

## **SCHOOLS' FORUM**

Minutes of the meeting held at 4.30 pm on 13 July 2023

### **Present:**

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| David Dilling (Chairman)        | Primary Academy Governor (Charles Darwin Academy Trust)       |
| Andrew Ferguson (Vice-Chairman) | Non-School Representative (Church of England)(Aquinas 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)     |
| Ian Travis                      | Special Head Teacher/Governor Academy (Glebe School)          |
| Steve Whittle                   | Secondary Academy Head Teacher (Impact Multi Academy Trust )  |

### **Also Present:**

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

## **19 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN**

Andrew Ferguson proposed that David Dilling be appointed Chairman. The motion was seconded by Neil Miller, put to the vote and CARRIED.

David Dilling proposed that Andrew Ferguson be appointed Vice-Chairman. The motion was seconded by Neil Miller, put to the vote and CARRIED.

### **RESOLVED: That**

- 1. David Dilling be appointed Chairman, and**
- 2. Andrew Ferguson be appointed Vice-Chairman.**

## **20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Andrew Rees and Mr David Wilcox.

## **21 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26TH JANUARY 2023**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2023 were approved and signed as a correct record.

## **22 CONSTITUTION OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM**

### **Report CEF23034**

The report provided an overview of the representation on the Schools' Forum. The Head of Children, Education and Families Finance introduced the report, explaining that the Constitution was reviewed every few years and would go on to be considered by the Children, Education and Families PDS Committee and ratified by the Portfolio Holder.

The Schools' Forum discussed proposals to reduce the Membership by two, removing one Governor/Trustee member from both Primary and Secondary. This proposal reflected the difficulty in obtaining a full cohort of membership and the changes proposed would help to ensure that meetings remained quorate. It was noted that this proposal would maintain the schools' membership at 70%, which was above the DfE guidance of two thirds of the overall membership being from the Schools' area.

The Head of Children, Education and Families Finance confirmed that following the implementation of the changes, which reduced the Membership of the Schools' Forum from fourteen to twelve, five vacancies would remain on the Forum.

Referring to Paragraph 6.2 of the Schools' Forum Constitution, the Forum also agreed to move the date of the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to the first meeting of the municipal year, in June.

In response to a question, the Head of Children, Education and Families Finance confirmed that representation on the Schools' Forum was based on pupil numbers.

### **RESOLVED: That**

- 1. The Membership of the Schools' forum be reduced by two, removing one Governor/Trustee member from both Primary and Secondary.**
- 2. The election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman take place each year at the first meeting of the new municipal year.**

## **23 SPENDING BY PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND SPECIAL MAINTAINED SCHOOLS IN 2022/23 Report CEF23035**

The report provided information on all revenue and capital balances held by Primary, Secondary and Special Maintained Schools as at 31 March 2023, and also provided a comparison to the balances held at the same time in the previous

year. The Forum noted that report would be considered by the Children, Education and Families PDS Committee.

**RESOLVED: that the balances be noted.**

**24            CEF PROVISIONAL OUTTURN**  
**Report CEF23036**

The report provided the CEF provisional outturn position for 2022/23. The Head of Children, Education and Families introduced the report noting that the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) remained in a deficit position. The Local Authority would be meeting with the DfE in the summer to discuss the deficit position and further recovery of the deficit.

The Director of Education explained that a deficit recovery management plan was in place, and this was regularly considered by the Children, Education and Families PDS Committee. Some positive progress had been made against the actions in the deficit recovery management plan. For example, eligibility guidance for EHCPs had been implemented and for the year to date the first reduction in the number of requests for statutory assessment had been seen. The Local Authority continued to work towards the establishment of the new Special Free School in the Borough which would add much needed specialist capacity into the Borough. There were other areas of challenge and steps continued to be taken.

In response to a question, the Director of Education confirmed that the Local Authority continued to see a sustained increase in the number of contacts and referrals into children's social care and this had been the case since coming out of lockdown. Bromley was not unique in its position; it was a national challenge. The Bromley partnership was moving towards Children and Family Hubs which would provide a single point of contact offering a number of services such as Early Help, greater integration of mental health aspects and more timely access to support for families. It was noted that the early signs around this were positive.

In response to a question, the Director of Education explained that there was a national shortage of LA foster carers. Bromley continued to work to recruit in-house foster carers although this would continue to be an area of pressure and a number of other options were being considered.

**RESOLVED: That the projected position of the CEF Portfolio be noted.**

**25            ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Supplementary Grant for Early Years

The Schools' Forum noted that the supplementary grant for early years for 2023/24 would increase the hourly rate for funding for 2 & 3-year-olds and 3 & 4-year-olds and would start from September 2023. There were other minor increases – for example pupil premium. The funding did not form part of the DSG, it was a one-off supplementary one-off grant worth £2.5m (as a full year effect).

Mayor of London's Universal Junior Free School Meals

Funding for Bromley had been announced and would be in the region of £6m for the academic year.

The Director of Education explained the Mayor of London's Scheme extended the provision of universal Free School Meals to the Junior age range. The rate of funding was £2.65 per child, per day which many schools had highlighted was below the contractual rate. No contribution to capital costs was being made. As a result of the challenges to schools it was felt that it was important to offer an opt out mechanism if schools felt unable to offer the scheme (as a result of the cost of the shortfall in funding which some had estimated was in the region of £10,000). Final details of the final allocation for Bromley remained outstanding, but it was clear that the level of funding would assume a 90% take up. The GLA had now confirmed that the claw back mechanism would not be applied.

In response to a question, the Director of Education confirmed that as the claw back mechanism was not in place if take-up was below 90% there could be some additional funding for other costs associated with the scheme. The level of 90% had been based on the take-up of infant free school meals. If take up was significantly over 90% in a local authority area additional funding could be sought where evidence was provided. However, this would not help individual schools experiencing high demand in an area where overall take up was not significantly above 90%.

A Primary Head Teacher highlighted that schools had indicated that the capital costs involved in the scheme – the provision of new cookers etc – would exceed £10,000.

**26            DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

14 September 2023

The Meeting ended at 5.21 pm

Chairman