



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE TEACHERS' JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE Wednesday 18 November 2015 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Bradley (Chair) and Councillors Bradley Harrison, Kelcher, Tatler together with Mrs L Gouldbourne (Vice Chair), Mr H Roberts and Ms J Roberts

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillor Nerva and also Mr C Beschi, Mr H Brown, Ms J Cooper and Mr G Williams

1. Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests

None.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 July 2015 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting subject to:

Clause 6 (iv), final line – amend to read decision for 'Academies' trusts.

Clause 7, para 2 – amend to read:

'This had been discussed at the termly meeting with headteachers. The PREVENT officer had also led a workshop at the Governors' Conference.

3. Matters arising

Academies

The Teachers' Panel welcomed the news that a date had been set for legal action to commence with a view to getting back money misappropriated by some staff at the former Copland Community School now Ark Elvin Academy, however, concern was expressed at the Academy's decline in exam results.

The Teachers' Panel also expressed concern at other schools thought to be considering Academy status and felt that the local authority should make public its opposition to Academisation and also publicise the council's service offer for schools. Circulated at the meeting was a press article from the Evening Standard (10 November 2015) where a London school, branded as 'Failing' by Ofsted, was transformed within 16 months to 'Outstanding' through the LA giving its full support working with the school and parents, changing the curriculum and raising aspirations. The Teachers' Panel urged the council to let parents and staff know concerns, to speak to governing bodies and counter criticisms of council services.

The Teachers' Panel also questioned the extent to which the council had been involved in a meeting at Oakington Manor concerning their proposed building expansion.

The Strategic Director, Children and Young People responded that the local authority's approach was to have partnerships with all schools working well and to avoid any more schools being compulsorily Academised. She stressed that it was governing bodies of good and outstanding schools who took the decision to move towards convertor academy status and not head teachers and she confirmed that the LA had been notified that Oakington Manor and Furness schools would be consulting on Academisation. It was not practice to respond formally in such instances.

The Teachers' Panel reiterated their view that the LA should not be passive but make representations and members of the council's side agreed that the council should send out positive messages about its work and services.

Pay progression in maintained schools

The committee noted that enquiry of HR colleagues on whether the authority held any data on the protected characteristics of teachers joining and leaving schools in Brent was still outstanding.

Human Resources review

The Teachers' Panel expressed regret at staffing changes and reductions in the HR team which was adversely affecting policy making progression and hindering preventative work. The Strategic Director undertook to advise on the point of contact for documentation.

4. Items raised by the Teachers' Panel

i) Partnership criteria

Gail Tolley (Strategic Director, Children and Young People) confirmed that the Cabinet at their meeting on 16 November 2015, had considered a report on the School Place Planning Strategy appended to which was partnership commitment for academies and free school providers working in collaboration with the council. This included a requirement for academies and free school providers to demonstrate appropriate staffing arrangements including trade union recognition.

ii) Secondary school places

The committee agreed to take as an urgent item, the 'School Place Planning Strategy 2014-18' update. The Teacher's Panel enquired on the progress of school places in Brent. Gail Tolley advised that on 16 November 2015 the Cabinet had approved a report updating the 2014-18 School Place Planning Strategy. There were currently sufficient primary and secondary places. While the demand for places had lessened in comparison to previous years, all planned expansions would be required. Demand for secondary places was expected to exceed supply by 2018 and this was a London wide concern. Gladstone Free School had been further delayed due to the absence of a suitable site. The DFE would decide on

applications for Free Schools and pre-approval consultation would be required. Gail Tolley stated that she was aware that some local secondary academy schools were considering making a submission to sponsor a new Free School.

In response to a question on recruitment and retention and whether there would be sufficient teachers available, Gail Tolley responded that the issue of recruitment was London wide and there was a need for a realistic approach. The Teachers' Panel reminded that the problem was exacerbated by the cost of housing in Brent, the lack of affordable housing, the cost of living and reduced teachers' salaries.

Gail Tolley stated that there was no requirement to consult on the update to the School Place Planning Strategy report in advance of submission to Cabinet in November as it related to legislative changes which were not negotiable. She further confirmed that the meeting of Special school head teachers to discuss a proposal to sponsor a new free school, took place outside of school hours.

The Teachers' Panel expressed concern at the appearance of secrecy and the value of openness and transparency suggesting that the head teachers be asked to share information.

The feasibility of moving to all-through schools, for example, with schools located over different sites, as a means of increasing places was discussed and the Chair questioned the extent to which information was available on other councils' experience in this area.

- iii) TU bill, Prevent Strategy and the Education and Adoption bill - joint strategic response

The Teachers' Panel questioned progress on the council's response on the TU bill, Prevent Strategy and the Education and Adoption Bill with a view to reaching consensus on a joint approach. The committee heard that the TU Bill was due to be raised at Full Council in November. Regarding the Prevent Strategy, the Teachers' Panel emphasised that their concerns were over the approach and stressed the need for any concerns to be dealt with as safeguarding issues and that staff not be required to act as police. Additionally, it was felt that teaching unions should have been consulted. Gail Tolley stressed that the guidance for schools was that Prevent should be treated as part of safeguarding.

- iv) Brent OFSTED outcomes and future plans

Gail Tolley advised that an Ofsted inspection had been conducted during September 2015 the outcome of which would be published the following week.

5. Any other urgent business

None.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The committee agreed that the next meeting should take place on 10 February 2015 at 7pm.

The meeting closed at 8.00 pm

M BRADLEY
Chair