

<p style="text-align: center;">THE SOUTHWARK SCHOOLS FORUM MINUTES OF THE MEETING Thursday 11th December 2014</p>

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1. **Attendance and Apologies**
See Annex A. Michael Davern substituted for Betty Joseph.
 2. **Declaration of Interests**
Members were asked to declare any pecuniary or other interests they might have that were greater than the interests of other members of the Forum in any matter on the agenda for discussion. There were none.
 3. **Minutes of the Meeting of 16th October 2014**
The attendance was amended and then agreed as a true record.
 4. **Matters Arising from the Minutes of 16th October 2014**
 - a) The LA was asked about the progress of the SEN Funding Review as it was noted that a report back was due back in January 2015. Melissa Williamson informed the Schools Forum that the Local Authority was still looking at the impact of the new EHC Plans and then consult, so there will not be time to collate the responses in time for a report back in January 2015
 - b) Changes to Schools Forum membership – the clerk reported that, to date, no detail had been received from the DfE.
 - c) Steve Morrison confirmed that the LA's discrepancy in the number of Trade Union representatives at his school had now been rectified.
 - d) Maternity Cover Supply Scheme – it was confirmed that the current policy had been circulated to members. The LA suggested that the Heads Executive and SASH (secondary schools) could ask their members for their views on the current policy of not including financial cover to schools when their Headteacher goes on maternity leave. They could then report back their views for consideration by the LA and then decide whether any changes were desirable.
 5. **Dedicated Schools Grant 2014-15 update and Distribution of funds Unallocated Funds from 2013-14.**
 - 5.1 This report, previously circulated, updated the Schools Forum on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocation for 2014-15 and the projected expenditure as at November 2014. In addition, the Local Authority (LA) was making proposals regarding the distribution of unallocated funds from the 2013-14 DSG.
 - 5.2 Melissa Williamson reported that the DSG for 2014-15 had increased in year by £845k and this mainly reflects the increase in early years numbers in the January 2014 census.
 - 5.3 The 2014-15 budget position as at November 2014 gives an estimated underspend of £2.5m relating to high needs and early years funding. In addition it was expected that the two year old budget will continue to be underspent. Following a question it was agreed that the LA would ring fence

the underspent monies related to the two year olds to future two year old programmes including increasing capacity and support.

- 5.4 The LA highlighted the potential risks on the DSG funding in future years and importance of managing these risks by holding contingency funding. In addition the LA confirmed that the current EFA guidance recommends LAs plan for meeting the costs of rising pupil numbers in the non-recoupment academies and free schools from 2016-17. This is a significant concern in Southwark due to the number of these schools. Sarah Alexander reminded the Schools Forum that the employers' pension contributions will be increased so causing extra cost for schools.
- 5.5 Keith Fox was concerned that schools did not know the reasons why monies were actually being held back and that if schools were facing reduced budgets then they may well be planning staff redundancies, which in fact the belated release of additional funds could prevent. Steve Morrison said that schools need to know as early as possible about these funds.
- 5.6 In response to Rebecca Sherwood, Melissa Williamson confirmed that if the full £4.165m was released to schools and the PVIs then the LA would still be holding, at minimum, the £3.8m DSG contingency from the 2014-15 funding, as agreed by the Schools Forum.
- 5.7 It was confirmed that the LA cannot, now, release additional funds in year, it has to add any residue to the next financial year's funding formula. Also if all the surplus was not distributed it would remain in the DSG budget for future years use. Steve Morrison said that aspects of the risks highlighted were sometimes speculation and that what is needed, if possible, is hard information to base decisions on.
- 5.8 Mickey Kelly asked about how much monies schools were holding in their own reserves. The LA said that it only had information on maintained schools and not academies, and this is presented to the Schools Forum each year. For 2013-14 this was £17.054m, a rise from £15.902m.
- 5.9 It was agreed that it would be useful to the Schools Forum to be provided with trend information on figures in each area for the previous three years. Paulette Bertram said that, because of the low level of funding the PVIs get, then the impact to them of receiving extra funds is higher. Melissa Williamson said that this would be one-off monies, and that with the Schools Forum support, would be outside future years Minimum Funding Guarantee calculations. The Schools Forum noted this and gave its support.
- 5.10 The Chair then asked that the Schools Forum for their views by asking them to vote on the various options in the report (note not all members cast a vote for Option2):

Option 2 - Distribute £3m – In Favour 3, Abstentions 2, Against 1

Option 1 - Distribute £4m – In Favour 7, Abstentions 2, Against 0

Option 3 - Distribute £2m – In Favour 1, Abstentions 0, Against 8

The remainder of the report was noted.

6. **Progress Report on the Draft Early Years Single Funding Formula**

- 6.1 The report, previously circulated, updated the Schools Forum with the revised proposals of the LA with regards to revisions to the 2015-16 Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF).
- 6.2 Due to the announcement by the DfE regarding a national review of the EYSFF and the lack of time for consultation, now no change is proposed to the base rates. However, it is proposed to consult on changing the deprivation factor to one which applies the same methodology to all providers, i.e. uses the IDACI bandings and using the same rates for all providers.
- 6.3 It was also proposed to consult on amending the formula so that academies received the same funding rates as maintained primary schools and as previously agreed, this will be backdated to April 2014.
- 6.4 Rebecca Sherwood was concerned that, as changes impact more severely on those with small budgets, then what was the consequence of the proposals regarding the deprivation formula? Melissa Williamson pointed out that the last table in Appendix C attempted to model any change based on January 2014 data. This showed that where there was a loss the maximum was £1,950, with an average of loss of £290.
- 6.5 Paulette Bertram was concerned at the current low basic hourly rate for PVI's, some of which are voluntary groups. To increase quality does require higher rates so as to employ staff with qualifications and experience higher than the basic level that is required. All providers are subject to the same OFSTED inspection regime. Rebecca Sherwood agreed that there is the need to raise standards but it should not be at the expense of another sector, all should be sustainable.
- 6.6 Merrill Haeusler said that Southwark does need to see what the DfE comes up with for a national formula but the move to a more consistent approach for all providers for the changes to the Deprivation factor does seem sensible. Mickey Kelly said that he believed a more radical solution to early years funding is required with a clear steer being required from both the LA and the DfE.

The report was noted.

7. **Dedicated Schools Grant 2015-16**

- 7.1 A report setting out the updates to the arrangements for funding the DSG for 2015-16 had been circulated and reports had come to each previous Schools Forum meetings as more detail emerged.
- 7.2 Melissa Williamson explained that the government had confirmed the unit of funding to the LA was unchanged at £6,124 per pupil. A further top slice of £7.51 per pupil is planned to fund the government's Carbon reduction Commitment. Pupil numbers have increased by an estimated 346 which represents a 1.22% increase over 2014-15.

- 7.3 More importantly, the “Headroom” which is the difference between the rate paid by the DfE to the LA and what is paid out through the formula to providers is estimated to be minimal. Therefore, no additional funding is available to meet any increase in any additional needs these extra pupils may have – the existing budgets will have to cope with higher numbers.
- 7.4 The EFA had confirmed the 2015-16 funding arrangements for 2 year olds with the main change being that from April 2015 funding will be based on take-up numbers rather than a population estimate. The hourly rate of funding to the LA is confirmed at £6.07.
- 7.5 The risks around 2 year old funding included the ending of the support for delivering and expanding the programme and meeting the additional needs of 2 year olds – some with quite complex special educational needs. The LA proposed to manage these risks by ring fencing any previous over allocation of one-off 2 year old funding to the future needs of 2 year olds.
- 7.6 Merril Haeusler confirmed that the LA was looking at the possibility of schools being able to take 2 year olds.

The report was noted.

8. Pupil Premium 2014-15 Update

- 8.1 This previously circulated summary report set out the impact on the overall funding for Pupil Premium between 2013-14 and 2014-15. This showed an increase of £3.5m which is 22%.
- 8.2 It was also confirmed that there will be an Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) for 2015-16 based on an hourly rate of £0.53. The LA is currently working through how the administration of this new funding will work.
- 8.3 The Schools Forum felt that, as the January Pupil Census was crucial to funding schools for Pupil Premium, the LA should produce a single paper on Pupil Premium to clarify what needs to be done and this could be an item on the next Governors Forum.

The report was noted

9. Provisional 2015-16 Mainstream School Funding

- 9.1 The previously circulated information report provided an update on the information submitted to the Education Funding Agency regarding the school funding formula for 2015-16.
- 9.2 This information used had been previously agreed at the October 2014 Schools Forum. Although the actual format was different in that it included non-recoupment academies, the data remained the same. The minimum funding guarantee had been confirmed at minus 1.5%
- 9.3 The actual rates to be used for 2015-16 will be submitted to the Schools Forum January 2015 meeting.

10. Dates for Next Meeting

29th January 2015 19th March 2015 14th May 2015 9th July 2015

There being no further business the meeting closed.

Annex A

SCHOOLS FORUM ATTENDANCE SHEET
11th December 2014

VOTING MEMBERS

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PRESENT
Sarah Alexander	Primary School Headteacher	Yes
Craig Voller	Primary School Headteacher	Apologies
Keith Fox	Primary School Headteacher	Yes
Gregory Doey	Primary School Headteacher	Yes
Elaine Garlick	Primary School Governor	Apologies
Omolayo Sokoya	Primary School Governor	Apologies
Rebecca Sherwood	Nursery School Headteacher	Yes
Simon Eccles	Special School Headteacher	Yes
Paulette Bertram	Early Years – Private/Voluntary and Independent Settings	Yes
Steve Morrison	Academy	Yes
Mickey Kelly	Academy	Yes
Mike Antoniou	Academy	No
Yomi Adewoye	Pupil Referral Units	Yes
Sister Anne-Marie Niblock	Secondary School Headteacher	Apologies
Vacant	FE SEN	
Catherine May	Diocese Board	Yes
Betty Joseph substitute Michael Davern	Trade Unions	Michael Davern attended

Senior Officers in Attendance

Melissa Williamson	Yes
Merril Haeusler	Yes
Jim Eshelby	Apologies
Pauline Armour	Apologies
David Cross	Clerk
Kerry Crichlow	Yes