

# SCHOOLS FORUM

Virtual Meeting held on Wednesday 20 January 2021 at 17:30

Governors: Mr J Ellis (Primary), Ms H Kacouris (Primary, Mr J Donnelly (Secondary), Mr T Hellings (Primary). ), Ms G Taylor (Special)

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

Academies: Ms H Thomas (Chair, *Mrs K Turnpenney*, Ms A Nicou, Ms Z Thompson), Vacancies x 2

## Non-Schools Members:

16 - 19 Partnership Mr K Hintz  
Early Years Provider Ms A Palmer\*  
Teachers' Committee Mr T Cuffaro  
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 / Ms S Mahesh  
Education Funding Agency *Mr G Nicolini\**  
Director of Education Mr P Nathan  
Finance Manager Mrs L McNamara  
Resources Development Manager Ms S Brown  
Advisory Service for Autism Ms R Walker  
CHAT Ms S Ellingham  
Clerk: Ms T Hobday

*\* italics denotes absence*

## Clerks note:

Ms R Walker left the meeting at 5.48 p.m.  
Mr J Donnelly left the meeting at 6 p.m.  
Mr Ellis left the meeting at 6.45 p.m.

## 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND MEMBERSHIP

### (a) Apologies for absence

**RECEIVED** apologies from Councillor Erbil, Councillor Jewell and Kate Turnpenney.

### (b) Membership

#### **Reported that:**

- (i) Ms Tanya Douglas was expected to join the Forum to replace Mr Bruton.
- (ii) Flowers on behalf of the Forum had been sent to Mrs Sless and Mrs Leach to thank them for their contribution to the work of the Forum for many years.
- (iii) Nominations had been sought for the two academy representative vacancies and expressions of interest were awaited.
- (iv) Mrs Goldwater, Children First academy was being replaced by Ms Kate Turnpenney, CEO from Children First academy.
- (v) Councillor Erbil had advised that the Forum should highlight any issues they would like her to raise with the scrutiny committee. It was stated that the scrutiny committee who reviewed difficult and controversial issues, for example, DSG and school budgets.

**NOTED** Ms Susan Ellingham was attending as an observer because she was interested in joining the Forum as an Academy representative.

## **2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Members were invited to identify any personal or prejudicial interests relevant to items on the agenda. A definition of personal and prejudicial interests had been distributed for members' information.

No declarations were made.

## **3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

(a) School Forum meetings held on 9 December 2020.

**RECEIVED** and agreed the Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 December 2020.

(b) Matters arising from these minutes

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

## **4. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

(a) High Needs Review – Early Intervention: Further Support for Autism

Item presented by Rachel Walker, Head of Enfield Advisory Service for Autism (ASA)

**RECEIVED** a report outlining the proposed autism project.

### **REPORTED**

- (i) The proposal focused on supporting children with autism and their families.
- (ii) Collaboration and communication had previously been informal, there were no formal arrangements for lead professional to work together strategically to enable a joined-up approach.
- (iii) The structure being planned by ASA aimed to bring together and involve professionals and teams from a variety of different areas, experiences and background.
- (iv) Previously, the support provided by ASA had been reactive, alongside the training which was offered. The EASA were proposing to develop the It was suggested that now the priority should be to work in conjunction with the Autism Education Trust framework in Enfield. This had been used successfully by other LAs. The framework would enable a strategic approach to supporting schools, settings and families to support pupils with autism and embed positive messages about autism.
- (v) The change should result in a move away from different phases working by themselves to some work being done across phases.
- (vi) By improving the support and training offered to schools and establishing a joined up approach should lead to pupils receiving better support to achieve their outcomes.
- (vii) The outcomes that ASA aimed to achieve from this new development provide improved support to families to increase their understanding of their child's needs and enable them to manage the diagnosis.

**NOTED** in response to questions –

- (i) The Forum was advised that this proposal together with the proposal agreed at the last meeting for speech and language were supported by the Council's Executive Management Team and the Leader of the Council. Following the Forum's support at tonight's meeting, it was planned for both proposals to be presented to Cabinet. There was great interest and excitement regarding these projects because of their focus on early intervention.

- (ii) It was important there were clarity and transparency around outcomes and effective arrangements in place for monitoring and assessing impact.

**RESOLVED** to continue their support develop and extend autism support as part of the early intervention strategy.

The Forum thanked Rachel and her team for their time and effort on this proposal.

(b) DSG Budget Monitoring Report 2020/21

**RECEIVED** a report detailing the DSG Budget Monitoring position for 2020/21.

**REPORTED**

- (i) The deficit brought forward was just under £4.5 million deficit.
- (ii) The November budget monitoring showed that the overall overspend had increased to £7.7m. The change from the position reported at the last meeting was due to an increase in the number of pupils with EHCPs being supported in maintained schools and reduction in the underspend previously reported for out borough placements due to some new placements agreed in the Autumn term.
- (iii) The Spring term update is likely to push overspend up and there will be some changes to out of borough placements, most other areas will stay the same.

The Forum noted the contents of the report and the projected DSG cumulative deficit position for 31 March 2021.

(c) Schools Budget 2021/22

**RECEIVED** a report providing updated information on the proposed budget position for 2021/22 for each of the funding blocks within the DSG.

**REPORTED**

A. Schools Budget

- (i) The total actual DSG allocation for 2021/22 was £373 million. The decrease from the indicative allocation reported at the last meeting was due mainly to a drop in primary pupil numbers and a small increase in secondary pupil numbers with a net reduction in pupil numbers overall.
- (ii) The Schools block had increased by £15.5 million but £12 million of this was related to the transfer of the pay and pensions grant into the unit rate for the per pupil element of the funding formula.
- (iii) Within the Schools block, £1.3 million had been allowed for the four growing schools, but only £1 million had been provided in the budget allocation. Separately, £0.15million was allowed further in-year changes.
- (iv) The funding available in the Schools block for the mainstream formula allocations was calculated by deducting £0.15m for the growth fund and 0.5% transfer to the High Needs block. The final used for the allocation was £281.89million.
- (v) The actual funding received for the High Needs block funding was more than indicated at the last meeting. This was to reflect the increase in number of pupils with high needs.
- (vi) There has also been a slight increase for Early Years Block allocation.
- (vii) The number of pupils eligible for free school meal had increased. This was probably due to more families experiencing hardship as a result of the ongoing pandemic.
- (viii) The model presented used the National Funding Formula rates with the Enfield area cost adjustment and using these rates met the minimum funding guarantee could be set at a higher level, 1.89%, than indicated by the previous modelling. This was at the upper end of the 0.5-2% range allowed by the formula regulations.
- (ix) The direct pupil led funding excludes premises, all secondaries have achieved that level of funding. 8 primary schools have been protected to achieve that level of

funding. These are mainly schools that do not qualify for other funding based on deprivation.

- (x) The PFI shortfall allocation was funded from the Schools block and that the allocation had to be increased to reflect a drop in pupil numbers for the PFI schools.

**NOTED** in response to questions:

- (i) The variation between model circulated for the consultation and the actual figures being presented was mostly due to changes to pupil numbers.
- (ii) The calculation used for the initial funding of £281.89million was by dividing the number of pupils by guaranteed unit of funding and other adding related to historic issues. The Government's calculations for free school meals etc, are not shared with the Local Authority. There is the expectation that all Authorities can work within a minimum funding guarantee of 0.5-2%.
- (iii) It was confirmed that there should be no lag for the salary increases. Any gap in funding and start date will be partly covered through the grant or the formula allocation.
- (iv) The High Needs block was described as a 'significant risk' due to continuing rising demand to support pupils with SEN and the associated financial impact. It was stated the average deficit across London was around £10 million. No additional funding was given when age was extended from 16 to 25 and out-borough placements were expensive, consequently the Borough was working on developing in borough provision.

**RESOLVED to:**

- (i) Approve the formula factors and unit rates as set out in Appendix B.
- (ii) Note the school formula allocations for 2021/22 as detailed in Appendix C.
- (iii) Note the DSG settlement and the proposed budget for 2021/22 as detailed in Appendix A.
- (i) Approve the allocation of £0.15m for the Growth Fund.
- (ii) Provide information on school sixth form funding as soon as this was available.

**ACTION:** Mr Johnson

#### B. De-Delegated Services for Maintained Schools 2021/22

**REPORTED**

- (i) The final Union Duties value was actually £3.16 because it reflected drop in pupil numbers,
- (ii) At the last meeting:
  - maintained primary schools indicated that they would continue with de-delegation for CLEAPSS, FSM Eligibility Service, GDPR and Union Duties. De-delegation for the other services will cease in August 2021, members were asked to confirm this decision;
  - there were no maintained secondary school representatives present at the time of the vote, so it was necessary for a vote to be carried out at this meeting to confirm which de-delegated services were to be supported.

**Noted** in response to questions:

- (i) Some Primary schools have started to work with Unions to develop an SLA to come in after de-delegation is removed.
- (ii) The maintained secondary representatives requested the vote be delayed to the next meeting as they had not realised, they had to decide at this meeting. It was advised that the vote had to be taken at this meeting because a return had to be submitted the following day to the DfE. The requirements for confirming de-delegation had been

highlighted in the papers circulated and at the Education Resources Group meeting held last week.

**RESOLVED:**

Maintained primary schools confirmed de-delegation of:

- CLEAPSS
- Free Schools Eligibility
- Union duties
- GDPR

Services not to be de-delegated and cease at the end of this academic year:

- NQT recruitment support and applicant tracking system
- School Improvement Service
- Schools in Financial difficulty
- Long Service Awards

Maintained secondary schools confirmed de-delegation of:

- CLEAPS
- Free Schools Eligibility
- NQT recruitment support and applicant tracking system
- Union duties
- GDPR
- School Improvement Service
- Schools in Financial difficulty
- Long Service Awards

(d) High Needs Strategy report

**RECEIVED** a report on the High Needs Strategy.

**REPORTED**

- (i) There was a new requirement for local authorities in deficit to develop DSG management plans which outlined plans and progress on managing and reducing the overspend.
- (ii) The funding received from 2015 to 2021 had increased but there was still a gap between funding required and received, this reflected the rise in demand and historic funding issues.
- (iii) Nationally, the number of EHCPs in schools had increased from 3.1% to 3.3%. From being close to the national average, Enfield's EHCPs had increased to 3.8% of the total school population. The most common primary needs continued to be supporting pupils with autism and speech and language.
- (iv) The increase for supporting pupils in early years, reception and nursery, and post-18 was high because of the change brought about by the SEND Reforms and requirement to support children and young people from the birth to 25 years. However, the change was not recognised in the funding provided through the High Needs block.
- (v) The increase in spend was mainly due to increasing provision to meet the rising demand to support pupils with autism and speech and language.
- (vi) The Forum had been receiving since 2016 annual reports on how the rising demand for support was being met and the report included an update on the various strategies which were being pursued.
- (vii) The next area planned for review special school place funding. Officers were developing a scoping document for an independent consultant to carry out the review.

**NOTED** in response to a question that the special school place funding rates had not been reviewed because of the anticipated publication by the DfE of their responses to the SEND consultations.

The Forum supported the review of special schools and not waiting for the DfE responses to the consultations. It was considered that the review should keep pupils with High needs in-borough rather than more costly out of borough placements.

The Forum noted the update.

## **5. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

None

## **6. WORKPLAN**

NOTED that the Work plan will be updated following this meeting.

## **7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None

## **8. FUTURE MEETINGS**

(a) Date of next meeting is Wednesday 3 March 2021 at 5.30pm. This meeting will be a virtual meeting.

(b) Dates of future meetings:

- 12 May 2021 5:30 - 7:30 PM
- 14 July 2021 5:30 - 7:30 PM

## **9. ITEMS TO REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL**

None of the items were considered confidential.

Meeting closed at 6.55pm