

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>THE SOUTHWARK SCHOOLS FORUM MINUTES OF THE MEETING Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2017</b></p>
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**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 19<sup>th</sup> January 2017**

These were agreed as an accurate record.

**5. Matters Arising from Minutes**

5.1 Growth Fund and Falling Rolls Fund: The LA tabled the eligibility criteria for both and said that they are dictated to by the DfE regulations. The Schools Forum asked that academies and maintained schools be made aware of these and that the LA and EFA work together to ensure that there is not double counting especially as the EFA has 6 categories for Exceptional Funding.

5.2 PRU Top Up Funding: The LA reported that they are working with SILS in reviewing their cost pressures including the level of subsidy by the LA. The Schools Forum was surprised to hear there was a subsidy on the Day 6 Exclusions as schools were led to believe that they are charged the full cost of provision. The Schools Forum will be kept informed and notified of the outcome of the review.

5.3 Finance Handbook: The LA reported that this was still work in progress and they will trial this with a few schools in the summer term before issuing to borough wide. The Schools Forum suggested that the manual includes a FAQ section so as to make it easy and quick to find the answers to common questions.

**6. Dedicated Schools Grant Budget Monitor for 2016-17 and 2017-18 Update**

6.1 A report prepared by Russell Dyer had been circulated which sets out the financial update of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2016-17 and the provisional allocation for 2017-18.

6.2 In summary at year end the 2016-17 DSG had, as previously reported to the Schools Forum, additional spend of £4.1m leaves a Reserve of £2m. The projected commitments on the Reserve in 2017-18 could be £1.4m leaving an uncommitted balance of £0.6m.

- 6.3 There are, however, growing pressures on the High Needs block and the LA are re-viewing these as a matter of urgency in order to assess the scope for the release of any uncommitted headroom to the Reserves.
- 6.4 The 2017-18 DSG was, as reported, £106.515m, with the agreed central retentions of £2.282m plus the de-delegated amounts for LA maintained schools of £4.414m. The Authority Pro forma was completed and sent to the EFA.
- 6.5 With these deductions, budgets were issued to schools with a covering letter of explanation. This letter the Schools Forum found gave very clear explanations, and the LA reacted very quickly when told that the comparative data in the budget schedule was incorrect, issuing an update immediately.
- 6.6 The issue regarding the closure of Southwark Free School was discussed whereby other schools had to take the students displaced by the closure. Appendix A gave details of the changes between 2016-17 and 2017-18 which was predominantly due to an increase in High Needs Block funding. Appendix B showed the adjustments still to be made by the EFA and when they are expected to be known and so reported to the Schools Forum.

The report was noted.

## 7. Early Years Funding 2017-18

- 7.1 A further report on the Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF) had been circulated which sets out the further work required to be completed on central retention funding from the Early Years block of the Dedicated Schools Grant, including the Local Inclusion Fund (LIF).
- 7.2 Neil Gordon-Orr introduced the report that gave the detail of the £1.373m 7% central retention of the block. This included £557k for the Early Help Service, which is also funded from other council budgets and DSG blocks.
- 7.3 In 2018-19 the percentage that can be retained has to drop to 5%, as a consequence all centrally retained services are being reviewed to ensure value for money. The Day Nursery Subsidy has already been reduced and the LA is looking at options to keep the day nurseries open, however, nothing can be done quickly.
- 7.4 Janice Bibb raised the issue of places available, demand and viability which applies to all providers. It was confirmed that Day Nurseries are not registered schools. Rebecca Sherwood said that the service teams could be remodelled so that they offered Service Level Agreements with a core offer of a basic entitlement and buy in of additional support.
- 7.5 The Schools Forum then voted on the LA's proposed central retentions for 2017-18:
- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| In favour   | 7 |
| Against     | 0 |
| Abstentions | 2 |
- 7.6 The SEN Local Inclusion Fund and the Disabilities Access Fund will be discussed the next Early Years Working Group. There were concerns about the 30 free hour provision, which is optional, being introduced in September as there will be cash

flow issues for providers if the local authority does not make regular payments to settings.

## **8. Schools National Funding Formula Consultation**

- 8.1 The Local Authority's final response had been circulated. The Schools Forum thanked the LA for getting a copy in advance of the closure deadline. It was agreed that the consultation questions were skewed to educationalists and not parents and carers.

## **9. Schools High Needs National Funding Formula Consultation – Stage 2**

- 9.1 This information report was noted.

## **10. Any Other Business**

- 10.1 Steve Morrison raised the issue of the principles that were underpinning the consultation on the National Funding Formula and that they should be applied when whatever funding agency identifies serious historic and retrospective funding errors and how they are should be dealt with.
- 10.2 It was agreed that they should be dealt with by ensuring:
- a) the maximum transparency over all aspects of the issue
  - b) making all parties aware of the any potential error ( suggested over 10%) at the earliest opportunity
  - c) that there should be dialogue and consultation with the school with the right to reply

## **11. Reconstitution of the Schools Forum**

- 11.1 The clerk reported that the Local Authority has to keep under review the constitution of the Schools Forum so that the membership reflects the number of LA maintained schools and the number of academies. That will happen after Easter.
- 11.2 At the same time each member's two year office period will come to an end in August 2017. This will require the bodies that elect constituent members to do so during the summer term ready for the members to take office in September 2017.

## **12. Date of Next Meetings 2016/17**

18th May 2017 and 6th July 2017

There being no further business, the meeting closed.

## Annex A

## SCHOOLS FORUM ATTENDANCE SHEET

23<sup>rd</sup> March 2017

## 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	No
Steve Morrison	Academy	Yes
Mickey Kelly	Academy	No
Mike Antoniou	Academy	Yes
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

Nina Dohel	Yes
Russell Dyer	Yes
Sue Emmons	Yes
David Cross	Clerk