

MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING

Held on Wednesday 14 June 2017 at Chace Community School

Schools Members:

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

Headteachers: Ms H Ballantine (Primary), *Mr D Bruton (Secondary)*, Ms M Hurst (Pupil Referral
Unit), Mr B Goddard (Secondary), Ms H Knightley (Primary), Ms H Thomas
(Primary) Chair, Ms G Weir (Special), Ms L Whitaker (Primary)

Academies: Ms L Dawes (Secondary), Ms A Nicou, Mr A Sadgrove

Non-Schools Members:

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

Observers:

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

Also attending:

Assistant Director, Education	Mr J Carrick
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 Cllr Orhan, Mr Bruton, Mr Jacobson, Mr McGee and Mr Sadgrove.

Reported the vacancy for a primary governor had been sought from Member Governor Forum and nominations were awaited.

b) Membership

Noted:

- (i) The Forum confirmed their acceptance of Mr Sadgrove's nomination as an academy representative;
- (ii) Mr De Rosa's term of office had ended and Ms Gail Weir had been nominated to take over from Mr De Rosa's as the representative for Special Schools.

The Forum expressed their thanks to Mr De Rosa for his support and contribution to the work of the Forum. Ms Weir was welcomed to the Schools Forum

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest

3. ITEMS FOR DECISION

a) Election of Chair of the Schools Forum for the municipal year (2017/18)

Mr Carrick invited nominations for the position of Chair of the Schools' Forum.

Received a nomination from Ms Thomas for the position of Chair of the Schools Forum until a permanent Chairperson was elected.

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

Resolved to elect Ms Thomas as Chair of the Schools Forum for the municipal year 2017/18.

Ms Thomas thanked the Forum and Mr Carrick and took over the Chair.

b) Election of Vice-Chair of the Schools' Forum for the municipal year (2017/18)

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

Received a nomination for Ms Nicou for the position of Vice-Chair of the Schools Forum.

Resolved to elect Ms Nicou as Vice-Chair of the Schools' Forum for the municipal year 2017/18.

4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

a) **Received** and agreed the minutes of the meeting of the Schools Forum held on 8 March 2017, a copy of which is in the minute book.

b) Matters arising from these minutes

(i) The Forum were advised that Secondary Headteachers had requested Ms Dawes write to the Forum because of the Local Authority's decision not to accept the Forum's views regarding the changes to the high needs funding for pupils with ECHPs in mainstream schools. The Headteachers had questioned their continued representation at Forum meetings, but had decided to continue to attend, but considered that it was important the Council listened to the views of the Schools Forum.

(ii) Pupils with ECHPs requiring Element 3 top-up funding: Item 4a

It was confirmed that any requests for pupil information or notification of additional fund to be provided to schools would be sent to Headteachers and copied to the School Business Manager.

Action: Mrs McNamara

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

5. ITEM FOR DISCUSSION & INFORMATION

a) Budget Outturn – 2016/17

Received a report on the Dedicated Schools Grant Outturn for 2016/17, a copy of which is in the Minute book.

Reported the final outturn position for the DSG, for 2016/17, was a deficit balance of £3.2m.

Noted:

i) A balance of £1.2m was brought forward into 2016-17, and once all the adjustments for in-year changes in funding were made, total contingency of £2.3m was available to offset an overspend of £5.5m in 2016/17.

ii) The main contributory factor for the overspend was meeting the cost of out-borough placements and other high needs provision for pupils with SEND.

- iii) The overspend did not include the transport costs associated with the provision provided to pupils with SEND. These costs were met by the Local Authority.
- iv) A detailed budget monitor for 2017/18 would be carried out and presented at the Autumn meeting.
- v) In response to the question as to whether the LA's overspend was benchmarked against other local authorities, it was reported that this would be carried out when the DfE published the Section 251 Outturn report and the results would be brought back to the Forum.

Resolved to note the report.

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

b) Pupils with High Needs in Mainstream Schools

Received a report that providing an update on the funding position for pupils with high needs in mainstream schools, a copy of which is included in the Minute Book.

Reported as requested by the Forum, a review had been carried out to assess the impact of the changes to the funding arrangements for supporting pupils with high needs in mainstream schools. The paper provided outcomes from the review, included options for providing transitional support to protect schools that were inclusive and had seen a significant reduction in their funding.

The Forum was advised that the latest forecast for the DSG and, in particular, the High Needs block indicated overspend of £1.8m for the year-end. If, it was agreed transitional support would be provided, then this would increase the DSG overspend. The Forum in their deliberation would need to consider and agree to the DSG overspend.

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

Noted the options detailed in the report had been discussed with the Education Resources Group and they had stated a preference for option C. However, the Group felt the amount earmarked for transitional support of £200k was not sufficient and barely covered the losses being experienced by individual schools, as a minimum £400k should be allowed.

The Group felt the other options would not target the more inclusive schools, e.g. option B spread the funding across all schools.

It was stated that the amount earmarked for transitional support of £200k had been discussed and agreed with Cllr Orhan. Any change to this amount would need to be discussed and agreed with Cllr Orhan.

Clerk's Note: Mrs Leach arrived at this point.

Resolved to agree to:

- (i) the proposal by the Education Resources Group to provide transitional support by using Option C and to increase the total funding available for transitional support from £200k to £400k;
- (ii) the DSG overspend as detailed in the report.

Action: Mrs Brown

c) Dedicated Schools Grant 2017/18: Analysis

Received a report summarising the analysis carried on the Dedicated Schools Grant allocated for 2017/18: a copy of which is in the Minute Book.

Reported the background information on the National and Local funding formula contained in the report was to support and enable the Forum to have broader discussion of the funding allocated to mainstream school as part of the budget process.

Noted:

- i) Statistical neighbours were other local authorities that closely matched and had similar characteristic to Enfield. Further information on the factors used to identify statistical neighbours would be provided at a future meeting.
- ii) With the significant reduction in the number of pupils eligible for free school meals, it was suggested consideration should be given to using IDACI. It was stated that the national arrangements introduced in 2013-14 required the use of the minimum funding guarantee and any changes to the local arrangements would not have had the desired effect. Going forward, if the national funding formula were introduced, then this would no longer be a local decision.
- iii) Following the General Election, Enfield had a new MP for Enfield Southgate. The Forum was asked to consider whether to write Bambos Charalambous and ask him to raise the issues facing schools due to the flat cash funding provided to schools.

Resolved to:

- (i) Note the contents of the report.
- (ii) Write to Bambos Charalambous, newly elected MP for Enfield Southgate to ask him to raise the issue of school funding in his maiden speech to parliament.

Action: Ms Thomas

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

d) School Balances 2016/17 and Individual Schools Budget 2017/18: Update

Received a report detailing the balances held by maintained schools as at 31 March 2017, and a summary of working budgets, for 2017-18, submitted by individual maintained schools; a copy of which was included in the Minute Book.

Reported the total revenue balances held by school had reduced from £8.591m as at 31 March 2016 to £5,535m by 31 March 2017.

Noted

- i) In response to a question on the benchmarking of balances held by other local authorities, it was stated that balances held by each local authority was a reflection of the local decisions taken and on the number of maintained schools that had converted to become an academy.
- ii) The DfE, rather than fund cost pressures, had developed a number of efficiency tools to support schools to manage the cost pressures being faced.

The Forum was advised the Education Resources Group had suggested a possible way forward would be to share good practice or other resources.

It was commented that secondary Headteachers were unclear how this would help when schools were already sharing information and the issue was underfunding. There was also a concern about the inaccuracies of the financial monitoring of the high needs block and the Authority not informing schools in a timely manner of the increases in the local pension contributions. Under the circumstances, schools were doing remarkable job to manage their budgets.

- (iii) Schools may have submitted balanced budgets, but this did not reflect the cuts in staffing and resources made by individual schools. With the number of schools with in-year deficits, the accuracies of the budget projections for years two and three were questionable.

With all the difficulties and issues facing schools, it was requested that the Cabinet member be present at future Forum meetings and a meeting be arranged with the Leader to discuss funding and budget issues facing both schools and the Council. It was important for everyone to understand the funding crisis being faced by schools.

- iii) The apprenticeship levy required the funding to be used to meet training costs of apprentices, but not their salaries. The funding had to be paid to the provider. There likely to be some changes when train to gain was introduced. It was commented that Schools Direct was likely to be phased out.

Resolved to:

- (i) Note the content of the report
- (ii) Advise Cllr Orhan of the request for the Forum members to a meet with the Leader to discuss the funding and budget issues facing both schools and the Council.

Action: Mrs Brown

6. WORKPLAN

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

ACTION: Mrs Brown

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (i) Ms Cranfield had circulated a briefing note to the Schools Forum in regards to an invitation from the Chair of the Schools Forum Association requesting if the Schools Forum to join the Association. The Forum responded positively to this invite.

Resolved to confirm the Forum's agreement to joining the Schools Forum Association.

Action: Ms Thomas

- (ii) It was confirmed that training and induction, as well as an Induction Pack was available for newly appointed members was available.

Resolved the Induction Pack would be circulated to the new members.

Action: Mrs Brown

- (iii) The Schools Forum applauded and thanked Ms Cranfield for her hard work and years of dedication, commitment and contribution during her time as a member of the Schools Forum.

8. FUTURE MEETINGS

a) The date of the next meeting is 20 September 2017 at 5:30pm – 7:30pm at TBC.

b) Proposed dates for future meetings:

08 November 2017 5:30 - 7:30 PM
06 December 2017 5:30 - 7:30 PM
17 January 2018 5:30 - 7:30 PM
07 March 2018 5:30 - 7:30 PM
09 May 2018 5:30 - 7:30 PM

9. CONFIDENTIALITY

No items were considered confidential. The meeting closed at 6.35 pm.