

MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING

Held on Wednesday Thursday 8 December 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)

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 H Thomas (Primary), *Ms L Whitaker (Primary)* substituted by Ms S Quartson

Academies: *Ms L Dawes* substituted by Ms T Day (Secondary), *Mr G Stubberfield*, Ms A Nicou

Non-Schools Members:

Early Years Provider Ms C Gopoulos

16 - 19 Partnership *Mr K Hintz*

Teachers' Committee Mr T Cuffaro

Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee Vacancy

Head of Behaviour Support Mr J Carrick

Education Professional Vacancy

Observers:

Cabinet Member *Cllr A Orhan*

School Business Manager Ms A Homer

Education Funding Agency *Mr O Jenkins*

Also attending:

Chief Education Officer Ms J Tosh

Assistant Finance Business Partner Mrs L McNamara

Head of Budget Challenge Mr N Goddard

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 Sless, Mrs Dawes, Ms Whitaker, Cllr Orhan, Mr G Stubberfield and Mr Hintz.

Noted Ms Whitaker was represented by Ms Quartson and Mrs Dawes by Ms Day.

The Forum welcomed Ms Quartson and Ms Day to the meeting.

b) Membership

Reported:

- Following the conversion of Bowes Primary School to an academy, Ms Nicou would now be an academy representative on the Forum;
- Mr G Stubberfield had resigned as a governor from Southgate Academy. This meant he was no longer eligible to be an academy representative on the Forum;
- The position on the primary representative vacancy would be reviewed after the data from the January Census had been assessed for pupil changes. Nominations for the other vacant positions were being sought.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Interest were received from Mrs Leach, Mr Carrick and Mr Cuffaro for Item 4(b) Central Services Funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

(a) **Received** and agreed the minutes of the meeting of the Schools Forum held on 13 October 2016, a copy of which is included in the Minute Book.

(b) Matters arising from these minutes

(i) Item 4(a) Outturn report 2015/16 & Budget Monitoring 2016/17 - Update

Noted the review on the procedure for reporting deficits will be timetabled for carrying out in the New Year.

Action: Mrs McNamara

(ii) Item 4(c) Schools Budget 2017-18

Reported two briefing papers had been drafted outlining the impact that national policies on funding were having on schools. The first paper was a briefing note/letter to inform parents and carers and the second a template of a letter to use to lobby MPs, Ministers, Councillors and other influencers.

The Chair suggested that some schools would appreciate it if the letter to parents and carers were to be sent by the Authority, as the schools themselves were not responsible for the reductions in funding or for the decisions relating to them individually by the Authority. However, it was suggested that the lobbying letters should be sent individually and not as a group or forum. The statistics that would form the driver for change were based on the recorded number of letters received and not the number of signatures on a petition.

Noted schools had begun to write to parents and carers, informing Parent Forums, PTAs, Governing Bodies and 'Our Voice', a parent-led organisation working with parents and carers in the borough. The web link for Our Voice is as follows:
<https://www.ourvoiceenfield.org.uk/>.

Resolved to send a reminder of the briefing note/letter and lobbying template through the Governor Hub, Schools Portal and the termly Governor pack.

Action: Mrs Brown

(iii) Item 4(b) School balances

Reported a map of the borough showing schools and the pupil premium rates is included in the papers for information only.

(c) **Received** a copy of the minutes of the Education Resources Group meeting held on 16 November 2016, a copy of which is included in the Minute Book.

Noted Item 4 Schools Budgets: 2017/18 should read:

Item 4: Schools Budget: 2017/18: Update

'... Local information from the October Census had been delayed because data had not been received from all academies.... '

Resolved, to avoid confusion when despatching late papers, the later distribution would include a complete set of papers for the meetings.

Action: Mrs Brown

4. ITEM FOR DISCUSSION & INFORMATION

a) Schools Budget 2017/18 - Update

Received a report detailing the current projected outturn for the Schools Budget for 2016-17 and the draft budget and forecast for 2017-18, a copy of which is included in the Minute Book.

Reported the budget projections included within the reports were based on local data from the October Pupil Census. The projections did not reflect the final position. The final position would be calculated when the pupil data was received from the DfE in late December.

The Schools Forum was being asked to note the draft position for 2017/18 as set out in Appendix B and comment on the options as set out in the consultation document to bridge the budget gap.

The Schools Forum and sector representatives respectively were being asked to confirm:

- a) The contingency of £0.984m be allowed for the growth fund.
- b) For the de-delegation services to continue to be provided.

The following points arose from a discussion of the report.

Noted:

- i) The DSG carry forward from 2015/16 was £1.049m, which included £800k for the Autism development and a contingency of £1,037m for High Needs pressures; this had given total resources available of £2,086m. The High Needs funding for out-of-borough placements and in-borough development had created a pressure on the budget and the net projected position for the DSG for 2016/17 was an overspend of £1.357m. The Forum was being asked to consider and agree that this pressure was the first call on next year's budget.

A member asked if 'pressure' meant 'overspend, and when it was stated that this was the case, it was requested and agreed that the term 'overspend' be used henceforth.

- ii) The current unit rates had been used to model the school budget information, but the information had been updated for the changes advised by the DfE for IDACI and prior attainment.

In advance of the outcome of the local consultation, the modelling also included the allocation of the sixth form funding to secondary schools.

Resolved the modelling of the re-allocation of the sixth form funding would be attached to the minutes.

Action: Mrs McNamara

- iii) The pupil number data was showing an increase of 420 for primary aged pupils and 264 for secondary aged pupils. The growth reflected the in-year increase of 154 pupils at Heron Hall and ARK Jon Keats academies. The net position was an overall increase of 623.
- iv) The free school meals (FSM) data for October 2016 was compared with October 2015 data and this indicated a reduction of 0.76% in the number of pupils' eligible.

It was questioned whether the drop was due to the impact of the welfare benefit reforms and if completing the application form for checking eligibility was a factor that prevented families from applying.

Resolved to clarify if the process for checking eligibility could be simplified and whether there was a correlation between the welfare benefit reforms and FSM.

Action: Mrs Brown

- v) The 2017/18 budget projections as delivered at the October meeting included a reduction of £504k in rates based on the five schools that had converted to academies in 2016/17. The Business Rates Team had said that a revaluation exercise would be carried out and this may result in negating the savings identified.
- vi) The list of De-delegated Services had been prepared on the same basis as in previous years and the options were set out in the report. The meeting was informed that the de-delegated Maternity, Public Duties and Long Service Awards were no longer viable for the Authority to maintain and, from 2017/18; these services would not be provided as de-delegated services.

Following a discussion on the impact of the removal of the maternity service as a de-delegated service, it was requested further information be provided on all de-delegated services, including those identified for cessation.

Resolved further information on the de-delegated services would be provided.

Action: Mrs Brown

- vii) The Growth Fund contingency included provision for schools either expanding permanently or admitting an additional class in one year group and new schools.
- viii) The minimum funding guarantee would be applied to all schools; the Authority would be seeking an exemption for the primary pupil rate applied to the primary aged pupils in all-through schools and not the secondary pupil rate.

b) Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and Central Services: Update

Received a report providing information on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and Central Services: Update, a copy of which is included in the Minute Book.

Reported the appendix attached to the report provided a breakdown of the DSG allocations for 2016/17, and also included information on the funding delegated to schools. The breakdown had been presented to the Joint Local Authority and Headteachers Conference held on 29 November 2016.

Since the Conference, the DfE had published the outcomes from their review of historical commitments and had provided regulatory guidance. The guidance confirmed, for 2017/18, there were no national changes to the arrangements for managing these commitments.

Noted:

- (i) The statutory and contractual commitments sought the Forum's approval of the amount being held centrally and for any others the Forum was being asked for their continuation.
- (ii) The report was seeking the Schools Forum's and school representatives' agreement to continuing with the statutory, combined, historical and de-delegated services.
- (iii) The Forum was asked to consider this item with the next item on the agenda.

c) Strategies for Supporting the Budget

Received a report providing information on the Strategies for Supporting the Budget, a copy of which is included in the Minute Book.

Reported the paper included options for addressing the forecast budget deficit for 2017/18. As well as reducing funding provided for some central services, the options included changes to the funding arrangements for pupils with high levels of SEND in mainstream schools, a reduction in the per pupil amount for mainstream schools and changes to the threshold for retaining balances.

The following points arose from a discussion of the report.

Noted:

- i) The national guidance required schools to fund the first £6k of the cost of provision for a pupil with a high level of need and the balance should be provided as a top-up by the Authority. The DfE had recognised that in a minority of schools, there was likely to be an exceptionally large number of pupils with high levels of need and for these schools there was a need to provide further funding above the top-up amount.

With the increased scrutiny by the DfE of local arrangements and the imminent introduction of the national funding formula for schools and high needs blocks, it was necessary to review and change the local arrangements. The option identified in the paper, as an interim measure, was to reduce the £6k currently provided to £3k for

2017/18. This option would then allow time to consider and introduce an appropriate methodology.

A member sought clarification as to whether the funding released had been factored into supporting the deficit and what would be the effect of this change for schools. He felt this change would have a significant impact on schools' ability to maintain these pupils in school.

There was also a concern about the effect this change would have on other pupils.

It was stated that the arrangement in Enfield was unique and all other authorities had arrangements in place, which provided the first £6k to a minority of schools either based on a criterion or did not fund the first £6k at all. In Enfield, there were some schools where there were a large number of pupils with high levels of SEND, but in some other schools it was difficult to place pupils with high levels of SEND.

It was commented any changes to the arrangements needed to be fair and recognise the number of pupils with high levels of SEND at each school.

Clerk's note: Ms Quartson left at this point.

- ii) Headteachers from each of the sectors had met to review the central services currently funded from the DSG and the following feedback was provided from each sector:

Secondary: The Headteachers were concerned that this would be the first financial year when the full effects of the rise in pensions, National Insurance and salaries would be felt and the impact this would have on individual school budgets. The view of the secondary Headteachers was that:

- there should not be a reduction in AWPU
- all central services should be cut back to statutory activities, and a more effective and efficient way to deliver these services be explored

Primary: The Headteachers were of the view that:

- the AWPU should be protected;
- the proposed savings for non-statutory central services should be accepted, with the exception of Behaviour Support, where the saving should be from September 2017, and School Improvement, where the saving should be limited to £50k as identified by the service.
- the threshold for balances should not be changed.

Special: The Headteachers had no view on the AWPU, and sought more information on statutory services, with a further reduction for the Parent Support Service. The funding for the SEN Peripatetic Service should be provided to special schools and not held centrally. Special schools felt the current funding arrangements were unfair and there was a need to review it and make the schools in the borough more attractive, thereby stopping pupils from going out of borough.

- iii) The Forum was informed that:

- the outreach work to support behaviour by the Behaviour Support Service was a small element of the work the service carried out. The service worked with disruptive children and young people or those with complex needs, who could not be placed in schools. This was because schools, whether in- or out-borough, could not or would not have these children or young people and the PRU was unable to meet their needs. If the arrangements for this service were changed, then these children and young people would need to be placed in local schools and this would create further challenges for schools or expensive out-borough or independent provision;
- the transport costs associated with SEND placements were met by the Council;
- work was continuing to review and develop strategies to reduce the number of children and young people placed in out-borough provision.

- (iv) A member commented that the views of the Headteacher were a little simplistic, there was a need to consider the knock-on effect of any change, and any proposals to manage the deficit should be considered carefully.

Members expressed the view that the schools had considered the financial situation and many schools had had to make cuts to cope with the financial pressures. The returns provided to the Authority masked the true financial position.

The key function of the schools to teach needed to be safeguarded.

- (v) It was commented that the Foundation Stage Service had experienced a 14% cut for this year and, because of this, had to review the service. Over the past six months, officers had been working with Headteachers and the Early Years representative to find a different way of delivering the service. The results of this work were detailed in the next item, but the outcome had led to a number of redundancies. This change had been possible because of the time allowed for planning and implementation.
- (vi) There was a concern that the cuts in the central services would have an immediate and longer-term impact on the local communities, as well as small PVI settings unable to purchase the service. Some members acknowledged that children, young people and families would suffer, but felt there was a need to protect school funding.
- (vii) In answer to the question whether a deficit budget could be set, it was stated that the Authority would not support the setting of a deficit budget.

Resolved:

- (i) Proposal to cuts to non-statutory services:

The Forum voted as follows: Yes – 15, No – 1, Abstention – 1

The primary representatives clarified that their vote also aimed to retain the School Improvement Service and only reduce the funding by the amount identified by the Service of £50k.

- (ii) Provide further information on the statutes governing services reported as being statutory.
- (iii) The items listed in the white section of the spreadsheet showing the breakdown of the DSG:

The Forum voted as follows: Yes – 16, Abstention – 1

- (iv) De-delegation:

Further information would be provided on each item for the schools' representatives to consider.

Action: Mrs Brown

d) Schools Funding Arrangements 2017/18

Received a report providing an update on Schools Funding Arrangements 2017/18, a copy of which is in the Minute Book.

Reported the document circulated was an extract from a longer document and detailed proposals for changes to the local funding arrangements. The document included a number of proposals, including the local arrangements for introducing the national funding formula for the nursery education of three- and four-year-olds and changes to the Scheme for Financing.

Noted:

- (i) The sixth form formula was no longer allowed; there were four possible options for redistribution and the consultation document detailed the effect of each option for individual schools.

- (ii) The government had confirmed its intention to extend the free nursery entitlement from 15 to 30 hours a week for working parents. The aim in doing this was to assist in reducing the cost of childcare and enable parents to return to work or increase their hours of work.
- (iii) The reason for removing the annual advance was the work created by one school that converted to an academy and did not pay back the full amount of the outstanding delegated budget to the Authority to transfer to the Education Funding Agency.

5. ITEM FOR DISCUSSION & INFORMATION

a) Strategy and Approach to Delivering Pupil Places

Received and noted the Strategy and Approach to Delivering Pupil Places report, a copy of which is in the Minute Book.

Reported the report was for information only.

b) School Condition & Fire Safety Programme 2016/17 to 2017/18

Received and noted the School Condition & Fire Safety Programme 2016/17 to 2017/18 report, a copy of which is in the Minute Book.

Reported the report was for information only.

c) School Balances 2015/16

Received and noted the Schools Balances 2015/16 report, a copy of which is in the Minute Book.

Reported the report was for information only.

6. WORKPLAN

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

ACTION: Mrs Brown

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Reported information had been received from the Enfield Over 50's Forum regarding a cross-political party petition on the claimed unfairness for Enfield of the floor damping formula, for the attention of the Secretary of State, Department of Communities and Local Government and the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The following link provided further information and copy of the petition:

<http://www.enfieldover50sforum.org.uk/>

8 FUTURE MEETINGS

(a) The date of the next meeting is Thursday 18 January 2017 at 5.30pm at Chace Community School.

(b) Proposed dates for future meetings

- 01 March 2017
- 19 April 2017
- 05 July 2017

9 CONFIDENTIALITY

No items were considered confidential. The meeting closed at 8.00pm.