

## **SCHOOLS FORUM**

Minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2008

### **Present**

Primary School Teachers:	Sue Meckiff
Secondary Head Teachers:	Meryl Davies, Kathy Griffiths and Karen Raven
Primary Governors:	Paul Chick, Tony Corkett, Betsy Johnstone and Nick Webb
Secondary Governors:	Janet Bell, Andrew Downes (Chairman) and Jenni Mogridge.
Non-School Representatives:	David Bridger (Vice-Chairman), Diana Manville, Alison Register and Mrs Mary Riley

### **Also present**

Karen Fletcher-Wight (Assistant Director, Children & Young People Services)  
Rob Carling (Head of Children and Young People Finance)  
Mandy Russell (CYP Finance Group)  
Gill Bratley (Principal Finance Officer)  
Helen Long (Democratic Services)

### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies had been received from Ron Lawrence and Sue Robertson.

### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none. Register of interest forms would be sent out to all members of the Schools Forum.

### **3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2008**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2008 were agreed, subject to the following amendments:

Page 1: Add Karen Raven to the list of apologies

Page 2: Matters arising, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph, delete "The Head of Children and Young People Finance.....any questions arising"

## **Matters Arising**

Page 2: Matters Arising – Feed back from David Pearson on meeting with Special Head Teachers. It was reported that David Pearson had said that all SEN children were fully funded but the Head Teachers disputed this as some children had greater need than others. Karen Fletcher-Wright reported that there would be an audit of all SEN children. She was currently working on an “audit tool” and would present this to a meeting of the Special Head Teachers cluster group.

Concerning the issue raised about the Behaviour Service and the provision of Respite. The situation had not changed but it was hoped that outreach work in schools would reduce the need for respite and that it would only be used for those pupils who really needed it.

Pages 5-7 DSG- Karen Fletcher-Wright, with regard to Primary Service development, reported there had only been one response from the consultation with Primary Head Teachers,. The low response was due to the fact that there had been a lot of discussion with Head Teachers, and officers had attended the cluster Chairs meeting. The proposals would be going to the next meeting of the Children and Young People Portfolio Holder. The recommendation was to “proceed with caution”.

For Secondary Service Development work would start with the Secondary head teachers in the Autumn term.

She was pleased to report that the SPIKE project was progressing well . The programmes would be developed and reported back to the Schools forum in the Autumn.

### **4. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN**

Andrew Downes and David Bridger were nominated as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Forum respectively for 2008/09 and their nominations were agreed.

**RESOLVED that Andrew Downes and David Bridger be appointed Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Schools Forum respectively for 2008/09.**

### **5. CENTRAL LIMIT (VERBAL UPDATE)**

The Head of Children and Young People Finance explained that the DSG settlement was imminent. It was expected to wipe out a lot of the central

contingency. He would want to consider it carefully before circulating a paper to members of the Forum.

In relation to 3 and 4 year olds concerns were raised that the count, which usually took place in January, disadvantaged the nursery settings. In terms of numbers these were highest in the Summer term and so it would be better, either to have termly counts or for the count to be in April or September each year. Counting in January meant that the PVI settings might well not receive enough funding to support the number of children on roll in the Summer term.

## **6 SPENDING BY PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN 2007/08**

Members of the forum considered the financial position of Primary Secondary and Special Schools as at 31 March 2008 the end of the 2007/08 financial year which were reported in accordance with the DCSF Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) Regulations. The CFR framework consisted of six balances, which provided an overall picture of a school's resources available from one year to the next, and gave information on balances carried forward. Officers explained that this report was being presented to the Forum for information.

In relation to BO6- Community Focused Extended Schools officers explained that this was funding for schools for community funded expenditure and not necessarily for individual pupils. Therefore whilst the spreadsheet appeared to show some schools with a considerable amount of BO6 money this was due to the fact that they were holding the funds for a number of schools in their areas. An example of this was Warren road Primary School.

**RESOLVED that the report is noted.**

## **7 OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION WITH SCHOOLS ON FUNDING FOR POCKETS OF DEPRIVATION**

At the last meeting of the Schools' Forum it was agreed that all schools be consulted on the proposal that the funding for pockets of deprivation should only be allocated to schools with a deprivation factor of 50% or higher.

Schools were asked two questions:

- Question 1: did they support the proposal to distribute this funding using the DCSF Tax Credit data
- Question 2: Did they support the Schools' Forum's proposal to focus this funding on those schools with a deprivation indicator of 50% or higher.

A total of 32 responses were received, which was one of the strongest responses to any consultation. In relation to question 1; 24 agreed and 8

disagreed. In relation to question 2; not all respondents answered the question. Of those that did 14 were in favour and 15 were against.

The Children and Young People Finance team had analysed all the comments and, where possible, grouped them together. There were a range of comments but there was a general feeling that this methodology was still not the fairest way. This view was shared by the Schools forum. It was felt that the percentages, even with the weighted bands attached, did not distribute the money fairly to the schools with the highest numbers of pupils from deprived areas. The Schools Forum members pointed out a number of schools where the funding needed to be greater. They considered ways in which this could be achieved.

They appreciated that this was not a large sum of money but felt that they needed to establish a principle for the distribution of the funds. In order to support the schools with the higher numbers of deprived pupils they discussed the possibility of not funding the schools in the first two bands. However it had always been the intention that all schools benefited and they felt that this was the principle they wished to use.

They concluded that the best way to distribute the funding was to use appendix 2 but for the 41 -60% band increase the weighting from 4 to 6. This proposal would be submitted to the Children and Young People Portfolio Holder. The Head of Children and Young People Finance felt that it would be better for him to take this to the Portfolio Holder informally and he would explain the rationale behind the Forum's decision.

So that the allocation of funding was not further delayed it was agreed that rather than it be held back until the next meeting of the Schools Forum a small group meet with the Chairman and the Head of Children and Young People Finance to agree the final funding formula if approved by the Portfolio Holder. It was agreed that there was no need for a second round of consultations with schools.

The Forum also debated whether those schools on the Minimum Funding Guarantee should have their allocation of the deprivation funding withheld. It was agreed that this should apply since the schools in question were over funded compared to those schools funded by the Borough's schools funding formula.

**RESOLVED that the proposal to the Children and Young People Portfolio Holder be for the funding to be allocated using appendix 2 but that the weighting be increased from 4 to 6 for those schools in the 41 – 60% band.**

## **8 EXTENDED SCHOOLS STRATEGY**

Karen Fletcher-Wright presented a report on the Extended schools strategy which outlined a strategic approach to the development and funding

of extended services across Bromley and requested that the Forum agree “in principle” the approach to go out for wider consultation.

Local Authorities had been required to respond to a statutory duty to ensure that by 2010 all children had access to a range of extended services through their schools. This initiative had become known as Extended Schools and was funded through a number of grant streams Standards Fund; Extended Schools; and Sure Start Early Years Childcare Grant (08/09 only). In addition to this there was the Bromley Children Project which was core funded by the Local Authority, the Bromley Children’s Fund Grant and the CHOICE grant which were both now part of the Area Based Grant (ABG).

Extended Schools services had been developed by providing a number of small one-off grants to schools and other organisations. Whilst this had ensured that were kept on target with the DCSF for the number of schools engaged, the work had not been underpinned by a strategic approach ensuring that the areas of most disadvantage were able to provide sufficient services. A number of head teachers had indicated that they would welcome a more targeted and strategic approach to the funding and delivery of extended services.

The Forum members considered the proposals and noted that a detailed analysis of available data including free school meals, child poverty index; attendance, attainment, teenage pregnancy and other health statistics would be undertaken to develop a formula to fund services. An allocation of funding would be awarded to a community area and an affordable menu of services developed in collaboration with the schools. The delivery of the services to schools and children centres would initially be the responsibility of the Area Co-ordinators to devolve, based on need. This would be in close liaison with partner agencies, service providers and schools that would provide local knowledge of the areas. The Localised Services Manager would co-ordinate the work of across the six areas to ensure that best value was achieved by joint provision across areas wherever possible.

The timetable for the consultation was considered by the Forum. The next stage was to seek authority to consult from the Children and Young People Portfolio Holder to consult and the Children and Young People Policy Development and Scrutiny would then scrutinise the consultation process and outcomes in July and the Portfolio Holder would make a decision on the strategy on 16<sup>th</sup> July.

Karen Fletcher-Wright explained that a circular would be sent to schools which gave detailed information regarding the proposals. She would also be advertising for representatives from the voluntary sector to get involved. The authority would undertake the commissioning and it was hoped to start to commission the services in September/October.

The Forum Members agreed that they would approve the proposals “in principle” but would like an opportunity to consider the detail.

**RESOLVED that the approach to go out for wider consultation be agreed “in principle” but that a further report be submitted to a future meeting giving the details of the proposals.**

## **9 SEN/EARLY YEARS REVIEWS**

### **SEN**

The Working group would be meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> June. They were proposing to change the threshold to delegated funding and separate SEN and AEN.

### **EARLY YEARS**

The terms of reference were circulated at the meeting and are appended to these minutes.

The group were getting close to appointing a consultant and 3 tenders were due to be returned on 20<sup>th</sup> June. The consultant was being funded from the Schools Forum budget.

The working group were looking at the pilots being undertaken by ten other authorities. In line with a lot of other local authorities, they did not think the Borough formula for funding EY settings would be available in time for the 09/10 funding cycle and the group would submit a report to the Schools Forum on how to fund the interim period.

The group also requested the Forum write to the DCFS requesting that the school count for Early Years settings to either be undertaken termly or to have one annual count in April or September each year. Attendance in Early Years settings tended to vary each term with the Summer term seeing the highest roll numbers. Therefore the January count meant that the settings might well not receive enough funding to support the Summer roll.

**RESOLVED that The Forum write to the DCFS to request either an Annual April or Spetember count or a termly count for Early years settings.**

## **10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Concerns over the electronic distribution of the Forum agenda; Members found it costly to print out large agendas. Following the meeting, the clerk, in conjunction with officers, agreed that agendas would be sent out both electronically and by post.

**11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Forum be held on **Thursday, 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2008 at 4.30 pm** and the venue be the EDC.

Chairman

The meeting ended at 7.00 pm