

<p style="text-align: center;">THE SOUTHWARK SCHOOLS FORUM MINUTES OF THE MEETING Thursday 8th December 2016</p>

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

4. Minutes of the Meeting of 13th October 2016

These were agreed as an accurate record.

5. Matters Arising from Minutes of the Meeting of 13th October 2016

5.1 School Income Profile: The Schools Forum thanked the LA for reinstating providing regular income information to schools – although this does not contain the CFR codes, the LA believes this will not be an issue.

5.2 School Financial Handbook: The LA reported that this was “work in progress” with a view to its completion in April 2017.

5.3 Planned In Year Growth: The LA confirmed that academies would, from 2017-18, attract in-year growth funding as from the September of the new class opening.

6. Dedicated Schools Grant 2016-17 and 2017-18

6.1 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. This showed that the academy recoupment estimate used in setting the 2016-17 budget was understated by around £1.7m.

6.2 A review has shown that the High Needs Block is overspending by £2.2m but offset by an underspend in the Early Years Block of £0.5m. This gives a total projected overspend for the year of £3.4m

6.3 To compensate, the budget monitor shows that the £10.17m reserves held allowed for in-year budget changes are made up of:

Firm commitments of £3.04m

Still being reviewed – a possible £0.41m

Uncommitted contingencies of £6.72m

- 6.4 From the above, the LA believes that the estimated overspend of the 2016-17 DSG budget of £3.4m can be met from uncommitted contingencies. The Schools Forum agreed with the LA that no further commitments against reserves should be made until the forecast position becomes clearer and following the verification work on the budget and grant shortfall issue. This will be updated at the January 2017 meeting.
- 6.5 To ensure that the inaccuracies identified in the construction of data that was submitted and used by the EFA for 2016-17 DSG are not repeated in 2017-18, the main data sheet is being subject to an independent check by an experienced senior finance officer from another local authority.
- 6.6 The exact figures of the DSG will be published later in December but the following is already known:
- No change to the Guaranteed unit of funding - set at £6,412.68
 - The Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) continues at -1.5% and there are no plans to dis-apply these regulations. LAs will continue to have the flexibility to cap and scale gains of individual schools to make the formula affordable
 - The LA is not proposing any change to the formula. The unit rates will be agreed at the January meeting following the settlement and consideration of headroom priorities and affordability
- 6.7 As the data and information that will form the basis of the decisions to be made at the January Schools Forum meeting is significant, it was agreed that the LA reports to the Schools Forum will be circulated well in advance.

7. Education Services Grant

- 7.1 A report setting out how the Education Services Grant (ESG) was being absorbed into the Dedicated Schools Grant from 2017-18 onwards had been previously circulated. This report sets out the range of duties and responsibilities that were formerly funded by the ESG.
- 7.2 These included, statutory and regulatory duties and the grant is being split into two elements, one that was based on the retained duties that the LA has for both schools and academies based on a rate of £15 per pupil. The other is a general fund element of £77 per pupil that will be reduced in-year as schools convert to academy status and so will receive that funding in their direct grants from the EFA.
- 7.3 Pending more information from the DFE, including the maximum that can be retained by the LA, the detailed retained statutory duties for maintained and academy schools will still need to be funded from the new DSG. The Schools Forum will need to agree the amount to be retained centrally from the DSG for these duties which is estimated to be approximately £600k for 2017-18.
- 7.4 In addition, for LA maintained schools, PRUs and special schools, the Schools Forum will be asked to retain/de-delegate an amount for general statutory duties to the extent that the general duties element of the ESG (currently £2m) becomes part of the schools block in the DSG. Again this is subject to receiving information from the DFE on the allowable amount.

- 7.5 Keith Fox said that the position appeared to be to maintain the status quo in 2017-18 pending probable big changes in future years. Rebecca Sherwood commented on the fact that there were many services provided that might be subject to change, for example Health & Safety that could have a serious impact on small schools. The LA confirmed that it was awaiting information on the School Improvement grant
- 7.6 This report was noted and once again the decision making report for the January 2017 meeting will need to be circulated well in advance.

8. The School Budget 2017-18 – Central Retentions and De-Delegations

- 8.1 This previously circulated report set out the range of budgets that their funding in the Schools Block of the DSG is either retained by the LA or de-delegated, i.e. LA maintained primary and secondary schools, through the Schools Forum, hand back to the LA – academies receive their allocation through the EFA.
- 8.2 Full details of the relevant budgets were set out in the report and the Schools Forum members eligible to vote were asked to agree to the LA’s proposals on each.
- 8.3 Centrally Retained Budgets – these were voted on budget by budget by those eligible to vote i.e. the constituencies representing LA maintained primary and secondary schools. The outcome for each vote was:

Budget	In Favour	Abstentions	Against
Growth Fund	7	1	0
Non SEN Independent places	7	1	0
Admissions	8	0	0
Servicing of Schools Forum	8	0	0

- 8.4 It was noted that the previous budget for capital expenditure from revenue ceased at the end of 2016-17.
- 8.5 De-Delegated Budgets – these were voted on, budget by budget, by those eligible to vote i.e. the constituencies representing LA maintained primary and secondary schools. The outcome for each budget was:

PRIMARY

Budget	In Favour	Abstentions	Against
Contingencies	2	0	0
Behaviour Support Services	2	0	0
Summerhouse	2	0	0
FSM Eligibility	2	0	0
Licences/Subscriptions	2	0	0
Staff Costs - Maternity	2	0	0
Staff Costs – Trade Union	2	0	0

SECONDARY

Budget	In Favour	Abstentions	Against
Contingencies	1	0	0
Behaviour Support Services	1	0	0
Licences/Subscriptions	1	0	0
Staff Costs - Maternity	1	0	0
Staff Costs – Trade Union	1	0	0

- 8.6 The LA was asked to report back on the anomaly regarding the fact that secondary schools were meant to determine themselves parents/carers eligibility for free school meals but are being denied access to the database to do so.
- 8.7 Centrally Retained Growth Fund – this centrally retained budget for planned, Southwark approved, roll increases, will now be £600k and also have a fund of £100k as a “falling rolls fund”. The Schools Forum asked that the detailed criteria for both be made known to schools – this was agreed.
- 8.8 The Schools Forum then voted on both parts of this LA proposal – In Favour 7, Against 0, Abstentions 1

9. SEND Travel Assistance Fund Update

- 9.1 This report provided the Schools Forum with a service update following the implementation of operational changes and introduction of a new service model for the delivery of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) travel assistance service in 2015-16 which is funded by a contribution from the Schools Budget of the Dedicated Schools Grant and combined with Southwark’s own Core funding.
- 9.2 This was familiar to many members of the Schools Forum who had found the service very beneficial to their pupils. It was not just about travel but developing an essential life skill for the young people.

10. SEND Funding Working Review

- 10.1 John Voytal reported to the meeting that the LA had started its consultation on the its proposal to change the banding system to one of four top up bands which would be a better fit to what is required. This consultation will close at the end of December and the Working Group will meet again in early January to review the comments made by those that responded.
- 10.2 In addition the Group will look at possible transition arrangements especially to address the Schools Forum’s concerns that schools may receive less funding but be expected to do more with it.
- 10.3 In answer to the previous Schools Forum’s questions on data, the LA confirmed that: the pupil data included nursery classes, these are to be removed; out borough statements are included and Southwark will be talking to neighbouring LAs regarding unifying the rates.
- 10.4 The other part of the work of the group was looking at those small schools that had a lot of statements and/or care plans and so were having a high call on their core funding to meet the requirement to fund the first £6k of pupils SEND needs. The LA is developing eligibility criteria that schools would have to meet to access the funding.
- 10.5 An update will be presented to the January Schools Forum meeting.

11. Early Years Single Funding Formula Working Group – Update

- 11.1 The government's proposals on Early Years Funding proposals had been published and the working group had its first meeting in November 2016. The main proposal of the new funding was that 93% of the grant had to be delegated to providers in 2017-18 rising to 95% in 2018-19. There will also be supplementary funding for nursery school for a 3 year period.
- 11.2 The working group will meet in early January to review the LA modelling that increases the basic rates and will also be looking at the deprivation supplement. There will not be a factor for efficiency but likely to be one for EAL and one for quality.
- 11.3 The LA confirmed that the current level of retained funding is 90%. Rebecca Sherwood said that nursery schools have opportunities to generate income to attempt to bridge the funding gap but might need start-up funding to progress.
- 11.4 The Schools Forum thanked the LA for the update.

12. Any Other Business

- 12.1 The Chair asked if Southwark was proposing to take any children from the closed refugee camp in Calais- the Director will report back.
- 12.2 The Schools Forum was concerned that the government's pupil data census contained inappropriate questions for a school to ask of parents/carers. The LA said it would review what had been asked.

13. Date of Next Meetings 2016/17

19th January 2017, 23rd March 2017, 18th May 2017 and 6th July 2017

There being no further business, the meeting closed.

Annex A**SCHOOLS FORUM ATTENDANCE SHEET****8th December 2016****VOTING MEMBERS**

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PRESENT
Janice Babb	Primary School Headteacher	Yes
Craig Voller	Primary School Headteacher	Apologies
Keith Fox	Primary School Headteacher	Yes
Gregory Doey	Primary School Headteacher	Apologies
Vacant	Primary School Governor	
Omolayo Sokoya	Primary School Governor	Apologies
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	Yes
Mickey Kelly	Academy	Apologies
Mike Antoniou	Academy	Apologies
Yomi Adewoye	Pupil Referral Units	Apologies
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

Glenn Garcia	Yes
Nina Dohel	Yes
John Voytal	Yes
Russell Dyer	Yes
Sue Emmons	Yes
David Cross	Clerk