

**THE SOUTHWARK SCHOOLS FORUM
MINUTES OF THE MEETING
Monday 2nd July 2012**

- 1. Attendance and Apologies**

See Annex A. The Chair welcomed Muriel Rant from the Education Funding Agency as an observer.
- 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. Virginia Bridge declared an interest in item 7 Annex A – expansion classes as her school was one scheduled to receive extra pupils. There were no others.
- 3. Minutes of the Meeting of 29th May 2012**

These were agreed as a true record.
- 4. Matters Arising from Meeting of 29th May 2012**
 - 4.1 DfE Response on PFI – Kerry Crichlow reported that this was still awaited.
 - 4.2 Schools in Difficulty – clarification of figures – Melissa Williamson reported that this was included in the report for Item 7.
 - 4.3 Sub Group on SEN Units in Schools – Fay Hammond reported on behalf of the Deputy Director that this was now incorporated in the work related to the Funding Review.
- 5. The School Financial Value Standard – Training**
 - 5.1 An Information Report by Melissa Williamson had been previously circulated. This was noted. Irene Bishop commented specifically on benchmarking and said she found this particularly useful.
- 6. Full Time Nursery Places – Changing to Funding 2013**
 - 6.1 Fay Hammond reported on behalf of the Deputy Director that the central funding through the Schools Funding Formula for full time places in nursery schools and nursery classes will cease from September 2013. A school can still have full time places and it may charge the parents for the cost beyond the 15 hours of free entitlement. There will be some full time funded places for vulnerable children.
 - 6.2 A report will be coming to the Schools Forum in the autumn, Sharon Donno asked that it makes clear the issue of dates of birth that define whether a child is considered to be 2 or 3 or 4 for the funding formula.
- 7. Dedicated Schools Grant 2011-12 – Outturn**

- 7.1 A detailed report had been circulated with the agenda. This showed that the total level of reserves was now standing at £4.7m and the report had a number of annexes that detailed the Local Authority's proposals for these reserves.
- 7.2 Annex A sets out the detail of the spend on the additional places in the temporary expansion classes for primary admissions. This included further places at Rye Oak and Crawford. In response to a question on how schools were chosen to have these extra classes Kerry Crichlow said that all schools were invited to have a temporary expansion class. From those that responded, the actual demand in the area was taken into account, as was the current level of form entry at the school especially if it was wishing to move from a 1.5 to a 2 form entry school.
- 7.3 The Chair was concerned that as there was no longer an Admissions Forum there was no forum to debate admissions issues and Elaine Garlick said that the Schools Forum had previously asked for details of the LA's strategy on school places in the borough. Kerry Crichlow said that a draft strategy was being worked on and will be presented to the Schools Forum in the autumn. Maddy Webb had concerns that there were schools with vacancies and often parents would have their name down for a school place in September but with no real intention of taking it up and so "blocking" the place which can then remain empty whilst other schools are expanding.
- 7.4 The Schools Forum then voted on the proposal to allocate £125,798 for expansion classes at Rye Oak and Crawford primary schools.
Those in Favour: 9, Against 0, Abstentions 1.
- 7.5 Annex B related to the unspent Excellence in Southwark funds. This was due to the funds being brought back to the LA for a school that ceased to be a "banker school". This can now be allocated to the new "banker school" namely Brunswick Park. In addition, it was clarified that the programme of activities runs on an academic year not a financial year.

This was agreed unanimously.
- 7.6 Annex C related to creating a buffer of £1m to mitigate the impact of the School Funding reform changes relating to Early Years. In particular the LA currently receives a "top up" of funding in the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) because the total number of 3 year olds in early years settings is less than 90% of the total population of 3 year olds in the borough.
- 7.7 The exact mechanism the DfE will use to reduce the funding in 2013-14 and 2014-15 is not known but this could be a reduction of up to £2.7m over the two years and would impact across the whole budget. In response to a question Fay Hammond said that if the funding was not used then it remained within the DSG for schools.

This was agreed unanimously.
- 7.8 Annex D proposed a general contingency of £2m to be held in recognition of the risks of differences between estimated and actual pupil numbers in the DSG. This would be held in a specific DSG Reserve and could only be spent on school budgets or the centrally retained budgets.
- 7.9 Irene Bishop asked about whether it could go towards the Excellence in Southwark's programme – the Chair said that no doubt with the changes to

the funding mechanisms there will be lots of areas that will come under pressure. Sharon Donno asked that would the request to allocate come to the Schools Forum before it was spent – the LA agreed to do this.

- 7.10 It was unanimously agreed to maintaining a £2m general contingency in the DSG and that the LA would bring any request to draw down from this to the Schools Forum.
- 7.11 Annex E related to the LA looking for Schools Forum views on allocating the final £972,647 of the balances to either schools or to add it the LA's capital programme.
- 7.12 Kerry Crichlow confirmed that if the funds were allocated to the Capital Programme access would not be restricted to community schools it would be available for all schools. Mark Parsons commented that Lambeth seemed to have access to considerable capital funding. Grainne Grabowski commented that schools need to have funding to look after the school fabric and they should ensure that they do maintain their premises. This should be monitored by the LA and also the LA should ensure that the companies it uses are high quality.
- 7.13 There was no agreement on the proposals for a £500k investment in Carbon Reduction Loan Scheme or a £972,647 (Annex E) investment in school capital programme. These items will be brought back to the Schools Forum in October with additional information.
- 7.14 Fay Hammond presented a supplementary paper explaining that the final DSG figures were released making a further £1.7m available for distribution to schools. The Forums views were sort on the basis of allocating this funding, and following discussion it was agreed that all schools should equally benefit and this funding should be allocated on the basis of AWPU and places.

8. Schools Funding Formula 2013-14

- 8.1 This information paper previously circulated with the agenda summarised the changes proposed by the government to primary and secondary schools in 2013-14. Irene Bishop thanked Fay and her colleagues for the presentation they made to the previous meeting on what is a complex change. The paper was noted.

9. Schools Formula Funding 2013-14 Schools Block Exceptions

- 9.1 This paper was seeking the views of the Schools Forum on the various exceptions to delegation that were being permitted in schools funding in 2013-14 onwards. The options being explored by the LA have at their heart the principles for setting and agreeing the DSG Budget previously jointly agreed between the LA and the Schools Forum. The Schools Forum views would assist to shape the formal proposals to come to the Schools Forum as part of the 2013-14 budget setting process.
- 9.2 Fay explained that there were a range of services that were previously funded from central DSG budgets that under the new funding regime cannot. These budgets will initially be delegated to schools and academies through the School Funding Formula in the first instance. If however the LA thinks there may be efficiencies through running the service or activity centrally then maintained schools in a phase may collectively agree through the Schools Forum to hand the funding back to the LA. This does not apply to academies but they may buy in to the services if they so wish.
- 9.3 There were some questions as to the titles of the services as these were not understood, for example Behaviour Support Services. Maddy Webb suggested that there needs to be a working group to look at them all if they are to be funded from schools monies.

- 9.4 There were a number of options outlined in the paper for each budget but the Local Authority's preferred one was to continue to retain these funds, i.e. de-delegation, in the first year as this would provide stability for schools. However, it was anticipated that over time de-delegation would cease. In response to a question, Fay explained that schools funding would clearly show the level of each of the budgets to be de-delegated. The Schools Forum unanimously supported this way forward.
- 9.5 The previously held contingencies would be delegated. There was a change in 2013-14 whereby the previously held central funds for schools in financial difficulties now became a contingency for maintained schools only and that schools could either de-delegate creating pool of funding to be used against agreed criteria or any school facing financial difficulties would have to address them with no central funds available.
- 9.6 The Schools Forum view was that it would be best to de-delegate funds for this purpose: In favour 9, Abstentions 2 with none against.
- 9.7 The other contingencies would be delegated with further guidance awaited from the DfE regarding reception class roll increases.
- 9.8 The other exceptions related to historical commitments that may, if permitted by the DfE, to be continued with the approval of the Schools Forum at 2012-13 cash values.
- 9.9 The final category of exceptions related to the statutory functions of the LA which where applicable will be retained.

10. Excellence in Southwark (EIS) 2013-14

- 10.1 A paper had been circulated seeking views on the options for the required delegation of the EIS Banker School Funding in 2013-14. The current "holdback" monies (£251,085) will be considered in the autumn alongside the other "combined budgets".
- 10.2 The funds to be delegated to schools, £842,591, will need to be done using the new funding factors. Irene Bishop felt that if the monies cannot be an exception, then, for schools to be asked to pool their budgets, it is best delegated on pupil numbers. This was put to the vote: In Favour 10, Against 1, Abstentions 0.
- 10.3 The Schools Forum also supported, unanimously, the LAs request to the DfE to have the funds currently allocated to the four banker schools exempted from the Minimum Funding Guarantee calculations in 2013-14 as the funds each school holds are not for them but other schools.

11. Carbon Reduction Commitment – Loan Scheme for Schools

- 11.1 Brian Smith and Laura Wilson introduced their previously circulated paper proposing that DSG reserves could be used as seed funding for a loan scheme to enable schools to fund Energy Conservation Measures (ECMs).

- 11.2 The loan scheme would be available to maintained schools, not academies as they have access to other funding that maintained schools do not, and schools would pay back what they borrowed from the savings they made from reduced energy consumption. This would be based on estimated energy savings.
- 11.3 In response to a question Brian Smith confirmed that there had been a good response by schools to a previous pilot scheme but of the 23 schools that had been surveyed only 9 took up the recommendations, the main reason that the remaining 14 did not progress was lack of available funds to allocate to the ECMs in their schools.
- 11.4 Although generally supportive of the proposal the Schools Forum expressed concerns regarding voluntary aided schools. This revolved around those schools governors having different responsibilities to those of community schools and the fact that they are subject to VAT for certain works – maintained schools are not.
- 11.5 Fay Hammond said that the LA will take this issue back and consider how the Loan Scheme can be operated to ensure equality access of the funding for VA schools.

12. Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012

- 12.1 These had been circulated and were for information. The Chair noted that the previous membership for a representative of the Diocese Body was absent. The clerk explained that it is not a requirement to have such a member just that the LA has the duty to consider whether or not to include them in the membership – and this is currently under consideration.

13. Any Other Business

- 13.1 The clerk reported that there no items.

Meeting closed at 1800hrs

Annex A

SCHOOLS FORUM ATTENDANCE SHEET

2nd July 2012

VOTING MEMBERS

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PRESENT
Nick Tildesley	Primary School Headteacher	Yes
Craig Voller	Primary School Headteacher	Apologies
Teresa Nouri	Primary School Headteacher	Substitute Janice Babb
Virginia Bridge	Primary School Headteacher	Yes
Liz Robinson	Primary School Headteacher	Apologies
Maddy Webb	Primary School Headteacher	Yes
Mark Parsons	Primary School Headteacher	Yes
Grainne Grabowski	14-19 Representative	Yes
Darren Coghlan	Vulnerable Children	Apologies
Pat Tyler	Diocese Board	Resigned
Gillian Reeve	Early Years – Private/Voluntary and Independent Settings	Apologies
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	Observer C Hutton
Elaine Garlick	Primary School Governor	Yes
Canon Grahame Shaw	Primary School Governor	Apologies
Teresa Neary	Special School Headteacher	Substitute
Dr Irene Bishop	Secondary School Headteacher	Yes
Sister Anne-Marie Niblock	Secondary School Headteacher	Yes

Senior Officers in Attendance

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