

## SCHOOLS' FORUM

Minutes of the meeting held at 4.30 pm on 5 November 2020

### Present:

David Dilling (Chairman)	Primary Academy Governor (Charles Darwin Academy Trust)
Tracey Davies	Non-Schools Representative(14-19 Partnership)(Bromley Academy Trust)
Patrick Foley	Primary Maintained Head Teacher (Southborough Primary School)
Chris Hollands	Primary Academy Head Teacher (Aquinas Trust)
Neil Miller	PRU Head Teacher/Governor Academy (Bromley Trust Academy)
Brid Stenson	Non-School Representative (Early Years)
Gareth Walters	Primary Academy Governor (Compass Academy Trust)
David Wilcox	Secondary Academy Governor (Darrick Wood School)

### Also Present:

David Bradshaw	Head of Finance (Education and Children's Services)
Julie Crew	Head of Schools' Finance Support
Jared Nehra	Director of Education
Philippa Gibbs	Democratic Services Officer

### 13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Andrew Rees, Ms Katie Scott, Ms Rebecca Cottage, and Ms Izabela Lecybyl. Following the meeting the Vice-Chairman, Mr David Bridger, extended apologies for absence due to illness and the Schools' Forum extended their best wishes for a speedy recovery.

### 14 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2020, were approved and signed as a correct record.

#### Matters Arising

In respect of the Scheme for Financing Schools, the Head of Finance (Education and Children's Services) reported that there was a difference between the Scheme for Financing Schools and the requirements placed on Academies and there was more complexity to the requirements for Academies. The Head of Finance reported that he was due to speak with the Auditors regarding this issue and would provide an update to the Schools' Forum via the Clerk.

**15 2021/22 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT  
Report CEF20032**

The report provided an outline of the estimated Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocation for 2021/22 and an overview of how this would be spent.

The indicative Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding for 2021/22 had been provided to all Local Authorities based on October 2019 pupil numbers (and would be uplifted in December to reflect the October 2020 census data). The DSG for 2021/22 was divided into four blocks – High Needs, Early Years, Schools and

2021/22 Dedicated Schools Grant					
	High Needs Block	Early Years Block	Schools Block	Schools Central Block	Total
Gross Grant Funding	£58,266,582	£23,055,439	£233,242,664	£1,871,573	£316,436,258
Recoupment adjustment	-£10,128,167				-£10,128,167
Net Grant Allocation	£48,138,415	£23,055,439	£233,242,664	£1,871,573	£306,308,091

Schools Central. The expected income detailed below:

Schools Central Block

It was noted that the Local Authority would be providing a contribution to address the overspend in the Schools Central Block.

Schools Block

The Forum considered issues around the minimum funding guarantee (MFG) and the financial risk posed to a number of schools from the low level being proposed. It was noted that the figures currently under consideration were provisional figures and there were limitations placed on the Local Authority. However, any additional information provided by the DfE would be reviewed. The Head of Finance stressed that there was a requirement to stay within the finding envelope and be as transparent as possible with the allocation of funding.

In response to comments concerning the cost pressures to schools arising from Covid-19, the Director of Education acknowledged the additional pressures schools had faced and confirmed that the Local Authority had been raising concerns with the DfE and would continue to do so.

The Chairman queried whether there were any options to consider around reducing the spend on areas such as the Falling Rolls Fund and the Growth Fund. In response, the Head of Finance confirmed that all areas of spend would be reviewed however, due to the demand for schools places it was currently unclear

whether any savings in the Growth Fund could be identified as GLA projections indicated that there were certain areas where additional classes would be needed and it was likely that pressures would remain for the next 3 years.

### High Needs Block

A Member noted that costs of out of borough placements continued to rise year-on-year, highlighting that a key recommendation arising from the SEND4Change review that had been undertaken was that these costs had to be reduced. In response the Director of Education recognised the considerable pressure arising from the exponential and sustained increase in the number of ECHPs, not just in Bromley but nationally. Last year there had been some welcome additional High Needs Funding from Government but it was not enough to meet the longer-term growth in demand. Further funding was expected although at this point it was indicative. There continued to be concerns around funding the High Needs Block and there was a need to ensure that it was sustainable going forward. One of the key requirements for reducing the spend on out of borough placements was additional local provision and the Local Authority had been working to increase the in-borough offer, including through the proposed establishment of a new special free school.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

## **16            CONSTITUTION OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM** **Report CEF20033**

The report provided an overview of the representation on the Schools Forum.

It was noted that arrangements needed to be put in place to ensure that Members of the Schools' Forum were appropriately trained and the Head of gave a commitment to arrange some training for new members of the Forum prior to the next meeting.

In relation to the issue of public attendance at meetings, it was agreed that the Constitution would explicitly reference that fact that these were meetings held in public and that the public were entitled to attend meetings in an observer capacity.

The Chairman suggested that in future years it may be helpful to include the pupil numbers that were used to calculate the relative number of representatives in the different categories.

The Forum discussed the issue of alternate members. The Chairman highlighted that there were several benefits from having alternate members such as widening circulation of papers and helping to generate a body of people who had further experience of the Schools Forum. It was agreed that it should be at the discretion of members of the Schools' Forum whether they wished to seek an alternate in the event that they were unable to attend meetings. The Local Authority would offer training to any alternate members who required training and once an alternate had been accepted, meeting agendas and papers would be provided to any alternate members who were proposed to the Clerk in advance of meetings.

In relation to the Officers who attended Schools' Forum meetings, the Head of Finance agreed to check whether the wording in Paragraph 1.14 of the constitution was taken directly from the Regulations.

**RESOLVED: That**

- 1. The report be noted;**
- 2. The list of Officer attendees at the beginning of the Constitution be revised to reflect the list set of in Paragraph 1.14 of the Constitution, and**
- 3. The Constitution of the Schools Forum be amended to explicitly reference that meetings are held in public and members of the public are entitled to observe meetings.**

**17            DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting was scheduled to take place on 21 January 2021.

The Meeting ended at 5.30 pm

Chairman