

SCHOOLS' FORUM

Minutes of the meeting held at 5.00 pm on 20 September 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
Patrick Foley	Primary Maintained School Head Teacher
Neil Proudfoot	Non-School Representative (Joint Teacher Liaison Committee)
Karen Raven	Secondary Academy Head Teacher
Alison Regester	Non-School Representative (Early Years)
Richard Sammonds	Primary Academy Head Teacher
Keith Seed	Special Head Teacher/Governor
David Wilcox	Secondary Academy Governor

Also Present:

Councillor Stephen Wells	Portfolio Holder for Education
Dr Tessa Moore	Assistant Director: Education
David Bradshaw	Head of ECS Finance
Amanda Russell	Head of Schools Finance Support
Kerry Nicholls	Democratic Services Officer

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

Andrew Downes was nominated as Chairman. This was seconded and the nomination was agreed.

David Bridger was nominated as Vice-Chairman. This was seconded and the nomination was agreed.

RESOLVED that Andrew Downes be appointed Chairman and David Bridger be appointed Vice-Chairman for the 2011/12 municipal year.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Nick Cross, Secondary Academy Head Teacher.

The Chairman was pleased to welcome Councillor Stephen Wells, the Portfolio Holder for Education and Dr Tessa Moore, Assistant Director: Education to the meeting.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12th JULY 2012

In considering the minutes of the previous meeting, the Head of ECS Finance confirmed that guidance on the constitution of the Schools' Forum and the role of its representatives would be circulated following the meeting.

The Assistant Director: Education noted the discussion that had taken place around Item 3: Outcome of Consultation with Schools on Proposed Funding Reform around de-delegation of behaviour support services for maintained schools. The Head of Schools Finance Support confirmed that the Local Authority wished to formally consult schools on this issue before any decision was made and that this would be included in the consultation document on proposed funding reform which would be provided to schools across the Borough shortly.

The Vice-Chairman noted that the Schools' Forum working party would be meeting shortly to review the proposed secondary schools split which had been developed by Officers based on historical information of all the transferred grants involved.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 12th July 2012 be agreed and that matters arising be noted.

5 SPENDING BY PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND SPECIAL MAINTAINED SCHOOLS IN 2011/12

Report ED12039

Members of the Forum considered a report outlining all revenue and capital balances held by Primary, Secondary and Special Maintained Schools as at 31st March 2012, and providing a comparison to the balances held at the same time in the previous year.

In considering the report, the Head of Schools Finance Support confirmed that all schools with high level balances had now provided a response to the Local Authority and that plans for management action had been put in place by each school to reduce the balances held.

RESOLVED that the financial position of Primary, Secondary and Special Maintained Schools at the end of the 2011/12 financial year be noted.

6 CONSULTATION ON THE SCHOOL FINANCE REGULATIONS 2013 AND ADDITIONAL GRANT CONDITIONS FOR THE DSG

Report ED12040

Members of the Forum considered a report providing information on the Department for Education consultation currently being undertaken around the draft School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2013, together with additional grant conditions for the Dedicated Schools Grant. The consultation

would end on 21st September 2012 and the Local Authority had provided a draft response to the proposed adjustments to how the Early Years Single Funding Formula would operate for disadvantaged two year olds, which members of the Forum were invited to comment on prior to submission.

The Head of Schools Finance Support highlighted a number of changes that had been made in the draft School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2013, which included the extension of the definition of the schools' budget to include expenditure on young people aged 19 to 25 with learning difficulties, that the Schools' Forum must approve the criteria on which any funding for pupil growth was allocated (such as for bulge classes and additional infant class funding) and for budgets to be determined by 15th March for maintained schools and pupil referral units. The changes in regulations also allowed local authorities to apply to the Secretary of State to include exceptional premises factors in their formula, to exclude factors from the minimum funding guarantee and to vary the basis of the pupil number count. Under this change to the regulations, Bromley had already made an application to the Secretary of State for permission to exclude payments for bulge classes made in 2012/13 to prevent any duplication of funding and this had been agreed in principle but was not yet confirmed.

Alison Register added her support to the draft consultation response to the proposed adjustments to how the Early Years Single Funding Formula would operate for disadvantaged two year olds, and noted the importance of building capacity in early years provision for younger children.

RESOLVED that the details within the consultation be noted and that the comments of members of the Forum on the proposed responses to the specified questions on funding for disadvantaged two year olds be noted.

7 FINAL DSG BUDGET 2012/13

Report ED12041

Members of the Forum considered a report outlining the final Dedicated Schools Grant allocation for 2012/13. Bromley's final allocation had been confirmed as £220,809,000, which was an increase of £346,000 on the estimated figure of £220,463,000. As the additional funding largely related to increased pupil numbers for three and four year olds, it had been added to the Central Schools' Budget, which included Early Years Funding and it was anticipated this funding would be used to offset any overspend in relation to the increase in pupil numbers for three and four year olds.

In considering the additional funding, Alison Register confirmed that it was difficult to anticipate the number of pupils that would be attending early years settings, and that more pupils were now moving on to the Reception year as September starters.

RESOLVED that the final Dedicated Schools Grant allocation for 2012/13 be noted.

8 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OUTTURN REPORT 2011/12

Report ED12044

Members of the Forum considered a report providing the provisional final outturn position for 2011/12 which had also been considered at the meeting of Education Budget Sub-Committee on 31st July 2012. This showed that the Dedicated Schools Grant had been under spent in 2011/12 by £1,698,000 and this surplus would be carried forward into the 2012/13 financial year.

RESOLVED that the Children and Young People Outturn Report 2011/12 be noted.

9 FINANCIAL MODELLING FOR THE 2013/14 FUNDING REVIEW

Report ED12043

Members of the Forum considered a report outlining a range of proposed financial modelling options for the new funding formula as part of the 2013/14 funding review. Twelve versions of the funding model had been developed following the meeting of the Schools' Forum on 12th July 2012, where members of the Forum had considered a report outlining feedback from schools on the basic principles underlying the new funding formula. The modelling had been undertaken using the prescribed number and type of factors laid down by the Department for Education, applying variations within the factors based on the findings from the first stage of the consultation. For each version of the financial modelling, the current overall levels of funding for Primary, Secondary and Special Schools had been maintained to ensure that no particular sector was adversely affected by the proposed changes.

The funding of Special Schools would not be allocated through the proposed financial modelling options and members of the Forum were advised that representatives of the Local Authority would meet with representatives of the Special Schools to agree individual arrangements around the number of places and level of funding provided.

Members of the Schools' Forum considered the elements of the proposed models which would apply to primary and secondary schools.

In considered the level of attainment at which to base the funding, it was noted that a child attaining 73 points or less was likely to be working just below age related expectations and was more likely to have been identified as having a special educational need and/or a disability, whereas a child attaining 78+ points may be considered to be working at age related expectations and as having reached a good level of development. The members of the Schools Forum generally agreed that it would be most appropriate to base this measure at those attaining 73 points or less, although Richard Sammonds was concerned that these measures did not reward the school for the progress made by children as they progressed through the key stages. Following a vote on whether to use the

73 points or less Foundation Stage Profile, 12 members were in favour and 1 member abstained. It was therefore agreed to use this measure

In response to a query regarding how the figures for Deprivation/Attainment/English as an Additional Language had been derived, the Head of Schools Finance Support confirmed that the figures had been based on current total funding allocations and that work had been undertaken to find a lump sum that could be common to both the primary and the secondary sector to ensure a similar level of funding was available to children and young people with special educational needs. Karen Raven highlighted the way the funding was split between the primary and secondary sector. This split had been applied consistently throughout the modelling, however there was potential to revisit how the pools of Primary and Secondary funding were split to ensure levels of funding were appropriate across both sectors.

Members of the Schools' Forum then considered the level at which the lump sum should be set. The modelling was based on three proposed lump sums of £125k, £150k and £180k, and members of the Forum noted that the lump sum agreed would be paid in the same amount to all schools. Richard Sammonds highlighted the disparity in providing the same lump sum to all schools, regardless of number of pupils, and was concerned at the general low level of funding for larger schools in the proposed models. The Head of Schools Finance Support confirmed that similar concerns were been identified for larger schools by other local authorities but that a Minimum Funding Guarantee would be in place for two years to ensure schools received an appropriate level of funding until the move to the National Funding formula in 2015/16. The Vice-Chairman queried whether a lump sum of £0 could be provided. The Head of Schools Finance Support confirmed that this could be agreed, however schools faced certain fixed costs, such as staffing which made it logical to provide a lump sum. Another member of the Forum queried whether the use of different models for supporting small schools, such as federating, would reduce the need for a lump sum payment.

Members of the Forum discussed the number of models that should be provided to schools as part of the consultation. A member of the Forum noted that by presenting fewer options, it would be easier to identify the preferred model. The Vice-Chairman agreed that the results would be clearer with fewer models; however he also highlighted the need to provide a wide choice to schools within the consultation. To support schools in understanding the implications of each model, Alison Regester asked that the impact of the Minimum Funding Guarantee be included with each model.

Following a vote on the number of models that should be provided to schools as part of the consultation, 9 members were in favour of 4 models (versions 6, 8, 10 and 12), 2 members were in favour of 2 models and 1 member abstained. It was therefore agreed for 4 models to be included in the consultation.

The Head of Schools Finance Support confirmed that a briefing session would be provided for Head Teachers, Governors and Bursars on Thursday 27th September 2012 at the Education Development Centre, and noted that the Chairman and some members of the Schools' Forum would be in attendance.

RESOLVED that funding models 6, 8, 10 and 12 be released to schools as the next part of the formal consultation period.

10 CONSTITUTION OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM

Report ED12042

Members of the Forum considered a report outlining changes to the Schools' Forum constitution proposed by the Local Authority following the introduction of the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012, which would come into effect from October 2012.

The Head of ECS Finance outlined the main changes which included the inclusion of a representative of the Pupil Referral Unit to the membership of the Forum, new restrictions to voting arrangements which would allow only school and academy representatives (and private, voluntary and independent sector members) to vote on the funding formulae, and a requirement for Forum meetings to be public and for Forum papers, minutes and decisions to be published on the Local Authority website. The Education Funding Agency would also be given Observer Status on the Forum and would be able to attend future meetings.

In response to a question from Anna Boshier, the Head of ECS Finance confirmed that changes to voting arrangements had been introduced to give schools more responsibility for the allocation of funding. With regard to absence from meetings, the Head of ECS Finance confirmed that members of the Schools' Forum could individually nominate a substitute to attend a meeting where they would be absent, and that this would be clarified in the Constitution.

RESOLVED that the proposed changes to the Schools' Forum constitution be endorsed.

11 CONSULTATION ON REPLACING RSG LACSEG FOR 2013/14

Report ED12046

Members of the Forum considered a report outlining details of the Department for Education consultation on proposals to introduce a new mechanism to distribute Local Authority Central Spend Equivalent Grant (LACSEG) from the current top slice of individual local authorities to a single national formula grant. The consultation would end on 24th September 2012 and the Local Authority had provided a draft response to the proposal, which members of the Forum were invited to comment on prior to submission.

The Head of ECS Finance confirmed that it was proposed to top slice £168 per pupil from local authorities and for this funding to be provided directly to academy schools. The Local Authority currently spent £86 per pupil which meant that the new mechanism would leave Bromley with a significant shortfall of funding, impacting the Local Authority's ability to deliver a range of other education services.

The Portfolio Holder for Education confirmed that the Local Authority had met with representatives of the Department for Education and the Treasury to discuss the impact of this new mechanism on the Local Authority and potential ways to mitigate the impact of any change of funding mechanism, such as the introduction of a minimum funding guarantee. A further meeting would be held with David Laws, Minister of State for Schools at the end of October 2012.

In considering the draft Local Authority response to the consultation, the Vice-Chairman proposed that the Schools' Forum draft a statement supporting the concerns of the Local Authority around the operation of the new funding mechanism to be submitted alongside the Local Authority response and this was generally agreed.

RESOLVED that the Chairman draft a statement on behalf of the Schools' Forum supporting the concerns of the Local Authority around the operation of the new funding mechanism to be submitted alongside the Local Authority response

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman was pleased to announce that the Schools' Forum agenda and papers were now available on the Bromley Council website, but highlighted the need for the Schools' Forum page to be easily located through the search function.

13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

All meetings would be at the Education Development Centre unless highlighted below:

Thursday, 18th October 2012
Thursday, 22nd November 2012
Thursday, 13th December 2012
Thursday, 10th January 2013
Thursday, 7th February 2013
Thursday, 14th March 2013

The Meeting ended at 6.58 pm

Chairman