

SCHOOLS' FORUM

Minutes of the meeting held at 4.30 pm on 11 January 2018

Present:

Andrew Downes (Chairman)	Secondary Academy Governor
David Bridger (Vice-Chairman)	Non-School Representative (Church of England)
Matthew Apsley	Primary Academy Governor
David Dilling	Primary Academy Governor
Richard Edmunds	Primary Academy Head Teacher
Patrick Foley	Primary Maintained Head Teacher
Izabela Lecybyl	Non-School Representative (Catholic Church)
Angela Leeves	Non-School Representative (Early Years)
Neil Miller	PRU Head Teacher
Karen Raven	Secondary Academy Head Teacher
Andrew Rees	Secondary Maintained School Acting Head Teacher
Keith Seed	Special Head Teacher/Governor
David Wilcox	Secondary Academy Governor

Also Present:

David Bradshaw	Head of ECHS Finance
Amanda Russell	Head of Schools Finance Support

25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Sam Parrett, Councillor Peter Fortune, and Paul Murphy. Sunil Chotai attended as alternate for Paul Murphy.

26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no additional declarations of interest.

The Chairman noted that new Members would need to complete the relevant declaration of interest form.

27 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 NOVEMBER 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2017 were approved, and signed as a correct record.

28 2018/19 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT

Report ED18041

The Schools' Forum considered a report outlining the proposed Dedicated Schools' Grant budget for 2018/19 and the options for funding formula allocations. The Department for Education had confirmed the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Allocation for 2018/19 as follows:

High Needs Block	Early Years Block	Schools Block	Central School Services Block	Total
£39,021,736	£21,149,813	£205,351,587	£1,964,910	£267,488,046

*NB: figures do not reflect the disapplication request to move £1million from the Schools' Block to the High Needs Block

The Local Authority (LA) had reviewed each of the four blocks individually to identify any financial pressures. The Early Years block was shown to be self-funding, although there were some areas deemed to be overspent but were being supported by underspends within the same block. The High Needs Block was projecting an overspend of £2million. Following the decision of the Schools' Forum at its last meeting, the LA submitted an application to the Secretary of State to formally request a disapplication of the regulations which would allow £1million funding to be moved from the Schools' Block to the High Needs Block without the support of the Forum. The Head of Schools' Finance Support reported that the Local Authority had very recently been notified (via a telephone call) that the Secretary of State had approved the application. It was therefore proposed that the remaining £1million overspend would be funded by a contribution of £1million from the Revenue Support Grant, subject to the final approval of Members. SEND4change would continue to carry out a full review of current SEND spend and any savings identified would be invested in the transition period as the LA moved towards a more cost effective and more sustainable High Needs Block position.

As a result of the decision from the Secretary of State £202.4million would be allocated to schools. The LA had the option to either move to the National Funding Formula (NFF) for 2018/19 (and 2019/20) prior to the planned introduction of the NFF in 2020/21, or to remain with the Bromley Funding Formula (BFF).

In the Central School Services Block there was a projected overspend of £173,000. Expenditure in this Block had been reviewed and no immediate short-term savings had been identified. It was therefore proposed that the projected overspend in this Block would be met from any commensurate underspend of DSG in 2017/18.

In response to a question from the Vice-Chairman concerning whether the application to the Secretary of State made by the Local Authority had included an

indication of how the remaining £1million would be met, the Head of ECHS Finance reported that the application itself had not. However, at its meeting on 10th January 2018, the Council's Executive had agreed £1million to be taken from the RSG to help relieve cost pressures in the High Needs Block, this was in addition to the £1million disapplication. The Chairman reported that he was aware that across London a number of authorities had been considering moving funds from the Schools' Block to the High Needs Block.

In response to a question, the Head of ECHS Finance confirmed that the £1million funding from the RSG for the High Needs Block had been included in the Council's 5 year budget. A Member noted that the disapplication was for only one year and that it would not be possible to quickly implement the recommendations from SEND4change.

The Vice-Chairman also noted that there was no inflationary increase in the Early Years Block and Early Years providers also had to manage the added pressure of the 30 Hours funded provision. As yet there was no sign of PVI providers dropping out however any additional financial pressure could put this position at risk.

A Member of the Forum noted that the decision taken by the Secretary of State was disappointing as it resulted in £1million less for schools. It was recognised that most schools were underfunded and the unfairness to Bromley schools of the financial situation had already been well rehearsed. The discussion point for the meeting was how the funding would now be allocated and it was suggested that the debate should focus on this issue.

The Primary Sector representatives emphasised that the responses to the consultation that had been received were clearly polarised between primary and secondary schools, with schools favouring the option that maximised the benefit to their own sector. It was highlighted that in terms of representation on the Schools' Forum, there were 2 vacancies for primary representatives that had not yet been filled which was unfortunate as there were more primary pupils than secondary pupils in the Borough. As this was a divisive issue it was the view of the Primary representatives on the Forum that having a vote at this time would be problematic. The Head of ECHS Finance stressed that the Schools' Forum was not being asked to take a decision, as decision making powers rested with the Education, Children and Families Portfolio Holder. The Schools' Forum was being asked to recommend a funding formula for the Portfolio Holder and the Education, Children and Families Budget and Performance Monitoring Sub-Committee to consider at the meeting on 17th January 2018. Ideally the Schools' Forum would vote on the issue however if the feeling of the Forum was that a vote could not be taken, the discussions from the Forum would still be fully reported to the meeting on the 17th January 2018 to enable Members to understand the views of the Schools' Forum.

A Secondary Head Teacher representative expressed concern that by consulting with schools a problem had been opened up when a decision had already been taken by the Schools' Forum. It was suggested that the mood of the previous meeting of the Schools' Forum had been to move to the NFF. It was noted that as

the existing BFF did not fully allocate the amount of funding available AWPU levels had been increased and this would lead to a greater drop back for primary schools when the NFF was introduced. Concerns were expressed that this exercise was undertaken with no further consultation of any sort with the Schools' Forum or school representatives. In response, the Head of Schools Finance Support reported that the funding settlement had not been received until 15th/16th December 2017, and this had left no time for consultation with school due to the Christmas holidays. Officers confirmed that they had not been aware of this issue when the Schools' Forum met on 23rd November 2017, and that a mechanism needed to be found to get the additional funding to schools. It was noted that as a percentage based on current AWPU the changes that had been made gave less to secondary schools. The impact on Key Stage 4 of the proposed distribution of the AWPU would immediately affect GCSE results. It was stressed by Secondary Head Teachers that the stripping of the Key Stage 4 AWPU would decimate what schools could deliver in September 2018 and would impact on GCSE results. The challenge faced by secondary schools at 16+ had not been reflected. It was noted that all schools, whether they be primary or secondary, faced the same issues in terms of inflationary pressures and the need to review levels of staffing in light of reduced funding.

Another Secondary Head Teacher expressed surprise at the division between primary and secondary schools noting that 80% of primary schools stood to lose between 2k and 5k as a result of the NFF. It was suggested that this was not a great deal in percentage terms. It was noted that the NFF was being introduced in order to bring in fairer funding and the view was expressed that the impact of the new NFF on a very small number of schools should not be allowed to outweigh the interest of the vast majority of children in the Borough. It was also noted that there were issues around deprivation which were not reflected in the BFF and as a result of these there was a clear need to move in the direction of the NFF as this would allow redistribution into disadvantaged groups.

Primary Head Teacher representatives highlighted one positive which was that the funding settlement received was £5-6million more than had been expected. It was noted that the Secretary of State had indicated that every school would gain by at least 0.5% per child. The only option currently under consideration that did this was the BFF. It was suggested that it would therefore be perverse not to pursue this option when it was available. It was further suggested that for the vast majority of schools the sums of money under consideration were tiny however for a small number of schools disproportionate turbulence would be caused by an immediate move to the NFF. The BFF would minimise this at a time when there were other significant pressures facing schools. It was noted that in real cash terms the primary schools had borne the brunt of the savings that had been required in the previous financial year. This had resulted in a number of staffing cuts which had undoubtedly had an impact on children. A number of the consultation responses had highlighted the excellent early intervention work that was being undertaken in primary schools and reductions in funding would put this work at risk. A Primary Head Teacher noted that it was not the intention of the Government that the NFF was introduced immediately. The NFF was not 'set in stone' and there was a possibility that it could change as there had recently been

a change in Secretary of State. To this end the BFF should be used for 2018/19 to enable all schools to prepare for the transition to the NFF.

A Primary Head Teacher highlighted that whatever formula was eventually decided upon, support should be provided to the small number of schools that had been affected by the significant drop in pupil numbers and the resultant reduction in funding.

A Primary Academy Governor stressed the need to look at those schools that were set to lose as well as those that were set to gain. It was noted that the primary/secondary ratio for the NFF was 1:1.29 and that was the split that Bromley should be moving to. Work should begin to address issues of deprivation as soon as possible and in order to do this there would need to be a trajectory that was closer to the NFF.

The Vice-Chairman noted that the role of the Schools' Forum was to review the position for all schools in Bromley. Both the primary and secondary representatives had eloquently stated the case for their individual sectors however it was clear that some degree of compromise would be needed as it was apparent that the two sectors would not reach agreement. One compromise could be to agree to recommend the BFF for 2018/19 with assurances that the NFF would definitely be implemented in 2019/20. The suggested compromise was not supported by other members of the Schools' Forum and therefore did not go to the vote.

It was agreed that the Schools' Forum would vote on the two options that had been presented – Option 1a the NFF, and Option 5a the BFF. It was noted that two Members present were non-voting Members.

The options were put to the vote:

Option 1a – 6 in favour

Option 5a – 4 in favour

2 Members abstained from the vote.

RESOLVED: That the Portfolio Holder for Education, Children and Families be recommended to:

- 1. Note the discussion of the Schools' Forum; and**
- 2. Implement the National Funding Formula (Option 1a) in 2018/19.**

29 SCHOOLS FORUM CONSTITUTION

Report ED18040

The Schools' Forum considered a report which provided an overview of the representation of the Forum. Representation on the Schools element of the

Schools' Forum
11 January 2018

Forum was derived in the main from pupil numbers. There were thirteen members made up of Heads and Governors. Whilst current pupil numbers had not changed significantly there had been further movement towards Academy conversion in the Special and PRU areas resulting in small amounts of pupils in these areas being in both Academy and Maintained settings. Advice from the DfE was that there needed to be a representative for Maintained and Academy in Special and PRU settings if there were settings within the Borough. This meant that there needed to be an increase in the schools element membership of the Schools' Forum by two members from thirteen to fifteen, a Special Academy representative and a PRU Academy representative. All other representation would remain the same. The overall membership of the Schools' Forum would increase from eighteen to twenty:

CONSTITUTION			
	OLD	NEW	VACANT
SCHOOLS			
Special Maintained school representative governor/head	1	1	1
Special Academy school representative governor/head	0	1	0
PRU Maintained representative head/governor	1	1	1
PRU Academy representative head/governor	0	1	0
Primary Academy head representative	2	2	1
Primary Academy governor representative	3	3	2
Primary Maintained head representative	1	1	0
Secondary Maintained head/governor representative	1	1	0
Secondary Academy head representative	2	2	0
Secondary Academy governor representative	2	2	0
	13	15	5
NON SCHOOLS			
Early year provider (PVI)	1	1	0
14-19 partnership**	1	1	0
Diocese CofE**	1	1	0
Diocese Catholic**	1	1	1
Joint Teacher Liaison**	1	1	1
	5	5	2
OTHER NON- VOTING ATTENDEES			
Portfolio Holder/Portfolio Holder Assistant	1	1	
Director of Education/Schools	1	1	
Head of Finance	1	1	
Head of Schools Finance Support	1	1	
Clerk of the Forum	1	1	
	5	5	

Members of the Schools' Forum asked the Head of ECHS Finance to further review the Head Teacher/Governor split in terms of representation as it was felt that Head Teachers were more likely to volunteer to sit on the Schools' Forum.

The Head of ECHS Finance was also asked to undertake a more comprehensive review of the Schools' Forum constitution in order to enable a better understanding of the implications of Multi Academy Trusts on the membership of

the Schools' Forum. The Head of ECHS Finance highlighted that the intention had always been to ensure cross representation across different types of schools.

The Head of ECHS Finance confirmed that any vacancies would be advertised via the Schools' Circular.

The Schools' Forum agreed that, subject to some further minor amendments to address the comments that had been made concerning the Head Teacher/Governor split, the amendments would be put to the Education, Children and Families Budget and Performance Sub-Committee meeting on 17th January 2018 with a full review of the Constitution to be undertaken within the year.

RESOLVED: That the Education, Children and Families Portfolio Holder be recommended to approve the revised Schools' Forum Constitution, subject to the amendment outlined above.

30 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was noted that new Members of the Schools' Forum would have to receive some training and the Head of ECHS Finance confirmed that this could be done either individually or in small groups.

31 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Dates for the next municipal year had not yet been confirmed and these would be circulated to Members as soon as they were available.

The Meeting ended at 6.08 pm

Chairman