Waltham Forest

MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING
Wednesday 17 September 2014
Committee Room 2, Waltham Forest Town Hall
6:30 – 8:38pm

PRESENT	
Shona Ramsay	Acting Chair of Schools Forum
Debbie Callender-O'Neill	Clerk to Schools Forum debbie.callender-oneill@walthamforest.gov.uk **020 8496 3669**
Primary Head Teacher Representatives: (4)	
Sandra Campbell	Church Hill Nursery School and Children's Centre
Kate Jennings	Mission Grove School
Maureen Okoye	Davies Lane Primary
Kathryn Soulard	Greenleaf Primary
Primary Academy Representative (1)	
Jo Littman (for Matt Hanks)	Primary Co-ordinator
Maintained Secondary Head Teacher Representatives(3)	
John Hernandez	Norlington School for Boys
Lynnette Parvez	Kelmscott School
Shona Ramsay	Lammas School (Acting Chair)
Maintained Primary Governor Representatives (1)	
Cllr Aktar Beg	Edinburgh School
Maintained Secondary Governor Representatives (2)	
Ian Moyes	Heathcote School
Rukhsana Yaqoob	Leytonstone School
Non School Representatives (3)	
Sarah Kendrick	Redwood Pre School
Julian Lee	Hawkswood Group
Paolo Ramella	Sir George Monoux College

LBWF Council Officers	
Linzi Roberts-Egan	Deputy Chief Executive, Families Directorate
Cate Duffy	Divisional Director, Education Improvement
Graham Moss	Schools Finance Consultant
Rishi Peetamsingh	Group Accountant- Schools
Duncan Pike	Strategic Finance Advisor – Families
Shehwar Sultan	Principal Accountant – School Improvement and High Needs Block
Kofi Adu	Hawkswood Group
Observers	
Graham Jackson	Willowfield Humanities College
Joanne Littman	Primary Headteachers Co-ordinator
Maddy Reina	Belmont Park School

1. Welcome all

The Acting Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

Duncan Pike explained the situation explaining why Peter Dawe was no longer eligible to chair tonight's meeting. At a joint meeting of Dawlish and Newport governing bodies, it was agreed to disband both governing bodies at the end of August prior to forming a new governing body in October as a hard federation.

At the Schools Forum Call Over (pre-meeting), service management discussed who may be able to act as chair, as the Vice-Chair was not able to attend tonight's meeting. The Clerk, subsequently contacted Forum members and Shona Ramsay, secondary headteacher representative from Lammas School was first to agree to act as chair for tonight's meeting.

- Acting Chair asked Forum members to introduce themselves.
- Acting Chair announced Matt Hanks (Primary Academy representative – Roger Ascham) sent this apologies and delegated his voting powers to Jo Littman, Area Partnership Co-ordinator for all Waltham Forest Primary Leaders
- Acting Chair announced following the retirement of Peter Falconbridge, Special School representative (Joseph Clarke) during the summer term, Gary Pocock Executive Principal from the Hornbeam Academy Trust will now replace him. Gary Pocock sent his apologies via the Clerk

Apologies received Msgr George Stokes, Gerry Kemble (Head of HR Delivery); Mark Morrall; Gary Pocock; Steve White; Matt Hanks – these were accepted by the Acting Chair.

1.1 Outward Chair

Acting Chair asked for Forum members to pay tribute to Peter by signing his leaving card and to contribute towards a gift, which will be presented to him at the November meeting.

1.2 Tribute to Nicholas Russell

Forum members, observers and Council officers showed their respects to Nicholas Russell, founding Schools Forum member who passed away suddenly during the summer holidays and they all gave a minute's silence as a tribute.

2. Minutes of the last meeting held on 11h June 2014

Acting Chair asked for accuracy and goes through the minutes page by page.

Page 4 bullet point 5: Clerk was asked to remove the last sentence in bullet point 5

Page 6: Clerk was notified to amend the sentence beginning 'Task and Finish'

2.1 Matters Arising

There were none

3. Single Status Update – September 2014

The Single Status update was tabled at the meeting. Gerry Kemble sent his apologies. Any further queries should be emailed to Gerry. All signing in sessions should be completed by the next meeting.

4. Update of Free School Meals Registration – slide presentation update

This was also discussed at the Headteachers Briefing earlier this week.

The following comments and queries were discussed:

- last page having run over 3000 checks: 519 were eligible for Pupil Premium, generating about £4million over six years.

  Acting Chair asked whether the primary heads have any further comments or questions.
- Happy with the outcomes in terms of reception being added.
- It has worked very smoothly.
- Text service to parents which seemed to work ok.
- Data now on the system, so if parents' circumstances change the information can be identified very quickly.
- There is a child and no process to claim the FSM money. DP will follow this up

5. Schools Forum Membership – Update for Discussion and Decision

The report was distributed in advance of the meeting. The following comments were raised:

- The report was discussed at the June meeting.
- The term of office of most members of the Schools Forum ends in October 2014. At the same time, it is necessary to review the current breakdown of membership to ensure that it complies with the Schools Forum Regulations which were updated in October 2013.

- Schools Forum were asked to review *table 4* 'Summary of Changes' in Appendix A
- There were concerns that were raised at the last meeting regarding the reduction of the headteacher representation. Headteachers discussed this and spoke to the secondary headteachers. There is only have one governor and they feel having 3 head teacher representatives is very important.
- The governing bodies also understand why they do feel that. It has been acknowledged by the Governors and they feel there should be 3 secondary heads.
- The primary headteachers would prefer 4 primary heads and 2 governors
- On this occasion that practice has fallen down on crucial issues. The feedback received is that there should be 4 headteachers and 2 governors in the Primary sector
- This was echoed by the Primary headteachers.
- RP agreed with the headteachers and it should be 3 secondary headteachers.
- It was suggested if the two can go up to 3 but keep 2 governors or look at the number of primary. The number of governors is really important keep the numbers equitable.
- The Local Authority determines the membership but clearly don't want to override objections.
- What about the governors from the academies? Confirmed it was for academies and free schools to determine their own representatives.
- JL confirmed that Matt Hanks would continue as the Primary Academy headteacher representative
- Acting Chair noted there has been several ideas regarding suggesting reconfiguration and wondered there is there time to do this
- The response is no because of the elections taking place. Forum could approve the reconfiguration in Table 2 (Appendix A)
- The DFE suggests local authorities should review the maximum size and look carefully that it is representing on the type of schools we have. There is no upper limit mainly around what makes Schools Forum work efficiently. It is up to the individual Local Authority
- Secondary headteachers expressed they wanted to have 3 headteacher representatives and are happy to have the 2 governors representation. They wanted this made clear regarding the governor representation
- Acting Chair: test out the views on the proposals. In order of proposal the primary in favour: 11 against / 3 for
- Acting Chair: For the secondary the second option to be considered: 13 in favour / 1 against
- Acting Chair: Do not need to do the third option - **Response**: no
- Acting Chair: Do we need to vote on 2.1? **Response**: The LA has had a very clear steer

RECOMMENDATIONS

Forum members casted their votes as above
http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/schoolsforum - **Agenda Item 5**

6. Dedicated Schools Grant Outturn 2013-14 – For information

The report was dispatched in advance of the meeting.
The following comments were raised:

- On page 2 it sets out the position for each block.
- Acting Chair: this is for information and for us to note
- Acting Chair: Asked to note the recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

Forum members noted the recommendations on the report as numbered **2.1 – 2.4**
http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/schoolsforum - **Agenda item 6**

7. Use of DSG Underspends

The report was dispatched in advance of the meeting. The following comments were discussed:

- In June 2014 Schools Forum agreed to delegate proposals for the underspend to the Strategic Education Partnership (SEP) Board
- In context there has been a real up turn on fortunes on education in particular in the secondary phase on attainment.
- Those improvements are the testimony of the excellent leaders and teachers to tackle mutual challenges.
- Those improvements are fragile regarding deprivation and also have some challenges in the secondary phase and some in the primary phase.
- 22% improvement in the secondary phase, so do really need to secure those improvements whilst trying to do that against other challenges from policy challenges and on-going demand for school places.
- The LA funding context cut 40%. Significant cut in budget proposals to build up the capacity and strength in schools. There are four proposals.
- Further reporting in the Growth Fund later in the agenda
- Money given to budget holder to build up leadership. The expectation is there will be an action plan
- To allocate the universal offer – support infrastructure e.g. for critical incidents in a short space of time. This will be discussed with headteachers
- It is like a Service Level Agreement (SLA) contract with schools.
- We will work with a spread of headteachers. We are trying to create an accountability strategy and there is a way on how it is used.
- This was agreed at the SEP meeting so asking for agreement tonight
- **Question**: How did you arrive at those figures and is there a costed plan?
- **Response**: It is based on the range of services up to July 2016
- Experience in the past that you need more money.

- This was discussed in terms of secondary challenge but would not envisage being the only resource.
- Schools with sixth forms and all the colleges to improve quality and classroom observation.
- We would embrace the post 16 partnership. The system improvement board would be useful for heads to hear the methodology so this was part of the discussion
- **Question**: Looking at Appendix A is this on the current position as of September. **Response**: It is for the financial year. There is no commitment to it at the moment. Is this a proposal? **Response**: Earmarked budgets but not committed budgets

- **Question**: from the academies perspective, is the money given back to the academies or do they buy-in to this process? Is that a process that can be and should be processed? **Response**: This is from the high needs block. The recommendation came from the SEP and is an opportunity to develop quite uniquely
- **Question**: What is being considered? **Response**: if the Forum decided to delegate to all schools we cannot have individual schools opting in and out.
- If this isn't approved we would need to look at this further
- If funding approved, there would be a need for a leader and also a board created. We do not want to come up with a predetermined plan. We know of the issues regarding governance. There are issues regarding network resource that might come from schools, but those are the discussions we need.
- There has to be an energising project to be earmarked and improve the English and Maths subjects. Very interested in the scope.

Acting Chair asked Forum members to review the recommendations: 13 in favour / none against / none abstaining

RECOMMENDATIONS

Schools Forum AGREED to the recommendations 2.1-2.5 in the report.

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

8. Schools Block Funding in 2015-16

The report was dispatched in the advance of the meeting. The following comments and questions were raised:
Funding arrangements are affected by three key issues:

(a) Changes to the school population between the October 2013 and October 2014 school census dates

(b) Outcome of consultations by the DfE for fairer schools funding in 2015-16 and simplifying the administration of academies funding

(c) Underspend in the Schools Block and High Needs Block in 2014-15.

- We have a period of time from September to December.
- Any decision taken now will be for the January meeting. It may vary on the total number of children from the October census.
- In the Schools Block it is £9.25 million higher until you realise that includes to fully fund a free school for which the government will add £5.25million. It leaves £2.3 million unallocated. In order to take a view provided a review on the two appendices
- Funding ratio between primary and secondary: in this financial year we have the highest. Waltham Forest is increasingly being watched by the DfE.
- The impact taking on the two free or three free schools skews the funding that would make us look worse.
- Split sites are also an issue. Next year we will be the 2nd highest with high proportion on split sites. We need to reduce the total spend, so we suggest looking at the sites
- In terms of the lump sum, we are at the national average but lower for the primary schools. The difference they have significantly small schools. Encourage collaboration

Acting Chair expressed that there is a lot of information and requested a meeting or to attend the constituent groups for them to understand

- **Response:** the dialogue is far best way to do this.
- **Question**: what is the timescale? **Response**: by the next meeting in November and we must ratify in the January meeting.
- **Question**: is there a need to and time to produce a consultation? **Response**: any areas where you want to include

Acting Chair asked the Forum for their agreement to the recommendations: 12 for / none against

RECOMMENDATIONS

Schools Forum AGREED to note to the recommendations 2.1-2.4 in the report

Schools Forum AGREED to confirm the recommendation as numbered 2.5

http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/schoolsforum - **Agenda item 8**

9. Growth Funding in 2015-16 and Beyond

The report was dispatched in advance of the meeting. The following comments were raised:

- Waltham Forest has one of the highest Growth Fund in the country and only six local authorities have a bigger budget. One is Croydon, the others are shire counties.
- The money is set aside by top slicing all schools and academies to fund expansion

- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) operates a different system which is a lot harsher.
- What we can do we can stabilise the top slicing that the Growth Fund would be used on
- Question: does that mean the DSG £1million is from the SEP and not Schools Forum? **Response**: it is for supporting schools it's on the growth of those schools. It is understandable why there is that perception
- Canvassing for a Reach free school. **Response**: it has not been approved and it needs to meet basic need
- EFA funds any new free school in its first year. After that it is the local authority has to pay
- Growth Fund is kept separate. One has to look at the affect and what is deemed to be fair. We want to ensure fairness of funding to particular schools

Acting Chair asked Forum to make a decision about questions they want to bring back. Schools will be consulted

Acting Chair asked the Forum for agreement to the recommendations: 13 for the recommendations / none against / none abstain

RECOMMENDATIONS

Schools Forum AGREED the recommendations as numbered 2.1-2.3 in the report

http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/schoolsforum - **Agenda item 9**

10. The use and impact of the Pupil premium – For Information and discussion

The report was dispatched in advance of the meeting. The following comments were raised:

- A task and finish Group was established and they met twice on discussions and issues regarding the balance and the whole school strategy.
- Nationally some schools are pooling Pupil Premium for other things
- This has not gone to all headteachers but would like the Task and finish group to make further comments and published as a hard cover.
- Arjun was thanked on the well-written report

Acting Chair encouraged colleagues to look at it closely and would like further collaboration.

11. High Needs Block 2014-15 – For information and decision

The report was distributed in advance of the meeting. The following comments were raised:

- The impetus of the proposal comes from research there is a need to create provision internally.
- The identified group is set out on the first page of the report
- Young people with mental health issues. We are mindful of those that are missing.
- Common characteristics each one of them has acute mental needs and special SEN.

- The Hawkswood Group expands its offer for up to 6 pupils in the year one.
- We will come back to Schools Forum for a more permanent basis. We can start this in January to April, therefore this will be three months of funding
- Currently in discussion with CAMHS with consultants and we have offered them space to accommodate
- This is fully supported.
- We need to be flexible and not necessary define by a statement.
- There are assessments that are accepted before attending Hawkswood. It is then discussed to the Fair Access Panel (FAP), some with challenging behaviour are not always accepted in Hawkswood
- To make sure to meet the needs and expand the criteria, but not to an extent that we place in the wrong criteria. Youngsters with assessed mental health needs, but not at the point that is massively disruptive.

Acting Chair: Asked for agreement to recommendation to 2.1 – *this was agreed*. Report back on recommendation 2.2. Without approving the 2.2 are we limited to the £114,000?

- The SEN team may not have six pupils but we are resourcing for 6.

Any Other Business

Headteachers received the Fair Funding document which lobbied for inner London weighting. Once this is finalised it will be distributed to all schools

Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday 12 November 2014

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

The meeting ended at **20:38**