

MINUTES

Ms E Chaplin (EC) Chaired the meeting.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 1.1 There were no apologies submitted, however HJ mentioned that two Secondary colleagues would arrive later.
- 1.2 Members asked whether there was a new Diocesan Representative. No information reported.

Governor
Services

2 INTRODUCTION FROM CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

HJ stated that their decisions may be the most complex faced in Education with regards to the proposed funding model for next year. Primary Head teachers were looking to provide early intervention and Secondary schools were funded to prepare young people for adulthood. The Forum needed to work carefully for a balanced solution. HJ appreciated that members had worked hard to avoid a sector disagreement and this was a challenging agenda. Unfortunately Councillor White and Councillor R Gill were unable to attend the meeting; therefore HJ said she would address their questions.

HJ advised that the Forum's recommendation on the proposed funding model would be considered by the Local Authority Cabinet in November 2013.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2013 were confirmed and signed as a true account.

Matters arising from the previous meeting:

- 3.1 **Growth Fund 2013/14** (minute 3.11 refers)
This would be addressed later in the meeting.
- 3.2 **Reading Comprehension Project** (minute no 6.1 refers)
Informed that the £500,000 bid for Education Endowment Funding had been submitted and JH reported feedback had been positive.

JH

4 REPORT FROM THE INTERIM GROUP MANAGER – CHILDREN'S

PH introduced the School Forum Report outlining the items of business for the Forum to address and decisions to be made and agreed.

4.1 Election of Chair and Deputy Chair

Liz Chaplin (LC) and Roger Leighton (RL) to be elected as Co - Chairs of the

Schools' Forum for the 2013/14 educational year.

Proposed by RE and seconded by DD for LC and RL to be elected as Co-Chairs of the Schools' Forum for the 2013/14 educational year

Agreed

4.2 **School Balances 2012/13**

a) HJ stated that:

- schools with considerable balances were required to have discussed with their Governing Body where it was to be spent (committed);
- as Corporate Director of Children's she had a statutory responsibility to be able to answer to the DfE regarding what the balances were being spent on;
- Forum needed to be aware, if balances were over the recommendation of the DfE, there would be a requirement for reporting to Schools' Forum.

Noted

4.3 **DSG Budget 2013-14**

a) Members were informed that the DSG Budget 2013-14 needed to be agreed by the individual blocks and the reporting of any variances.

b) Block Allocations

- High Needs Block £24.4m, forecast £0 variance but key pressures were to be managed within the block;
- Early Years £11.8 million forecast with £826k underspend, but £529k one off funding and £165k carry forward from 2012/13;
- Schools £177 million forecast £0 variance;
- 2 year old funding £4.5m forecast £0 variance;
- Academy transfers, funding will be recouped.

The Members:

- Noted the description of the Block variances for 2013/14. £5 million overall carry-forward, although the mix may change as the Early Years Block had an under-spend, but the High Needs Block was forecasting pressures.
- Asked about £5 million currently in Early Years. Members were informed that this would be considered for the Early Years Block first and then decided how to disperse to meet the pressures within all of the Blocks. Reporting would be to Forum.

Noted and Agreed

PH

4.4 School Funding Arrangements 2014-15

The Schools' Forum was requested to consider and recommend a funding model from the Models 1 – 4.

- a) Members received the details of the summary for the formula, which PH said was indicative of the National funding reform. This was a précis of all four models in the Schools Funding 2013/14 consultation document.
- b) Comments were **noted** from members:
- c) RE spoke on behalf of Primary Head teachers, that following their discussions, they were in favour of Model 1. The reasons were felt that more equality to national levels, 1:1.35 maximum movement, and that they strongly urged the movement to continue from 1:1.35.
- d) RL reported that Secondary Head teachers had met recently and they were in favour of Model 3, but agreed to the principle to move to the national ratio. He commented that it was okay last year from the injection of money, and there were no financial losers. RL stated that they wanted to minimise turbulence, but there were pressure costs, with 1% pay rise and other costs, 6th Form funding cuts were faced circ £100K and the average secondary school was facing a £200K cost pressure. They were potentially vulnerable with accountability measures, end of vocational equivalences and only 'first take' exam to count. RL requested that the Forum looked at the differences between Model 1 and Model 3 in the summary paperwork with particular attention to 'column 46' which was the 'real money' column (post minimum funding guarantee, this was the funding next year in terms of cash) in both models. RL stated that the plus and minuses would have a direct impact on education in secondary schools, some would have a lot of cost pressures and others would not be able to meet the commitments and have to make cuts.
- e) RL stated, with Primary, there was a difference in real monies, as most would gain more in Model 1 and also would gain more in Model 3. Secondary Head Teachers could understand the move to national levels, but if the Forum agreed with Model 1 it would drastically affect the secondary schools. Model 3 would hold the line in secondary, but not affect primary schools.
- f) Members mentioned balances in primary schools, and with 1000 additional pupils they would face staffing costs.
- g) RL stated secondary balances by percentage were lower, only two schools, Eastbury Comp and Dagenham Park, were holding balances for building work, but others were not holding onto big balances.
- h) BF commented regarding primary percentage balances that the under-spends were spent on capital last year, not staff. Primary schools had appointed intervention teachers, etc, or staff to address the turbulence in primary. The LA has a low proportion of schools of 'good' or better and

they were appointing staff to address this. It was stated that “If you got it right in primary, it would help secondary”. BF said nationally, for the last 10 years, primaries have moved from 1.36 to 1.28 and the total funding had moved 10 points over that time, whereas LBBB primaries were in the bottom 5 of 17 with the biggest gap between primary and secondary.

- i) AC stated they were under huge pressure in primary; EYFS curriculum had upped the expectation of children by 5years. All KS2 results were affected on Level 4 and would be Level 4B.
- j) RN stated that it was an opportunity now, as whatever was agreed now may be frozen. The formula may be agreed for some time, and although a bold move, there had been an imbalance for some time, 61% of primaries good or outstanding. However eight out of nine secondary schools performed better, therefore need to inject intervention early.
- k) MN concurred that if more money was in Primary, then Secondary sector would benefit long term.
- l) PH said that the four models were based on October 2012 census data, so cash amounts would change. The ratio had not been imposed and the model agreed may be rejected by the DfE. The funding (cash amounts) for 2014/15 will be based on October 2013 census
- m) HJ stated the LA had tried hard to ensure that money does go to schools. 82% does go into our schools, compared to other boroughs. It was about how we managed the churn in the system, as primary schools will initially feel the pressures, and whether we can manage this in the future.
- n) RE stated that it was not just the money, but would be able to bring in experienced staff to improve and increase standards in primary. They were questioned by Ofsted and wanted to be funded as schools across the country - ‘Equality and Balance’. Numbers have increased in primary, some 1000 children with a maximum difference of 1½ % this year.
- o) Members asked what has happened with the secondary budgets. RL replied that “You do not cut until you have to”; he reiterated that Column 46 was real money. In Model 3 all schools gain £200,000 or more and highlighted examples. He commented that for secondary schools to face cuts in real terms of £200,000 would be significant and would make a real impact on those secondaries.
- p) The Chair commented that to lose £15,000 out of £1 million budget was small.
- q) PMc asked for those who are not primary or secondary, what was the least risky option for all schools over the next year. Would this be a risk of turbulence rather than aspiration?
- r) GN mentioned that gains were capped at 4%, loses at MFG -1½%.
- s) RN stated that over 1:1.27 was not asking to go to the average, but a small shift on the journey and not a massive leap. 22,000 pupils in primary and HTs were speaking up for that majority of pupils. Secondaries have 10,000

pupils, excluding 6th form.

- t) RL stated that he understood and said the decision would be taken out of their hands, but it would lead to making staff redundant. Secondaries would have a chance to stand still with model 3.
 - u) DD commented that he agreed with the movement for primary, but with the drop in funding it would affect results gained over years and requested that the Forum not to jeopardise the outcomes for 16 and 18 year olds.
 - v) RE stated that the commitment last year was to reduce the gap with long term planning, and there had to be some movement each year. The loss of -1½ % last year and a commitment to close the gap.
 - w) HJ enquired as to how healthy the money was for schools facing financial difficulties and would the funding be accessible? GN stated that this would reduce to £1 million this year, but would be based upon the modelling for next year.
 - x) There was a continued debate of the previous points and HJ reminded that the decision would be made by Cabinet.
 - y) HJ informed that the Cabinet would want to know the feelings of the Forum and that the LA does listen and would come to a decision based upon the Forum overall decision.
 - z) Members were reminded that they were not voting on the Model, it was the formula, the `direction of travel' not the cash allocation, and the Model was not actual funding (allocations).
 - aa) It was noted the Pro-forma was to be submitted at the end of October 2013 to the DfE.
 - bb)GS stated that the Council would need to know the potential significant effect for secondary schools but by not taking into account their commitments. There would be huge implications for secondary in Model 1.
 - cc) HJ informed that Councillors needed to know of other contingency money to support schools, £400K for Eastbrook Comprehensive. GN stated £1 million - £1.18 million in 2015/16.
 - dd)BF mentioned that the primary phase was three times larger than years ago and secondary would be admitting the extra children eventually.
 - ee)Members took a vote on the two alternative Models as follows:
 - Model 1 = 6 votes + 1 PVI + 1 abstention
 - Model 3 = 5 votes + 1 Special + 1abstention
- Result: Model 1 was carried as the recommended funding model for 2014/15.**

Agreed

4.4.1 Schools facing financial difficulty contingency 2013/14

- a) Members were advised that there had been no new requests and noted the listed schools in the report had already been approved.
- b) The Chair requested they have some criteria for this contingency. GN replied that this is discussed through the sub-group meetings.

Noted

4.5 Scheme for Financing schools 2013

Scheme for Financing schools was distributed, with the proposed revisions.

- a) Noting a consultation period in the summer, and members were reminded it had been part of the June 2013 Forum report.
- b) The changes were updated due to legislation
- c) JL asked if it was an annual document. GN said it was required by December or next April, due to the High Needs changes.

The Schools' Forum agreed the Scheme for Financing Schools for 2013.

Agreed

Members noted the Scheme would be reviewed annually and asked for dates to be added to ensure the document is reviewed.

PH

4.6 Literacy and Numeracy Projects

Members commended the proposals for funding Literacy and Numeracy projects. Members noted the Reading Comprehension Project bid. JH reported they were in discussions with The Education Endowment Fund (EEF) and hoped to have a decision shortly for funds over the next year. The Project would then be able to take in another 6 – 8 schools.

- a) The Schools Forum supported these proposals as they felt too many children were leaving primary education with poor reading;
- b) Members asked how many schools were involved in the current Reading Comprehension Projects and JH advised 9 primary schools at present, with 6 or 7 in the second tranche next September. The schools would then share their expertise with other schools in the second contingent and the plan was to link with others;
- c) Asked whether the schools were chosen and was informed that JH offered participation and schools volunteered.

The Schools' Forum agreed

- **To take forward the proposals set out in the paper.**
- **To prioritise retaining funding for the Reading Comprehension Project in case the EEF bid is not successful.**

JH

Agreed.

4.7 **2013-14 Schools Facing Financial Difficulty Contingency**

Members were asked to approve the move of Eastbrook Comprehensive from the 'Schools Facing Financial Difficulty Contingency' to the 'Schools with Falling Rolls Fund'.

The Schools' Forum agreed to move Eastbrook allocation to Schools with Falling Rolls Fund.

Agreed

4.8 **Centrally Retained DSG for 2014-15**

As recommended by the Head Teachers Steering Group. **The Schools Forum agreed each line of the centrally retained DSG Budget £2.169 million for 2014-15.**

Agreed

4.9 **De-delegated 2014-15**

Members were asked to agree to de-delegate £1,698,013 DSG for 2014-15.

The Schools Forum agreed to de-delegate £1,698,013 DSG for 2014-15.

Agreed

4.10 **Growth Fund**

a) Members received a copy of the DfE regulations regarding the growth fund, noting the amounts had not changed since last year. The Growth Fund is £3.07 million for 2014/15, with the criteria in accordance with guidelines from DfE. **Members proposed £3.07million Growth Fund for 2014/15.**

The Chair reiterated that £3.07 million was agreed at a previous meeting.

Noted and Agreed

b) Members received a tabled report of the proposed allocation criteria for additional classes, new schools and expanding schools. Noted the assessment criteria and the support funding of £57,000.

The Schools Forum agreed in principle and would return to the proposed criteria when re-modelled.

Agreed

5 **ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS**

There were no other urgent items discussed and the Schools' Forum thanked PH for her assistance.

6 **DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The Members noted that a future meeting had been arranged as follows:

Spring Term 2014 – Tuesday 14 January 2014, 10am – 12 noon, in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Barking.

PH