

MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING
Wednesday 18 September 2013
Committee Room 3, Waltham Forest Town Hall
6:30 – 7:30pm

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)	
Maureen Okoye	Selwyn and Davies Lane Federation
Kathryn Soulard	Greenleaf Primary School
Secondary (3)	
John Hernandez	Norlington School 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
Secondary (2)	
Rukhsana Yaqoob	Leytonstone School
Non School Representatives	
Julian Lee	Alternative Provisions Representative
Steve White	Union Representative (NUT)
LBWF Council Officers / Representatives	
Graham Moss	Strategic Development Consultant
Florence Fadahunsi	Principal Accountant-Schools
Rishi Peetamsingh	Group Accountant – Schools
Duncan Pike	Strategic Finance Advisor – Children’s
Shehwar Sultan	Principal Accountant – Schools & High Needs

Raina Turner	Head of Finance – Children’s
Adrian Williams	Interim Assistant Director, School Effectiveness
Observers	
Graham Jackson	Willowfield Humanities College
Joanne Littman	WFPLA/TSA
Julia Mainwaring	Belmont Park School
Jey Monsen	Joint Principal Educational Psychologist (Waltham Forest)
Zoe Cozens	Heathcote School
Michael Rennie	Sir George Monoux College
Jon Ashwell	Highams Park School

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. The Chair expressed his concern that the pre-briefing technical was, unfortunately in quorate but was pleased to see the Forum was quorate.

1.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted by the Chair: Peter Falconbridge (Joseph Clarke Special School); Aktar Beg (Edinburgh Primary School); James O’Rourke (Parkside Primary School); Cllr Nicholas Russell (Davies Lane & Selwyn Federation); Ian Moyes (Heathcote School); Msgr George Stokes (Diocese of Brentwood); Mark Morrall (Chingford Foundation / Rushcroft); Matt Hanks (Roger Ascham Primary) and Cate Duffy (Divisional Director – School Improvement).

Chair announced there have been changes to the membership of the Forum. Claire Toberman, Headteacher at Low Hall Nursery announced her retirement and has therefore left the Forum. Claire served on the Forum for many years. Kate Jennings, former headteacher at Ainslie Wood, has been appointed to another school in the borough and has, therefore stepped down from the Forum. One of the Forum’s longest serving members Barbara Barnard, serving on the Forum since December 2007 has decided to resign from the Forum due to continuing ill-health. The Clerk arranged for letters to Kate and Barbara to be signed by the Chair and will be sent to them in due course. A letter to Claire will be sent once the Clerk finds out her private address.

Chair thanked the Clerk for collating the huge volume of reports and appendices for tonight’s meeting.

2. Minutes of the last meeting held on 12th June 2013

The minutes of the meeting held on the 12th June 2013 were checked for accuracy and signed off by the Chair as a true record of the meeting.

3. Single Status Update – September 2013

The Single Status update brief report was distributed in advance of the meeting. DP provided some additional verbal notes via Gerry Kemble, Head of HR Delivery:

- Facilitated meeting with Counsel on 24th June. It was a well received engagement between Heads/School Representatives and the Council/Counsel.
- Legal have then visited all schools with RSSO's and fully understood the individual circumstances.
- HR has then sought benchmarking info from other London Boroughs (on how they have addressed RSSO issues).
- Information collated and provided to Counsel for final opinion that is due before the end of September.
- Further meeting with Heads/Schools being set up for first week in October.
- Target for resolution before the end of calendar year.

The Chair announced officers and headteachers attended Task and Finish Working Groups during the summer term and questions have already been recommended.

4. Update for the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2013-14, the 2012-13 Outturn and use of DSG Balances

The report was distributed in advance of the meeting. Rishi Peetamsingh, Group Accountant for Schools provided a commentary verbal report to the Forum.

The report deals with two parts: the final outturn for 2012-2013 and makes recommendations on the use of the DSG underspend. A Task and Finish Group was established in June and met on 11th July to consider and make recommendations to Schools Forum on the use of the DSG underspend. The latest notification of the 2013-14 DSG is £186.2 million after deductions for Academy recoupment and changes in the High Needs Block.

What was not discussed at the Task and Finish Group when they met in July is recommendations **2.13** and **2.14** in the report. Schools Forum is asked to agree to allocate the underspent DSG balances for use in 2013-14 as follows:

2.13 states: £0.040 million to the Education Psychology Service

2.14 states: £0.0250 million to be carried forward to support schools in financial difficulty.

The Chair asked the Forum for any questions to the report.

Question: Who was present in the Task and Finish Group?

Response: RP referred to *Appendix B: Minutes of the Use of DSG Underspend for 2012-13*

The Clerk was asked to note that Rukhsana Yaqoob, Secondary Governor (Leytonstone School) did attend the Task and Finish in July. This has been noted by the Clerk.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Forum members were asked to note recommendations **2.1-2.10**; Forum members were asked to agree to the recommendations **2.11-2.12** and were also asked to agree to the recommendations **2.13-2.14**, which was not discussed at the Task and Finish Group that met in July

The Chair asked for votes.

Schools Forum AGREED to note the recommendations as numbered 2.1-2.10 in the report

Schools Forum AGREED the recommendations as numbered 2.11-2.12 and 2.13-2.14 (which was not discussed at the Task and Finish Group that met in July) in the report

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The Chair commented he was impressed with the clarity of the report and thanked the report authors for their contribution.

5. High Needs Block Funding: Proposals for using SEN underspend in 2013-14 and update on places in special schools and academies

The report was distributed in advance of the meeting. Shehwar Sultan, Principal Accountant for Schools & High Needs also provided a commentary verbal report.

The Forum was asked to refer to page 2 of the report where it was highlighted there is a duplicate of paragraph 2.5. Forum was asked to re-number the duplicate to '2.5a'.

SS explained the report follows on from the previous report on the DSG underspend. At the June meeting Schools Forum agreed a number of projects in the sum of £105,550 that would benefit from additional one-off funding that the SEN underspend could provide. Various options and recommendations were read out. SS asked the Forum to pay particular attention to paragraph, 2.5 where a sum of £200,000 to be allocated towards the cost of four SEN experts to advice and support headteachers regarding SEN reform. In addition, the Forum was asked to note the revised paragraph 2a which is to carry forward.

The Forum was asked to refer to *Table B* on page 4 of the report. There have been significant changes at William Morris Schools and this will be discussed further at the next meeting on 15th October at 5:00pm.

Question: Are the unfilled places at any of the William Morris Schools under 16?

Response: SS confirmed this has not been analysed yet.

Chair announced he is pleased with the recommendation 2.2 regarding Belmont Park Special School to commission a level 1 BTEC Diploma in Basic Construction from John Laing Training starting this month. Headteacher confirmed it is a successful course so far. There are currently eight students who have started on the course. Working with young people is very important. Headteacher confirmed there are no girls that have joined the course.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Forum members were asked to note the recommendations on the report.

Schools Forum members were asked to recap 2.1 and to agree to the recommendations as numbered 2.1 – 2.6 in the report. Forum members were asked to note the recommendations 2.7-2.8

The Chair asked for votes.

Schools Forum AGREED to the recommendation as numbered 2.1-2.6 in the report.

Schools Forum NOTED the recommendations as numbered 2.7-2.8 in the report.

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The Chair thanked all who had attended the Task and Finish meetings so far. Membership is not 'fixed in stone', therefore all are welcome to attend.

6. Proposed Changes to Schools Block 5-16 Growth Fund for 2014-15

The report was distributed in advance of the meeting. Graham Moss, Strategic Development Consultant also provided a commentary verbal report. Only one member attended the Schools Block Task and Finish Group meetings. The report outlines the Growth Fund for 2014-15 provides funding for planned in-growth in September 2014 following the October 2013 census.

The Forum was asked to refer to the 'recommendations' section. Under 2.2, the government has to take into account pupils' intake between October and December. This financial year, 81 pupils joined but no funding was received.

Under 2.3, the Secretary of State changed the system on the funding. There are two papers that accompany the report which show concerns for the dropped numbers (Appendices G and H). Following the review of funding arrangements for 2013/14, the Local Authority would now have the additional discretion through the Growth Fund of allocating additional funding to schools with falling rolls. To meet the DfE criteria, schools must be rated either good or outstanding in Ofsted inspections. The Forum would need to make a decision what the criteria would be on the funding of planned new capacity (basic need).

Under 2.4, arising from correspondence relating to Project Management costs, there are issues regarding projects relating to Leytonstone School that are funded by the Local Authority. Technically these are leadership costs, but technically not Growth Fund.

Under 2.5, as far as Growth Fund is concerned, it has been about the existing schools and the growth of population from the new schools, i.e. free schools and academies. The government changed the regulations, that if a new school is needed, the Local Authority has to fund the start-up costs. The Local Authority must agree the criteria to which to fund these schools. We have to fund from our existing monies. Therefore, it is being proposed to agree the criteria on the funding of planned new capacity (basic need). Schools Forum is being alerted about this.

Under 2.6, £1 million from the DSG underspend does not include costs of new schools on basic needs, therefore decisions would have to be agreed at tonight's meeting.

There will be further reports to be discussed in the November meeting.

A meeting is required, preferably the next Schools Block task and finish group to decide the Growth Fund criteria on the funding of planned new capacity (basic need).

Question: This is a question for the future: funding of new schools, whether there is any capacity in other schools?

Response: Post-16 falls outside of this criteria. This will be disputed, despite there being a business case. A meeting between the DfE, Cate Duffy, Divisional Director for School Improvement and Adrian Williams had taken place to discuss this.

Response 2: Regardless whether there is a need, local authorities may top slice the DSG in order to create a Growth Fund to support schools which are required to provide extra places in order to meet basic need within their authority. The Growth Fund may not be used to support schools in financial difficulty.

Question: What is the time scale?

Response: The process is on-going. We are expecting confirmation soon.

Response: We can use the £1 million from the DSG underspend, but there could be some other underspend. We need to make the decision by mid-January 2014. The worst case scenario would be taking another £80 off the AWPU for secondary schools.

Comment: On this basis, if there were more places, some of the primary schools have expanded, so perhaps these are less needed.

Response: It is too late for that. Not planned for bigger secondary schools and this will not be considered by the Secretary of State.

Question: What has happened to the recoupment for academies?

Response: This will be checked, but the recoupment costs should have been re-paid.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

The Chair asked for votes.

Schools Forum AGREED to the recommendations 2.1-2.7 in the report.

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Forum also needs to set up another Schools Block meeting to discuss the Growth Criteria. Shona Ramsay and Lynnette Parvez volunteered to be a part of this group. Kathryn Soulard from the Schools Forum Primary headteacher sector also agreed to be involved in the group.

7. Update on Issues Affecting Early Years and the 3-4 Year Old Funding

The report was distributed in advance of the meeting. Raina Turner, Head of Finance also provided a commentary verbal report. Appendix A – Task and Finish Group – Project Initiation Document (PID) outlines the establishment of a task and finish group to consider issues affecting each of the new three funding blocks.

The initial meeting of the Early Years Block has been arranged to take place on **3rd October** and the Forum was asked for volunteers to be part of this group. The Chair has agreed to chair the meeting. Kathryn Soulard and Sandra Campbell both agreed to become part of this group. If there are any additional topics to be added, this should be sent to the report author.

The net sum will be revised at the task and finish group meeting in October.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Schools Forum was asked to note the recommendations as numbered **2.1-2.2** and asked to confirm as numbered **2.3**

The Chair asked for votes.

Schools Forum AGREED to note to the recommendations 2.1-2.2 in the report

Schools Forum AGREED to confirm as numbered 2.3

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8. Proposed changes to Schools Block 5-16 Local Funding Formula for 2014-15

The report was distributed in advance of the meeting. Graham Moss, Strategic Development Consultant also provided a commentary verbal report. The report outlines what the prediction are for the school population in October. In terms of the formula, the Authority needs to address the changes that the government has introduced. In *Appendix D*, and as agreed at the Schools Block Task and Finish group, the Lump Sum rate for primary schools should be reduced from £125,000 to £75,000.

In the London area, we shouldn't be putting the money in maintaining the Leadership structure. The government expects collaboration. In *Appendix E, E.3 Mobility*: this causes significant changes as the government has introduced that funding only applies to those schools where the percentage of eligible pupils is over 10% and only the percentage above 10% counts. In Prior Attainment, the Schools Block Task and Finish group that met on 18th July, agreed to continue to use the 73 points cut-off. The Forum was asked to review the table in Appendix E: Targeted Pupil Support as the Authority is proposing that the revised rates for Prior Attainment, EAL and Pupil Mobility be the same for both Primary and Secondary. The Authority need to be mindful of the AWPU rates (paragraph 2.10 in the report). The funding per pupil is significant (see *Appendix F: Comparison with other Local Authorities and AWPU*). It is hoped that secondary colleagues can see the intention.

Question: Regarding Prior Attainment: What about children who arrived in Primary schools late during the academic year as well as those that arrived in the summer term? Might have something out of the EAL – is there any payback?

Response: There are a lot of children who came without Prior Attainment. That has not been accepted. The official argument is the turnover is in deprived areas. Free School Meals they will attract the Deprivation factor. For Waltham Forest, 80% of new admissions are EAL, so you still are receiving that. There is nothing we can do on the percentage of children for whom that data is available. You use the data for 90% and apply it to your total roll.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Schools Forum was asked to pay particular attention to note the recommendations 2.1 – 2.3 in the report.

Schools Forum was asked to agree, although subject to consultation with schools to the recommendations as numbered 2.4 -2.10 in the report.

The Chair asked for votes.

Schools Forum AGREED to pay particular attention to note the recommendations as number 2.1-2.3 in the report

Schools Forum AGREED, subject to consultation with schools to the recommendations as numbered 2.4-2.10 in the report

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9 Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday 13th November 2013

Time: 5:15pm – Pre-briefing Technical Session

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

The Chair confirmed he was the only voting member who attended the pre-briefing technical session earlier this evening. The Chair believes these sessions are still required and has

asked participants to inform the Clerk whether they will be attending future pre-briefing sessions.

9a. Task and Finish Groups

The Chair reiterated to Forum these are not closed groups, but also appreciate there are other demands on time. The next meeting to be arranged is the Schools Block. Nursery headteachers should be invited to all task and finish groups.

The meeting ended at **7:30pm**.