

MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING

Held on Wednesday 6 July 2016 at Chace Community School

Schools Members:

Governors: Ms I Cranfield (Primary) Chair, Mr C 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 D Bruton (Secondary), Mr P De Rosa (Special), Ms
M Hurst (Pupil Referral Unit), Mr B Goddard (Secondary), Ms H Knightley
(Primary), Ms A Nicou (Primary), Ms H Thomas (Primary), Ms L Whitaker (Primary)*

Academies: Ms L Dawes, Vacancy

Non-Schools Members:

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

Observers:

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

Also attending:

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| Chief Education Officer | Ms J Tosh |
| Assistant Finance Business Partner | Mrs L McNamara |
| Resources Development Manager | Mrs S Brown |
| Resources Development Officer | Ms J Bedford |
| Observer | Ms S Watson |

* Italics denote absence

1. MEMBERSHIP AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

a) **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Leach, Mrs Sless, Mr Stubberfield, Ms Ballantine, Mr De Rosa, Ms Homer, Mr Bruton, Ms Knightley, Ms Whitaker and Mr Hintz.

b) **Membership**

(i) **Election of Chair of the Schools Forum for the municipal year (2016/17)**

Ms Tosh invited nominations for the position of Chair of the Schools' Forum.

Received a nomination for Ms Cranfield for the position of Chair of the Schools Forum.

Resolved to elect Ms Cranfield as Chair of the Schools Forum for the municipal year 2016/17.

Ms Cranfield thanked the Forum and Ms Tosh and took over the Chair.

(ii) **Election of Vice-Chair of the Schools' Forum for the municipal year (2016/17)**

Ms Cranfield sought nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Schools' Forum.

Received a nomination for Mrs Sless for the position of Vice-Chair of the Schools Forum.

Resolved to elect Mrs Sless as Vice-Chair of the Schools' Forum for the municipal year 2016/17.

(iii) Noted that nominations were being sought the positions reported as being vacant.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Received and agreed the minutes of the meeting of the Schools Forum held on 11 April 2016, a copy of which is included in the Minute Book.

4. ITEM FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR DECISION

a) School Funding Review (2016/17)

Received a report that provided the outcomes from the School Funding Review (2016/17), a copy of which is included in the Minute Book.

Reported the report was in two parts:

- The first part provided a summary of the Section 251 Budget Statement, which detailed how the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) had been allocated.
- The second part provided information on funding delegated to individual schools.

Noted:

- (i) The Section 251 Budget Statement reflected the Forum's decision to reduce funding provided for central services to balance the DSG. This resulted in funding held for central services decreasing from £13.9m for 2015/16 to £11m for 2016/17 (1% of DSG).

Clerk's note: Ms Dawes arrived at this point.

- (ii) The Budget comparison table for 2015/16 and 2016/17 provided information on the changes in Pupil Information.

It was queried if the pupil numbers used for academies was correct. Officers apologised and confirmed that the pupil numbers had not been refreshed for the new year.

- (iii) It commented that the report was informative, but did not provide information on the expenditure schools were incurring to address the cost pressure of the pay awards, higher National Insurance and pension contribution. In response to a question whether schools had set balanced budgets, it was stated that this report was simply reporting on the funding allocated through the DSG. From the outturn and working budgets received, six schools ended 2015/16 in deficit and eight schools in total had reported they would have a deficit budget at the end of 2016/17.

It was remarked that the budget information masked the financial difficulties schools were facing and although schools had reported balanced budgets, it was most likely that more schools would be reporting a deficit in 2017/18. There was a need to understand the pressures facing individual schools' budgets and the support that could be provided.

The Forum was advised that the information on balances was indicating an overall increase in balances held by primary schools and an overall decrease in balances held by secondary and special schools.

It was stated that the Authority was developing a framework for supporting schools in financial difficulties. In response to a question whether through the Framework, the Authority would fund the deficit, it was stated that this would not be the case and schools with a deficit recovery plan would be supported through a licensed deficit loan.

A full report including some analysis on the impact of the flat cash budgets on schools would be presented to the next meeting.

It was commented that there was a need for a strategic view regarding the budget constraints.

- (iv) It was questioned whether the DfE proposals included the minimum funding guarantee. It was stated that the proposals for the school funding reforms had included a minimum guarantee, but it was uncertain how it would operate.
- (v) It was observed that Enfield was a net exporter in terms of pupil places and there was a need to develop a strategy that would tackle and reverse this situation.

b) Central Services Funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) & Education Services Grant (ESG) - Update

Received an update on the Central Services funded from the DSG & ESG, a copy of which is in the Minute Book.

Reported following the request from the Schools Forum, this report included information on the review of central services funding from the DSG and a briefing on the proposals contained in the DfE consultation document on the ESG.

Noted:

- (i) The review of the central services from the DSG had been incorporated into the work being undertaken by the Council on early help and intervention.
- (ii) It was requested that further information be provided on the impact the funding cuts have had on individual services and consideration be given to whether the services could be provided differently to release money to support schools. It was stated that the services where funding from the DSG had been completely withdrawn had developed packages for schools to purchase as part of a traded service offer. Although this was possible for a number of services, it may not be for some and, so the next stage was to assess the wider impact of the current and future change in funding.

It was suggested it would be useful to have information on the traded services and the level of buyback. It was stated the services within education were currently considering developing a different way of delivering the traded services provided. The proposals were being considered by the Council Management team and Cabinet, and if agreed would be presented to the Forum, together with information on the traded services.
- (iii) It was requested that the publication of traded services available for schools to purchase be published as early as possible to enable schools to consider and confirm, in time for the new financial year, their intention on which services will be purchased. It was stated that consideration would be given to publishing the traded services information as early as possible, but this was dependent upon discussion regarding the budget.
- (iv) Following the consultation on the funding reforms, the DfE had requested information on historical commitments and combined services funded from the DSG. The DfE had been provided with this information and the outcome of the DfE review was awaited. The Forum was advised that the outcome might affect any local decisions on central services funded from the DSG.
- (v) As part of the DfE proposals, Enfield may lose up to £3.61m of the general element of the ESG grant.

It was stated that it was unclear how the proposed cessation of the ESG and creation of the fourth block within the DSG would operate. As part of the proposals, it was stated that local authorities would be responsible for admissions and pupil place planning.

In response to a question whether the Authority would be consulted on any new academies and free schools opening in Enfield, it was stated that this was the key in managing and developing a strategy for pupil places. Officers and the Regional Commissioner for Enfield now met regularly and this issue had been raised and would be included as part of the ongoing discussion at meetings.

c) School Funding Arrangements (2017/18)

Reported the publication of the second phase of the funding consultation had been delayed due to the election purdah period and now the effects of the outcomes from the EU Referendum.

The DfE had stated that the document would be published. It could be at the end of the term or during the school holidays. The DfE had been advised that publication during the school holidays was not helpful for schools.

Agreed to advise the Forum when the DfE published further consultation documents.

Action: Mrs Brown

d) School Places

A verbal report was provided to the Forum.

Noted:

- (i) The current pupil places information was indicating a surplus of places for secondary aged pupils and the need for additional places for primary aged pupils. From 2018/19, the demand for secondary places would increase and additional places would be required.
- (ii) The Forum was advised that the need for additional places at special schools was critical. There was a significant increase in the number of children with social and emotional mental health (SEMH) needs and this was creating additional pressure for all schools. Both the special schools and the PRU were being asked to provide additional places for these pupils, but without expanding the buildings, it was becoming difficult to place these children. Officers were working with the special schools and PRU Headteachers to consider how the provision could be further increased. Mainstream schools were trying to maintain and support these pupils, but those with high levels of need were in danger of being permanently excluded.

It was commented that mainstream schools were seeing an increase in the number of pupils with autism who were just below the threshold for support. The support required for these pupils was creating a further pressure on resources for schools.

It was stated that the Chief Executive and officers were aware of the impact of the increase in the number of pupils with severe learning difficulties and were working on a number of strategies, including expanding the provision offered at Waverley and further developing Durants.

- (iii) The Forum was informed that the Local Authority had recently been inspected by Ofsted on how the SEND Reforms were being implemented. One of the inspectors had commented that the increase in autism in Enfield appeared to very high in comparison to other boroughs or nationally. It was stated that there was a need to carry out some research in this area to understand the reasons. It was stated that the Fair Access Panel was seeing an increase in the number of assessments for under 5's: now 32% of all requests for assessments were for under 5's.

Agreed to circulate the briefing note on pupil places to the members of the Schools Forum.

Action: Mrs Brown

5. WORKPLAN

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

ACTION: Mrs Brown

6. FUTURE MEETINGS

(a) Date of Next Meeting

The Forum was advised the next meeting was planned for Thursday 13 October 2016 at Chace Community School, but if the DfE published the next phase of the national funding formula consultation document before the summer, then the date of this meeting would need to be changed to be in line with the deadline for responses to the consultation.

(b) Dates of future meetings were as follows:

- 8 December 2016
- 18 January 2017
- 01 March 2017
- 19 April 2017
- 05 July 2017`

7. CONFIDENTIALITY

No items were considered to be confidential.