

**THE SOUTHWARK SCHOOLS FORUM
MINUTES OF THE MEETING
Thursday 13th October 2016**

-
1. **Attendance and Apologies**
See Annex A.
 2. **Declaration of Interests**
Members were asked to declare any pecuniary or other interests they might have that were greater than the interests of other members of the Forum in any matter on the agenda for discussion. There were none.
 3. **The meeting was quorate**
3. The new member of the Schools Forum, Janice Babb, was introduced to the other Forum members and officers attending.
 4. **Election of Chair and Vice Chair**
 - 4.1 The Clerk called for nominations - Sister Anne-Marie Niblock was proposed and there being no other nominations Sister Anne-Marie was duly elected.
 - 4.2 The Chair asked for nominations for Vice Chair - Keith Fox was nominated – there being no other nominations Keith Fox was duly elected
 5. **Minutes of the Meeting of 7th July 2016**
With an amendment in 6.8 to the reference to SILS - these were agreed. It was pointed out however that the correct term for Autistic Spectrum Disorder was now Autistic Spectrum Condition.
 6. **Matters Arising from Minutes of the Meeting of 7th July 2016**
There were no other matters arising that were not already on the agenda.
 - 6.1 **BSF Programme** – the Director reported that the staff currently in post have only joined Southwark, as were other officers, no previous papers setting out the authority’s intentions regarding Secondary school SEN Units being linked to the BSF programme were found. The current programme is linked to a recent analysis matching demand with need including the expansion of Spa school.
 - 6.2 Mickey Kelley pointed out that some schools in the programme, which funds had been allocated to, had not had the SEN Units proposed. The Chair said that her school had recently had to provide the BSF paperwork to its legal representative and this can be made available to the LA.
 - 6.3 **Extending the Maternity Cover Scheme** – The LA reported that this was under review and will come to the next meeting of the Schools Forum. Janice Babb asked that the LA consider including, as well as Paternity Leave, but also Shared Parental Leave – this was agreed.

6.4 **Schools Financial Handbook** – the detail of which is still to be looked at by the LA – the Schools Forum will be kept informed of progress

7. **SEND Funding Working Review**

7.1 A report giving the progress of the working group looking into the top-up funding paid to mainstream schools for children with an Education Health Care Plan had been previously circulated – Yvonne Ely introduced the report.

7.2 The Schools Forum was reminded of the current process and the fact that schools had to pick up the first £6,000 of costs and this Group was looking at Bands 4 (£12,715) and 3 (£15,125) using a Ready Reckoner (RR) to determine funding. This was sometimes inequitable requiring the school to find more than the first £6,000.

7.3 Following analysis of current EHCPs and banding it was therefore proposed that the LA would have four top up bands of:

Band A	£4,000
Band B	£8,000
Band C	£12,000
Band D	£16,000

This will provide a more flexible means of matching funding with cost, keep within budget and reduce administration.

7.4 The financial impact would be to reduce, overall the cost of payments and this saving would be recycled back into the High Needs Block. The new structure would apply to new Southwark pupils with EHCPs approved on or after 1st April 2017 with a transition strategy being developed for current pupils e.g. for when they change key stage.

7.5 Russell Dyer pointed out that this approach fitted in with the current government consultation on the High Needs Block which is aiming to ensure a system that is better, fairer and with some discretion. The Chair pointed out that any change could impact on staffing and so may cause redundancy costs if schools are not made aware of any change soon enough.

7.6 Following questions from members, the LA confirmed that the change would take place at the annual review triggered by the change in Key Stage and new EHCPs being issued and it only applied to mainstream primary and secondary schools.

7.7 The Schools Forum welcomed the work done so far by the Group and looked forward to seeing the modelling of the financial and budgetary impact of the proposal especially with regard to any transitional protection. Rebecca Sherwood felt that the consultation process proposed by the LA will benefit from the LA providing schools with model packages as examples.

7.8 Members then moved on to the second part of the report which set out the work the Group had done on examining those cases where schools, especially the smaller primary school, had a number of children with EHCPs and so was needing to fund a

high proportion of students with the first £6,000 of the cost of the plans from their basic budget.

- 7.9 Questions were raised about the data relating to Number on Roll (NOR), whether this was the total number of pupils or the FTE – this will be checked and the issue of schools on the borough boundary who have a number of children from another LA will be looked at. Those with more than 3% of their NOR would attract additional funding.
- 7.10 The proposal to set up a fund to support schools with a disproportionate number of pupils with SEN/EHCP will be worked up and brought back to the Schools Forum.

The Schools Forum thanked those who have been looking at both areas of SEND funding.

8. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2016-17 Update

- 8.1 A report prepared by Russell Dyer had been circulated which set out the final allocation of DSG for 2016-17 and the in-year pressures on the DSG.
- 8.2 The main concern was the higher recoupment by the EFA for funding academies which has caused a £3.22m adjustment i.e. reduced DSG. This is being checked with the EFA to determine its accuracy.
- 8.3 Also set out in the report was the funding commitments against the DSG Reserve as at 31st March 2016. The Chair informed the Schools Forum that this was only showing £2.92m as uncommitted. This meant that there was already a shortfall of £0.3m because the 2016-17 DSG was lower by £3.22m – this was a concern.
- 8.4 Following discussion, the LA confirmed it was carrying out a review of all the commitments in the DSG Reserve to determine whether any are overstated. The outcome will be brought back to the next Schools Forum meeting in December.
- 8.5 The update on the National Funding Formula Consultation i.e. its deferral to April 2018 was noted.
- 8.6 Growth Fund/Falling Rolls Fund: it was noted that this was item 10 elsewhere on the agenda. However, the Schools Forum was concerned that whilst some schools were expanding others often had a relatively high number of vacancies. The Director said that considerable work is put into planning projections but it is not an exact science and is impacted upon by parental decisions.
- 8.7 Glenn Garcia remarked that a number of schools that have been impacted upon by falling rolls are not directly linked to the re-generation areas of the borough. The Schools Forum also commented that the DfE's decision to agree to new free schools, often in areas where there is already adequate capacity, impacts negatively on schools in the same area. Glenn Garcia also commented that, like other LAs, Southwark is divided into planning areas and parents are not constrained by these areas when making their own school selections.

- 8.8 De-delegated Services – the Chair commented on the amount being held for free school meal eligibility checking (£171k) and there is still a backlog of processing. Glenn Garcia apologised for the delay that some schools were experiencing, however, this should be resolved by the time of the January pupil census.
- 8.9 Gregory Doey asked about the retained funding for the Schools Forum running costs. The Clerk reported that it was predominantly monies to provide a budget for the Schools Forum to have working groups and carry out any research it required. Currently there are no charges for the use of the venue.
- 8.10 The Schools Forum advised the LA that the Formula setting reports received in previous years are a good guideline as to the information it needs to make the required decisions on the funding formula for 2017-18.
- 8.11 The Schools Forum also noted the LA's position that there should be no change to the 2015-16 formula factors and that their unit values will be determined at a later meeting.

9. DfE Consultation on Early Years National Formula Funding Proposals

- 9.1 A report giving an update of the DfE consultation proposals and the Council's response had been previously circulated. Rebecca Sherwood, who had been a member of the Schools Forum Working Group, said that the borough's Nursery Headteachers had been following events very closely and were awaiting the outcome of the recent DfE consultation due at the end of November.
- 9.2 The London Councils were concerned at the level of funding that may well be "redistributed" by government away from London in September 2017 to fund the manifesto commitment to support the funding for 30 hours of free entitlement for eligible working parents. The impact on Southwark's funding could be a reduction of £2m.
- 9.3 The further proposal, to equalise funding across the different types of providers, Rebecca Sherwood felt would need a statement from those LAs with maintained nursery schools regarding what safeguarding would be provided post 2020.
- 9.4 All providers of nursery provision needed figures in November in order to model their revenues and costs, recruit staff etc. Paulette Bertram said that the voluntary sector was already experiencing resourcing problems as the funding from their local authorities is already lower.
- 9.5 Mickey Kelly commented that there is already a cross subsidy in maintained schools that have a nursery class and that a radical solution is needed in the relationship between PVI, primary schools and nursery schools perhaps with a bigger geographical grouping to share expertise and deliver economies of scale.
- 9.6 Rebecca Sherwood also commented that nursery schools were being required to provide a high degree of support for what is deemed to be the medical needs of pupils and that the accuracy of census data used is an issue. Paulette Bertram remarked that the PVI providers suffer when parents enrol for September then either do not turn up or after a couple of weeks move their children elsewhere.

10. Growth Fund and Proposals for a Falling Rolls Fund in 2017/18

- 10.1 This report by the LA updates the Schools Forum on the allocation of funding for the approved new classes opened in September 2016. It showed that because of the higher need for new classes in the primary phase, the budget held of £700k was inadequate by £28k.
- 10.2 The LA also believed that the amount given to primary schools for new classes should be increased from £52k to £60k. This itself would require a further £112k of DSG. Mickey Kelly was concerned that academies, because of lagged funding by the EFA, do not receive this in the year that the class opens, so are always one year behind. Glenn Garcia said that they had been talking to the EFA in order to address this issue.
- 10.3 Regarding a Fund for Falling Rolls, as with any increase to the Growth Fund, the Schools Forum said that it could not give a view at this meeting due to the issues regarding overall funding in 2017-18 – these will need to be addressed at the December meeting when more detail is known and the financial impact assessment carried out for all areas of the 2017-18 budget.

11. Update on School Balances and Schools in Deficit

- 11.1 The report previously circulated was noted. Rebecca Sherwood expressed concern at the accuracy of the figures for nursery schools which was showing 5 of the 6 schools as exceeding the threshold, i.e. had higher than recommended balances. The LA said they would review and report back.

12. Any Other Business

- 12.1 A question was raised about the expected date of the next tranche of Pupil Premium for 2016-17 and that as the LA no longer issues monthly statements of funds issued to schools that when funds are given, schools are informed of the reason why. The LA said they would investigate and report back.

10. Date of Next Meetings 2016/17

8th December 2016, 19th January 2017, 23rd March 2017, 18th May 2017,
6th July 2017

There being no further business, the meeting closed.

Annex A

SCHOOLS FORUM ATTENDANCE SHEET

13th October 2016

VOTING MEMBERS

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PRESENT
Janice Babb	Primary School Headteacher	Yes
Craig Voller	Primary School Headteacher	Apologies
Keith Fox	Primary School Headteacher	Apologies
Gregory Doey	Primary School Headteacher	Yes
Vacant	Primary School Governor	
Omolayo Sokoya	Primary School Governor	Yes
Rebecca Sherwood	Nursery School Headteacher	Yes
Simon Eccles	Special School Headteacher	Yes
Paulette Bertram	Early Years – Private/Voluntary and Independent Settings	Yes
Steve Morrison	Academy	Apologies
Mickey Kelly	Academy	Yes
Mike Antoniou	Academy	Apologies
Yomi Adewoye	Pupil Referral Units	Yes
Sister Anne-Marie Niblock	Secondary School Headteacher	Yes
Vacant	FE SEN	
Catherine May	Diocese Board	Apologies
Betty Joseph	Trade Unions	Yes

Senior Officers in Attendance

Yvonne Ely	Yes
Glenn Garcia	Yes
Nina Dohel	Yes
Russell Dyer	Yes
Sue Emmons	Yes
David Cross	Clerk