

MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING

Virtual Meeting Held on Tuesday 19 May 2020 at 5.30 p.m. via Microsoft Teams

Governors: Mr J Ellis (Primary), Ms H Kacouris* (Primary), Mrs J Leach (Special), Mr J Donnelly* (Secondary), Mr T Hellings (Primary).

Headteachers: Mr D Bruton* (Secondary), Ms K Baptiste* (Primary), Ms R Datta* (Special), Ms C Fay (Pupil Referral Unit), Ms N Husband (Primary), Ms M O'Keefe* / Ms T Day* (Secondary), Mr D Smart (Primary)

Academies: Ms H Thomas (Chair), Mrs A Goldwater, Ms A Nicou, Mrs L Sless*, Mrs A Cattermole*, Ms Z Thompson

Non-Schools Members:

16 - 19 Partnership Mr K Hintz

Early Years Provider Ms A Palmer*

Teachers' Committee Mr J Jacobs

Education Professional Mr A Johnson

Head of Admissions Ms J Fear

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Cllr S Erbil*

Observers:

Cabinet Member Cllr R Jewell

School Business Manager Ms S Mahesh

Education Funding Agency Ms Goodacre*

Director of Education Mr P Nathan

Head of Budget Challenge Mr N Goddard

Finance Manager Mrs L McNamara

Education Resources Manager Ms S Brown

Early Years Inclusion Manager Ms J Hide

EY Ms C Park

Clerk: Andrew Stapleton

** italics denotes absence*

Clerks note:

Mrs Leach joined the meeting at 6.00 p.m.

Cllr Jewel joined the meeting at 5.40 p.m.

Ms Thomas joined the meeting at 6.15 p.m.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND MEMBERSHIP

Apologies for absence had been received from Ms Kacouris, Ms Datta, Ms Baptiste, Ms Day, Ms O'Keefe and Ms Cattermole.

NOTED absence of Cllr Erbil, Mr Donnelly, Mr Bruton, Mrs Sless and Ms A Palmer.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

An opportunity was provided for Members to declare an interest whether pecuniary or otherwise regarding any of the items on the agenda. No declarations were made.

3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- (a) Minutes
RECEIVED and agreed the Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 March 2020.
- (b) Matters Arising
NOTED there were no matters arising that were not on the agenda.

4. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

- (a) Election of Chair
Nominations were invited for the position of Chair for the forthcoming year. Helen Thomas was proposed, seconded and duly elected as Chair.
- (b) Election of Vice-Chair
Nominations were invited for the position of Vice-Chair. Androulla Nicou was proposed, seconded and duly elected as Vice-Chair.

5. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/DECISION

(a) Nurture Group Review

REPORTED by Julia Hide that;

- (i) the options for provision of nurture groups had been taken to ERG, which had put forward the idea that funding for nurture groups would be available to schools for 3 years, after which they would have to re-apply. This would involve monitoring on what would probably be an annual basis. Three options were set out, of which the first was currently the preferred option. This option involved looking at the use of part time groups, which would lead to an increase in the number of groups. Alongside would be an outreach model delivered to a second tranche of schools. There were some issues around the organisational changes needed in schools and the timing of changes also needed to be considered. The brokerage of the outreach provision required more detailed work;
- (ii) option 2 was a small number of full time groups, with each group reserving some places for children from other schools. The impact of moving children with attachment needs required further consideration, along with transport issues, costings and organisational changes;
- (iii) option 3 was to continue as at present but with new criteria in place.
- (iv) the final option was not to have any nurture groups at all – but this was not favoured;
- (v) the proposed revised criteria involved ranking schools, with the top 40% in terms of free school meals (FMS) eligibility hosting a nurture groups. One question was if FSM was the best indicator of deprivation and if it would arrange the highest number of children in need;
- (vi) It was **questioned** whether staffing implications had been considered. In response it was stated that further consultation would be needed once that stage was reached, as it was just a matter of exploring the options at this time;
- (vii) In **response** to how a mismatch between the criteria in place and the money available be addressed, it was stated there was a certain number of groups that could be hosted so the matter would be decided according to need. Remaining demand could be met through access to the outreach package;
- (viii) It was **queried** how disparities in the size of schools would be addressed and it was commented this was a valid concern which needed to be worked through when further detail was available, but assessment would always be on the basis of need;
- (ix) The Forum was advised that the proposals would go out for wider consultation amongst all schools as the next step and it was hoped a decision would then be reached. It was

less clear when the implementation phase would take place but due to the organisational issues that would arise it was acknowledged that a timely decision was needed.

The Forum noted the update and thanked Ms Hide for her presentation.

Clerk's note: Ms Hide left the meeting at this point.

(b) High Needs Review

REPORTED by Cat Park that;

- (i) the High Needs review was commissioned, like Enfield, most local authorities across the country were struggling to deliver high needs services within budget. The review set out the present position and put forward options to set the strategic direction for SEN. Finances and benchmarking had been considered. A budget breakdown was given showing 58% delegated to schools, 30% for out borough placements and 12% for central services. The input of stakeholders had also been sought as part of the review, looking particularly at how best to provide value for money and good outcomes. The themes which emerged were the high and increasing demand for services in Enfield, which clearly needed significant change in order to remain sustainable. There was a considerable variation in the cost of provision. It was suggested that early intervention spend assisted in managing need and was an area that could benefit effectively from further investment. A banding system could be utilised to help assess demand;
- (ii) the next task was to decide upon the emerging options, which could be grouped under the headings of Demand Management options, Supply options and Financial Management. In relation to Demand Management, the objectives involved early identification so as to make early interventions and achieve positive outcomes; early interventions with speech and language; improvements in long term planning; and improved communications with parents to help manage expectations;
- (iii) in terms of Supply, the objectives included improving mainstream inclusion, where some schools would be able to improve with additional support; expansion of in-borough provision; and reduction of reliance on independent and non-mainstream placements;
- (iv) in regard to Finance, the objectives included reviewing funding allocations to ensure budgets were proportionate to need; and reviewing financial management systems to better support clear budget planning and monitoring. The next steps involved obtaining feedback from stakeholders and circulating the finished report with greater detail around the options;
- (v) It was **questioned** if the outcomes based commissioning model applied to all those between 0 and 25 years old and whether the agenda would be developed collaboratively. It was stated that finance must be linked to outcomes and any options considered and developed would support all those between 0 and 25 years old. The arrangements for the commissioning model were part of the next phase;
- (vi) It was **commented** that there needed to be a framework and a banding system, whilst complex, may save money overall, although there was a need to ensure the correct level of support.
In response, it was stated that experience of another local authority was that a banding system that did not in fact save money. The assessment process was often not straightforward and frequently led to children moving up bands rather than down them. The system required much work and consultation. Another member endorsed this point, having used a banding system in relation to special schools in Enfield some years ago, which had led to a tendency to focus on finance and less on outcomes.

The Forum noted the update and thanked Ms Park for her presentation.

(c) De-delegated Services

The question of de-delegated services had been raised by Headteachers at the Education Resources Group because the plan was to review the position in the Summer term, but this was now not possible due to lockdown. It had been planned to take the matter to primary Heads and bring it back in early September. Due to the prevailing circumstances there was limited capacity to discuss the matter. Forum members felt it was important to have an agenda for debate and it was suggested this be discussed at EPHA (Enfield Primary Heads Association) who could discuss and make recommendations to enable a way forward, as there were issues with timing and implementation. The aim was to confirm services to be de-delegated by early Autumn term. It was stated that confirmation of de-delegation had to be included on the ATP return submitted in January.

Action Mr Smart

6. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

NOTED there were no items for information to be discussed.

7. WORKPLAN

RECEIVED the updated Work Plan

RESOLVED to agree the updated Work Plan.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

NOTED there was no other business to discuss.

9. FUTURE MEETINGS

(a) Next Meeting

NOTED the date of the next meeting was Wednesday 15 July 2020 at 5.30pm. This meeting may be a virtual meeting – to be confirmed;

(b) Future Meetings

NOTED the dates of future meetings as set out on the agenda.

10. ITEMS TO REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL

NOTED there were no items to remain confidential.