

MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING
12th March Wednesday 2014
Committee Room 3, Waltham Forest Town Hall
6:30 – 8:00pm

PRESENT	
Peter Dawe	Chair of Schools Forum
Debbie Callender	Clerk to Schools Forum debbie.callender@walthamforest.gov.uk 020 8496 3669
Headteachers Representative: Primary [4] Secondary [3] Special School [1]	
Primary (4)	
Sandra Campbell	Church Hill Nursery School and Children's Centre
Kate Jennings	Mission Grove School
Maureen Okoye	Davies Lane Primary School
Kathryn Soulard	Greenleaf Primary School
Secondary (3)	
John Hernandez	Norlington Schools for Boys
Lynnette Parvez	Kelmscott School
Shona Ramsay	The Lammas School
Governor Representatives (7) – Primary (5) Secondary (2)	
Primary (5)	
Peter Dawe - Chair	Dawlish Primary School
Secondary (2)	
Ian Moyes	Heathcote School
Academy Representative (2) – Primary (1) Secondary (1)	
Mark Morrall	Chingford Foundation / Rushcroft
Non School Representatives	
Sarah Kendrick	PVI Sector – Redwood Pre-School
Julian Lee	Executive Headteacher – The Hawkswood Group

Steve White	NUT
LBWF Council Officers / Representatives	
Linzi Roberts-Egan	Deputy Chief Executive, Families Directorate
Cate Duffy	Divisional Director – Education Improvement
Andrew Beckett	Interim Head of Inclusion
Elizabeth Freer	Business Support Officer – Childcare Team
Gerry Kemble	Head of HR Delivery
Judith Kirk	Interim Assistant Director for School Effectiveness
Eve McLoughlin	Education Improvement Service Head
Graham Moss	Strategic Development Consultant
Rishi Peetamsingh	Group Accountant – Schools
Duncan Pike	Strategic Finance Advisor – Families
Shehwar Sultan	Principal Accountant – Schools & High Needs
Observers	
Joanne Littman	WF PLA/TSA
Michael Sucre	St Mary's Chingford
F Michael	St Mary's Chingford
M Mudie	St Mary's Chingford
Elaine Gerety	St Mary's Chingford
D Airen	St Mary's Chingford
Philip Roe	Chair of St Mary's Chingford
Mgr Christopher Brooks	Vice-Chair, St Mary's Chingford
Philomena Egan	St Mary's Chingford

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Chair was impressed to see that the meeting was well attended and that all Forum members were present.

1.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted by the Chair: Cllr Clare Coghill (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People Services – Families Directorate); Aktar Beg (Edinburgh Primary); Rukhsana Yaqoob (Leytonstone School); Nicholas Russell (Davies Lane Primary); Michael Rennie (Vice Principal, Sir George Monoux College); Msgr George Stokes (Diocese of Brentwood) and Raina Turner (Head of Finance, Families Directorate)

Clerk received the following apology after the meeting finished: Matt Hanks (Primary Academy Representative – Roger Ascham School).

1.2 PVI Sector Representative

Chair welcomed Sarah Kendrick from Redwood Pre-School as the newly elected PVI representative after a contested election took place.

1.3 Primary Headteacher Representative

Chair welcomed Kate Jennings who was recently elected as the Primary headteacher representative. Kate was a former Primary headteacher representative during the academic year 2012-13 and the Chair expressed his delight in welcoming Kate back into Schools Forum.

2. Minutes of the last meeting held on 12th February 2014 and Notes of the Pre-Briefing Technical Session

Chair went through the minutes pages by page.

The minutes of the meeting held on **12th February** were checked and signed off by the Chair as a true record of the meeting.

Chair wanted it noted once again, that there were no voting members who attended the pre-briefing technical session earlier this evening.

2.1 Matters Arising

- **Universal Infant Free School Meals**

The update that was discussed at the last meeting explained the limitation and concerns on pupil premium.

- Free school for their child not eligible for free school meals.
- Impact on pupil premium.
- The DfE has provided some information including the tool kit.
- The two important things to remember are not a single school in Waltham Forest qualifies so they do not have any share.
- The DfE promised to give guidance on eligibility.
- Islington Council was one of the first local authorities in England to trial the universal free school meals for nursery and primary
- What is the view from Schools Forum and how to approach?
- A child only has to be eligible once. This is worth £7800. There is no reason that it will help schools.
- Two ways to deal with this either to leave it for individual schools to deal with or the local authority give some support or complete the checking. What should we do?
- Government proposes will be the only indicator for a formula.

Further comments

- Likes the Islington Council approach to this
- The revenues and benefits team have been approached and have a service put to schools
- Further report in the near future

3. Single Status Update – March 2014

This is a standard item and will be updated

RSSO schools have been providing with info and reviewing

There were no further questions.

Question: part of the consultation was to talk about the substantial savings. Will not be making any savings so what is the rationale?

Response: GK will speak separately about this

4. Schools Forum Dates 2014-15 – For Decision

There will be a contested election of the governors sector later this year. Headteachers have their own representation.

The meetings will remain to take place on Wednesday evenings as that seems more convenient.

The Schools Forum Dates for 2014-15 were agreed by all

Meeting	Date	Venue
Schools Forum Wednesday Evenings 6.30-8.30pm Tea / Coffee and Biscuits from 6.00pm	17th September 2014	Room 2
	12th November 2014	Room 2
	14th January 2015	Room 3
	11th February 2015*	Room 3
	11th March 2015+	Room 3
	10th June 2015	To be confirmed

*Spring Half-term will be 16th-20th February 2015

+Cabinet date for March 2015 to be confirmed

5. Update on Early Years Funding Block – provision for the free education for 3 and 4 year olds for 2013-14 and 2014-15 – For discussion and Decision

- The budget falls into three blocks
- The report was distributed in advance of the meeting.

- This follows on from the February meeting.
- Appendix A revised figures
- Communication was sent to all settings explaining the reasons of the clawback
- Recommendation 2.2.6 sets out 'no contingency'
- PVI setting representative emailed the Finance team but no response was received.

The following questions have been raised:

- Are the balancing payments based on calendar year or financial year? This has not been made clear to providers, there has been no written evidence to explain these payments.
- Why are there so many amendments to FEEE payments?
- Why mistakes were made with the Idaci bandings and how were these identified?
- Providers were told that they would be informed of their hourly rate for the year 2013/14, we are now in March and this information is still unclear. We need clarification that the 2013/14 hourly rate is the one that everyone will be paid on for the hours they've provided between 1 April 13 and 31 March 14.
- How confident are Finance that the hours have been calculated correctly? Settings are not confident with the figures as the headcount proformas do not calculate data correctly. How could the wrong information have been used when finance have the actual hours for April 13 to December 13? For example, The Village has a reduction of 8000 hours which equates to 14 children, why did Finance get their hours wrong, then pay them a huge balancing payment so they will now be subject to claw back? Why were mistakes not picked up by Finance? Who is checking Michael's work?
- What reassurances can you give us?
- Item 4.2 in the report: This means that actually 78% of settings are affected – there needs to be clear communication to settings that another analysis may result in claw backs from overpayments made in February.
- Item 4.4 in the report: the detailed analysis – what will be in this? I would expect to see all the children and the data used to make our calculations as what we get now does not meet our financial accounting requirements. We need a copy of your analysis that uses our headcount data to calculate our hours so we can see how our payments are calculated.
- In the budget spreadsheets, there are hidden columns or the forms are in pdf format so we can't see how figures are calculated.

The finance team will respond to these questions as soon as possible.

RP: We will respond separately

- Service management is aware these concerns exist
- The calculations are not easy to sort and we need to get it sorted. We need to get some confidence back. And build bridges

A forward plan agenda item should be discussed in the June meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Schools Forum AGREED to note the recommendations as numbered 2.2.1 – 2.2.6 in the report

<http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/schoolsforum> - Agenda Item 5

6. High Needs Block 2014-15: Update on SEN Protection Funding

Chair: It will be helpful to know who would like to make points and ask questions.

- This is a follow-up from the January meeting.
- Finance checked the impact on high needs.
- For 2014-15 and 2013-14 dropped and also funding has significantly dropped.
- Appendix A some schools are affected but also there is a low reduction on SEN protection. Finance has put forward two options under recommendation 2.3.

Chair: need to choose between the two options. This was agreed at the last meeting.

- Recommendation 2.1: this was agreed by all
- Recommendation 2.3: this is clearly printed in the report
- This issue also affects nursery schools and PVI settings and is a very big drop.
- Finance is aware of similar issues in nursery and can offer different solutions.
- In para. 4.12 is this going to be taking away again. It seems the funding has already been put in place
- This is reflected on the high needs funding. It is place-led funding. SEN notional budget and if you have four high needs will be using up your SEN notional budget. The Low needs affected. We realised the overall on the impact on place-led funding and SEN. This is extra funding from the high needs block
- It is not money taken away: Money follows the pupil the money isn't taken from the budget.

Chair read out recommendations

2.3 to choose which option:

Option 1 – 50% of reduction is mitigated (by applying 50% to the reduction less £10,000). As shown in Appendix A the total cost to the HNB is **£99,600**.

Option 2 – 50% of reduction is mitigated (by applying 50% to the reduction less £8,600 for primary schools and £7,200 for secondary schools). As shown in Appendix A the total cost to the HNB **£108,900**.

Some schools will be affected but would go for option 2.

School Forum members voted for **option 2** - 8 voted for option 2

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chair asked for votes.

Schools Forum AGREED to the recommendations as numbered 2.1 and 2.2 in the report.

Schools Forum AGREED to the recommendation as numbered 2.3 Option 2 in the report.

<http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/schoolsforum> - Agenda item 6

7. Looked After Children Pupil Premium Update

- This draw attention to Looked after Children (LAC) on pupil premium. This report updates Schools Forum on issues relating to the Pupil premium Grant for Looked after Children (LAC) in 2013-14.
- To alert Schools Forum to the LAC Pupil Premium and that schools have not been claiming it from the LA.
- Identified which schools have not claimed and will ensure to get the money to them.
- Other schools are also being prompted to claim.
- There is a concern that Waltham Forest schools, if they are not chasing finance would be missing out on claiming.
- Next year pupil premium funding will be substantially more. Page 9 on the guidance para 17 states this.
- We were made aware on the massive uptake on pupil premium from Schools. This is a trend across the capital.
- The DfE's view is Virtual Heads need to take responsibly and will be allocating on PP on our cohort. Schools have until May to use it up. This is a learning curve on the process. We will make amendments this year and next year.
- Schools did not know you had to claim it which explains why no one is claiming it. This has not been claimed in previous years.

All agreed to the recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

Schools Forum was asked to note the content of the recommendations.

The Chair asked for votes.

Schools Forum AGREED to NOTE the recommendations as numbered 2.1, 2.2 and 2.4 in the report.

Schools Forum AGREED to the recommendation as numbered 2.3

<http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/schoolsforum> - Agenda item 7

8. Any Other Business

- The only thing to revisit is the continuing admission of pupils in academies which may need to change the representative. This is all already implemented.

- Recommendation of how we should structure Schools Forum with affect from November 2014
- Chair suggested the pre briefing technical sessions are disbanded due to lack of attendance
- The Pupil Premium task and finish meeting has been arranged to take place on 3rd April at 6pm and all are welcome to attend
- On behalf of secondary headteachers maybe some pupil number transferring from pupil numbers. First round of figures in the South none of the maintained will be full and some are low. Clear implications because it could mean some schools are on protection. We believe direct impact on the opening of the free school and expansion of the Secondary school.
- The financial impact and the pressure on reception and we need more additional classes and the report needs to cover both ways
- Looking on the high needs and the distribution of the funding.
- Suggest finance colleagues speak to those who are concerned after this meeting due to the technical level of the funding
- The functions of Schools Forum are purely consultative. We can take decisions and referred to Cabinet
- The decisions where Schools Forum has the final say are on de-delegation. On some other decisions the Local Authority consults to Cabinet. On the high needs block there is a requirement to consult Schools Forum. The Local Authority can do what it wants. Some of the discretion is exercised by Schools Forum.
- What about the consultation?
- The survey had gone out to schools. Survey Monkey was used.
- There are 55 primary schools how does that communicated?
- We have that discussion and have a feedback on what the views are.
- Chair: We pride ourselves with our good relationship with headteachers for the past 11 half years.

9 Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday 11 June 2014

Time: 5:45pm – Pre-briefing Technical Session

Time: 6:30pm (Refreshments from 6:00pm)

9a. Task and Finish Groups

Pupil Premium Task and Finish Group – 3rd April at 6pm

The meeting ended at **19.50**