

SCHOOLS' FORUM

Minutes of the meeting held at 4.30 pm on 16 September 2021

Present:

David Dilling (Chairman)	Primary Academy Governor (Charles Darwin Academy Trust)
Andrew Ferguson (Vice-Chairman)	Non-School Representative (Church of England)(Aquinas Trust)
Claire Bessa Rebecca Cottage Patrick Foley	Secondary Academy Head Teacher (E21C) Special Head/Governor Maintained Primary Maintained Head Teacher (Southborough Primary School)
Clare Grainger	Non-Schools' Representative (Joint Teacher Liaison Committee)(Connect Multi Academy Trust)
Chris Hollands Neil Miller	Primary Academy Head Teacher (Aquinas Trust) PRU Head Teacher/Governor Academy (Bromley Trust Academy)
Andrew Rees	Secondary Maintained School Head Teacher (St Olaves Grammar School)
Brid Stenson Ian Travis	Non-School Representative (Early Years) Special Head Teacher/Governor Academy (Glebe School)
Steve Whittle	Secondary Academy Head Teacher (Impact Multi Academy Trust)
David Wilcox	Secondary Academy Governor (Darrick Wood School)

Also Present:

Julie Crew	Head of Schools' Finance Support
David Bradshaw	Head of Children, Education and Families Service Finance
Jared Nehra	Director of Education
Philippa Gibbs	Democratic Services Officer

9 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Claire Grainger and Gareth Walters.

The Forum noted that this would be Rebecca Cottage's last meeting. The Chairman thanked Ms Cottage for her participation in the Forum.

10 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Chairman proposed that Mr Andrew Ferguson be appointed Vice-Chairman.

The motion was unanimously supported by the Members present.

RESOLVED: That Mr Andrew Ferguson be appointed Vice-Chairman

11 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 JULY 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2021, were approved and signed as a correct record.

12 VERBAL UPDATE ON GROWTH FUND AND FALLING ROLLS FUND

The Head of Children, Education and Families Finance reported that no funding had been allocated for falling rolls this financial year as there was some further analysis to be undertaken by the Local Authority and information remained outstanding from some schools. The Forum noted that there were strict criteria in place, and it was therefore unlikely that there would be significant funding through this mechanism.

It was further noted that Falling Rolls Funding and the Growth Fund would be impacted by the proposed changes to the National Funding Formula (NFF) which were the subject of the consultation to be considered at Item 5 of the agenda (Minute 13).

The level of funding for the Growth Fund was reducing. Bulge class funding was based on AWPU and deprivation criteria. In the main bulge classes filled up but there were some exceptions which meant that the local authority was funding classes that were not full but schools had been required to outlay funds regardless of whether or not classes were full.

The Forum had previously considered whether the methodology should be changed however, proposed changes to the National Funding Formula would move this decision away from the Local Authority with the proposal being that Falling Rolls and Growth Funding were managed by the DfE.

The Director of Education highlighted that in terms of Falling Rolls Funding, there were a small number of primary schools that had expressed concern to the Local Authority over their financial sustainability as a result of either their low numbers or falling rolls. A small number of these schools had indicated that they would consider formally seeking to reduce PAN should falling rolls funding not be forthcoming. At this stage the Schools' Forum were not being asked to take any decisions, but simply to be aware of the situation.

In terms of growth, there was a likelihood ahead of the hard National Funding Formula coming on stream that there would be a need for additional growth funding for secondary places. This was recognised in terms of the capital work being reported to elected Members.

The Chairman suggested that once further information was received about the growth and falling rolls, it may be worth considering changes that enabled the

local authority to smooth out any transition. In the same way as the Local Authority's early adoption of the NFF had delivered a smoother transition.

13 FAIR SCHOOL FUNDING FOR ALL: COMPLETING OUR REFORMS TO THE NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA – RESPONSE BY BROMLEY COUNCIL
Report CEF21039

The report provided a response to a recent consultation on Schools Block funding by DfE. The Schools Forum reviewed the proposed response to the consultation and unanimously supported the proposed response, subject to a few minor changes.

It was agreed that once the changes were actioned the revised version would be sent to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for final sign off.

RESOLVED: That the proposed response be endorsed and that a joint response to the consultation on Fair Funding for All be submitted to the DfE on behalf of the Schools' Forum and the Local Authority.

14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Remote Meetings

It was recognised that remote meetings had attracted a higher level of attendance. Consequently, it was agreed that remote meetings of the Schools' Forum would continue, with the situation being kept under review and the possibility of holding an 'in person' meeting considered later in Spring or Summer 2022.

Training

The Head of Children, Education and Families Finance confirmed that, training for new Members would be offered towards the end of October with information and proposed dates circulated, via the Clerk to the Schools' Forum, during the week beginning 20 September 2021.

15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was due to be held on Thursday 4th November 2021.

The Meeting ended at 5.30 pm

Chairman