

MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING
Virtual Meeting Held on Wednesday 15 July 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’Keeffe* / 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 E Campbell
Education Funding Agency *Ms Goodacre**
Director of Education Mr P Nathan
Head of Budget Challenge Mr N Goddard
Finance Manager Mrs L McNamara
EY Ms C Park
Governor Support Service Mrs S Zaveri
Headteacher Broomfield School Mr P Travis
SBM Broomfield School Ms C Bignell
Governor, Broomfield School – Mr R Malek, Mr G Thwaite, Ms K Peacock
Head of EPS Ms S Francis
NASUWT Mr T Cuffaro
Education Resources Manager Ms S Brown
Clerk: Ms T Hobday

** italics denotes absence*

Clerks note:

Ms Thompson and Ms Husband joined the meeting at 5.40 p.m.
Ms Park left the meeting at 5.54pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND MEMBERSHIP

Apologies for absence had been received from Ms T Day, Ms O’Keeffe and Mrs A Cattermole.

NOTED absences of Mr Donnelly, Mrs L Sless, Ms R Datta, Mr D Bruton, 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 19 May 2020.

b) Matters Arising

NOTED that there were no matters arising that were not on the agenda.

4. ITEMS FOR PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

a) High Needs Review

Ms Park presented this item

RECEIVED report 'SEN High needs Block Review Financial Analysis', a copy of which is held for the Minute Book.

REPORTED:

- i) The review was commissioned to assess how the increasing demand for support and current overspend of the high needs block could be managed. As part of the review, engagement sessions were held with different groups to understand the needs and enable options to support the pressure on the budget to be identified.
- ii) The purpose of the presentation to the Forum was to focus on the options identified in the report. The options identified were split into three areas which were:
 - Demand management: to consider early identification and interventions and then long-term planning, with a principle of intervening early.
 - Supply management: to achieve the right type of provision for the child that met their needs in a cost-effective way and move towards increasing main-stream inclusion.

The review had highlighted the need to increase in-borough provision to reduce costs. The current provision within the borough was described as excellent, but there was not enough of it, thus increasing the use of independent and non-maintained provision. The findings from the review confirmed these places were appropriate in some circumstances, but a number of pupils needs could have been met in-borough by a local school but required more provision to be created.

- Financial management: to support allocation of funding more effectively by moving to a single system to manage and monitor income and expenditure.

Members were advised once comments and feedback had been received from the Forum, the aim was to set up a working group to prioritise and develop an implementation plan for each of the options. The following points arose from the ensuing discussion:

NOTED

- i) The proposal was for a small representative working group to consider the options and consider possible proposals or recommendations to support the option, which would then be brought back to the Forum. This may require an additional meeting of the Forum during the Autumn term. For the working group, volunteers were sought from the Forum to represent each sector.
- ii) The Forum was advised that recommendations had not yet been considered but could be drawn out from the report. For example, the report highlighted speech & language support, so an option could include prioritising speech and language to support early intervention and an additional amount of money could be allocated for Speech and Language support. The aim was to continue to increase the number of places available in Enfield special schools. It was noted that these actions would increase the overspend in the short term but would lead to savings over the medium and long term.

The view was not to pursue a banding system but consider allocating funding in line with the resources required to meet the needs of a pupil achieve their outcomes.

The Forum was already aware of priority to develop more high needs places in special schools.

iii) The main aim was for a better and fairer service for everyone.

RESOLVED

- The following members would be part of the High Needs Working Group: Helen Kacouris (Primary), Kate Baptiste (Maintained Primary), Zoe Thompson (Secondary), Celeste Fay (Pupil Referral Unit), Androulla Nicou (Academy).

A member from a special school would be sought

ACTION: SANGEETA BROWN

- An update with recommendations will be presented at either a single agenda item meeting or a scheduled meeting of the Forum.
- 'Our Voice' the parent group will be kept informed of progress and emerging recommendation.

ACTION: PETER NATHAN

Ms Park was thanked for her work and providing a comprehensive report.

b) School Budget Outturn 2019/20

RECEIVED the DSG Outturn Report 2019/20, a copy of which is held for the Minute Book.

REPORTED after the various adjustments detailed in the report that the final cumulative year-end position was a deficit of £4.48m being brought forward into 2020/21. The main changes from the previous projection provided to the Forum were a reduction in outborough commitments, carry forward of the balance for the LAC transfer and additional advance paid to a school.

Due to the deficit reported, the current regulations would require a deficit recovery plan (DRP) to be developed and agreed. The DfE were developing a DRP template for LAs to complete. The following points arose from the ensuing discussion:

In response to a discussion and some questions, it was stated that two thirds of London boroughs were reporting as being in deficit. The DfE DRP appeared to be similar to the template used for schools. It was likely to take a significant amount of time to complete. The template should calculate the information but collating the information for the template will be time consuming.

The Forum noted the year-end position and the requirement for a DRP to be completed.

c) School Budget Outturn 2019/20

RECEIVED the school balances for 2019/20, a copy of which is held for the Minute Book.

REPORTED the final position was total balances held by schools as at 31 March 2020 was -£3.755m with the balances held by secondary schools reducing by £0.656m primary schools by £1.938m.

Noted at year-end, 16 schools ended the year in deficit. Termly monitoring meetings had been held with most of these schools and there had been limited progress in reducing the deficit. The Council was concerned about the risks created by the increasing deficits. Also, last year the DfE consulted on changes to the Scheme for Financing to improve financial transparency. The DfE proposed requirements in relation to deficits. The publication of findings and requirements following this consultation were delayed due to the General Election and now due to Covid 19.

For both these reasons, the options in relation to schools in deficits has been assessed and were outlined in the report outlines. The aim was to pursue options most appropriate for each school.

The maintained school representatives on the Forum were asked to note the report and comment on the proposals contained in the report.

RESOLVED to note the report and options detailed in the report for supporting schools to reduce their deficits.

d) High Needs local arrangements for 2020/21

RECEIVED a report on the High Needs Block 2021/22 – Review, a copy of which is held for the Minute Book.

REPORTED it was expected the DfE would confirm at the end of term that current arrangements for high needs will continue next financial year. There was no information on whether there would be additional funding for the High Needs block and it was assumed that the planned increase for the Schools Block for 2021/22 was likely to be implemented.

The DfE's planned reviews of the High Needs block formula and the SEND Code had been delayed due to the pandemic, as had the response to the Call for Evidence consultation carried out last year. The DfE were aware in carrying out these reviews any recommendations for one review should inform the other reviews.

The outcome from last year's local Consultation had identified some areas of high needs to be reviewed. The papers circulated outlined the preferred options for three areas: changes to Nurture Groups, funding to support inclusive mainstream schools and top ups for pupils with EHCPs in mainstream schools.

These options had been shared with Education Resources Group and were being brought to the Forum for comment.

NOTED the final proposals would be brought back to the Forum before a wider consultation took place in the Autumn term and implementation was planned during 2020/21.

RESOLVED to note the report and the options for the reviews detailed in the report.

e) De-delegation of Central Services – Impact Analysis

RECEIVED the De-delegation of Central Services report, a copy of which is held in the Minute Book.

REPORTED following the discussion at the last Forum meeting, primary colleagues had been surveyed by the Headteacher representatives on the Forum. The outcomes from the survey had indicated that some school may not have appreciated the impact of not de-delegating some services.

As a result of a discussion with Education Resources Group, each service was asked to carry out an impact analysis. This impact analyses were being presented to the Forum for comment.

NOTED

- i) The Forum was advised by a Member that only primary headteachers had completed a survey. Outcomes indicated that schools did not appreciate impact of not de-delegating some services. The survey was sent to Enfield primary schools. Of these, 51 Headteachers responded and the results showed that the majority of schools opted not to pay into every service. From the response, it was apparent that colleagues were not aware of the impact of not de-delegating.
- ii) In considering their responses, schools had decided on whether to pay or not, but had not considered the impact of their decision, as an example, some schools did not want to buy into CLEAPSS, which was a regulatory requirement. It was suggested that if the CLEAPSS information was shared with Headteachers that the wording in the impact analysis be amended to state that the cost to the local authority was less per pupil than if the school purchased it direct.
- iii) It was commented that schools were not fully aware of how the de-delegated amounts were used and the impact for their schools.

- iv) The Forum noted that that Headteacher represented needed to consult further with their colleagues before a final decision was made. It was suggested that the survey was re-issued after the additional information and impact analysis had been shared with schools.
- v) There was a view that part of the CLEAPSS cover was not required if a school purchase the ESFA insurance scheme. It was suggested that this was not the case, but the position would be clarified.
- vi) The Forum’s view was that the impact analysis contained some useful information, especially the details included in the associated comments. However, further clarity was required on the ratings used for the impact and scores. It was stated that the scores ranged between 1-5 where 5 had a high impact, however it depended on the viewpoint as to relevancy of the score.

RESOLVED that the impact analysis would be circulated to schools to consider and Headteacher representatives on the Forum will again seek the views of primary colleagues.

ACTION: Dominic Smart

5. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION.

None

6. WORKPLAN

RESOLVED the Workplan would be updated from this meeting.

ACTION: SANGEETA BROWN

7. FUTURE MEETINGS

NOTED that meetings will remain virtual until further notice.

Date	Time
02 October 2020	5:30-7.30PM
09 December 2020	5:30 - 7:30 PM
20 January 2021	5:30 - 7:30 PM
3 March 2021	5:30 - 7:30 PM
12 May 2021	5:30 - 7:30 PM
14 July 2021	5:30 - 7:30 PM

8. AOB

The Director of Education thanked the Forum for their work this year despite the immense pressure on headteachers, governors and lead professionals.

The Chair seconded the Director of Education’s sentiment and thanked everyone for being part of the Forum and supporting the important and valuable work that was being done. The Chair also thanked everyone who worked behind the scenes and provided support to the Forum in these difficult times.

9. CONFIDENTIALITY

RESOLVED that none of the meeting content was regarded as confidential.