

**MINUTES OF THE SUMMER TERM MEETING OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM
HELD ON 21 JUNE 2016
AT COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, BARKING
(9.00 am – 11.30)**

Present: School members

Primary School Representatives

Elizabeth Chaplin (Joint Chair)	HT, Valence Primary School
Scott Halliwell	HT, Southwood Primary School
Richard November	HT, Northbury Primary School
Caro Drumm	HT, Manor Junior School
Julie Philips	HT, Godwin Primary School

Secondary School Representative

Ges Smith	HT, Jo Richardson Community School
Mark Lloyd	HT, Barking Abbey School
Simon Weaver	HT, Dagenham Park C of E School

Special Needs Representative

Peter McPartland	HT, Trinity School
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Governor Representative

David Dickson	HT, Eastbury Community School
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Academy Representative

Roger Leighton (Joint Chair)	HT, The Sydney Russell School
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Non-School Members

Head of Specialist Alternative Provision

Annie Blackmore	Tuition Centre (PRU)
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Trade Union Representative

Dominique Byrne	NUT
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Also present: Jane Hargreaves, Divisional Director – Education, Youth and Childcare
Daksha Chauhan – Group Accountant - Local Authority Finance
Patricia Harvey, Senior Professional, High Needs Block and Minute Clerk
Councillor Evelyn Carpenter – Cabinet Member Education and Schools
Lee Medlock – Principal Accountant, Schools – Local Authority Finance
Caroline Kenny – Alternative Provision – Local Authority

MINUTES

Mr Roger Leighton (RL) Chaired the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Ms Helen Jenner, Corporate Director, Mr Richard Micek, HT The Warren School, Ms Glenda Spencer, Roman Catholic Representative, Ms Yvonne Kelly, 14-19 Representative, Ms Ruth Ejet HT, St Margaret's C of E Primary School, Mr Brian Fox, HT, Roding Primary School, Mr Martin Nicholson, HT, Grafton Primary School, Ms Anita Fenn, Church of England Representative, and Mr John Trow-Smith, Early Years Representative.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

2.1 Ms Patricia Harvey (PH) wished to declare an interest in agenda item 4, and Mr Mark Lloyd (ML) wished to declare an interest in agenda item 5, and it was decided that both would leave the meeting whilst this item was being discussed.

MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

3.

3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2016 were confirmed and Mr Simon Weaver, HT Dagenham Park C of E school attended the meeting but was omitted from the list of attendees in the minutes.

Noted Mr Simon Weaver's attendance

3.2 Actions from 15th March 2016

3.2.2 Ms Daksha Chauhan (DC) commented that Mr Robert Nellist from Revenue and Benefits section was scheduled to present to Schools Forum a presentation of Free School Meals (FSM), but cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances. JH suggested that this should be picked up as part of a High Needs Sub Group

Action PH

5.2 DC commented that the Early Years reported pressure of £900k at the last meeting is updated as per main report.

- 8.4 PH confirmed PRU numbers/census was included with the pupil count with regards to the SEND funding to schools, and all schools who had submitted a SEND bid should now have received the support funding.
- 9.3 DC updated that the Schools' Forum working sub group for the National Funding meeting was held. A response to the consultation was submitted.

Mr David Dickson (DD) replied that the sub group would have to meet again in the Autumn, once the response to the consultation was released and further details on the funding reform is announced.

DC to arrange meeting once announcement is made.

Action DC

The minutes were signed as a true account

4. REPORT FROM THE GROUP ACCOUNTANT – FINANCE

DC introduced the Schools Forum Report outlining the items of business for the Forum to address and decisions to be made and approved.

2. Dedicated Schools Grant Outturn Position 2015-16

2.1 Mr Roger Leighton(Chair) sought clarification on the Budgeted drawdown figure of £3.467m in Table 2 of the report.
It was clarified that this was the funding for schools approved by School Forum for the SEND strategy from the DSG reserve.

2.2 A decision was required to agree the allocation of DSG reserves for 2015-16 £1.322m as detailed in table 1 of the report

Agreed

2.3 A decision was required to agree that the post 16 underspend was not carried forward as an earmarked reserve.

Agreed

2.4 A decision was required to agree the drawdown of £40k to fund the Admissions software from the underspend on the centrally retained budgets (£172k)

Agreed

2.6 Noted Trade Union de-delegated budgets and proposed model with savings 2017-18 was outstanding.

Action PH

3. Dedicated Schools Grant 2016-17 Budget allocation update

3.1 It was noted that the reported DSG projected carry forward at the end of 2016/17 was forecasting £2.350m.

Noted

3.2 Noted 2 year old funding £4.597m budget including £191k growth

Noted

3.3 Noted Early Years budget £13.589m budget including £807k growth

Noted

3.4 Noted High Needs block budget £25.910m includes a deduction for the Post 16 places £523k. This funding will now be paid directly to the institutes and the LA will only pay top up payments or element 3 from the high needs budget.

Noted

3.5 Ms Elizabeth Chaplin (Joint Chair) (LC) queried the number of places this funding equated to? DC updated that it was an additional 125 places.

3.6 LC enquired on the number of places that is reported in the high needs budget for post 16. DC confirmed 273 places.
Mr Peter McPartland (PMc) updated the meeting that some of those were attributable to Trinity Special School.
LC questioned if this would result in a pressure on the high needs.
DC updated the meeting that an underspend had been reported.

Noted

3.7 LC questioned the underspend on the out of borough placements and how long other establishments had to reclaim the funding. PH confirmed the guidance stated 'a reasonable amount of time'.

Noted

3.8 RC questioned the SEND Strategy funding £3.2m reported in table 2. DC confirmed this was the funding to schools for the SEND Strategy and already approved by Schools' Forum.

3.9 DD requested thanks to be noted to PH for the hard work that had been undertaken on the review of the high needs block and reported savings to School Forum.

Noted

3.10 A decision was required to agree the allocation of DSG reserves for 2016/17 as reported in table 2 in the main report.

Agreed

4. School Improvement – White Paper – Educational Excellence Everywhere

4.1 Noted the proposals of schools through their meetings with the DCS support to explore with other local authority models which help maintain the strong school partnerships, the ability of schools to support each other and oversee a collective responsibility for all the children and young people of the borough.

Noted

- 4.2 A decision was required to endorse the approach and the gathering of evidence and views from local heads, professional associations and other boroughs with a similar approach to partnership working.

Approved

PH left the meeting due to a declaration of interest.

- 4.3 A decision was required for the school forum consultant to support the evidence gathering and visits to other authorities and to report back to Schools Forum.

Approved subject to no additional resources and to report to all schools and governing bodies

PH

PH rejoined the meeting.

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

ML left the meeting due to a declaration of interest.

- 5.1 Noted deficit totalled £358k as reported in Appendix A

Noted

- 5.2 Noted proposal that no further funding to support the SFFD.

Noted

- 5.3 Request for Appendix A to be updated to remove de-delegated support in financial years 2020/21.

Action

DC

- 5.4 A decision was required to approve the deficit of the SFFD contingency £358,031 in 2015/16 and carry forward to 2016/17.

Approved

- 5.5 A decision was required to approve that no further allocations are to be made from de-delegated funds to the SFFD contingency from 2017/18.

Approved

- 5.6 DD commented that full transparency should be made on schools and loan agreements and meetings should be held with chairs too.

- 5.7 It was noted the phased deficit balance and repayments from schools of the loan agreements would recover in 2016-17.

Noted

- 5.8 LC requested that any further loans to schools should include quarterly repayment schedules, rather than yearly.

Action

DC

- 5.9 Mr Scott Halliwell (SH) commented that by 2019-20, approximately

£1.5m was due to be repaid from schools in loan repayments, therefore the reserve should be smaller and funding redistributed to all schools.

- 5.10 SH requested details of the attendees on the SFFD meetings?
DC updated the meeting of current attendees :-

Mr Roger Leighton (Joint Chair SF)
Ms Elizabeth Chaplin (Joint Chair SF)
Ms Daksha Chauhan, Group Accountant, LA Finance
Mr Lee Medlock, Principal Accountant, LA Finance
Ms Jane Hargreaves, Divisional Director, Education
Mr Dominique Burns, Trade Union

- 5.11 Ms Caro Drumm (CD) enquired if any of the money would be coming back to schools?

- 5.12 LC requested that checks and balances on all schools should be conducted by the local authority and reported to the SFFD meetings in future. Quarterly returns should be reviewed, careful monitoring of the balances and reported back to School Forum.

Action DC

- 5.13 Ms Jane Hargreaves (JH) confirmed that the SFFD was a working sub group of Schools Forum and reported to School Forum with recommendations for Schools Forum's decision, including issuing of revenue loan agreements.

Action DC

ML rejoined the meeting

6. **De-delegated Services**

- 6.1 Noted explanation of the schools specific contingency budget £51k and support to two school site expansions.

Noted

7. **Review of School Balances**

- 7.1 Noted the reporting of school balances £16.427m and reporting within the Scheme of Financing 5% and 8% totalled £8.962m.

- 7.2 LC commented on the school balances and the SFFD group to review and report to School Forum on any unplanned surplus/balances regularly.

Action DC

- 7.3 DD agreed that schools should be held to account, but consideration for earmarked funding for specific projects needs to be taken into account.

- 7.4 Ms Annie Blackmore (AB) commented that she agreed with DD and any specific income generation by the school/establishment should not be subject to claw back or penalised for the initiative.

7.5 PMc agreed on the accountability of schools, but questioned on the reporting of balances at year end due to planned expenditure approved at the Governing body meetings afterwards.

7.6 LC requested that the SFFD sub group should be renamed and the constitution of this group reviewed, and budget monitoring quarterly and half yearly should be reviewed.

Action DC

7.7 JH confirmed that any work undertaken and proposals made at the SFFD sub group would be reported directly to School Forum and decisions would be made by School Forum.

Noted

7.8 RC commented that the SFFD sub group should still be available for schools who potentially are asking for financial assistance.

7.9 A decision was required for School Forum to agree that the SFFD sub group review schools that hold balances over the threshold limits.

Agreed - but to include schools who balances are diminishing and potentially facing financial difficulty DC

7.10 A decision was required for School Forum to provide a view on whether claw-back is appropriate.

Not Approved DC

8. National Funding Formula

8.1 Noted comments on the national funding formula and waiting for feedback from consultation and the next steps.

9. Future Work Plan

9.1 Proposed dates and work plan was noted and it was proposed another sub group meeting should be scheduled for November 2016. RC suggested to wait until the next stages of funding reform was published and DD agreed to host the working sub group meeting.

9.2 Noted that reporting to Cabinet on the proposed formula for 2017-18 may have to be delayed due to school funding reform publication.

9.3 LC commented on the previous request for capital reporting and all allocations to schools to be reported and included on the work plan. DC updated that capital reporting will be reported to Schools Forum including allocations from Schools modernisation fund, Basic need grant, Modernisation grant and Devolved Formula capital grant in October. LC requested clarity from the capital allocations provided by School Estates to schools for the last financial year. Schools Forum requested a report from the Group Manager School Estates on the Capital allocations to schools, including the bidding process.

Action MF

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 PH reported to School Forum on the current Alternative Resource Provision (ARP) places and sought approval for Monteagle Primary School to expand its existing ARP places from 12 to 24 (expansion of 12) with effect from September 2016 due to all primary ARPS reporting no spare places from September. A meeting had been held at the school and a review of accommodation to support the expansion and the governing body had approved the expansion

10.2 LC enquired where the resources would be supported from. PH updated with resources £155k being supported from the high needs block budget under spend and from the 'out of borough' placements.

Approved PH

10.3 The next High Needs working sub group meeting was confirmed as Thursday 14th July 2016 12:30 – 2:30pm at Sydney Russell School. This meeting was postponed and is to be rescheduled.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

6.1 The next Schools' Forum will take place on Tuesday 4th October 2016 10am –

- 12:00 Room 115, Barking Learning Centre

Headteachers pre-meeting will commence at 9.00am.