

EDUCATION BUDGET SUB-COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 16 October 2014

Present:

Councillor Neil Reddin FCCA (Chairman)
Councillors Kathy Bance MBE, Alan Collins and Judi Ellis

Councillor Stephen Wells, Portfolio Holder for Education

Also Present:

Jane Bailey, Assistant Director: Education
Robert Bollen, Head of Strategic Pupil Place Planning
James Mullender, Senior Accountant
Amanda Russell, Head of Schools Finance Support

24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Teresa Ball and Councillor Nicholas Bennett JP.

25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

26 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING

No questions had been received from members of the public.

27 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9TH SEPTEMBER 2014 AND MATTERS OUTSTANDING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 9th September 2014 be agreed.

28 OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION WITH SCHOOLS REGARDING FAIRER FUNDING FOR 2015/16

Report EDU15109

The Sub-Committee considered a report setting out the outcome of consultation with schools and the changes to proposed funding distributions to primary and

secondary schools across the Borough following the release of the Department for Education's final funding allocation for Bromley for 2015/16.

At its meeting on 26th June 2014, the Schools' Forum considered a report outlining a number of options put forward by the Local Authority and the Schools' Forum Working Group for the distribution of funding to primary and secondary schools for 2015/16. Following discussion, it was agreed that the Local Authority would undertake consultation with primary and secondary schools on Option 1 from the initial proposals and a further option tabled by a member of the Schools' Forum at the meeting.

The outcome of the consultation was reported to the meeting of the Schools' Forum on 25th September 2014, where the Schools' Forum also considered a report detailing changes to the proposed funding distributions following the issue of updated information regarding the Fairer Funding proposals on 17th July 2014 by the Department for Education, which included an increase in the overall amount of funding allocated to Bromley to £19.5m and changes to the minimum funding levels. After being put to a vote, it was agreed that the Schools' Forum would support Option 1, which proposed that all schools be funded at the higher level of either current Bromley funding or the new Department for Education minimum funding level, and that the lump sum be adjusted for all schools where there was not sufficient additional funding to support this. This option was also supported by the Executive Director: Education, Care and Health Services and his Senior Management Team.

The Head of Schools Finance Support notified Members that Local Authority Maintained schools would receive the new funding allocation from 1st April 2015, but that academies would not receive this funding until 1st September 2015 due to the different funding arrangements for Local Authority Maintained schools and academies. Work was being undertaken with the Department for Education to ensure that Local Authority Maintained schools that converted to academy status between 1st April 2015 and 31st August 2015 were not disadvantaged as a result of this.

In response to a question from the Chairman, the Head of Schools Finance Support confirmed that the minimum funding guarantee from the Department for Education was still in place for schools, but that the proposed funding distribution for 2015/16 would increase the funding of the majority of Bromley schools above the minimum funding level. Two smaller schools in the Borough would still benefit from the minimum funding guarantee.

In considering the amount of Dedicated Schools Grant held centrally, the Head of Schools Finance Support advised Members that the Dedicated Schools Grant funded a number of services in addition to primary and secondary schools, including the cost of special schools, specialist units, and early years provision across the Borough. Targets were set by the Department for Education around the proportion of Dedicated Schools Grant that should be devolved to schools, and these targets were exceeded by the Local Authority. The £19.5m funding that had been allocated to Bromley through the Fairer Funding programme would be fully devolved to schools across the Borough.

The Portfolio Holder for Education noted that the Schools' Forum had requested that more consultation be undertaken in future regarding the use of Dedicated Schools Grant funds held centrally, such as the recent purchase of Beacon House, which had been approved by the Council's Executive on 10th June 2014 with the expectation of developing a provision which offered a wide variety of vocational courses at Key Stage 4 and 5 to both male and female pupils identified as having social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. It was requested that a visit be arranged to Beacon House for Members and Co-opted Members of the Education PDS Committee prior to the consideration of a report outlining proposals for the refurbishment programme of the building at the meeting of Education PDS Committee on 27th January 2015.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder for Education be recommended to agree the proposed distributions methodology as supported by the Executive Director: Education, Care and Health Services and the Schools' Forum.

29 REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES IN THE EDUCATION PORTFOLIO 2014/15

Report ED15108

The Sub-Committee considered a report setting out the current and potential income generated by services across the Education Portfolio and recommending that a new charge be introduced for moderation services provided to academies.

With the exception of Bromley Adult Education College tuition fees and nursery fees, and nursery fees for the Community Vision and Blenheim nurseries, the majority of income in the Education Portfolio was from trading accounts established to sell services to schools. Key Stage 2 Writing Moderation was currently provided free of charge to all Bromley schools by the School Standards Team and funded by a grant from the Department for Education. Recent guidance had clarified that the intention of this grant was to fund moderation services in Local Authority Maintained schools, and it was therefore proposed that a £400 charge per visit be introduced for academies who commissioned this service, which was estimated to generate approximately £20k per annum.

Officers were also exploring the feasibility of introducing parking charges for Adult Education sites which, excluding the one-off cost of approximately £20k for the parking meters, could raise up to £15-20k per annum, net of the estimated parking management fee. There was also potential to further promote room bookings at Adult Education sites, which, in the case of bookings made by internal customers, would only benefit the Local Authority as a whole if these were made instead of external bookings.

In considering the income generated by services across the Education Portfolio, the Chairman noted that 80% of Bromley Adult Education College users were resident in the Borough and queried if it would be possible to give Bromley

residents preferential rates in accessing the College provision.

In response to a question from the Portfolio Holder for Education around the funding of the Education Psychology service, the Senior Accountant confirmed that that the regulations precluded the funding of qualified Education Psychologists through Dedicated Schools Grant, although some local authorities were reportedly using Dedicated Schools Grant to fund other elements of their Education Psychology service.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) Members' comments on the current charging policy for the Education Portfolio be noted;**
- 2) The proposal to introduce charges for moderation services provide to academies be noted;**
- 3) That further work be carried out to determine the feasibility of introducing charges for parking at Adult Education sites, with the outcomes to be reported to a future meeting of the Education Budget Sub-Committee; and,**
- 4) The Portfolio Holder for Education be recommended to request that the Council's Executive agree the introduction of charges for moderation services provided to academies as part of the budget setting process for 2015/16.**

30 FREE SCHOOL MEALS UPDATE

Report ED15112

The Sub-Committee considered a report providing an update on progress made across Bromley schools to implement the Free School Meals for Infants Programme.

On 17th September 2013, the Government announced that every child in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 in state funded schools would receive a free school meal from September 2014, for which there would be revenue funding of £2.30 for each meal taken by pupils who were newly eligible for free school meals as a result of the policy. Meals for pupils who were eligible for free school meals under the current criteria would continue to be funded through existing arrangements.

To deliver this new requirement, the Local Authority was allocated £386,780 capital funding for Local Authority Maintained schools and £30,824 for Voluntary Aided schools for 2014/15. To support the allocation of these funds, a sufficiency audit of the kitchen provision in Local Authority Maintained and Voluntary Aided schools across the Borough was undertaken to identify and prioritise those kitchens that required capital investment. The outcome of this audit was received in June 2014, and Officers had worked with the Bromley Primary Consortium

Group and individual schools to agree the principles behind capital investment to ensure that all eligible Bromley schools were able to deliver universal infant free school meals from September 2014. The Free School Meals for Infants Programme was successfully rolled out across the Borough from September 2014, but work continued with Local Authority Maintained and Voluntary Aided schools to identify and prioritise kitchen improvements.

The Head of Strategic Pupil Place Planning advised Members that the Government had just announced a further £20m capital fund available for Local Authority Maintained schools to bid for funding for kitchen improvements to support the delivery of the Free School Meals for Infants Programme. A similar capital fund would also be available to academies.

RESOLVED that progress in implementing the Free School Meals for Infants Programme from September 2014 be noted.

31 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

32 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Education Budget Sub-Committee would be held at 7.00pm on Tuesday 6th January 2014.

33 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (VARIATION) ORDER 2006 AND THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded during consideration of the items of business listed below as it was likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information.

34 FINAL SETTLEMENT OF THE LANGLEY PARK SCHOOL FOR BOYS CONTRACT

The Sub-Committee considered the report and supported the recommendations.

35 EDUCATION PORTFOLIO PART 2 (EXEMPT) INFORMATION ITEMS

a) ADULT EDUCATION BUDGET PROJECTED OVERSPEND

The Sub-Committee considered the information item.

36 ANY OTHER PART 2 (EXEMPT) BUSINESS

The Sub-Committee considered any other Part 2 (Exempt) business.

The Meeting ended at 9.43 pm

Chairman