

EDUCATION BUDGET SUB-COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 23 July 2013

Present:

Councillor Neil Reddin FCCA (Chairman)
Councillor Julian Benington (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Kathy Bance MBE, Nicholas Bennett J.P. and
Julian Grainger

Councillor Stephen Wells, Portfolio Holder for Education

Also Present:

Dr Tessa Moore, Assistant Director: Education
David Bradshaw, Head of Education, Care and Health Services Finance
James Mullender, Senior Accountant

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that Councillor Neil Reddin FCCA be appointed Chairman and Councillor Julian Benington be appointed Vice-Chairman for the 2013/14 municipal year.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor David McBride.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman noted that Declarations of Interest made by Members at the meeting of Education PDS Committee on 2nd July 2013 were taken as read.

4 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING

No questions had been received from members of the public.

5 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2ND MAY 2013 AND MATTERS ARISING

In considering matters arising at previous meetings, it was confirmed that an item providing an overview of the Council's approach to project management had been

added to the work programme for Executive and Resources PDS Committee.

Councillor Nicholas Bennett JP highlighted the importance of attainment of Looked after Children in the Borough and suggested that it be considered at the meeting of Education PDS Committee on 30th January 2014.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd May 2013 be agreed.

6 EDUCATION PORTFOLIO OUTTURN REPORT 2012/13

Report ED12074

The Sub-Committee considered a report outlining the final outturn position for the Education Portfolio for the 2012/13 financial year. This showed an underspend of £3,091,000 for the controllable element of the Education budget. A carry forward request had been made to the Council's Executive for £297,000, and should this be agreed, the final outturn position would be £2,794,000 for the 2012/13 financial year.

In considering the final outturn position for 2012/13, Councillor Nicholas Bennett JP congratulated the Education, Care and Health Services Department for the significant underspend in the controllable element of the Education Portfolio Budget. Members noted the carry forward requested totalling £297,000, and the Head of Education, Care and Health Services confirmed that this request had been made to fund essential repairs to Castlecombe and Mottingham Children's Centres. The Portfolio Holder for Education noted that consideration was being given to the wider use of children's centres across the Borough as key community hubs.

The Chairman noted the overspend of £21k by the Access and Admissions Service which was attributed to lower levels of staff turnover than budgeted for and printing of brochures, posters and application forms. The Assistant Director: Education confirmed that the move to an online school admissions process remained a priority, and that the overspend was partially due to the purchasing of licenses to support online schools admissions which would remain an ongoing cost.

The SEN and Inclusion Service had delivered an underspend of £695,000, primarily due to price increases below inflation, optimisation of route planning and a one-off overachievement of recoupment income. There was also a one-off underspend of £200k relating to previous years items. A Member queried the cost of £12k on vehicle repairs as Members understood that the SEN Transport service was completely outsourced.

Councillor Julian Grainger highlighted the increase in recharges to the Dedicated Schools Grant by £560k to £1,377k to cover additional fixed costs and recharges. The Head of Education, Care and Health Services Finance confirmed that this funding was comprised of recharges to the centrally retained element of the Schools Block Funding which covered the costs of the Local Authority in managing

services funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant. The level of funding had recently been reviewed to ensure the cost to the Local Authority was accurately reflected. Councillor Julian Grainger noted the total underspend of £5,426k on Dedicated Schools Grant Services in 2012/13, and it was confirmed that Dedicated Schools Grant funds must be spent on specific Education activities and that, subject to approval, these surplus funds might be given to schools as a one off payment, whilst some funds might be carried forward to offset future expected budgetary pressures. Any payment to schools from the Dedicated Schools Grant would include payment to academy schools, which would be provided via the Education Funding Agency.

In response to a question from a Member, the Head of Education, Care and Health Services Finance confirmed that the EDC Trading Account was no longer trading since the closure of the Education Development Centre in April 2013.

The Chairman suggested that a cross-Portfolio review might be undertaken of the broad range of services for children and young people, including Children's Centres and the Bromley Youth Support Programme to ensure there was no duplication of service provision and that services were targeted at those most in need.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The underspend of £3,091, 000 on controllable expenditure at the end of 2012/13 be noted;**
- 2) The carry forward request to the Council's Executive for £297,000 be noted; and,**
- 3) The Education Portfolio Outturn Report 2012/13 be recommended to the Portfolio Holder for Education for approval.**

7 EDUCATION PORTFOLIO BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2013/14

Report ED13075

The Sub-Committee considered a report setting out the budget monitoring position for the Education Portfolio based on expenditure to the end of May 2013. The Schools' Budget, funded from the Dedicated Schools' Grant and specific grants, was forecast to be in an underspend position of £458,000, which would be carried forward into the next financial year. The controllable part of the Non-Schools' Budget, funded from Council Tax, Revenue Support and specific grants, was forecast to be in an underspend position of £89,000.

In considering the Education Portfolio Budget Monitoring Report 2013/14, Members requested that a breakdown be provided of the total Non Controllable Budget spend as at May 2013. Councillor Nicholas Bennett JP also noted the need to ensure that Total Non Controllable Budget spend continued to reflect the

make-up of the Education Division as the needs and number of Education staff changed over time. Following discussion, Members requested that the current and future apportionment of Council recharges be reported to a future meeting of the Executive and Resources PDS Committee to support the most efficient use of Local Authority resources.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The current and future apportionment of Council recharges be reported to a future meeting of the Executive and Resources PDS Committee;**
- 2) The latest 2013/14 budget projection for the Education Portfolio be noted; and,**
- 3) The Education Portfolio Budget Monitoring Report 2013/14 be recommended to the Portfolio Holder for Education for approval.**

8 EDUCATION PORTFOLIO INFORMATION ITEMS

Report ED13076

The Sub-Committee considered an information briefing outlining the results of the Government's Spending Review which were announced in June 2013. A 1% cut in funding for Local Government had been agreed for 2014/15 and further guidance was awaited from the Department for Communities and Local Government as to how this would be applied. Further cuts of £11.5bn across Government spending had also been agreed for 2015/16, and within this Local Government expenditure would be reduced by 10%. It was noted that Bromley was a low grant Local Authority and had historically received a higher proportion of cuts than the average. The Local Authority had grant damping protection of £12.6m in place to mitigate the impact on grants of the high number of pupils at academy schools in the Borough.

Funding would be made available in 2014/15 and 2015/16 for those Local Authorities who did not increase Council Tax, with local authorities receiving a grant worth the equivalent of 1% increase. There would also be a £200m extension of the Tackling Troubled Families programme through the payment by results scheme. There would be real terms protection of the Schools' budget and Pupil Premium, however the Education Services Grant would be reduced by £200m in 2015/16, which represented a cut of around 25%. Conversion of schools to academy status would continue to be supported and funding would also be available for 180 new Free Schools, 20 new Studio Schools and 20 new University Technical Colleges each year. The Early Years 15 hours a week of free early education for all three and four year olds would be maintained and free entitlement extended to the most disadvantaged two year olds would be maintained for September 2013 and increased to around 40% in 2014/15.

In considering the Information Briefing, the Assistant Director: Education confirmed

that the Council's Commissioning Group was currently looking at the future delivery of a range of Education sold services. It was possible that these services would be commissioned as part of a bundle of services, and Councillor Julian Grainger noted the importance of ensuring that these proposed bundles of services did not preclude locally-based third sector or private providers from bidding to deliver services.

RESOLVED that the information briefing be noted.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

In considering the work programme for the Education Budget Sub-Committee for 2013/14, Members requested that reports on the Access and Admissions Service and Annual School Reserves be provided to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee on 2nd October 2013. Members also requested that a report on Special Educational Needs be provided to the meeting of the Sub-Committee on 7th January 2014.

Councillor Julian Grainger noted an issue that schools in the Chelsfield and Pratts Bottom Ward were experiencing around funding for pupils with special educational needs and this would be addressed outside of the meeting by the Assistant Director: Education.

RESOLVED that the issues raised be noted.

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Education Budget Sub-Committee would be held at 7.00pm on Wednesday 2nd October 2013.

The Meeting ended at 7.52 pm

Chairman