

## MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING

Held on Wednesday 2 March 2016 at Chace Community School

### **Schools Members:**

Governors: Ms I Cranfield (Primary) Chair, Mr Clark (Primary), *Mrs J Ellerby (Primary)*,  
Mrs J Leach (Special), Mrs L Sless (Primary), *Mr T McGee (Secondary)*,  
Mr G Stubberfield (Secondary)

Headteachers: Ms H Ballantine (Primary), Mr P De Rosa (Special), *Ms A Gaudencio (Primary)*,  
Ms M Hurst (Pupil Referral Unit), Ms H Knightley (Primary), *Mr M Lavelle (Secondary)*,  
*Ms A Nicou (Primary)*, Ms H Thomas (Primary),  
*Mr B Goddard (Secondary)* substituted by Ms S Tranter

Academies: *Ms L Dawes, Vacancy*

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### **Non-Schools Members:**

Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Cllr D Levy
16 - 19 Partnership	Mr K Hintz
Teachers' Committee	<i>Mr S McNamara</i> substituted by Mr T Cuffaro
Head of Behaviour Support	Mr J Carrick
Early Years Provider	<i>Ms C Gopoulos</i>
Education Professional	Ms E Stickler

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### **Observers:**

Cabinet Member	Cllr A Orhan
School Business Manager	Ms A Homer
Education Funding Agency	<i>Mr O Jenkins</i>

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### **Also attending:**

Chief Education Officer	Ms J Tosh
Head of Finance Business Partner	Mrs J Fitzgerald
Assistant Finance Business Partner	Mrs L McNamara
Resources Development Manager	Mrs S Brown
Resources Development Officer	Ms J Bedford

\* Italics denote absence

## **1. MEMBERSHIP AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

### a) **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Ellerby, Mr Goddard, Mr Lavelle, Ms Gopoulos and Mr McNamara.

Noted:

- Mr Goddard substituted by Ms Tranter and Mr McNamara by Mr Cuffaro;
- Ms A Gaudencio was absent from the meeting.

### b) **Membership**

Reported a nomination for the vacancy for the academy representative would be sought following an evaluation of the current pupil numbers as reported on the January Pupil Census. The Forum were advised that this was to ensure the membership of the Forum reflected the different types of schools within the Authority.

**ACTION: Mrs Brown**

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were given the opportunity of declaring an interest relating to any items on the agenda. No declarations were made.

Members were advised that any outstanding Register of Business Interests forms would be followed up.

### **3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

(a) Schools Forum meeting held on 20 January 2016

**Received** and agreed the minutes of the meeting of the Schools Forum held on 20 January 2016, a copy of which is included in the Minute Book.

(b) Matters arising from these minutes

**Noted** the matters arising were covered by the items on the agenda.

### **4. ITEM FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR DECISION**

a) Schools Budget 2016/17: Update

**Received** a report providing an update on the Schools Budget 2016-17, a copy of which is in the Minute Book.

**Reported** the formula factors agreed at the January meeting were submitted to the DfE by the deadline of 21 January 2016.

**Noted:**

- (i) The DSG at present remained as reported at the previous meeting. The final position would be confirmed when the final adjustment to the Early Years block was made in June 2016. Officers were continuing to work and monitor the expenditure on Early Years provision to ensure it was in line with the agreed budget.

The Forum was advised that the budget proposals for the DSG for 2016/17 were presented and agreed by Council on 24 February 2016. Following this agreement, all Individual Schools Budgets had been distributed to all maintained schools.

- (ii) All maintained provision for pupils with high needs was funded on a similar basis. This included the funding allocated to the Enfield Secondary Tuition Centre, Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). As previously reported, the place funding provided to the PRU had not been reviewed for 2016/17 and it would not be reviewed until the Unit moved to its new site.
- (iii) The budget included an increase in funding for the provision at St Mary's as it proposed to expand the place numbers from 8 to 16 to address the need for additional specialist provision.
- (iv) The Autumn term pupil data had shown an increase in the number of pupils with high needs being supported by mainstream schools and this had added an additional pressure of £0.5m to the budget, which in consequence meant a reduced contingency. There appeared to be a marked increase in the number of Reception and Year 1 pupils with high needs requiring support.

It was questioned whether there was a reason for this increase. It was stated that a contributory factor was the SEND Reforms. The SEN Service had reported a 32% rise in referrals for under 5's requiring support. This level of increase was unprecedented. The Service was also seeing an increase from FE institutions seeking support for Post 16 students. This was also due to the changes introduced by the SEND Reforms for support being available up to the age of 25 years and this had resulted in a budget pressure of £400k.

It was corroborated that the Complex Issues Panel was considering a significant increase in referrals for younger children and older students.

- (v) The Home and Hospital Provision was being commissioned from West Lea Special School as part of an agreed Service Level Agreement. Due to the increase in demand for the service, the provision had spent the agreed budget and was forecasting an overspend for 2015/16. It was stated that this could be another pressure for 2016/17.
- (vi) The budget information provided to the Forum included all the savings and known pressures, which included a minimal contingency for supporting pupils with high needs.

It was stated that placing pupils with high needs whether in or out of the borough was one area that was likely to change and could create a budget pressure during the year. This was because of an expected increase as new children and young people came into the borough and the need to place pupils in out-borough provision.

It was questioned if work was being carried out to increase the provision available in the borough. It was stated that the Authority was exploring all opportunities to develop in-borough facilities for either one-off short term provision or long term placements.

- (vii) It was commented that secondary Headteachers were seeking further savings from central services to fund schools. It was stated that the information provided was based on the savings discussed and agreed with the Forum at the last meeting. Services were now reviewing how the savings would be met from April 2016 and carrying out an impact analysis. Reports would be presented to the Education Resources Group on how the work was progressing.

It was questioned what percentage of the DSG was now being retained to fund central services and whether this had decreased from 12%. It was confirmed, as in previous years, a full review of budget setting process would be carried out including an analysis of the funding provided for central services. The Forum would be provided with a report on the analysis at the Summer term Schools Forum meeting

**Resolved** to note the report and that the Budget Review report would include an analysis of Central Services.

**Action: Mrs Brown**

Louise and her team were thanked for all their hard work in the preparation and distribution of the budget to schools.

b) SEND and High Needs Places: Update

**Received** a report providing an update on the SEND and high needs places, a copy of which is in the Minute Book.

**Reported** for 2016/17, there had been no application process for seeking additional places; instead the Borough had received £662k additional funding to support the increase in pupils with high needs. The report provided information on the number of pupils currently on roll and places funded across the different settings to support pupils with high levels of need. The Forum was advised that some of the increase in places at individual institutions was due to known increases required for September but this did not include any other increase that may be required during the year.

**Noted**

- (i) The Authority was working with each of the special schools to ensure places allocated were being filled and consider opportunities to increase capacity and create additional places.
- (ii) It was commented that it was good to note that special schools were looking to increase the number of places, but a concern was raised regarding the Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs). It was observed that there was a real need for additional services to be provided through the ARPs in mainstream schools, but the information indicated a considerable number of vacancies that were being funded at £10k per place. There was a concern whether this offered value for money. It was stated that pupils attending the ARPs were assessed and supported to be reintegrated back into the mainstream. In some instances, the pupils were misplaced in the ARPs and needed to be in a more specialist provision. The impact in these cases meant the need to allocate additional staff and resources to meet the students' needs while they were assessed and an appropriate place became available.

It was observed that it was a difficult situation and the ARPs should continue to be monitored and reviewed to ensure use of each ARP was maximised and if required funding moved to match need.

- (iii) Discussions were taking place with Waverley School to increase the number of early years places provided by the School. Officers were aware a further 30 places would be required over the next two years and were working with the School to cost and implement this increase.
- (iv) For the past two years, West Lea School had 138 pupils and had asked their place number to be increased from 132 to 138 places. The Authority had considered their request and was recommending an increase in place numbers.
- (v) Officers had sought information from the Special Schools receiving outreach funding. When all the information had been received, officers would carry out a desktop review to ensure that the work being carried out addressed need and was in line with the criteria for the outreach service.
- (vi) As highlighted in the previous item, the ARP at St Mary's School was supporting pupils with a high level of need in SEMH and had seen an increase in demand, so it was a recommendation that the total number of places be increased from 8 to 16 from April 2016. The School managing the ARP had also asked that the ARP be treated as a split site school because it was an off-site unit. The Authority had considered this request and was recommending that the ARP at St Mary's be allocated the primary split site factor.
- (vii) Following the reduction in funding provided for the Early Years Social Inclusion (EYSI) Service, the service was now looking to provide a traded service from April 2016 to support schools with nurture groups and also enabling all schools to access the LASS and Tiger Team programmes.
- (viii) Advisory Service for Autism (ASA) was being commissioned to be provided at Russet House School. Officers had worked with the school to confirm the funding required for delivering the ASA. This had been calculated as being £365k. The Authority was recommending that £304k be funded from the outreach provision and the balance from the autism development contingency.

It was questioned whether the commissioned services would be for three years as stated and whether this was appropriate. It was stated that the reason for this was to give the schools concerned some stability of funding; however the annual allocation would be subject to an annual report from each school.

- (ix) Over the last two years, there had been an increase of 43 pre-16 pupils and 58 post-16 students placed in independent and out-borough provision. It was stated that the place costs, associated transport and wraparound support costs made these very expensive placements and created a significant pressure on the budget. The changes within the last year had shown a significant increase in Special Education Needs, with expensive placement and transport costs, and the expectations of pupils and parents.

It was stated that the Authority was working with schools and external agencies and partners to consider how additional places could be created within the borough. The recent annual report on the Pupil Expansion Programme (PEP) included a review of specialist provision and the Government were indicating that local authorities would be provided with a basic allocation for funding specialist provision.

The Forum was provided with a brief update on some of the individual building projects currently being considered. In addition, it was stated that work was being done to ensure consistent, clear and identifiable data was available and that it was measured and reasonable.

It was remarked that Joan Ryan MP had visited Enfield schools and was aware of the issues affecting Enfield, including the low settlement Enfield had traditionally received.

**Resolved** to provide the Forum with an update on pupil places for both mainstream and special schools.

**Action: Mr Rowley**

## **5. ITEM FOR INFORMATION**

### **(a) DfE Consultation: Schools Funding Reforms – 2017/2018: Update**

**Reported** following on from the meeting with the Enfield MPs, a letter addressed to David Burrowes MP had been forwarded to the Chair and the contents of this letter related to infant school places and not the issues raised by the Forum.

An email update had also been received from Joan Ryan MP: this provided an update on the issues raised and also confirmed that Ms Ryan had been involved in a motion concerning Free School Meals. In addition, she had extended an invitation to a couple of members of the Schools Forum to attend a meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group for London to receive a briefing on school funding.

#### **Noted**

- (i) Due to the short notice, Mrs Brown attended the Briefing on behalf of the Forum. (A copy of the paper provided to MPs at the meeting is attached to these minutes.)
- (ii) The Forum was advised that the briefing was chaired jointly by Bob Neill MP and Steve Reed MP. The Panel members included a headteacher from an academy in Wandsworth, Director of Children's Services for Barking and Dagenham and also a member of the London Enterprise Panel.

The APPG advised and updated MPs on schools funding and the issues facing schools. This included:

- Real term reduction in funding for schools;
- The financial impact on school funding to meet the cost of the pay award and national insurance changes;
- The recruitment crisis in London and the difficulties faced by schools in recruiting good teachers to vacant posts;
- The increased level of deprivation and a failure to recognise this in funding arrangements;

Ms Ryan MP in her comments provided a feedback from her visits to schools and also the briefing and discussion provided by the Schools Forum.

It was generally commented that London needed to work together to ensure that there was a fairness in the new system for all schools in the country and also that it recognised the challenges faced by London.

The member of the London Enterprise Panel advised that FE colleges were in a similar position a few years ago and schools should use the colleges' experience in supporting and building their case.

Mr Hintz explained that, since 2009 and following a merger CONEL's turnover had reduced from £42m to £32m, representing a 30% cut, and this appeared to be a continuing theme with further savings anticipated. The College had undertaken drastic actions, which included stopping use of agency staff and moving to funding staff on an hourly basis. The College had also moved to automating as many processes as possible to gain efficiencies. Mr Hintz gave an example of student enrolment. He explained the college now had an automated system for enrolling over 23,000 students and that there was no human contact until interview stage.

It was questioned if this had had an impact on the recruitment of students. Mr Hintz stated that there had been an increase in the number of students attending the interviews for a college place.

- (iii) The All Party Parliamentary Group had agreed to await the publication of the Government's consultation document and would seek information from London Councils and GLA to formulate a response from the Group. The Group and local MPs had asked for data and evidence of impact on London to support their response.

The Forum was advised that the key issue was when the consultation document was published because of the impending start of the purdah period for local elections and also the national referendum period. The purdah would restrict the Authority's and also schools ability to engage with MPs and the Press.

- (iv) The Forum was advised information would be circulated as soon as the consultation document had been published. The publication of the document would determine the next meeting.

(b) Scheme for Financing: 2016/2017

**Received and accepted** a copy of the revised Scheme for Financing Schools for 2016/17, a copy of which is in the Minute Book.

**6. WORKPLAN**

Any additional items arising from the meeting would be added to the workplan.

**ACTION: Mrs Brown**

**7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business

**8. FUTURE MEETINGS**

(a) NOTE: since the meeting and publication of the consultation documents, the next meeting would be held on Monday 11 April at Chace Community School.

(b) Dates of future meetings were as follows:

- 18 May 2016 – Forum to confirm if they would like to have this meeting.
- 06 July 2016
- 12 October 2016
- 18 January 2017
- 01 March 2017
- 19 April 2017
- 05 July 2017

**9. CONFIDENTIALITY**

No items were considered to be confidential.