

SCHOOLS' FORUM

Minutes of the meeting held at 4.30 pm on 13 December 2012

Present:

Andrew Downes (Chairman)	Secondary Academy Governor
David Bridger (Vice-Chairman)	Non-School Representative (Church of England)
Colin Ashford	Primary Academy Governor
Anna Boshier	Non-School Representative (Catholic Church)
Geoff Boyd	Primary Maintained Governor
Angela Chapman	Primary Maintained Governor
Nick Cross	Secondary Academy Head Teacher
Patrick Foley	Primary Maintained School Head Teacher
Sam Parrett	Non-School Representative (14-19 Partnership)
Neil Proudfoot	Non-School Representative (Joint Teacher Liaison Committee)
Karen Raven	Secondary Academy Head Teacher
Alison Regester	Non-School Representative (Early Years)
Keith Seed	Special Head Teacher/Governor
David Wilcox	Secondary Academy Governor
Aydın Önaç,	Secondary Maintained Head Teachers

Also Present:

David Bradshaw	Head of Education and Care Services Finance
Dr Tessa Moore	Education and Care Services
Helen Long	Democratic Services Officer

20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Richard Sammonds, he also tendered his resignation. Apologies were also received from Councillor Pauline Tunnicliffe and Mandy Russell, Head of Schools Finance Support.

The Chairman then informed the Forum that, sadly, Gillian Bratley, Schools Finance Team had passed away on the 11th December. The Forum extended their sympathy to Gill's family.

The Chairman also welcomed Sam Parrett, the 14-19 partnership and Mr Aydın Önaç, Head Teacher of St Olaves School who was representing the Maintained Secondary Schools.

21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations.

22 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18th October 2012

There were two amendments to the minutes:

- Minute 18, 1st paragraph, second line should be EFA not PFA
- Minute 18, 4th Paragraph, 4th line, replace Vice-Chairman with David Bradshaw.

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th October 2012 were agreed. Subject to the above amendments.

Matters arising:

- There had been further correspondence between Mandy Russell and Langley Boys and Langley Girls Schools. A meeting had taken place, the response had been sent and a further meeting was due to take place on Tuesday 18th December 2012.
- Bromley had received an email from the DfE querying the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) for Primary and Secondary Schools. Officers did not understand the request so had responded asking for clarity. Mandy Russell would report to the Forum once the reply had been received.
- In relation to the PFI mentioned on AOB at the previous meeting. David Bradshaw had received an update from Don King. The PFI charges for the school in question would not start until 2016 by which time it was expected that a National Formula would be in place. The SF would be consulted on the National Formula and could register its strong views about PFI charges for one school affecting all other schools. Officers had requested further information from Mr King as the response was vague.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 8th October 2012 be agreed, subject to the amendments listed above, and matters arising be noted.

23 Estimated Dedicated Schools Grant for 2013/14 Based on Funding Blocks

The Forum considered details of the estimated Dedicated Schools Grant for 2013/14 based on the three funding blocks. They also noted the initial allocations and estimated expenditure under each of the block using 2012/13 data and the issues/assumptions on which the data was based.

The Head of ECS Finance explained that the first part of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) was based on funding blocks. His team had undertaken some initial work, on the allocations for each block, but it was very much a "first pass" and he hoped to receive more information in the next few days. Failing this further

information was due to be received on 19th December. He asked the forum to identify how to use, if any, of the available headroom. However they needed to be aware that the headroom may disappear as they moved forward.

The Forum then considered the 3 blocks separately:

High Needs

Members asked for the position of the SEN 2012/13 budget. Officers reported that, at present, it was slightly under spent. They were currently working on the 2013/4 figures but did not envisage a growth. These figures would be brought back to the Forum in the New Year. The Assistant Director (Education) added that the SEN team were also working on efficiencies and that High needs was a very difficult area in which to predict expenditure.

Members of the Forum then asked about the 2 areas of prudential borrowing from 2012/13; £570k and £800k. What would happen in 2013/14? The Head of ECS Finance explained that the £570k was as a result of an earlier invest to save which finished in 2012/13 and this would therefore not appear in the 2013/14 budget. The £800k was an invest to save payback for the Glebe which would continue to appear in the 2013/14 budget.

The 14-19 partnership representative asked if, for 16-19 year olds the figure included the element removed from the Further Education (FE) budget. The Head of ECS Finance explained that the DfE were still not giving a clear outline of FE funding. They wanted to know if it would be included in the DSG and were pressing the DfE for an answer.

Early Years

The Vice Chairman raised concerns about Early Years funding showing a funding shortfall of £825,000. He felt that Early Years' providers could not possibly absorb this but he felt that the report did not reflect the potential position. The Head of ECS Finance explained that they had a contingency of £551k which could be used to free up some of the funding shortfall. He added that he felt that the EFA had used old figures for their calculations which again might result in a better position.

The Early Years representative asked if the number of early years' pupils was predicted to rise and The Head of ECS Finance reported that there was likely to be a higher take up. The higher the take up the lower the figure to be recouped by DfE would be which again would help with the shortfall

Schools Block

The Vice Chairman commented that the report made it appear as if there was surplus headroom. However this was created by assuming that every school should bear a cut of 1.5% (to the MFG limit) in addition to not receiving any extra funding to meet inflationary cost increases. The Head of ECS Finance explained it showed the worst case scenario,

Based on the figures presented, there would be £3.6m head room and The Head of ECS Finance wanted an indication from the Forum as to how this would be spent. The report suggested 3 areas; An increase in Early Years funding; Support the MFG impact on schools - this could be done either by reducing the floor by 1.5% or by introducing a ceiling; and funding "bulge classes".

With regard to Early Years the Vice Chairman had been in discussions with Mandy Russell as he thought there was a special MFG rule relating to Early Years; as yet Mandy had not had the time to see how this would be applied. He thought that this may mean that Early Years did not have bear more than a 1.5% reduction. If this was the case then they would be forced to use part of the head room on Early Years.

The Early years Representative reported that she had been in discussions with providers. The New Early Years Foundation Framework had a lot of hidden costs involved with no added funding to cover the costs. There were training needs and the greater emphasis on reports for parents meant that staff had to be released to write the report: both had cost implications. Any cuts in funding would impact on providers at a time when they were facing higher costs.

The forum then discussed "bulge classes". These would also be a priority as they would have to be funded. However the Vice Chairman pointed out that early indications of funding needed for 2013/14 were that these would be very similar to the amount of £970,000 in 2012/13 so there might not need to be much headroom used here.

The Vice Chairman asked why there were only 3 options listed whereas in the past they had considered a longer list. The Assistant Director explained that, at present, these were the only areas they had identified.

One of the Primary Governor Representatives raised a point that it may not be legal to reduce the floor of the MFG. Officers would clarify this and report back to the Forum.

Another suggestion was to use all of the schools block headroom on schools..

The Maintained Secondary Schools representative asked if there was a permitted range of options and if it included the possibility of recognising success. Officer would look at the EFA guidelines as they were limited to the 10 that would drive the formula.

The Schools forum accepted 4 areas for the possible spend of the head room:

- (1) Use of headroom to offset reduction to Early Years funding.
- (2) Use of headroom to support MFG. This could be done either by reducing the floor of 1.5% or by introducing a ceiling. The outcome of this could be either that some schools would not lose any funding or that some schools would receive a small increase. It is proposed

that funding scenarios based on this would be produced for the next Schools Forum meeting.

- (3) An estimated figure has been included for bulge classes. This may have to be considered as a priority for allocation of additional funding.
- (4) SEN Funding.

RESOLVED that the report is noted and the Forum suggests funding across the 4 areas outlined above.

24 Criteria for Growth and Infant Class Size Funding

The Schools' Forum considered the criteria for funding pupil growth and class size funding and the "in principle" amount of funding required to support it. The Head of ECS Finance explained that this item was linked to the previous one as it would have an effect of the use of any head room. £1m would be held centrally, it was purely for running costs and did not include any capital costs.

For a number of years Bromley had faced enormous pressure to find reception places for increasing numbers of pupils. In order for schools to be able to comply with these requests additional revenue funding had been allocated to schools through a specific factor in the funding formula. In 2012/13 the funding was approximately £970k. But following the review of the funding formula local authorities were no longer allowed to have a separate factor in the funding formulas to provide their funding to schools. However, dependant on certain requirements, funding for significant pupil growth could be retained centrally, before the formula was calculated; funding for additional classes as a consequence of infant class size regulations could be funded as part of this.

In light of this officers were recommending the following criteria and funding principles for which they sought approval from the Schools' Forum:

- i) Where schools were required to take in between 1 and 6 additional reception pupils for each form of entry, class size legislation funding to be paid for the relevant period only (ie Sept to March) and that the amount of funding should increase to £35,000 for a full year.
- (ii) Where schools were required to take in 7 or more pupils, they will be expected to open an additional class and funding will be calculated as follows:

AWPU x 30 x 7/12ths

SEN per pupil funding x 30 x school % x 7/12ths

Deprivation per pupil funding x 30 x school % x 7/12ths

EAL per pupil funding x 30 x school % x 7/12ths

For example, based on the funding levels in the current modelling, a school taking in 30 pupils and with 10% SEN, 15% deprivation and 3% EAL would receive the following funding

$$\text{AWPU} = \text{£}2185 \times 30 \times 7/12\text{ths} = \text{£}38,237$$

$$\text{SEN} = \text{£}2500 \times 3 \times 7/12\text{ths} = \text{£}4,375$$

$$\text{Dep} = \text{£}1500 \times 4.5 \times 7/12\text{ths} = \text{£}3,937$$

$$\text{EAL} = \text{£}1000 \times 0.9 \times 7/12\text{ths} = \text{£}525$$

$$\text{Total Funding} = \text{£}47,074$$

- (iii) Funding would be allocated to all primary schools ie maintained primary schools and academy primaries and would be paid directly by the LA in 7 monthly instalments from Sept to March.
- (iv) This policy would be reviewed in future years to be extended to secondary schools as and when the increase in pupil numbers reached that sector.

The Forum were concerned that if the funding was based on the October census and pupils started in November the school would not receive funding for those pupils. However officers confirmed that the majority would be funded from September but if they started late there could be a problem. The department would only intervene if there was a significant difference.

The Forum was concerned that this was an interim measure and that the funding was not sustainable long term and the Forum should be looking for sustainable solutions to the class size issues.

The policy would be reviewed to take account of the secondary but as these pupils were a known entity "bulge classes" were not a problem.

The representative for Secondary Academies wanted clarification as to how officers had arrived at their figure of £1m. In response the Head of ECS Finance explained that it was based on an average of 16 bulge classes and it needed to be kept centrally as it would have to be allocated at certain times. Members asked for more information on how this figure was reached as they were concerned at tying up such a large sum for children who did not yet exist and have a more accurate demographic. Officers would provide this at the next meeting together with projections for 2013/14.

RESOLVED that the proposed criteria for funding pupil growth and infant class size funding are agreed.

25 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The forum noted the resignation from Richard Sammonds, Primary Academy rep. He suggested that Matt Rampton at Pickhurst Juniors, who chairs the Bromley Primary Academy Chain, may be able to suggest a suitable replacement. The Clerk had already contacted Matt and was awaiting a reply.

The Secondary Academies representative requested information on the delegated Behaviour Service Money as there was lack of clarity about the level of delegation or the level of spend. This information could then be sent to Head teacher colleagues.

26 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The dates of the next 3 meetings were circulated. All meetings would be held at the Education Development Centre and would commence at 4.30pm:

Thursday, 10th January 2013*

Thursday, 7th February 2013

Thursday, 14th March 2013

*as there was a tight deadline for information to be received the agenda may be late.

The Meeting ended at 5.35 pm

Chairman