# **SOUTHWAK CHILDREN’S SERVICES SCHOOLS FORUM**

**Thursday 18th January 2024 14:00 – 15:30 via Teams**

## 1. Attendance and Apologies: - See Annex A

There were apologies from Susannah Bellingham, Jane O’Brian, and Catherine May. The Clerk confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

## 2. Declaration of interest

Members were asked to declare any pecuniary or other interests they might have that were greater than the interests of other members of the School Forum in any matter on the agenda for discussion. None were declared.

## 3. Minutes of the 14th December 2023 and Matters Arising

These were agreed for accuracy. Steve Morrison gave apologies for the meeting held on 14th December 2023.

## 4. DSG Allocations

The report sets out the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) income allocation for 2024-25 and provides details of the changes in comparison to the 2023-24 allocation. The DSG is set out in four blocks; schools block, central block, early years block and high needs block. The figures have been adjusted to include the MSAG grant. The notable change is to the early years block, that is associated with the expectation of the age ranges, and increased provision. The DfE have assumed 100% take up of the additional offer, the final allocations will be based on census data.

Table 2 sets out the schools block allocation which is based on pupil numbers from the October census. There are additional factors regarding premises, growth funds and this year a falling roles fund has been introduced.

In 2023-24 the new TPAG grant was introduced to support schools with the September 2023 teachers pay increase. This grant is continuing into 2024-25 for the full year, before the funding is rolled into the DSG funding for 2025-26. The DfE will publish school level allocations of the mainstream schools’ portion of TPAG for the 2024 to 2025 financial year in May 2024.

For 2024-25 maintained Special Schools and AP settings will continue to receive a separate allocation, the distribution of which will be agreed with impacted schools in line with DfE expectations. New for 2024-25, maintained Hospital schools will receive a separate allocation to the other specialist settings.

Funding rates for the pupil premium grant in the financial year 2024-25 have been inflated by between 10.4% and 1.7%

## 5. High Needs Budgets

The report provides the Schools Forum with the details of schools block transfer and the funding of special schools, hospital schools and resource bases and EHCP’s for next year. The schools block transfer influences the funding allocations to schools and this is considered in a separate paper on the agenda.

The Schools Forum is asked to:

* Agree the schools block transfer of 0.42%, a sum of £1.2m. **AGREED**
* Agree that the special schools’ funding rate should remain the same level as 2023-24 (Table 2). **AGREED**
* To note the continuance in 2024-25 of the high needs additional grant to special schools, alternative providers and hospital schools of 3.4%. **AGREED**
* Agree that the top-up rate for SILS should remain at the same level as 2023-24 (Section 7). **AGREED**
* Agree that the funding rate for hospital schools for 2024/25 should continue to be aligned to the funding level included in the High Needs block allocation (Section 8). **AGREED**
* Agree that the funding rates for Resources Bases should remain at the same level as 2023-24 (Table 4). **AGREED**
* Agree that the funding rates for EHCP’s should remain at the same level as 2023-24 (Section 9). **AGREED**
* Agree the contribution from the High Needs block towards SENDIF of £100k. **AGREED**

## 6. Early Years Budgets 2024-25

This report sets out the provisional Early Years Block, Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocation for 2024-25 and provides details of the changes in comparison to 2023-24. It asks for Forum members to confirm the funding rates for early year’s providers. The DfE have provided some further guidance on changes to the basis on which Local Authorities are funded, this is a positive change. The Local Authority will be funded for 26 weeks for the September starting provision as opposed to 22 weeks. Rates can be increased, it was proposed that the base rates would increase to the maximum affordable level.

The Schools Forum is asked to agree:

The funding rates for Early Year providers of:

* 3 and 4 year olds base rate of £6.15 per hour (Section 8.1) **AGREED**
* 2 year old (deprived households) base rate of £9.00 per hour (Section 8.1) **AGREED**
* 2 year old (working households) base rate of £9.00 per hour (Section 8.1) **AGREED**
* Under 2’s funding rate of £12.28 per hour (Section 8.1) **AGREED**
* Deprivation rates for all age groups as set out in Section 8.2 **AGREED**
* Disability Access Funding rate for all age groups of £2,000 per year (Section 8.3) **AGREED**
* Early Years Pupil Premium rate for all age groups of £0.68 per hour. (Section 8.5) **AGREED**
* 3 and 4 year old rate to distribute the TPAG funding is raised to £0.40 per hour (Section 8.4). **AGREED**
* That the central retentions budget should be set at £915k as per Section 5.2. **AGREED**
* That the forum accept the changes to the Early Years formula following the results of the consultation as discussed in Section 4. **AGREED**
* Agree the increase of the SENDIF budget to £518,000 **AGREED**

## 7. Schools Funding Formula 2024-25

The report provides the Schools Forum with the details of the mainstream school funding formula for 2024-25. The budgets need to be formally submitted to the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), using their spreadsheet template called the Authority Proforma Tool (APT), on 22nd January 2024. The details of the settlement have been provided in an earlier paper.

Schools Forum is asked to agree the following ranking of priorities which have been used in the operation of the 2024-25 funding formula for schools;

* To set the minimum funding guarantee (MFG) at 0.5%, the maximum allowed under DfE guidance. **AGREED**
* Ensure formula rates that are at or above the National Funding Formula (NFF) rates do not fall below the DfE range for matching the NFF. **AGREED.**
* Set lump-sum formula rate to the maximum. **AGREED**
* To apply any remaining resources to those formula factor rates furthest below NFF rates. **AGREED**

## 8. De-Delegated and Centrally Retained Budgets

The purpose of the report is to support Schools Forum to consider the 2024/25 budget for the schools block centrally retained and de-delegated budgets from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The paper is largely unchained from the paper presented in December. The notable changes are the number of FSM Ever 6 pupils that are used for calculations have increased slightly which is noted in **Table 3**.

The allocation for Central School Services Block is slightly lower than anticipated, it was anticipated that there would be a £50,000 increase in funding, the increase is £28,000. The increase has been applied to the Admissions Team, which has not had any increase for a number of years to offset inflationary pressures.

The Schools Forum is asked to agree:

i) The top-slices to the schools block in **Table 1** (para 21). **Agreed**

* **Growth Fund** £50k to be set aside (the same as 2023-24). **AGREED.**
* **Falling Rolls Fund** £300k to be set aside (the same as 2023-24) **AGREED**

ii) The de-delegated services individually detailed in Table 3 by phase (mainstream representatives only). The proposed total budget is £3.210m which compares with £3.147m for the current year (2023-24).

* Contingency. **AGREED.**
* School Improvement. **AGREED.**
* Behaviour support services – Contribution to early help. **AGREED**.
* Behaviour support services – Summerhouse. **AGREED.**
* Free school meals eligibility (primary schools only). **AGREED.**
* Staff costs supply cover (maternity scheme). **AGREED.**
* Staff costs supply cover (trade union). **AGREED.**

iii) Maintained Special Schools and Maintained Nursery Schools are asked to confirm whether they will buy into the following de-delegated services at the rates listed in para 30 and para 48

* Contingency. **AGREED**
* Staff costs supply cover (Maternity Scheme). **AGREED**

iv) The centrally Retained Budgets (paras 55-63) with CSSB Sumarry in **Table 4. AGREED**

## 9. Scheme for Financing Schools Amendment – Balance Control Mechanism

The Scheme for Financing Schools (Scheme) is the basis on which local devolved financial management of maintained schools operates. It applies to all maintained schools and to the local authority (LA) and it for the LA to maintain the Scheme, but it if for Schools Forum to agree it, following consultation with all maintained schools.

Schools Forum considered proposals about changes to the Scheme for Financing Schools at its meeting in October 2023. Consultation on proposed amendments was conducted with all maintained schools from 6th November to 4th December, 2023. The report summarises the responses to the consultation, the subsequent impact on the proposed amendments and seeks approval from the Schools Forum on the revised 2023-24 Scheme.

In terms of the consultation there were 13 responses, Appendix 2 is a response to any comments made as a result of the consultation. Most comments were in relation to the arrangements rather than the proposals of the amendment to the scheme.

The arrangements have been modified from those discussed at the Forum in three areas. The impartiality and transparency of the decision making in the arrangements has been strengthened, in particular around the membership and operation of the appeals panel. It is now stated that members of the appeals panel must be independent from the original decision makers.

The schools forum member that sits on the panel must be a maintained school representative.

A flow chart is included in the arrangements in relation to the conduct of the panel.

The excess surplus balances that were put in trust under the previous arrangements will be released to all schools that were subject to those Trust arrangements. All schools will be subject to the new arrangements as soon as the scheme is amended.

The four years mentioned in the arrangements is retrospective.

Schools Forum;

* Note the responses to the consultation, contained in Appendix 2, and the inclusion of the proposed amendments to Southwark’s Scheme; **APPROVED.**
* Comment and agree to the final arrangements for the operation of Southwark’s Balance Control Mechanism, included in Appendix 3; and
* Approve the Scheme for Financing Schools, as amended, set out in Appendix 4. **AGREED.**

## 10. Updates from Education Directorate (or their nominated officer)

The following points were raised.

* The consultation around the closure of Comber Grove Schools has formally closed. Feedback will be provided to the Cllr Ali.
* Report to Cabinet on School Admissions and pupil numbers.
* The next stage of decision around Ann Bernard Nursery School, the consultation has now closed.
* Leader of Council is interested in meeting with headteachers.

Allocation of funding from the DfE Wrap Around Care Scheme to encourage primary schools to provide childcare from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm. There is a funding allocation of £1.1 million to support that with a capital grant of £400,000.

## 11.Forward Plan and Dates of Future Meetings Verbal Update

14th March 2024

13th June 2024

## 12.AOB

There was no other business.

### Annex A

SCHOOLS FORUM ATTENDANCE SHEET

14th December 2023

VOTING MEMBERS

| NAME | CONSTITUENCY | PRESENT |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Janice Babb | Primary School Headteacher(RC) | Yes |
| Susannah Bellingham | Primary School Headteacher (Com) | Apologies |
| Vacant | Primary School Headteacher CofE |  |
| Vacant | Primary School Headteacher (Com) |  |
| Jane O’Brien | Primary School Governor (Com) | Apologies |
| Vacant | Primary School Governor (VA) |  |
| Helen Rowe | Nursery School Headteacher | Yes |
| Heidi Tully | Special School Headteacher | Yes |
| Nicola Howard | Early Years – Private/Voluntary and Independent Settings | Yes |
| Steve Morrison | Academy | Yes |
| Vacancy | Academy (Primary) |  |
| Declan Jones | Academy | Resigned |
| James Wilson | Academy | No |
| Steph Lea | Special School Academy | Yes |
| Yomi Adewoye | Pupil Referral Units | Yes |
| Catherine May | Secondary School Headteacher | Apologies |
| Vacant | FE SEN | Awaiting nomination from LA |
| Pia Longman | Diocesan Boards | Yes |
| Betty Joseph | Trade Unions | Yes |

Senior Officers in Attendance

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| --- | --- |
| Alasdair Smith | Yes |
| Anna Chiva | Yes |
| Steve Tanner | No |
| Aron Brown | Yes |
| Kate Bingham | Yes |
| Nikki Tilson | Yes |
| Richard Hunter | No |
| Neil Gordon-Orr | Yes |
| Hayden Judd | Yes |
| Andrea Dennis | No |
| Eniko Nolan | Yes |
| Jenny Brennan, Family Early Help & Youth Justice | Yes |
| Maureen Thomes | Yes |
| Sarah Cooper | Clerk |