

**THE SOUTHWARK SCHOOLS FORUM
MINUTES OF THE MEETING
Thursday 15th March 2012**

- 1. Attendance and Apologies**
See Annex A. Lynn Charlton substituted for Liz Robinson.
- 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 26th January 2012**
These were agreed as a true record.
- 4. Matters Arising from Meeting of 26th January 2012**
There were no matters arising not on the agenda.
- 5. Dedicated Schools Grant 2012-13 - Update**
 - 5.1 Fay Hammond had circulated a report with the agenda. This set out the estimated Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2012-13 will be in the region of £223.6m based on an estimated pupil numbers of 30,737. This is still a projection as the DfE had yet to provide details of pupil numbers in academies and the Early Years data is subject to change as the DfE is yet to confirm the data provided by the Private/Voluntary and Independent (PVI) sectors.

This was noted by the Schools Forum.
 - 5.2 The Schools Forum then moved on to section 3 of the report regarding the Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) Resource Centre Funding Review that was undertaken in advance of a full review of Special School Funding. This had reviewed current funding of the resource centres and the Local Authority (LA) is proposing a revised funding methodology as the current model no longer accurately reflected the costs associated with running costs of the Resource Centres. This was due, in part, to the increasing complexity of the need of the children requiring one-to-one support.
 - 5.3 The proposed funding methodology was based on a flat rate £55k for each centre to cover the costs of one full time teacher, an additional 20% of a teacher costs to cover PPA and other centre management costs and a per pupil amount of £16.3k that was in addition to the pupil funding already received through the formula.
 - 5.4 It was also proposed that any in-year changes at the centres would impact on the funding in that year, like other children with SEN statements – the centre would only attract the funding for actual pupils at the centre. These changes would cost a further £170k in addition to the £120k already set aside for growth. Fay Hammond confirmed that, so far, no funding at all had been allocated to those schools with ASC Resource Centres.

- 5.5 Elaine Garlick said that many schools that do not have these Resource Centres, including Alfred Salter where she is Chair of Governors, were also experiencing additional resource needs for children that they have within this category of SEN. The proposal would therefore create an unfair system by having different funding levels, a higher rate per pupil in the centres compared to the same, and lower, rate in other mainstream schools. Teresa Neary confirmed that in special schools there was a higher staffing ratio due to their complexity.
- 5.6 Following a question from the Chair, Fay Hammond confirmed that the actual Banding of the statement in both types of settings was the same and this proposal was interim and for one year. The Chair felt that, therefore the monetary value attracted should be the same. It was also felt by the Schools Forum that if the Centres needed two teachers then they should be funded for two teachers.
- 5.7 The Schools Forum concluded that it could not agree with the proposal as put in the report because it was unfair but then voted on a recommendation that the Centres should be resourced for the equivalent of two teachers and that the monetary value of the banding should be the same, whether the pupil was in a resource centre or in a classroom in a mainstream school.

In favour: 11, Against: 0, Abstentions: 1.

- 5.8 The other areas of the report were then addressed. Fay Hammond reported that the DfE would only permit a dis-application of the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) relating to Excellence in Cities (known locally as Excellence in Southwark) for 2012-13 and that it should be distributed by formula across all schools from 2013-14 onwards. This request by the LA to the DfE had been discussed and supported by the Schools Forum at its previous meeting.

- 5.9 The Schools Forum asked the LA to let all those schools that currently receive funding for this project, be told that this is the last year of the funding through the current methodology, so they can plan ahead.

The Schools Forum formally noted the response from the DfE.

- 5.9 It was also noted that the government's Central Expenditure Limit (CEL) that applied to budgets that were retained centrally by the LA had not increased in cash terms at a greater rate than the individual schools budget. As a consequence the CEL had not been breached.

The Schools Forum formally noted that the Central Expenditure Limited for 2012-13 had not been breached.

6. Combined Budgets 2012-13

- 6.1 The Local Authority (LA) proposal to allocate £74,850 as a contribution to the running costs of the Headteachers Executive in Southwark had been circulated to the Schools Forum prior to the meeting. This had also been discussed by the Schools Forum at previous meetings where the LA was seeking advice and also when considering the overall budget for 2012-13.

- 6.2 The funding to be allocated would be in two parts. Firstly, £57,580 to be paid to their bank account to cover general running expenses and the salary of the Business Manager. Secondly, £17,100, to be retained and allocated as and when claims are received by the LA to pay for compensating the school that provides the Headteacher who acts as Chair of the Executive for their absence from the school.
- 6.3 Irene Bishop felt that by not allocating the full amount up front conveyed a lack of trust in the organisation. Kerry Crichlow said this was not the case. Fay Hammond confirmed that the LA was still awaiting the detail of the outturn of the accounts. Kerry Crichlow said that once these accounts had been received, the operational aspects of the allocation would be reviewed.

The Schools Forum agreed the allocation in 2012-13 of £74,850 of DSG to “Combined Budgets”.

7. Impact of the Private Finance Initiative on the Dedicated Schools Grant

- 7.1 The Chair agreed, due to the importance and urgency of the views sought by the LA that the short paper on the above could be tabled. This had been “laid on the table” prior to the start of the meeting.
- 7.2 Kerry Crichlow gave the Schools Forum the background to the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) for secondary schools in Southwark and how the strategy was previously supported by the Schools Forum. There is often a gap between the funding provided by the government under PFI and the actual cost over the 25 year period of the contract. This shortfall is known as the “Affordability Gap”.
- 7.3 This issue would have been brought to the Schools Forum in July as part of the Outturn for the 2011-12 financial year. However, two secondary schools, St Michael’s Catholic College and Sacred Heart Catholic School have started the process to convert to academy status with the intention of achieving that by May 2012. A third, St Thomas the Apostle College, has also expressed an interest in converting but has not yet started the process.
- 7.4 The DfE has made it clear that for the schools to convert the issue of who pays the affordability gap and how, must be addressed and included in the legal documentation of the conversion.
- 7.5 Fay Hammond then took members through the section of the report on how usually this “Affordability Gap” would be funded, namely by a factor in the schools funding formula that would allocate funds to the schools for this, who would then pay them over to the Council. That is, it is resourced from the Dedicated Schools Grant.
- 7.6 The level of the gap for St Michael’s Catholic College is projected to be £60k per annum, but at the moment the projection for the other two schools that came into the programme later is zero, although this may change over time. The £60k gap is currently being funded by the Council from its core budget and this was done in order to get the necessary legal agreements in place so as to ensure that the building works were not delayed.
- 7.7 Grainne Grabowski, who is the Headteacher at St Michael’s Catholic College, took the members through the background to the PFI scheme and how her

school and the Diocese had to sign up to the PFI deal in order to get the necessary major building works done. They would have preferred not to go down the PFI route but had no option. The school is paying a considerable sum, 12% of its school budget share, already for the Facilities Management aspects of the contract, including ICT and do not receive value for money in the services provided.

- 7.8 Mark Parsons asked how long this would have to go on. Fay Hammond said it is likely to be the full 25 years. The Chair said that through this government policy of academy conversion other Southwark schools would be penalised. Irene Bishop stated that as conversion to academy status is government policy then it is they who should meet the cost.
- 7.9 Kerry Crichlow said there was a risk to the converter schools that if this issue is not resolved they could not convert. It was asked why the level of gap is not the same for the other schools? Kerry Crichlow replied that part of BSF was later and the financial climate was different but this of course may change over the 25 year period. In answering a question from the Chair, Kerry Crichlow confirmed that there were no primary schools within the PFI programme.
- 7.10 Following further discussions the Chair then summed up and it was agreed that the LA should be asked to enter into further discussions with the DfE but the Schools Forum advice to the LA was that in their view, it is the DfE who should meet the extra costs associated with PFI and academy conversions.

8. Schools Financial Value Standard

- 8.1 An information report by Melissa Williamson had been circulated with the agenda. Irene Bishop asked that the LA produce an exemplar of the evidence that a Southwark school should be basing its questions and judgements on.

The report was noted.

9. Early Years Budgets Funded Through the Dedicated Schools Grant

- 9.1 This overview information report had been circulated with the agenda. Sharon Donno commented on whether there were enough day care places in the Early Years Centres especially for very vulnerable children and families.

The report was noted.

10. Schools Nursery Funding Working Party

- 10.1 An information report had been circulated with the agenda.
- 10.2 The Schools Forum commented that the issue of Full Time and Part Time places had been around for some time and hoped the Local Authority would, in its recommendations due later in the summer term, end the uncertainty and also give schools time to carry out any changes to their admissions practices.
- 10.3 In an answer to a question from Virginia Bridge, Kerry Crichlow confirmed that there were no planned changes due for September 2012.

The report was noted.

11. School Finance (England) Regulations 2012

11.1 An information report by the Clerk had been circulated with the agenda.

The report was noted.

12. Academy funding

12.1 An information report, in the form of PowerPoint slide handouts, was circulated at the meeting. An updated version will be circulated with the minutes.

12.2 Fay Hammond took members through the slides and outlined the financial impact that schools converting has on the funding coming into Southwark for the maintained schools. Currently because of rising rolls the problem is minimised. However, there is a time lag in receiving academy information from the DfE at budget setting time which makes it difficult to calculate the DSG each year.

12.3 Because some educational activities are funded from the council's own budget, these funds are withdrawn for each converting academy by the DfE. There is a danger that what is left is not sufficient to resource what is still required to be provided for pupils at maintained schools.

12.4 The government has acknowledged that change is required and this is proposed for 2013-14 with a probable national formula and, hopefully, clearly defined responsibilities for academies, maintained schools and local authorities.

12.5 The Schools Forum thanked Fay for the briefing.

13. Dates of Next meetings

29th May 2012

5th July 2012

Annex A

SCHOOLS FORUM ATTENDANCE SHEET

15th March 2012

VOTING MEMBERS

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PRESENT
Nick Tildesley	Primary School Headteacher	Apologies
Vacancy	Primary School Headteacher	
Teresa Nouri	Primary School Headteacher	Apologies
Virginia Bridge	Primary School Headteacher	Yes
Liz Robinson	Primary School Headteacher	Substitute L Charlton
Maddy Webb	Primary School Headteacher	Yes
Mark Parsons	Primary School Headteacher	Yes
Grainne Grabowski	14-19 Representative	Yes
Darren Coghlan	Vulnerable Children	Yes
Pat Tyler	Diocese Board	Apologies
Gillian Reeve	Early Years – Private/Voluntary and Independent Settings	Yes
Sharon Donno	Nursery School Headteacher	Yes
Michael Davern/Betty Joseph	Teachers Unions	BJ Yes MD Apologies
To be nominated	Support Staff Unions	
David Sheppard	Academy	Apologies
Vacancy	Academy	
Elaine Garlick	Primary School Governor	Yes
Canon Grahame Shaw	Primary School Governor	Apologies
Teresa Neary	Special School Headteacher	Yes
Dr Irene Bishop	Secondary School Headteacher	Yes
Sister Anne-Marie Niblock	Secondary School Headteacher	Yes

Senior Officers in Attendance

Kerry Crichlow	Assistant Director
Fay Hammond	Head of Children's Services Finance
Pauline Armour	Assistant Director - Apologies
Mike Smith	Assistant Director - Apologies
Merril Haeusler	Deputy Director - Apologies
Jim Eshelby	Assistant Director - Yes
David Cross	Clerk

Apologies from Councillor McDonald