

MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING
Held on Wednesday, 6 October 2021 at 17:30 on Microsoft Teams

Schools' Members

Governors:

Mr J Ellis	Primary
<i>Mr T Hellings *</i>	Primary
Ms H Kacouris	Primary
<i>Ms C Davies *</i>	Special
<i>Mr J Donnelly*</i>	Secondary

Headteachers

<i>Ms T Day*</i>	Secondary
Ms K Baptiste	Primary
<i>Ms C Fay*</i>	Pupil Referral Unit
Ms N Husband	Primary
Ms M O'Keeffe	Secondary
<i>Mr D Smart*</i>	Primary
Ms G Taylor	Special

Academies:

Ms H Thomas (Chair)
<i>Ms S Ellingham*</i>
<i>Mr M Lewis*</i>
<i>Ms A Nicou*</i>
Ms Z Thompson
<i>Ms K Turnpenney *</i>

Non-School Members

Mr K Hintz	16-19 Partnership
<i>Ms A Palmer *</i>	Early Years Provider
Mr T Cuffaro	Teachers' Committee
Mr A Johnson *	Education Professional
Ms J Fear	Head of Admissions
<i>Cllr S Erbil *</i>	Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Observers	
Cllr M Uddin	Cabinet Member

**Indicates Absence*

Also present:

Mr P Nathan, Director of Education
Mr N Goddard, Head of Budget Challenge
Rik Boxer – External Consultant
Mrs L McNamara, Finance Manager
Mrs S Brown, Education Resources Manager
Mrs P Swain, Clerk

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND MEMBERSHIP

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Smart, Ms Day, Ms Ellingham, Ms Nicou, Ms Turnpenney and Ms Fay.

Noted the absence of Mr Hellings, Ms Davies, Mr Donnelly, Mr Lewis and Cllr Erbil.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Members were invited to identify any personal or prejudicial interest relevant to items on the agenda.

No declarations were received.

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

RECEIVED the minutes of the Schools Forum meeting held on 14 July 2021.

NOTED that:

- (a) The Minutes were a correct record of the meeting
- (b) There were no matters arising from the Minutes which were not addressed in items on the Agenda

4. **ITEMS FOR PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION**

(a) DSG Budget Monitoring Report 2021-22

This item was presented by Louise McNamara.

RECEIVED the DSG Budget Monitoring Report 2021-22.

REPORTED that the report provided details of the latest DSG position for 2021/22 and includes confirmation of the latest allocation from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) as at July 2021.

Members were asked to **note** the contents of the report and the projected DSG cumulative deficit position for March 2022.

The DSG budget was monitored on a monthly basis and variances were presented to the Forum. The accumulated DSG carry forward 2020/21 was an overall deficit of £8.9m. The outstanding adjustments largely related to a potential clawback of Early Years funding by the ESFA. This would normally been confirmed in the summer term, but has been delayed for 2021/22 due to additional data collections requested by the ESFA to identify trends in pupil numbers in early years settings.

NOTED

- (i) The original estimate of gross DSG resources for 2021/22 amounted to £373.187m. Of this amount £2.1m would be provided direct by the ESFA to fund places in mainstream academy units and academy special schools. Budget allocations for 2021/22 were agreed within this level of resources.
- (ii) The Forum was advised in March and July 2021, revised DSG allocations for 2021/22 were published. These allocations reflected updated academy and college recoupment for the Schools Block and High Needs.
- (iii) There may be further DSG allocation between now and the end of the financial year and the Forum would be advised of these changes.
- (iv) In reply to a **question**, it was confirmed that the DSG grant was ring-fenced and the deficit remained as a debt against the DSG.
- (v) Further increases in the High Needs Block overspend were expected over the next 2 terms to meet the cost of any new EHCPs agreed. This rise was after allowing for the contingency to fund expected increases in demand for support for pupils with EHCPs in mainstream schools and the planned increase during the year for new places in special school and ARPs.
- (vi) The Forum was aware that the DSG remained a under considerable pressure due to ongoing high needs overspends. The ongoing programme previously discussed with the Forum to address this was being implemented with additional in borough places being made available from September 2021 either in mainstream special units or special schools as a cost-effective way of meeting the increased demand. The new early intervention workstreams were being set up and beginning on working from September 2021 to identify and pupils with special needs as early as possible and

provide them with support with the aim of reducing the longer-term financial impact. The main concern was that the DSG allocation was increasing but not at the same rate as the increasing demand for support.

The position for the coming year was currently being assessed to confirm whether planned provisions was sufficient to meet demand or whether there would further increased pressures on the High Needs Block.

Officers were working a Deficit Management Plan, which will be presented to the Forum at a future meeting. It was noted that many other LAs were in similar positions.

The Forum would be provided with updates at future meetings.

The Forum noted the update on the projected overspend of the DSG.

(b) School Funding Arrangements: Update and Summary of Proposals for 2022/23

This item was presented by Sangeeta Brown.

RECEIVED the School Funding Arrangements: Update and Summary of Proposals for 2022/23 Report.

REPORTED that the paper presented was an extract from the draft school funding consultation document and detailed the proposals to inform the funding arrangements for 2022/23. The DfE had confirmed the arrangements for the financial year 2022-23, which included confirmation of the increase of £7.1 billion in funding for 2022-23. This increase was part of a commitment made in 2019 to increase school funding. However, the increase was not adequate to reverse the effect of insufficient funding between 2009/10 and 2018/19.

In **response** to a question as to whether the £7.1 billion increase was the accumulative effect of the increases over the last three years, it was stated that this was likely to be the case because there wasn't enough clarity on how much of the increase was funded by new money.

It was confirmed that current arrangements for allocating the funding would continue for 2022/23 and the hard national funding formula would be delayed to earliest 2023/24. The introduction of the hard national funding formula for mainstream schools was likely to result in no local flexibility to inform or amend funding within the Schools block.

The paper circulated outlined the proposals for the local arrangements for 2022/23. Members were asked to **note** and provide their views and comments on the proposals outlined for consultation.

A. Mainstream Schools – Funding Formula

NOTED as discussed at the last meeting, the aim for the local arrangements for 2022/23 for mainstream schools were to maintain stability and least turbulence for individual schools. The modelling attached to the paper used information published by the DfE and October 2020 data. An analysis of the results from modelling indicated the per pupil led funding for primary schools would increase between 1-2% and secondary between 2-3%.

It was commented that a school was missing from the information presented.

RESOLVED:

- To accept the proposal to maintain the current arrangements for local funding formula be included for consultation;
- an updated version of the modelling be circulated to Forum Members.

ACTION: MRS BROWN

B. High Needs Block

Noted the indicative increase was confirmed as 8% per head with a gain cap of 11% per head. The calculation for allocating the funding was based 50% on actual spend in 17-18 and 50% on proxy indicators. Enfield would see an increase of just over £4m.

C. Mainstream Schools – Pupils with EHCPs

REPORTED the current regulations required schools to fund the first £6k of support for pupils with additional educational needs and SEND. Any costs above £6k identified on the EHCP were funded by the LA from the HNB. To support schools with high number of pupils with EHCPs, it was agreed in Enfield to transfer 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block to fund additional £6k and continue to support schools with above a calculated average number of pupils with EHCPs.

PROPOSED

With the outcomes awaited from the two SEND consultations and uncertainty regarding future funding, it was proposed current arrangement for the transfer of 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block be maintained for 2022/23.

RESOLVED to accept the proposal for the current arrangements for the transfer of 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block to support schools with above a calculated average number of pupils with EHCPs by providing a contribution towards the £6k per pupil be included for consultation.

ACTION: MRS BROWN

D. Special Schools & Pupil Referral Unit – Place Funding

This item was presented by Rik Boxer, Independent Consultant.

REPORTED independent consultants were commissioned to review the special school place funding arrangement and assess the financial position and type of needs supported at each of Enfield's special schools and pupil referral unit.

NOTED there was a case to review the historic funding model, which had been in place since 2013. Options for an alternative funding model were considered by the local authority in collaboration with special school headteachers and the PRU, with support from the independent consultant.

PROPOSED

Funding for special schools

Following discussion of possible funding models, it was proposed that a benchmarked average cost model be adopted based on an audit of current provision.

Noted modelling based on the profile of pupil needs at each school would be undertaken

Funding for pupil referral unit

The PRU was currently funded based on an indicative number of 100 places, although numbers on roll fluctuated during the year and year on year. Recent data indicated average number on roll was below 100 possibly due to a reduction in the number of permanent exclusions. It was stated that the PRU undertook several preventative activities to support schools and pupils at risk of exclusion.

Further work was required to develop this model in more detail.

RESOLVED that the outcomes from the consultation and full details of the funding model for both special schools and the PRU which included the financial implications

be presented to the Forum in the spring.

ACTION: MRS BROWN

E. Early Years Block:

REPORTED the guidance for allocating the Inclusion Fund had been amended. The new guidance stated that the Inclusion Fund should be used to target support for children with lower level or emerging SEND attending settings in the relevant local authority, regardless of where they lived.

It was clarified that the Inclusion Fund was required to be allocated in the form of a 'top up grants' on a case- by-case basis with the Fund being used for direct support to providers or resources to support an individual child to access the curriculum. This requirement had meant a change to the local arrangements whereby the support provided to settings by Educational Psychology Service could no longer be funded from the Inclusion Fund.

NOTED that the proposal was to remove provision for direct support from the Educational Psychology Service and the released funds be used to meet the increasing demand for support from the Inclusion Fund. This change should ameliorate the overspend that has been experienced in this element of the Fund.

Following the updates to the regulatory guidance and for support, the provision of specialist support has had to be reviewed.

It was confirmed where a provider required an assessment for an EHCP from the Educational Psychology Service, then the provider would seek the agreement of their Area SENCO and the cost would be met from Inclusion Fund Plus.

RESOLVED to progress the recommendations made.

ACTION: MRS BROWN

5. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Response to the DfE consultation on Fair School Funding for All

RECEIVED the Response to the DfE consultation on Fair School Funding for All.

REPORTED that the paper circulated included a copy of the response submitted to the DfE consultation on proposals for implementing a hard national funding formula.

NOTED the Forum was briefed on the consultation at the last meeting. The deadline for responses was 30 September 2021. It was agreed that a draft response would be shared for comment with Forum members prior to the response being submitted. It was confirmed that a draft had been shared and no amendments were sought to the draft response. The final response submitted was a joint response of the Local Authority and the Schools Forum.

It was remarked that following publication of outcomes from the consultation, stakeholders such as unions and professional bodies may consider on how they may work towards getting the best option for schools going forward. It would also be helpful if EPHA could raise this at their next meeting.

Members were asked to **note** the response submitted.

5 WORKPLAN

RECEIVED and noted the Schools Forum Workplan 2021-22.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no other items to consider.

7. FUTURE MEETINGS

- (a) The date of next meeting of the Forum was Wednesday 8 December 2021 at 5.30pm. The meeting would be virtual.
- (b) It was likely that some of the budget focused meetings may need to be physical and would be considered at the next meeting.

ACTION: MRS BROWN

- (c) **NOTED** the dates of future meetings as detailed below.

Date	Time	Venue
19/01/2022	5:30 - 7:30 PM	TBC
09/03/2022	5:30 - 7:30 PM	TBC
11/05/2022	5:30 - 7:30 PM	TBC
06/07/2022	5:30 - 7:30 PM	TBC
05/10/2022	5:30 - 7:30 PM	TBC
07/12/2022	5:30 - 7:30 PM	TBC

8. CONFIDENTIALITY

No items discussed within the agenda were to be treated as confidential.