

**MINUTES OF THE OF THE SCHOOLS' FORUM
HELD ON 18 OCTOBER 2018
IN THE CHAPEL, DAGENHAM PARK SCHOOL
(10:00am – 12:00pm)**

Present: School Representatives

Primary School Representatives

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Brian Fox | HT, Roding Primary School |
| Scott Halliwell (Joint Chair) | HT, Southwood Primary School |
| Jayne Meech | HT, Village Infants School |
| Martin Nicholson | HT, Grafton Primary School |
| Richard November | HT, Valence Primary School |
| Julie Philips | HT, Godwin Primary School |
| Jo Preston | HT, Gascoigne Primary School |
| Paramjit Roopra | HT, Northbury Primary School |

Secondary School Representative

| | |
|-----------|------------------------------------|
| Ges Smith | HT, Jo Richardson Community School |
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Governor Representatives

| | |
|---------------|-------------------------------|
| David Dickson | HT, Eastbury Community School |
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Academy / Free Schools

Academy Special School Representative

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Roger Leighton (Joint Chair) | Chief Executive, Partnership Learning |
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Special Needs Representative

Non-School Representatives

| | |
|-----------------|----------------------------|
| John Trow Smith | Early Years Representative |
|-----------------|----------------------------|

Head of Specialist Alternative Provision

| | |
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| Annie Blackmore | HT, Mayesbrook Park School |
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Trade Union Representative

| | |
|---------------|--------|
| Dominic Byrne | NUT |
| John McGill | NASUWT |

Also present: Jane Hargreaves, Commissioning Director – Education
Councillor Evelyn Carpenter – Cabinet Member for Education and Schools
Patricia Harvey – Senior Professional, High Needs Block
Katherine Heffernan – Group Manager – Local Authority Finance and Investment
Shaj Sivadasan – Principal Accountant, Schools - Local Authority Finance
Feroza Begum – Interim Group Accountant – Local Authority Finance
Ronan Fox – Joint Children’s Commissioner for Barking and Dagenham
Nichola Young – Local Authority Minute Clerk
Natasha Cock – Policy and Projects Manager

MINUTES

Mr Scott Halliwell (SH) chaired the meeting and expressed his thanks to Dagenham Park for hosting the meeting. Mr Roger Leighton (RL) to chair the January meeting

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Andrew Roberts – HT, Riverside School
Janis Davies – HT, Sydney Russell School
Yvonne Kelly – 14-19 Representative
Sue Ball – HT, Trinity School

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None

3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2018 were confirmed as an accurate record

3.2 Actions from 20 March 2018

2.2 DC to review the constitution. Annual elections of chair and co-chairs, works well so will be included in constitution; DC will prepare a draft for distribution – this is deferred to the June meeting – **to be deferred to the January meeting until after the census data has been received.**

Action KH

3.8 End of Year balances – Pat Harvey (PH) stated that it may be useful to provide SF with an update on schools’ spending plans, what they have committed and what the final balances are. Schedule to include committed and uncommitted spend of balances. This will be taken forward as part of 2017/18 closure reporting – **complete**

4.4 John Trow Smith enquired about details of the campaign relating to 30 hours. JTS to contact Rikki Damsgaard – Rikke provided JTS with the following information – banner advertising across the borough, banner advertising outside of participating settings, regular social media, a video for the Vicarage Fields roadshow at the end of January and continuing distribution

of leaflets and posters. SF requested an update on numbers for the take up of 30 hours – **complete**

4.8.1 Noted, DC recommended that the Falling Rolls subgroup look at the criteria that should be applied during the next meeting in May. DC informed SF that she had listed some of the DfE criteria that can be used for Falling Rolls. SF responded saying that the upcoming meeting in May will be looking at demand and that it is best to discuss the criteria with DC and report back to SF – **complete**

5.6 The unintended consequences of the decision need to be investigated, models, forecast and options need to be brought to the June SF meeting – **This action is no longer applicable**

5.10 SH asked that the impact be mapped out and reported back to June on what the payment to schools will be and the impact the 2% will have – **This action is no longer applicable**

3.3 The minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2018 were confirmed as an accurate record

3.4 Actions from 20 March 2018

2.6 Mr John Trow-Smith (JTS) commented that the early years clawback of 500k is a relatively low estimate due to the reduced census and might impact upon settings. KH replied that rates will be reviewed next year and possibility of new rates dependent upon census and providers will be notified mid-February as part of setting Early Years formula at January Forum – **deferred to the January SF meeting**

Action KH

3.6 DD commented for schools involved in building projects to take the monies out of school balances and report directly to make governors understand. KH replied that finance will endeavour to take money and liaise with capital team - **complete**

7.2 Noted Childcare Choice website is a difficult website for parents to use and support is required. It was suggested JB's service to support – **Deferred to the January SF meeting. NY to contact JB**

Action JB/RD

7.4 JTS requested a list of schools taking up the offer of offering 30 hours from September – **NY to contact JB concerning this action**

Action NY/JB

8.2 Schools' Forum composition review to be presented at the next meeting with further elections. DD suggested 3-19 representative – **deferred to January SF meeting after the census**

Action KH

8.4 Noted to review constitution and report back to Forum in autumn meeting – **deferred to January SF meeting after the census**

Action KH

- 3.5 Noted, Brian Fox (BF) informed SF that Coventry university does have QTS appointing status

REPORT FROM THE GROUP ACCOUNTANT - FINANCE

4.

2. Dedicated Schools Grant 2018/19 budget allocation update

- 2.1 Noted, the 3 and 4 year-old numbers are lower than allocated which is causing difficulties for primary Schools.

| Funding Block | Base £'000 | Adjust. £'000 | Net base £'000 | July adjust. £'000 | 2018/19 Revised budget £'000 |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Schools | 212,261 | (44,385) | 167,876 | 48 | 167,924 |
| Early years | 22,223 | - | 22,223 | (904) | 21,319 |
| High needs | 28,097 | (2,230) | 25,867 | - | 25,867 |
| Central | 2,559 | - | 2,559 | - | 2,559 |
| Total | 265,140 | (46,615) | 218,525 | (856) | 217,669 |

- 2.2 Noted, the 2018/19 revised budget allocation for the Schools Block is £167,924.
- 2.3 Noted, the 2018/19 revised budget allocation for Early Years is £21,319
- 2.4 Noted, the 2018/19 revised budget allocation for the High Needs Block is £25,867
- 2.5 Noted, the 2018/19 revised budget allocation for the Central Services Block is £2,559. This has not changed.
- 2.6 Noted, the total revised budget for 2018/19 is £217,669. This is a reduction of £865K.
- 2.7 **Recommendation (i):** Schools' Forum are requested to note DSG budget update

Noted

3. Projected outturn for 2018/19

- 3.1 Noted, there a forecasted underspend of £300K relating to the Growth Fund in the Schools Block for 2018/19 due to a reduced requirement for secondary place growth.
- 3.2 Noted, there is a forecasted pressure of £2.214m in the High Needs Block. If the borough received the correct funding, there would be no pressure.
- 3.3 Noted, the brought forward DSG balance excluding growth fund is £3,048m.

3.4. Noted, the DSG balance forecast for 31 March 2019 is £1,642m.

3.5 **Recommendation (ii):** Schools' Forum are requested to note DSG 2018/19 forecast outturn position.

Noted

4. **Growth Fund and Falling Rolls**

4.1 Noted, Martin Nicholson (MN) volunteered to chair the HNB working subgroup. It was agreed that a meeting needed to take place within the next half term.

Action NY

4.2 Noted, the underspend on the growth fund will be used for falling rolls as agreed in the summer SF.

4.3 Noted, schools that potentially qualify for the falling rolls fund under the criteria set out, (4.5 in the Schools' Forum report) will be invited to apply. The timescale for this process will start with the issuing of formal letters for application to schools by the 19th October. Applications will be considered by the financial monitoring group on 14th November 2018.

4.3 **Recommendation (iii)** – Noted, SF are requested to note the update on falling rolls fund and approve the request to invite applications from schools that may qualify for falling rolls fund.

Agreed

5. **Dedicated Schools Grant 2019/20**

5.1 Noted, the DfE have extended the soft formula transition phase by a further year into 2020/21.

5.2 Noted, the DfE have introduced a funding formula which is a method to allocate growth funding. This will be lagged funding and may be subject to year on year fluctuations, transitional protection arrangements have been out in place to protect LAs. As a result, growth funding will reduce significantly for LBBD, to £2.983m. Point to note, if it was not for the protection arrangements, the funding would be £1.938m. We are looking at a period of constrained growth funding.

5.3 Noted, an informal working party was set up last academic year where a small number of primary HTs along with Lisa O'Dwyer and Andy Carr, looked at place planning for September 2018. SH suggests that this group continues. Jane Hargreaves (JH) agrees that it would be good for this to continue as a formal Schools' Forum sub group with a chair and a minute taker. SH asked for volunteers to chair this meeting. **Action: Headteacher chair is required**

Headteacher member s

5.4 Noted, the HNB is increasing. The DfE have slightly changed the transition formula so that the cap has risen. We will now be receiving £29.6m, before academy recoupment.

5.5 **Recommendation (iv)** – Schools’ Forum are asked to note the DSG 2019/20 update and are recommended to approve the transfer of 0.5% (£1.073m) of the Schools Block to the High Needs Block to manage the funding pressures

Agreed

5.6 Noted, the number of SEND children coming in is only going to increase, SF agree that the transfer from Schools Block to HNB is sensible.

5.7 Noted, in addition to the HNB transfer, it is proposed to make the following changes to the DSG funding

| | £ |
|--|--------------------|
| DSG cash envelope (based on Oct 17 census) | 214,675,353 |
| Less: | |
| PFI funding requirement | (188,872) |
| Rates increase (to be funded from growth fund allocation) | (525,446) |
| Growth fund (requirement is £2,473k incl. £171k contingency) | (2,457,282) |
| HN transfer | (1,073,377) |
| Total available for formula | 210,430,376 |

5.8 Noted, the rates increase, growth and PFI requirement are shown in the table above. There is £210,430,376 remaining for distribution to schools and academies after the allocations have been taken from the Schools Block funding.

5.9 Noted, Growth will have to be funded at AWPU in 2019/20 rather than AWPU plus 20% as it was in 2018/19; this is due to the gap in growth funding.

5.10 **Recommendation (v) and (vi)** – Schools’ Forum are requested to (a) approve the allocations for growth, rates and PFI as set out above and (b) agree to fund growth at AWPU (if necessary).

Agreed

5.11 Noted, it has been acknowledged that there is still work to be done on rates. Issues and revaluations in schools passed back to schools for individual reviews and revaluations.

6. Local and national funding formula

6.1 As the DfE have extended the transition period by one year and primary schools are facing circumstances where there are constraints on their funding, it has been proposed to not move towards the previously agreed rate of 1:1.38. Instead, two more options have been presented to SF:

| | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 |
|----------|---------|---------|---------|
| Option 1 | 1:1.34 | 1:1.38 | 1:1.43 |
| Option 2 | 1:1.36 | 1:1.39 | 1:1.43 |

- 6.2 Noted, The first option is to remain at 1:1.34 with funding floor protection, in accordance with formula applied by the DfE to calculate the national schools block DSG. This allows for an increase of 1% per pupil against 2017/18 baseline. The second option is to move towards 1:1.36, also with funding floor protection. In addition to the funding floor, 0% minimum funding guarantee (MFG) has been applied to both models so that no school will see a cash reduction on a per pupil basis. The application of MFG is consistent with the 2018/19 funding model.
- 6.3 Noted, Appendix A shows the manipulation of the formula to offer the protections and made it affordable.
- 6.4 Noted, Appendix B shows for all schools in the borough, the implications of adopting option 1 and option 2. No school is losing any funding at all with either option. There are marginal differences for a minority of schools under the two options. There will therefore be a minimal difference to most schools.
- 6.5 Noted, the LA do not have a strong view on which option to recommend, but favour option1.
- 6.6 **Recommendation (vii)** – Schools’ Forum are requested to agree option 1 with funding floor protection as the basis of consultation with schools.
- Agreed**
- 6.7 Noted, out of 57 schools in total, 44 see no difference. There a 6 ‘losers’ – all secondary, who will gain slightly less.
- 6.8 Noted, SF were asked to note there is a need to review the split site funding for schools going forward as the amount is relatively high compared to lump sum rate and its likely to change going forward.

7. Teachers pay award grant

- 7.1 Noted, for information only, the DfE announced at the end of the summer term that they would be making £187m available nationally to pay the additional cost of the teacher’s pay awards. Some headline data has been published but more detail is awaited.
- 7.2 Noted, LBBB are expecting Inner London rates.
- 7.3 Noted, the DfE have not fully funded this pay award, they have only funded the additional impact above the 1% pay increase.

7.4 Noted, primary does include nursery. KH will investigate as to whether secondary includes sixth form.

Action KH

7.5 Noted, Annie Blackmore (AB) informed SF that Mayesbrook Park school is a site which operates within the high need block as a secondary school and employs teachers with teachers pay and conditions asked whether formula allocations will represent the pay rise that will need to be implemented? KH responded saying that they should do.

7.6 Noted, SF members have noted the information the information on the teachers' pay award grant and welcome further clarification for 2019/20.

7.7 **Recommendation (viii):** Schools' Forum are requested to note update on teachers' pay award

Noted

8. Schools facing financial difficulties

8.1 Noted, the schools financial monitoring group met on the 9th July and held confidential discussions with schools that were assessed at high level risk of financial difficulties. At that stage, no applications for assistance had been received for.

8.2 Noted, there will be another meeting on the 14th November, invitations will be issued to schools assessed as high risk, based on the first two quarters monitoring. Letters will be sent by the 19th October. Schools who attended the July meeting will also be invited back.

8.3 **Recommendation (ix):** Schools' Forum are requested to note update on schools facing financial difficulties.

Noted

9. Scheme for financing schools

9.1 This was last revised in 2013, needs to be revised regularly. Finance are working on this, it will be circulated either just before or just after half term for schools to comment. KH to report back to January Schools' Forum.

Action KH

9.2 **Recommendation (xi):** Schools' Forum are requested to agree that the revised scheme of financing be distributed for consultation.

Agreed

5. FREE SCHOOL MEALS

Natasha Cock (NC) made a presentation to Schools' Forum on Free School Meals (FSM) and what we together can do to try and improve take up. Please see PowerPoint presentation

- Take up has dropped since 2012 both nationally and within the borough.
- A cross-party working group has met regularly since June including external agencies and input from some schools. The priority of the working group is to reach out to families that are eligible but not yet claiming FSM
- There is no 'true' picture, based on available data, of families that live in LBBB that may be eligible but do not claim
- NC would like to work with schools further. To date, work has been undertaken with the Council's Comms Team to produce a FSM leaflet which schools and agencies can use. Proposals are being taken forward in partnership with Community Solutions, Job Centre Plus and the East London Housing Partnership.
- The working group have produced a prototype Excel tool which makes it easier for individual schools to filter down the families of children that may be eligible but are not claiming FSMs. The Working Group are looking for schools that wish to pilot this tool. .
- The Council will work with schools, train school staff (e.g. Business Managers) and provide follow-up support on using the tool. There will be periodic follow up with schools around monitoring and evaluation of data to measure impact.
- The FSM working group is currently working with two schools to pilot the tool. One of the schools has already identified eleven children that may be eligible for FSM and is following up about FSMs with parents through parent's evenings.
- A sheet was left for schools to leave contact details should they wish to work with the FSM working group to boost their school's FSM take up. Please contact natasha.cock@lbbd.gov.uk if you are interested. Views from schools around further ideas to support FSM take up are welcomed.

Schools' Forum thanked Natasha and the Working Group for their hard work.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Schools' Forum meeting will take place on Tuesday 15 January 2019 in the Chamber, Town Hall, 1 Town Square, Barking, IG11 7LU from 10:00am to 12:00pm.

Head teachers' pre-meeting will commence at 9.30am.