

MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING

Held on Wednesday 8 March 2017 at Chace Community School

Schools Members:

Governors: Ms I Cranfield (Primary) Chair, *Vacancy* (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), Ms S Quartson (Primary)

Academies: Ms L Dawes (Secondary), Ms A Nicou, *Vacancy*

Non-Schools Members:

Early Years Provider	Ms C Gopoulos
16 - 19 Partnership	<i>Mr K Hintz</i>
Teachers' Committee	Mr J Jacobson
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	<i>Vacancy</i>
Head of Behaviour Support	Mr J Carrick
Education Professional	Ms J Fear

Observers:

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
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 Ms Hurst.

Reported:

- Mr Clark had resigned from the Schools Forum, with immediate effect;
- Mr Jonathan Jacobson had been appointed the Teachers' Committee representative;
- Ms Jo Fear was joining the Forum as the Education Professional;
- Ms Quartson was covering the vacancy for the primary Headteacher vacancy.

The Chair welcomed Ms J Fear and Mr Jacobson to the Schools Forum.

On behalf of the Forum, the Chair expressed thanks to Mr Clark for his contribution towards the work of the Forum.

b) Membership

Reported the pupil numbers from the January 2017 Pupil Census had been assessed. The changes to the makeup of pupils across the different types of schools meant that there was no longer a need to fill the vacancy for a primary Headteacher. Instead, a vacancy for an academy representative was now required.

The Forum was advised that nominations would be sought to fill the academy vacancy.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

- a) **Received** and agreed the minutes of the meeting of the Schools Forum held on 18 January 2017, a copy of which is included in the Minute Book.
- b) Matters arising from these minutes
There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4. ITEM FOR DISCUSSION & INFORMATION

a) Schools Budget 2017/18 - Update

Received a report summarising information on the Schools Budget 2017/18, a copy of which is included in the Minute Book.

Reported at the last meeting, the Schools Forum had been advised that the DfE had confirmed the initial Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) together with the data set to calculate the 2017/18 budget shares for primary and secondary schools. At this meeting, the formula factors and unit rates to be used to inform individual schools' budgets were agreed and then submitted to the Education Funding Agency (EFA). Notification had been received that the EFA had approved the return.

The Schools Budget for 2017/18 was approved both by Cabinet and full Council.

This report sought:

- The Forum's support to the allocation of resources within the Schools, Early Years and High Needs Blocks of the DSG for 2017/18;
- The Forum's approval to the services to be funded from the retained duties element of the Education Services Grant (ESG) transferred to the DSG for 2017/18.

Noted

- i) A member commented that the Schools Forum had rejected the proposal to change the funding arrangements for pupils with EHCPs in mainstream schools, but the Council had chosen to override the Schools Forum's recommendation. Due to the impact this change was having on schools, the Council was being asked to reconsider and address this.

It was stated that the views of the Schools Forum had been noted and the Council was planning a review of SEND provision; this included funding for pupils with EHCPs in mainstream schools. In response to this, the member commented that the secondary Headteachers were writing to all parents and the press about the change being introduced by the Council and the impact these were having on schools;

Clerk's Note: Mr Hintz arrived at this point.

- ii) With an additional £1.56m provided by the Education Funding Agency, the DSG allocation for 2017/18 was £320.64m. Once the effect of overspend from 2016/17 was taken into account, the net available resources totalled £319.19m.
- iii) The change in pressures since the last meeting included the removal of the funding of £500k allowed for the rate revaluation. The Forum was advised that the revaluations had been received and the funding allowed for any increase was not needed. It was confirmed that the money released had been used to meet the increased cost of the pupils with EHCPs in mainstream schools and the balance added to the High Needs contingency pending a review of all SEND provision.

In response to a request, it was confirmed that any requests for pupil information or notification of additional funding to be provided to schools would be sent to Headteachers and not School Business Managers.

Action: Mrs McNamara

Clerk's Note: Ms Quartson arrived at this point.

- iv) For the implementation of the Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF) for 3 and 4 year olds and also to meet the cost of extending the free entitlement to 30 hours for working parents, an additional £3.38m had been received. The Government had confirmed that 7% in 2017/18 and then 5% in 2018/19 of this funding could be retained by local authorities to meet central costs.

There were no changes to the free nursery entitlement for 2 year olds.

A member commented that while the additional funding was welcomed, it did not cover all the costs incurred by PVI's and there was a charge for many of the Local Authority services that previously had been provided at no cost. In response, it was stated, with the budget cuts, the Local Authority was limited to providing statutory services and had to charge for non-statutory services and this included elements of training and development.

- v) The DfE had confirmed, due to demographic changes, an additional £1.2m for 2017/18 would be provided for the High Needs block; this amount was included in the overall DSG allocation detailed above. This additional funding provided was welcomed; however, it did not cover the increase in demand for supporting pupils with SEND and the current projected overspend.
- vi) To manage current overspend and ongoing pressure for supporting Post 16 students with EHCPs, the Local Authority was planning to limit the educational support to three years.
- vii) The Government had confirmed that funding for statutory activities funded by the ESG had been added to the DSG. The Local Authority had carried out an assessment of the activities and their associated costs and sought approval for £985k to be retained to meet the statutory duties.

Resolved to note the use and allocation of the DSG and agree to £985k to fund the statutory duties that were previously funded from the ESG.

Clerk's Note: Mr Bruton arrived at this point.

b) SEND and High Needs Places - Update

Received a report providing information for SEND & High Needs places, a copy of which is included in the Minute Book.

Reported the paper provided a summary of the current provision used to support pupils with SEND. Information was included on the proposed developments to reduce the number of pupils placed in out-borough provision and to meet the increase in demand for supporting pupils with SEND.

Noted:

- i) To meet the immediate demand for 2017/18, the Authority was working with existing special schools to increase the number of places at each special school. The increase was hampered by the space available to accommodate additional places. It was planned to have some additional places at Durants, West Lea and possibly Oaktree, for the coming year, and thus enable learners to remain in-borough.
- ii) Special schools with outreach provision and mainstream schools with Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP) were being asked to complete and submit a self-evaluation form to the Authority. Once received, the forms would be reviewed to ensure that the objectives and outcomes had been achieved.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that the review of the ARPs should ensure that the ARP places being funded were being used to support pupils with SEND. Where the places were not being utilised, consideration would be given to reallocating these places elsewhere.

Reported a correction to the information contained in the report: Highlands ARP should read 13 pupils on roll as at January 2017.

- iii) The planned increase in places at St Mary's ARP had taken place and from September 2017, the ARP was able to cater for up to 16 pupils with SEMH.

It was planned, for 2017/18, to increase the provision at Durants (Winchmore) from 8 to 16 places.

Clerk's Note: Mr N Goddard arrived at this point.

- iv) There was a significant increase in the number of children with SEND in nursery and below statutory school age requiring support.
- v) There was a need to increase provision in-borough to enable some of the learners in out-borough provision to move back into the borough and to meet the projected increase in demand. The Authority had submitted two expressions of interest bids for two free special schools to be built in the borough. The outcome of these bids was awaited.
- vi) The Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) was due to move to their new building in the October half term. The Local Authority was considering the feasibility of accommodating pupils with ASD or SEMH in the existing building, as these areas of need were seeing the highest increase in demand.

Clerk's Note: Ms Dawes and Ms Whitaker arrived at this point.

- vii) The sub-group supporting the implementation of the EYNFF was also considering the development of an Inclusion Fund to support 3 and 4 year olds with SEND, who may not have or be eligible to seek an EHCP. The funding available was £390k from the amount identified to be delegated from the Early Years Block for 3 and 4 year olds and £50k for Reception pupils not previously supported through a nursery placement from the High Needs block. Following the Forum meeting, the draft criteria for seeking support would be circulated, for comment, to all stakeholders. Upon receipt of comments, the arrangements would be finalised and in place for April 2017.

In answer to a question as to whether children who had previously been supported would be prioritised, it was stated that the decision would be based on need to ensure allocations were made on an equitable basis. All applications will be considered by a panel consisting of Headteachers and PVI managers.

- viii) A member asked, as historically Enfield's transport costs were among the highest in the country, if there was an update on what savings had been achieved by reducing SEND transport costs. It was stated that there was a project team working on this. The team included brokers who assessed each application for travel assistance against a menu of options for parents. In addition, an external provider was working with the Council to provide a more cost-efficient service. The aim was to contain costs for the first year and then achieve savings in subsequent years.

Resolved to note this report and further information on the work being done on transport provision would be provided.

Clerks Note: Ms Knightley left at this point.

c) School Academy Transfers – Contribution towards Costs

Received a paper providing information on School Academy Transfers – Contribution towards Cost, a copy of which is in the Minute Book.

Reported, with the changes due to the cessation of the ESG, the Council now needed to consider implementing a charge as a contribution towards the costs incurred when a school converted to an academy. The report circulated outlined the key stages of schools converting to academy.

The maintained schools representatives on the Schools Forum were asked to agree to the inclusion of a clause in the Scheme of Financing that a charge of £5k plus £2 per pupil to be incurred, as a contribution towards cost for support schools to convert.

Noted:

- i) Practices within other local authorities had been explored. It was found a range of approaches had been undertaken by those local authorities already charging, and most other local authorities were considering implementing a charge.
- ii) In response to a comment by a member that the inclusion of £2 per pupil was exorbitant and the converting school would not be able to manage this cost, it was stated that the workload associated with academy conversions was variable. It was dependent on a number of factors, e.g. number of schools converting, number of staff involved requiring TUPE, PFI and other contractual arrangements and multiple sites. The level of complexity meant considerable resources were required to support the conversion process, especially if specialist professionals had to be commissioned.
- iii) There were concerns that if several schools may wish to convert at the same time, the Authority would not have sufficient resources to support the process and would need to buy in services.

Resolved to agree that a clause be added to the Scheme of Financing, as a minimum £5k plus £2 per pupil and, where possible, for actual costs to be recovered.

d) Scheme for Financing

Received a copy of the Scheme for Financing, a copy of which is in the Minute Book.

Reported the Scheme will be updated with the agreed changes from today's meeting and available from April 2017.

ACTION: Mrs Brown

5. ITEM FOR INFORMATION

a) DfE Consultation documents: schools and High Needs National Funding Formula – Draft Response.

Received a report and a draft response to the DfE Consultation Documents: Schools and High Needs National Funding Formula, a copy of which is in the Minute Book.

Reported the information provided included a summary of the impact of the proposals in the Consultation Document for the implementation of the National Funding Formula (NFF) for Enfield, and the draft responses.

The Forum was asked to comment on the draft responses to the proposals and confirm whether the final response should be a joint response of the Schools Forum and the Local Authority.

Noted

- i) All schools should be encouraged to respond to the proposed consultation document.
- ii) The proposal for the funding floor was not acceptable and it was important that schools should not see a reduction in funding. The minimum funding guarantee provided some protection, but it was important that additional funding be provided to fund all schools appropriately.
- iii) There should not be separate transitional arrangements for the Central Services Schools Block.

Resolved the draft responses would be updated and joint responses be submitted.

The Forum thanked officers for formulating the draft response.

Clerks Note: Mr Bruton left at this point.

6. WORKPLAN

It was agreed that a meeting be included on the Workplan on Tuesday 16 May to look at the impact of budget decisions for individual schools' budgets.

ACTION: Mrs Brown

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Ms Cranfield reported Ms Tosh was leaving the Council and Ms Quartson was returning to Australia, so this was their last meeting of the Schools Forum.

The Forum thanked Ms Tosh for her outstanding support and expertise in advising the Forum over a number of years and wished her well.

The Forum wished Ms Quartson well and thanked her for her considerable contribution to the Schools Forum.

Ms Tosh thanked the Forum and confirmed that Mr Carrick would be taking over from her on the Forum.

Ms Cranfield advised the Forum that she had decided she would resign from the Schools Forum after the next meeting, owing to a number of other commitments that were taking up her time. She wanted to advise the Forum at this meeting so that there would be sufficient time before the next meeting for members to deliberate whether they would like to take over the role of Chair.

The Schools Forum applauded Ms Cranfield for her 43 years of voluntary service and dedication to support improvements for Enfield's children and young people. Ms Cranfield was thanked for her hard work and contribution as Chair of the Schools Forum.

8 FUTURE MEETINGS

- a) The date of the next meeting has been changed to **Tuesday 16 May 2017** at 5.30pm at Chace Community School.
- b) Proposed dates for future meetings
 - Wednesday 05 July 2017

9 CONFIDENTIALITY

No items were considered confidential. The meeting closed at 7.00pm.