Development Centre, Bowling Green Road, Netherton, Dudley

### PRESENT:-

Mr Dallaway, Mrs Edwards, Mrs Elwiss, Mr Francis, Mrs Garratt, Mrs Griffiths, Mr Harrington, Mr Hatton, Mrs Hazlehurst, Mr Hinton, Mr Hudson, Ms Hughes, Mr James, Ms Mickle, Mr Millman, Mr Millward, Mr Ridley, Ms Smith, Mr Wassall, Mrs Withers and Mr Yates.

### Persons entitled to attend meetings of the Forum and speak

Councillor Mrs Walker (Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services) and Mr Wyatt (Director of Children's Services) – both Dudley M.B.C.

### Officers

Assistant Director of Children's Services (Ms Porter); Children's Services Finance Manager (Mrs Cocker) and Principal Accountant (Mrs Coates) – both Directorate of Finance, ICT and Procurement and Assistant Principal Officer (Democratic Services), Directorate of Law and Property (Mr Sanders) – All Dudley M.B.C.

#### 1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED

That Mrs Griffiths be elected Chair of the Forum for the period expiring on 31st March, 2010

(Mrs Griffiths thereupon took the Chair).

#### 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Mr Jones, Mr Sorrell and Mr Timmins.

#### 3. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

RESOLVED

That Mr Millman be elected Vice Chair of the Forum for the period expiring on 31st March, 2010.

#### 4. INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME

New members of the Forum and the newly appointed Director of Children's Services were introduced and welcomed.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 17th March, 2009 be approved as a correct record and signed.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Further to minute 2 (Declarations of Interest), the Assistant Principal Officer (Democratic Services) reported the advice of the Interim Director of Law and Property that, since there was no legislative or constitutional requirement for Declarations of Interest by members of the Forum to be submitted, there was no necessity for an item for this purpose to be included on Forum agendas. The Assistant Principal Officer reported further the procedure preferred by the Interim Director that, should any member consider they might have an interest, they refer the matter to the Secretary to the Forum for advice on any action that needed to be taken. This approach was accepted by the Forum.

7. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT OUT TURN 2008/09

A report of the Interim Director of Children's Services was submitted on the out turn of the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2008/09 (DSG) which also sought approval for the Schools Provisional Spending Plans for 2009/10, in accordance with Dudley's Scheme for Financing Schools.

The provisional out turn, subject to audit, was in the sum of £186.716 m against a DSG of £188.303m, thus leaving an anticipated residue of £1.587m to roll forward into 2009/10. Proposals for the utilisation of the residue were set out in paragraph 8 of the report now submitted.

Provisional spending plans for schools for 2009/10, in accordance with the Dudley's scheme for Financing Schools, were set out in Appendix B to the report.

Particular reference was made in the report to concerns expressed by the Budget Working Group of the Head Teachers' Consultative Forum on difficulties being experienced by schools in balancing their annual budgets and that the position was likely to be exacerbated by the central government restriction on spending plans for local government over the 2011-14 period. The Vice Chairman of the Forum advocated that a strategic plan be drawn up to mitigate the effects. The Assistant Director of Children's Services confirmed that the Directorate was currently reviewing school places.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the out turn in respect of the Schools Budget for 2008/09, funding from the DSG, be noted and that the Director of Children's Services be recommended that the residue be applied as set out in paragraph 8 of the report now submitted.
- (2) That Schools Provisional Spending Plans for 2009/10, as set out in Appendix B to the report now submitted, be approved.

8. JOB EVALUATION AND EQUAL PAY FOR DUDLEY SCHOOLS

A report of the Interim Director of Children's Services was submitted updating the Forum in relation to the position on job evaluation and the equal pay back pay reserve for Dudley Schools and which also sought consideration of advice from the Director of Finance for all schools to set aside a further £20,000 in 2009/10 as a minimum contribution towards the anticipated costs. The report suggested an amendment of the wording of the Dudley Scheme of Financing Schools to provide for each school to maintain a minimum balance of £40,000 for the purpose of job evaluation and the equal pay back pay reserve.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the provision regarding job evaluation and equal pay be noted.
- (2) That the Director of Children's Services be recommended that paragraph 4.2.2 of the Dudley Scheme for Financing Schools be amended to read:-  
  
"Those schools which have set aside contingency funding over £20,000 for the purpose of single status and equal pay costs, are authorised to withdraw the excess funding from the contingency at their discretion and without reference to the Director of Children's Services, provided that the contingency funding does not reduce to less than £20,000.00 and that it be strongly recommended that schools add a further £20,000 in 2009/10 or until such time as settlement is reached".

9. CLOSURE OF CRADLEY HIGH SCHOOL – OUT TURN 2008/09

A report of the Interim Director of Children's Services was submitted advising the Forum of the Year End position regarding Cradley High School for 2008/09.

Reference was made in the discussion to on-going costs of securing the site, which continued to be necessary in the light of increased vandalism and the Council's Health and Safety responsibilities. The Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services confirmed that the costs of security would eventually have to be funded from the capital receipts accruing from the sale of the property, once this was effected.

RESOLVED

That the financial year end position for Cradley High School for 2008/09, and the current position regarding security, be noted.

10. UPDATE ON THE EARLY YEARS PROVIDER REFERENCE GROUP

A report of the Interim Director of Children's Services was submitted updating the Forum on the progress of the work of this Group, with particular reference to the development of the new formula for funding early years provision in the maintained and private voluntary and independent education sectors, as reported initially to the meeting of the Forum on 17th March, 2009.

The report now submitted indicated that significant progress was being made with information received from the Local Authorities involved in the DCSF pilot Formula Development Project being applied. The formula under consideration would be based on an hourly rate for each sector, in line with the methodology used by many of the pilot authorities, and, at this stage, it was anticipated that deprivation would be the only additional factor in the proposed formula. Early indications had suggested that an additional amount of 0.6 million pounds would be required to fully fund the estimated cost of provision but that if no additional funding was available the hourly rate would need to be scaled down to manage within the existing Dedicated Schools Grant resources.

A proposed timetable for the approval and implementation of the formula was appended to the report now submitted.

RESOLVED

That the report, together with the timetable for approval and implementation, be noted.

11. FREE SCHOOLS MEALS PILOT

A report of the Interim Director of Children's Services was submitted, indicating that the Council and the Dudley Primary Care Trust had been unsuccessful in its joint bid to deliver one of three Free School Meal Pilot Schemes.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

12. DUDLEY SCHOOLS FORUM – MEMBERSHIP AND TRAINING PROGRAMME

A report of the Interim Director of Children's Services was submitted, indicating the current membership of the Forum, in consequence of the changes effected from 1st May, 2009. The report also encouraged members to engage in the training programme arranged for 23rd June and 29th September, 2009, invitations to which had been sent on 5th May.

RESOLVED

That the current membership of the Forum and the correspondence inviting members to attend the training sessions, be received and noted.

13. DUDLEY SCHOOLS FORUM CONSTITUTION

A report of the Interim Director of Children's Services was submitted seeking consideration of amendments proposed to the Constitution of the Forum, in consequence of the revisions recommended to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services at the meeting of the Forum held on 17th March, 2009.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the revised Constitution, attached at Appendix A to the report now submitted, be recommended to the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services for approval.
- (2) That any further amendments be considered in March 2010 after 12 months of operation of the revised Constitution.

14. SECTION 52 BUDGET STATEMENT FOR 2009/10 AND THE ALLOCATION OF SCHOOL BUDGETS

A report of the Interim Director of Children's Services was submitted summarising the Section 52 budget statement for 2009/10 and providing summary financial data in respect of the Schools Budget allocation for the 2009/10 financial year.

The component parts of the Section 52 budget statement were as set out in paragraph 6 of the report now submitted and the contents of each item in the statement were summarised in paragraphs 7 to 11 (inclusive).

RESOLVED

- (1) That the 2009/10 Schools Budget data for the financial year to 31st March, 2010, extracted from the Section 52 budget statement, be noted; and

- (2) That the summary of Individual Schools' delegated funding as attached at Appendices A and B of the report now submitted, be noted.

15. SCHOOLS FORUM PROPOSED MEETINGS 2009/10 ACADEMIC YEAR

A report of the Interim Director of Children's Services was submitted seeking consideration of a schedule of proposed meeting dates for the Forum for the 2009/10 academic year.

The Secretary to the Forum cautioned that Room 6 at Saltwells Education Development Centre would not be available for all meetings proposed.

RESOLVED

That meetings of the Forum for the 2009/10 academic year be held at 6.00 pm at Saltwells Education Development Centre on the following dates (all Tuesdays):

6th October, 2009  
15th December, 2009  
23rd February, 2010  
16th March, 2010  
8th June, 2010  
6th July, 2010

The meeting ended at 7.10 pm.

CHAIRMAN