

THE SOUTHWARK SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING Thursday 10 May 2007

Present: Robert Worth
Paul Charter
Irene Bishop
Teresa Nouri
Anne MacNeary
Michael Davern(Teacher Unions)

Sister Anne-Marie Niblock
Mickey Kelly
Keith Fox
Stuart May
Liz Nolan

Also Present: Wendy Sagar
David Cross

Mike Smith (part)

1. Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies were received from: Sharon Donno, Dawn Hill, Betty Joseph, Pauline McAlpine, and Roger Cox. Councillor Pidgeon, Terry Parkin and Mick Daniels also sent their apologies. Robert Worth took the Chair for the meeting.

2. Declaration of Interests

Members were asked to declare any pecuniary or other interest they might have that was greater than the interests of other members of the Forum in any matter on the agenda for discussion. There were no such declarations

3. Minutes of the Meeting 22nd February 2007

The following changes are required to the draft minutes circulated with the agenda: Item 8.2 at the end of line 5 insert the words "could be" after " a school" and delete the word "is" These were then agreed as an accurate record.

4. Matters Arising from Minutes of 18th January 2007

4.1 Wendy Sagar thanked schools for their part in the statutory "Closure of the Accounts" with most schools achieving the tight deadlines.

5. Combined Budgets 2006-07

5.1 The Chair reminded members that a paper had been distributed at the previous Schools Forum meeting but there had not been time to discuss it. Mike Smith presented this item and spoke to the paper.

- 5.2 Sister Anne-Marie Niblock asked whether the managers in place already existed or were in fact new. Mike Smith acknowledged that they were existing people but were engaged in different roles as the new model of provision goes through transition to where it needs to get to.
- 5.3 In response to Sister Anne-Marie Niblock's question about pupils from outside the borough Mike Smith said that it was not where they reside that is important but Southwark will have to liaise and engage with other boroughs. Paul Charter also pointed out that the pupils in special schools not only come from across the borough, i.e. wider than the paired community council areas but again from outside the borough. Perhaps as with secondary schools a slightly different model needs to be explored.
- 5.4 Irene Bishop expressed concerns that within the quadrants needs varied across the various phases. For example adolescent mental health compared to early years and asked whether academies were going to be a beneficiary of the funding being asked for. Also there are issues around the Youth Service who are organised differently that will have to be explored.
- 5.5 Mike Smith said that it is expected that academies would be involved on an individual basis.
- 5.6 Members were concerned that the other agencies, e.g. Social Services and the PCT were contributing equally to the proposals. Keith Fox pointed out that some of the tasks outlined were in fact not new and it would be useful to receive a breakdown of the expenditure, as existing funds should have covered them.
- 5.7 The Schools Forum were concerned about how information and what is on offer is being disseminated to schools. Stuart May reported back on a locality meeting and in response to Mike Smith's question Mickey Kelly confirmed that neither he nor his school had been contacted or visited.
- 5.8 The Chair summed up the feelings of the Schools Forum requesting that there be a) very specific service level agreements for the various components parts of what is being developed, b) exactly where the academies fit in be clarified c) that along with a detailed financial report at Outturn that d) there is a report from the Pilot Quadrant.
- 5.9 The Chair thanked Mike Smith for attending. At this point it was noted that there were no senior officers in attendance. Mike Smith agreed to take that point back to his colleagues.

6. Excluded Pupils – Day 6 Provision

- 6.1 A paper had been previously circulated that set out the responsibilities, and consequent financial consequences, of both the LA and schools for ensuring that pupils received education from day 6 of a permanent exclusion. This had been announced by the DfES after all LAs had set their provisional budgets for 2007-08.
- 6.2 David Cross explained that the DfES had said that all financial consequences had been built into the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) cost pressures for 2007-08. They had believed it to be relatively small in relation to the overall value of the DSG and so had not actually referred to it in any documentation they issued on the DSG. For Southwark this was estimated at £35k for schools and £22k for the LA to cover PRUs.
- 6.3 Irene Bishop was concerned that schools were already experiencing issues around both permanent and fixed term exclusions.
- 6.4 The Schools Forum noted the paper and the costs that schools and the LAs would now have to meet.

7. Dedicated Schools Grant – 2007/08

- 7.1 A paper had been previously circulated setting out the revised projected level of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2007/08.
- 7.2 The paper was noted. The Schools Forum will be updated at its next meeting when the final value of the DSG would have been announced by the DfES.

8. DfES Consultation on Funding – 2008-2011

- 8.1 A paper had been circulated setting out the LAs proposed response to the DfES Consultation on future funding for schools early years and 14-16.
- 8.2 The Schools Forum made a number of recommendations about various sections of the consultation document. It was agreed that Wendy Sagar would incorporate these into a joint response from the LA and the Schools Forum. A draft of the proposed revised response would be circulated to all members of the Schools Forum prior to submission so that members could make comments or if needs be submit their own response.

9. Reconstitution of the Schools Forum

- 9.1 A paper had been previously circulated setting out the LA's proposals for reconstituting Southwark's Schools Forum. David Cross explained

that the current constitution and membership was set up in 2005 for two years and so required reviewing.

- 9.2 The paper showed that the current Schools Forum is working well but that with so many secondary schools becoming academies the balance between phases needed adjusting. However the LA was conscious that there could be a burden on the remaining secondary school representatives who would be expected to cover this phase with fewer members. At the same time the LA wanted to see representation on the Forum of the more vulnerable children who were not in schools.
- 9.3 Following discussion the Schools Forum recommended that the number of secondary school governors be reduced from 3 to 2 and that there should be a representative of the LA service that had responsibility for vulnerable children. This latter representative should be nominated by the LA.
- 9.4 David Cross thanked the Schools Forum for their input and recommendations and said he would report back the outcome.

10. Any Other Business

- 10.1 A number of members of the Schools forum had received a letter from a Chair of Governors about the impact of the Funding Formula changes related to Threshold payments to schools. The clerk reported that he had facilitated the distribution of the correspondence but was unaware of the exact content of the letter, as no copy had been provided to the LA.
- 10.2 The Chair agreed that although the item had not been received within the timeframe members could comment upon it.
- 10.3 David Cross informed the Schools Forum of the background to the change of the Teachers Pay and Performance Grant from a true grant to one that was to be accommodated from within a LA's funding formula as part of the DSG. A number of proposals had been made and consulted upon in both 2005 and 2006 including UPS3.
- 10.4 The views of those schools that had responded to the consultation were split. Irene Bishop said that her previous expressed concerns were reinforced; others said that the Schools Forum couldn't keep going back on decisions that it had already made.
- 10.5 David Cross said that the issue of how Threshold was handled in school funding would again be subject to proposals and consultation for 2008 onwards.
- 10.6 The Schools Forum asked that the Chair write to the particular Chair of Governors and explain the position and point out that this issue would

be subject to consultation with all schools for the Funding Formula for 2008 onwards.

11. Date & Time of Next Meeting

11.1 In order to deal with the business of requests for funding to be allocated from the DSG for particular projects the final settlement of the DSG has to be known. This is anticipated not to be until late May/early June. It was agreed that the next meeting would be:

Thursday 28th June 2007 at 4.30pm. at the usual venue.

11.2 The provisional date held for July 2007 would not be required.

The meeting closed at 6.45pm.