

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM
HELD ON 22 NOVEMBER 2016
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, BARKING
(9:00am – 12:00pm)**

Present: School Representatives

Primary School Representatives

Daniel Craft	HT, St Peter's Catholic Primary School
Brian Fox	HT, Roding Primary School
Scott Halliwell (Joint Chair)	HT, Southwood Primary School
Richard November	HT, Northbury Primary School
Julie Philips	HT, Godwin Primary School
Paramjit Roopra	HT, Henry Green Primary School

Secondary School Representative

Clare Cantle	HT, All Saints Catholic School
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Governor Representatives

Martin Nicholson	HT, Grafton Primary School
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Academy / Free Schools

Janis Davies	HT, Sydney Russell School
Andrew Roberts	HT, Riverside School

Academy Special School Representative

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

Peter McPartland	HT, Trinity School
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Non-School Representatives

Head of Specialist Alternative Provision

Annie Blackmore	Tuition Centre (PRU)
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Trade Union Representative

Dominic Byrne	NUT
John McGill	NASUWT

Church of England Representative

Anita Fenn	
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Early Years Representative

John Trow-Smith	LEYF (PVI)
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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
Rishi Peetamsingh – Principal Accountant, Schools - Local Authority Finance
Councillor Evelyn Carpenter – Cabinet Member Education and Schools
Susan George – Senior Accountant, Finance and Investment
Nichola Young – Local Authority Minute Clerk

MINUTES

Mr Scott Halliwell (SH) Chaired the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Ms R Ejvet, HT, St Margaret's Church of England Primary School, Mr M Lloyd, HT, Barking Abbey School, Mr G Smith, HT, Jo Richardson Community School, David Dickson, HT, Eastbury Community School, Ms Glenda Spencer, Roman Catholic Representative, and Ms Yvonne Kelly, 14-19 Representative.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

2.1 Clare Cattle, HT, All Saints Catholic School is representing Ges Smith.

2.2 Daniel Craft, HT, St Peters Catholic Primary School is representing Ruth Ejvet.

3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

3.1 The minutes and matters arising will be discussed in the January main Schools' Forum (SF) meeting on Tuesday 17th January 2017.

4. REPORT FROM THE GROUP ACCOUNTANT - FINANCE

2. Schools Funding Formula

2.1 Noted – Special Schools Forum meeting after the School Census data was published in October, still draft census data as the final allocations will not be notified until December. This is the initial modelling based on the October Census.

2.2 Noted – The factors in the modelling have been kept the same as 2016/17,

2.3 Noted – Lump sum to remain at £160k per school.

2.4 Noted – Primary schools with split sites will continue to receive £160k and secondary schools with split sites will receive £200k.

- 2.5 Noted – Funding formula gains are capped at 3.11%
- 2.6 Noted – The proposed model maintains the Primary to Secondary ratio 1:1:30 as agreed at the last meeting.
- 2.7 Noted – This is provisional data based on the draft October pupil census data. Final allocations will be notified in December. Refer to appendix A
- 2.8 Noted – Numbers on roll (NOR) have increased by 820.
- 2.9 Noted – The driver for any increases or decreases in funding allocations will be the numbers of pupils.
- 2.10 Noted – Business rates allocation have been excluded from the funding model for year on year comparison purposes, as schools are funded on actuals for NNDR This gives a better idea of the true movement for each school.
- 2.11 A decision is required from Schools' Forum on whether to approve the 2017/18 school formula, subject to the final DSG allocations in December 2016.

Agreed

3. De-delegation

An action from previous meeting 4th October 2016 that Pat Harvey to provide an update on Free School Meals and to present the paper on the Proposed Facility Time Model for 2017/18 allocations (appendix C)

Facility Time

- 3.1 Noted – It was agreed at the last SF meeting that no further contributions Would be made to the Schools Facing Financial Difficulties contingency.
- 3.2 Noted - The decision relating to Free School Meals Eligibility (FSM) was deferred pending the discussion of the options at the High Needs Working Group held on 11th November 2016.
- 3.3 The decision relating to the Trade Union Model and proposed savings was also deferred from the October meeting due to the distribution of the paper the day before the meeting.
- 3.4 Noted – PH stated that when a school transfers to an academy status, Trade Union duties / Facility Time is not de-delegated. Academies do not form a part of the de-delegated budget; this is unless they buy back into Facility Time or support for trade union duties. Therefore, the per pupil amount differs from the report that was received at the last SF in October.
- 3.5 Noted – Anita Fenn (AF) stated that in March the Current Facility Time Model actual figure for 2016/17 was reported at £268k, so in fact the £300k figure reported today is an increase not a saving.

- 3.6 PH stated that the original TU model previously was approximately £300k and set several years ago when the budget was first de-delegated (as part of School Funding Reform). For modelling purposes and to review the model, this figure has been used. There is no increase in TU Facility time de-delegated budgets, and any increases in de-delegation is not permitted.
- 3.7 Noted – RL stated that the Partnership Learning Academies buy back in to Facility Time and asked whether other academies in the borough did so also.
- 3.7.1 Noted – PH stated that all academies within the borough buy back into this service apart from one school.
- 3.8 A decision was for Schools’ Forum to decide on whether to de-delegate the Support for Trade Union Duties and then agree the percentage of the saving that Schools’ Forum to agree on a saving of either 5%, 7% or 12% and this needed to be voted by phase.
- 3.8.1 5 Primary School representatives voted for a 7% saving.
- 3.8.2 Dominic Byrne (DB) commented that he was under the impression that it would be a 5% saving, and this was the recommendation from supported Trade Unions.
- 3.8.3 Noted – SH stated that 5% or 7% savings will not lead to reductions in teaching union contributions and the main cuts would be from the other two unions at either 5 or 7% SF needed to decide.
- 3.8.4 PH recommended a show of hands for 5% and a show of hands for 7%, this would be a fair vote.
- 3.8.5 Noted – DB stated that there would be consequences to a 7% reduction, Facility time would be impacted. A 5% reduction is achievable, a 7% reduction is difficult.
- 3.8.6 AF asked if she would be able to vote. Yes, this was permissible.
- 3.8.7 SH stated that there would be a vote for Primary, Secondary and other.
- 3.8.8 JH asked why the vote had to be per sector
- 3.8.9 PH stated that SF had to vote on whether the saving would be 5% or 7 % and then it would have to be agreed per sector in accordance with School Funding Reform regulations and setting the individual school budgets.
- 3.8.10 7% savings/cut vote received ten votes,
5% received zero votes. Overall decision was 7% saving/reduction.
- 3.8.11 Primary representatives – 7 votes to de-delegate Facility Time
Secondary representatives – 1 vote to de-delegate
Special – 1 vote to de-delegate

Agreed

Free School Meals (FSM)

- 3.9 Noted – PH stated that Revenues and Benefits send out a list of children who are eligible for FSM to schools every few weeks. Part of the decision for SF was to decide whether these lists are useful and whether it is manageable without them.
- 3.10 Noted – PH stated that as a part of de-delegation regulations it states that once you agree not to de-delegate, you cannot reverse the decision.
- 3.11 Noted – PH stated that we need to identify a system that legally identifies the children and there is no data breach. Harrow have a system where parents check a box to opt out of data checking/validation exercise sharing, and this would only be applicable to children within the borough. SF need to decide whether to de-delegate the £50k to explore further or whether to put the £50k into the schools' block for school distribution.
 - 3.11.1 Noted – Richard November (RN) asked whether £50k is being paid to receive a list of names.
 - 3.11.2 Noted – PH responded that the £50k is split between Revenues and Benefits and catering.
 - 3.11.3 Noted – RN noted that the feedback received on where this money goes so far has been poor but not including PH's update today so would recommend not to de-delegate.
 - 3.11.4 Noted – SH asked whether schools would be reliant on parents to provide information on whether they eligible for FSM if they decide not to de-delegate.
 - 3.11.5 Noted – PH stated that they would and that FSM may drop considerably and cannot then request to de-delegate because money will be in overall formula, de-delegated money is therefore lost, once no approval by Schools' Forum.
- 3.12 Noted – SH stated that there are two options. Either de-delegate zero of the £50k or half of it, £25k. With half, reports will be received still from revs & bens.
- 3.13 AF asked what the difference in service levels would be if half of the £50k is de-delegated.
 - 3.13.1 SH responded that if zero is paid then nothing will be received, no reports and nothing from catering, whereas if half is paid then reports will still be received.

- 3.14 JH stated that clearly schools aren't happy with the service to date and if a decision is made not to de-delegate then it's gone. Can the money be held and a better proposal be brought forward and the money go back to schools at a later date?
- 3.15 PH responded that a decision needs to be made now so that the formula can be calculated in time with the census, there is a time slot for the formula to be reported and final model and school distributions will be January 17.
- 3.16 JH asked if de-delegate now and the money is not spent can it go back at a later date?
- 3.17 Daksha Chauhan (DC) responded yes and that the money could go into contingency.
- 3.18 AF asked if at the admission process could something be put into place to see if families are on benefits?
- 3.19 PH responded that this is something that could be looked into with redesigning the paperwork similar to another Local Authority.
- 3.20 Julie Philips (JP) stated that some schools collect information from parents and sent off to be checked, if schools decide not to de-delegate, will this checking service be lost?
- 3.20.1 PH replied that it would.
- 3.21 SH stated that there are three options, to de-delegate the £50k, to cut the de-delegation to £25k for Revenues and Benefits or not to de-delegate at all.
- 3.22 SH asked PH what a cut to £25k would mean for catering?
- 3.23 PH responded that this may lead to increased recharges in terms of SLAs, this will not affect schools who do not buy back into catering.
- 3.24 SH proposed a vote for £25k with a better system to work with Revenues and Benefits. A vote per sector is required.
- 3.25 Primary Representatives – 8 votes in favour to de-delegate £25k
 Secondary Representatives – 1 vote in favour
 Special School Representatives – 1 vote in favour
 Overall decision was to delegate £25k. **Approved**

4. **ESG Retained Duties**

- 4.1 Noted – DC stated that the Local Authority will lose Education Services Grant (ESG) of £3.6m from 2017/18. This is split into two elements: a general funding rate and a retained funding rate. Retained duties of £15 per pupil is allocated to academies and maintained schools, the plan is to put this into the new central funding block when the new funding formula comes

in to place. £611k going into the retained rate and supports statutory elements of the education services.

- 4.1.1 Noted – Keep this centrally retained for 2017/18 until more information is received from DfE on the schools funding formula.
- 4.2 SH asked what the consequences of a potential £3m cut would be on schools and the local authority? DC responded that this is being managed by the local authority as this is a loss to the local authority rather than schools.
- 4.3 SH stated that more information should be available on this in January and reported back to SF.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

HNB Working Group PH provided SF with an update.

- 5. 5.1 Noted – A provisional 3% reduction as savings within the HNB. PH will be working with budget holders so that the process runs smoothly. Proposing to re-invest £500k into Primary Provision (6-day respite).
- 5.2 Noted – Just under £1m savings made with bringing children who are in out of borough placements back into the borough.
- 5.3 Noted – PH stated that dates have been proposed for HNB Working Group to meet just before SF so that updates can be provided.
- 5.4 Noted – SF expressed his thanks to PH and Paul Richardson (PR) on the significant savings that have been made.

Apprenticeship Levy Katherine Heffernan (KH) provided SF with an update.

- 5.5 Noted – Peter McPartland (PM) stated that there has been a lack of information on the implications of top slicing 0.5% from staffing costs budget and schools can draw this money back.
- 5.6 KH stated that Apprenticeship levy is in essence a payroll tax and is a part of HMRC regulations. Schools need to take this into consideration when they are budgeting.
- 5.7 Noted – KH stated that maintained schools will have access to an LA employer pot in the form of an electronic voucher that can be used for apprenticeship training.
- 5.8 PH stated that these vouchers are for training only and will expire if they are not used within 12 months. Incentive is to have more apprentices by 2020. Schools can select where the training voucher is used.

- 5.9 Councillor Carpenter (EC) stated that Barking and Dagenham have a first class adult college as well as a FE college, which should be taken into consideration when using these vouchers.
- 5.10 Noted – JTS stated that he had read the FAQs on the HMRC website and found that within a group funds are transferrable.
- 5.11 Noted – KH stated that vouchers are held at employer level and a process needs to be put into place for allocating them.
- 5.12 Noted – RL stated that most will struggle to use these vouchers so they may be a loss.
- 5.13 SH wished it to be clarified that it's 0.5% for all schools in the local authority. DC confirmed that to be correct.
- 5.14 Noted – PM requested that all schools are briefed urgently on all information shared today.
- 5.15 A briefing not to go out to **all schools** about the Apprenticeship Levy to notify them the following:
1. Schools need to budget for the 0.5% for every £250k of employee costs
 2. What the criteria is
 3. The processes
 4. To provide an update on the mechanism and how the levy can be used in the best way possible.

Action KH

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

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

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