

## MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING

Held on Wednesday 17 January 2018 at Chace Community School

### **Schools Members:**

Governors: Ms Ellerby (Primary), Ms H Kacouris (Primary), Mrs J Leach (Special), Mrs L Sless (Primary), Mr T McGee (Secondary), Ms V West (Primary)

Headteachers: Ms H Thomas (Primary) (Chair), Ms H Ballantine (Primary), Mr D Bruton (Secondary), Vacancy (Pupil Referral Unit), Ms H Knightley (Primary), Ms K Baptiste (Primary), Ms G Weir (Special), *Ms M O'Keefe / Ms T Day (Secondary)*

Academies: *Ms L Dawes (All through)*, Ms A Nicou (Primary), Mr A Sadgrove (All through)

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

Early Years Provider	Ms A Palmer
16 - 19 Partnership	<i>Mr K Hintz</i>
Teachers' Committee	Mr J Jacobs
Head of Standards, Schs, Curriculum, & Children Ser.	Ms C Seery
Education Professional	Ms J Fear
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Vacancy

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### **Observers:**

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

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### **Also attending:**

Leader of the Council	Cllr D Taylor
Assistant Director, Education	Mr J Carrick
Heads of Budget Challenge	Mr N Goddard
Finance Manager	Mrs L McNamara
Resources Development Officer	Ms J Bedford

\* Italics denote absence

## **1. LOCAL AUTHORITY FUNDING**

Cllr Taylor, Leader of the Council attended the meeting for this item.

Ms Thomas began by welcoming Cllr Taylor to the meeting and explained that Cllr Taylor had been invited to the Forum to outline the Council's priorities for the year ahead and how schools would be supported with the challenges facing them.

Cllr Taylor began by explaining the context of the Council's financial position; and how the formula used by the Government to fund local authorities had resulted in Enfield being historically underfunded.

### **Clerk's note: Mr Sadgrove arrived at this point.**

The Forum were advised from 2010/11 to 2019/20, Council funding was forecast to reduce from £191.2m to £90m in terms of actual cash and £73.1m in real terms. From 2020, a new funding formula for local authorities was due to be introduced.

Cllr Taylor commented if he were optimistic, then Enfield, under the new funding formula, would receive a better settlement and nationally there would be an increase in investment for public services; he also commented that by 2020 without increased funding public services would have reached a critical situation. Recently, some recognition by the Government for the need to increase investment was seen when they introduced a precept for adult social care and it was Cllr Taylor's hope that a similar recognition would be extend to children's social care. However, a pessimistic view would be that the demands and effect of Brexit on the wider economy and businesses would not enable change or encourage an increase in investment.

He explained an issue with the current funding formula was that it relied on floors and ceilings to cap gains and losses and this meant that those authorities that were experiencing underfunding did not receive the funding essential to meet the needs of Enfield residents. It was important that the new formula saw local authorities funded fairly and provided with

sufficient funding. To seek fair funding for local authorities, Enfield Council was working with other London authorities to lobby and petition the Government.

**Clerk's note: Mr Bruton arrived at this point.**

Cllr Taylor confirmed that it was a legal requirement for the Council to set a balanced budget. The pressures facing the Council included demands on both children and adult social care; supporting families in temporary accommodation and, going forward, the proposed pay award for the coming year. The latest information indicated a possible pay award of 2% in 2018/19 and another 2% in 2019/20 for support staff. The effect of the pay award was likely to be higher for London because the introduction of the national and London living wage required the pay rates used for support staff in London to be lifted above the living wage rates.

Recent information showed that Enfield in comparison to other London boroughs had a large proportion of children aged between 0 -14 and a significant number of older people. In addition, Enfield was 12<sup>th</sup> most deprived borough in London. The key priority for the Council was to meet its statutory obligations of keeping children and vulnerable adults safe within the resources available.

Following Cllr Taylor's opening comments, there was a general discussion and the points that arose were as follows:

**NOTED**

- (a) There was a view that Cllr Taylor had been fair and realistic in his comments of the current situation. It was commented that schools were finding it increasingly difficult to meet the needs of the children and young people in their care and that the issue had been raised on several occasions with the local authority.
- (b) There was a need to continue to lobby and raise awareness of the consequences of the depleting funding being provided to support children and young people;
- (c) The Forum were advised that the Health and Wellbeing board at their recent meeting had discussed the need to prioritise school readiness and had identified the importance of parents being engaged early in supporting their child's readiness for school;
- (d) In response to a question on the effect of the liquidation of Carillon, it was stated that there were four PFI schools where services were being provided by Carillon. All the schools had been visited and were in contact with the Authority. The Authority was in contract with John Laing and they were responsible for business and facilities management. John Laing had engaged Carillon to provide these services. So far, John Laing had been supportive and the schools involved had been advised that the Catering Service and Enfield NORSE were available to them. Mr Theodoulou was due to meet with John Laing and the four schools on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> January. In the meantime, the Council was trying to speak to someone from the DfE for information and guidance. Schools had informed the Authority that the DfE were monitoring the situation.
- (e) Following the move of the PRU to Orchardside, the vacated space at the Swan was being used to support pupils with SEMH who would otherwise have been placed in expensive out-borough provision. Other developments to reduce use and spend on out-borough provision included expansion of Russet House at St Mary's and Durant's at Minchendon. The Forum was assured all pupils in an out-borough placement were fully assessed before considering any moves to or from an in-borough provision.

Cllr Taylor confirmed that the Council wanted to support schools and was actively working with London Councils and LGA to highlight the implications of Government policy and seeking readdress. Even under the current circumstances, there was a collective imperative to try to deliver the best services within the available resources. It was clear public services needed more money to ensure staff were retained and motivated.

Forum members were asked to review the recent consultation document on the funding formula for local authorities published by the Government and submit a response seeking adequate funding to be provided to meet the needs of Enfield.

**Resolved** a copy of the Local Authority Budget presentation would be re-circulated and the link for the consultation document on the funding formula for local authorities.

**Action: Mrs Brown**

**Clerk's Note: Cllr Taylor left at this point.**

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

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

Apologies for absence were received from Ms Dawes, Ms Homer and Mr Hintz.

#### **Reported:**

- Ms Hurst had resigned from the PRU and consequently the Forum. The vacated position would be filled when a new Headteacher was appointed at the PRU.
- Ms Kacouris and Ms West had been nominated by the Member Governor Forum for the two primary governor vacancies on the Forum.

The Forum:

- noted Ms Hurst's resignation and wished her well.
- welcomed Ms Kacouris and Ms West to the Forum.

## **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There was no declaration of interest.

## **4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

### **(a) Meeting of 13 December 2017**

**Received** and agreed with the following correction to the minutes of the meeting of the Schools Forum held 13 December 2017, a copy of which is in the minute book.

- (i) the minutes be amended to state Cllr Orhan had been unwell and had extended her apologies for not attending the meeting.
- (ii) It was commented in the discussion on the General Data Protection Regulations, it had been stated that two to three Data Protection Officers would be recruited, and this should be stated in the minutes. This was noted.

In response to a question on whether schools were aware of the requirements of the impending regulations, it was confirmed that briefing sessions had been held and further updates were planned for the School Business Management Forum.

### **(b) Matters Arising from the minutes**

**Resolved** to seek an update on progress in raising and addressing the financial difficulties facing schools.

**Action: Chair**

### **(c) Education Resources Group Meeting of 31 October 2017**

**Received** minutes of the Education Resources Group meeting held on 30 November 2017, a copy of which is in the minute book.

## **5. ITEM FOR DISCUSSION & INFORMATION**

### **a) School Budget 2017/18 – Monitoring Update**

**Received** a report with the latest financial projections for the Schools Budget for 2017/18; a copy is included in the Minute Book.

**Reported** the most significant changes since the last update was the DSG overspend had reduced from £4.5m to £3.7m and, also a change in the DSG cash position due to recoupment by the Education, Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA) for three schools that had converted to academies.

**Noted** the reason for the reduced overspend was because the December monitor included 10% contingency for new SEND placements. The contingency had been removed and adjustments for the starters and leavers for Autumn term added to the latest monitor.

The Forum were advised that the removal of the contingency created a risk if the demand to support new pupils with SEND increased significantly. To reduce this risk, officers were reviewing the funding committed against all existing placements to ensure they reflected an accurate year-end projection.

The Forum noted the report and the projected overspend.

#### **b) Schools Budget: Update 2018-19**

**Received** a report providing the known information on the School Budget for 2018/19, a copy is included in the Minute Book.

**Reported** last week indicative budget information had been presented to the Education Resources Group, but since then a notification had been received from the ESFA to say the free school meals (FSM) data provided to local authorities and required to inform the allocation of the Schools block and local formulas was incorrect. A revised dataset was received late last Friday afternoon. The new data had been used to recalculate the indicative individual school's allocation and for this reason, the amended information was being tabled. The Forum was asked to note the draft Schools Budget and agree to the formula and unit values being applied to allocate funding to primary and secondary schools.

#### **Noted:**

- (i) The change in the FSM data had resulted in a reduction in funding because the number of pupils eligible for FSM had decreased. The new data indicated that FSM eligibility had reduced by 1% from last year rather than 0.6% as previously reported.
- (ii) The position in relation to pupil numbers had not changed from the one previously reported. The growing academies were showing significant gains in pupil numbers and funding because they were admitting new cohorts during the financial year. This also accounted for the part FTEs shown for some academies.
- (iii) The local formula would continue to be implemented based on the principle outlined in the local consultation of moving 50% of the way towards the national funding formula (NFF). However, to ensure all funding was fully delegated, the percentage move towards the NFF for deprivation and low prior attainment had to be changed.

It was confirmed that there was still not sufficient funding available to move fully towards the NFF. The current arrangements enabled the ratio between primary and secondary per pupil funding to be maintained and protected losing primary schools by applying a 0% minimum funding guarantee.

- (iv) Information on rates increases was still awaited and to finalise and confirm the unit rates and provide indicative individual schools budget, a 2% increase had been assumed.
- (v) The indicative individual school's budgets excluded top up funding from the high needs block. Where schools had Additionally Resourced Provision and pupils had been registered as being roll, then these schools would receive the first £4k in their delegated budget and balance of £6k place funding and top up from the high needs block.

It was confirmed that the Schools Budget being presented included a 0.5% transfer from the Schools block to the High Needs block to support schools with above average incident of pupils with Education Health and Care Plans. The Forum was advised that the latest indication suggested that the average incident for the Borough was likely to reduce from 1 in 75 pupils to 1 in 70 pupils.

(vi) The funding for the Early Years block was based on January 2017 pupil numbers and an adjustment to the block would be made in the summer to reflect actual take up during the year. The hourly rate and supplements had been based on the arrangements outlined in the local consultation document.

(vii) The main risks for the Schools Budget were a significant change in the outturn position for 2017/18 or further changes required to the information and data used to calculate the budget for 2018/19.

**Resolved:**

The Forum noted and agreed for 2018/19:

- The funding formula and unit rates to be applied for funding primary and secondary schools;
- The latest draft Schools Budget.

**c) Scheme for Financing Maintained Schools**

**Received** a report providing an update on revisions required for the local Scheme for Financing Maintained Schools for 2018/19; a copy is included in the Minute Book.

**Reported** as requested by the Forum at the July meeting, the balance control mechanism detailed in the Scheme had been reviewed including the request by the Forum for the Education Resources Group to be involved in the process for assessing submissions for retaining surplus balances. The review had concluded this was a procedural matter and did not require a change to the Scheme. The only change that maintained schools needed to be advised about was the adjustment to the EU tender threshold levels to reflect the change in the Euro rate.

**Resolved** to note and agree the revisions to the Scheme for Financing Maintained Schools.

**6. WORKPLAN**

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

**Action: Mrs Brown**

**7. FUTURE MEETINGS**

a) The date of the next meeting was set as Wednesday 7 March 2018 at 17:30 at Chace Community School.

b) Dates for future meetings:

Dates	Time	Venue
09 May 2018	17:30 - 19:30	
11 July 2018	17:30 - 19:30	
03 October 2018	17:30 - 19:30	
12 December 2018	17:30 - 19:30	
16 January 2019	17:30 - 19:30	
06 March 2019	17:30 - 19:30	
15 May 2018 (Provisional)	17:30 - 19:30	

**8. CONFIDENTIALITY**

No items were considered confidential.

The meeting closed at 19:00