

**MINUTES OF THE OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM  
HELD ON 20 JUNE 2017  
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, BARKING  
(9:00am – 12:00pm)**

**Present: School Representatives**

**Primary School Representatives**

Scott Halliwell (Joint Chair)  
Richard November  
Julie Philips

HT, Southwood Primary School  
HT, Northbury Primary School  
HT, Godwin Primary School

**Secondary School Representative**

Ges Smith  
Jo Tupman

HT, Jo Richardson Community School  
HT, Barking Abbey School

**Governor Representatives**

David Dickson

HT, Eastbury Community School

**Academy / Free Schools**

Janis Davies

HT, Sydney Russell School

**Academy Special School  
Representative**

Roger Leighton (Joint Chair)

Chief Executive, Partnership Learning

**Special Needs Representative**

Peter McPartland

HT, Trinity School

**Non-School Representatives**

**Head of Specialist Alternative Provision**

Annie Blackmore

Tuition Centre (PRU)

**Trade Union Representative**

Dominic Byrne  
John McGill

NUT  
NASUWT

**Also present:** Jane Hargreaves, Commissioning Director – Education  
Patricia Harvey – Senior Professional, High Needs Block and Minute Clerk  
Daksha Chauhan – Group Accountant – Local Authority Finance  
Katherine Heffernan – Group Manager – Local Authority Finance and Investment  
Shaj Sivadasan – Principal Accountant, Schools - Local Authority Finance  
Councillor Evelyn Carpenter – Cabinet Member Education and Schools  
Nichola Young – Local Authority Minute Clerk

## **MINUTES**

Mr Roger Leighton (RL) chaired the meeting.

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Mr Brian Fox, HT Roding Primary School, Mr Andy Roberts, HT, Riverside School, Mr Martin Nicholson, HT, Grafton Primary School, Ms Ruth Ejvet, HT, St Margaret's C of E Primary School, Ms Paramjit Roopra, HT, Henry Green Primary School, Mr John Trow Smith, Early Years Representative, Ms Glenda Spencer, Roman Catholic Representative, Ms Anita Fenn, Church of England Representative and Ms Yvonne Kelly, 14-19 Representative.

### **2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

- 2.1 It was agreed that Jo Tupman (JT) would leave the room when the report focusing on Schools Facing Financial Difficulty (SFFD) was discussed as Barking Abbey would form a part of the report.

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

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2017 were confirmed as an accurate record.

- 3.2 Actions from 17 January 2017

- 8.2 Jane Hargreaves (JH) stated that Rikke Damsgaard (RD) and Joy Barter will set this out in a separate sufficiency statement and report to Schools' Forum, a meeting the duty to provide 30 hour options from September 2017 will be challenging for all providers in the borough. RD is present at SF and will make a presentation as a part of the agenda.

**Complete**

- 4.6 The fall in the Early Year's Pupil Premium is to be explored at the next High Needs Working Group. There has been no HNB working group meeting, Roger Leighton (RL) suggested that the date for the next meeting be arranged at the end of the SF meeting.

**Deferred**

- 4.3.1 Scott Halliwell (SH) made a request that more information be provided on the impact that cutting the ESG fund will have on schools, and information on previous years expenditure. Daksha Chauhan (DC) reported that ESG has been managed as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Jane

Hargreaves (JH) reported that this is difficult to determine as the ESG supports a number of areas within Education. Plans such as the School Improvement Company is helping to manage some of the pressures. Any impacts will be reported to Schools Forum.

- 6.5 SH requested a breakdown and detailed explanation about centrally retained budgets including 30 hours in March Schools' Forum meeting. This was included in the SF report in January 2017. Daksha Chauhan provided SF members with another copy of the table. No additional information is required.

**Complete**

#### **4. REPORT FROM THE GROUP ACCOUNTANT - FINANCE**

##### **2. Dedicated Schools Grant 2016-17 Outturn Position**

- 2.1 Noted, Early Years were initially allocated £18,166m which included reserve drawdown of £1.3m which was not required, this has resulted in an underspend of £1,640m
- 2.2 Noted, High Needs Block were allocated £29,501m which included £3.2m SEN strategy, the outturn was £30,472 which resulted in an overspend of £970k.
- 2.3 Noted, Schools Block 2016-17 allocation was £167,232m, the outturn is £167,278m, therefore an overspend of £46k.
- 2.4 Noted, DSG reserve position will mean a net increase in reserve of £624k, the final 2016-17 DSG carry forward balance is £2,821m.
- 2.5 Noted, appendix B shows the movement on school balances for 2016-17. The outturn position for non-oracle schools has been based on Quarter 3 returns submitted by the schools and is based on estimates to meet the early close-down timetable. The Schools in-year revenue movement for 2016 – 17 is £6m. The final position will be reported once all schools have undertaken their adjustments and have updated their consistent financial reporting on to the DfE website. The final position will then be reflected on to the council systems.
- 2.5.1 David Dickson (DD) asked whether it would be possible to have a paper for the chairs of governors so that they are aware of the borough wide and national issues. This will enable schools to be more proactive. It was agreed to start in the autumn term.
- 2.5.2 Noted, Annie Blackmore made SF aware that the balances reported for the Tuition Centre are incorrect.
- 2.5.3 Noted, SH has requested that level prudent of carry forwards be provided to schools. He also suggested that schools financial support may need to be revamped. DC responded saying that this had been discussed in the pre-

**Action DC/KH**

meeting and the School's Financial Management meeting about providing additional support for schools if needed. Pat Harvey (PH) has visited five schools in a significant deficit position to provide additional support.

- 2.5.4 Noted, Northbury deficit position is £37k due to an overspend on salaries. Northbury have reported that they will be in a recovery position by the end of 2017-18.
- 2.5.5 Noted, Ripple final deficit position is £226k which does not take the loan repayment into consideration.
- 2.5.6 Noted, Monteagle has a deficit position of £252k which should be recovered by 2021.
- 2.5.7 Noted, Gascoigne deficit position is £912k and the school is working on a recovery plan.
- 2.5.8 Noted, Jo Richardson's will have a breakeven position by the end of 2017-18.
- 2.5.9 Roger Leighton (RL) asked whether there are any lessons to be learnt from these schools. PH responded that growth and high agency costs have contributed to these financial difficulties.
- 2.5.10 SH asked whether recovery plans and any additional cost for support provided by PH need to be formalised. Also, clarification sought on reporting for schools with deficits.
- 2.5.11 Katherine Heffernan (KH) responded saying that if a school cannot recover by the end of a year they will be in deficit position and the authority will look to setting up a formal licensed deficit. The Council will need to approve this. There will also be enhanced monitoring of schools who are in difficulty. KH also emphasised that the role of governors is vital in signing off budgets. Schools should communicate to governors as early on as possible that they are in difficulty.

### **3. Dedicated Schools Grant 2017-18 Budget allocation update**

- 3.1 Noted, as shown in table 3 the base allocation for 2017-18 before any academy recoupment is £254,448m.
- 3.2 Noted, academy recoupment is £35,318m.
- 3.3 Noted, High Needs deductions of £2,579m.
- 3.4 Noted, Base allocation after recoupment is £216,551m.
- 3.5 Noted, budget for HNB has been set at £26,300m, the allocation is £25,544. This will require a DSG reserve drawdown of £756k.
- 3.6.1 Noted, Schools Block has growth fund of £2.5m. In 2016-17 the growth fund overspent therefore a request was made to add £500k to Schools Block to

manage the growth in classes in 2017-18. This would require a total reserve drawdown of £1.256m.

3.6.2 SH noted that £500k is being requested for the growth fund and asked whether the growth is in the Secondary phase, as the Primary Schools have unfilled places.

3.6.3 DC replied that the growth fund is for classes opening in September who were not captured in the previous October census. DC will look at the forecast for places which will inform where there have been growth classes and future planned growth classes. This will be fed back to SF.

**Action DC**

3.6.4 JH recommended that DC check the admissions forum report.

**Action DC**

3.7 SH requested that a detailed report be provided at the next SF on the amended budget for HNB as £750k has already been taken from reserves due to pressures.

**Action PH**

#### **4. DSG Reserve Balances**

4.1 A decision is required by SF members to agree the allocation of DSG reserves for 2017-18 as per table 3.

**Agreed**

#### **5. Schools Facing Financial Difficulty Contingency (SFFD)**

JT left the room due to a declaration of interest.

5.1 Noted – Appendix A show the closing balance for 2016-17 as £183,571 which will be carried forward in to 2017-18. Assuming that all loan repayments are made in 2017-18 and no further advances are made, the SFFD contingency will have a balance at year end of £626,571. No deferral requests for repayments have been requested.

5.2 Noted, discussions are taking place with Barking Abbey over repayment schedules.

5.3 Noted, KH stated that it is easier for schools to deal with harder decisions when they come up rather than defer them as things are only going to become more difficult.

5.4 Noted, RL suggested that the carried forward balance should be retained as it will not be possible to re-create this at a later date.

5.5 A decision is required for SF members to approve the surplus of the de-delegated Schools Facing Financial Difficulty contingency of £183,571 in 2016-17 and to carry forward and retain the £626,571 from 2017-18 assuming all payments have been made.

**Approved**

## **6. Early Years - 30 Hours free childcare for 3 and 4 year olds update**

RD provided SF with an update on the 30 hours free childcare for 3 and 4 year olds.

- 6.1 Noted - Scott Halliwell (SH) asked whether schools will be notified on claw-backs for 2017-18, DC replied that they will. RD stated that the 30 hours will be paid on actuals so there will be no future claw backs.

## **7. School Improvement Company Update**

- 7.1 Noted – Appendix C provides a copy of the report to be presented at the Cabinet meeting on 20 June 2017. A presentation will be made to the headteachers’ group on Monday 26 June 2017 and at the headteachers’ conference to provide an update on the School Improvement Company.

## **8. National Funding Formula**

- 8.1 The Secretary of State for Education has confirmed that the ‘hard’ National Funding Formula (NFF) will be introduced from 2019-20. A soft formula will be introduced from 2018-19 which means that allocation will be a per the funding formula but SF will have the discretion to allocate using local factors.
- 8.2 When the funding allocation is received SF will be asked whether to use local formula factors or whether to use the DfE national funding rates.
- 8.3 Noted, DD stated that funding needs to put back into education and that pressure needs to be put on government.
- 8.4 Noted, Cllr Carpenter stated that both her and the Leader are writing to the Secretary of State concerning cuts to Education, and a motion is going to assembly in July about this issue.

## **9. Proposed Meeting Dates for 2018-18**

- 9.1 Proposed dates of next year’s meetings:
- 17 October 2017
  - 16 January 2018
  - 20 March 2018
  - 19 June 2017

**Approved**

## **5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

## **6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next Schools’ Forum meeting will take place on Tuesday 17 October 2017 in Council Chamber, Town Hall, Barking from 10:00am to 12:00pm.

Head teachers’ pre-meeting will commence at 9.00am.