



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE TEACHERS' JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE Wednesday 10 February 2016 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Bradley (Chair), Mrs L Gouldbourne (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Aden, Chan, Harrison, Tatler together with Mr H Roberts, Ms J Roberts and Mr G Williams

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillors Hoda-Benn, Nerva and also from Mr C Beschi, Mr H Brown, Ms J Cooper and Mr S Gorsia

1. Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests

Councillor Chan advised that he was a teacher in a Hampstead School and a member of the NUT (National Union of Teachers). Councillor Bradley declared that he was a member of the NUT.

2. Welcome

The committee welcomed Councillor Chan to his first meeting of the JCC.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 November 2015 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. Matters arising

Academies

The Teachers' Panel requested an update on legal action against some staff at the former Copland Community School to recover monies and it was agreed that information would be circulated in advance of the next meeting.

Academisation

The Teachers' Panel asked about the Local Authority's plans to produce information for school governing bodies and parents, setting the council's position on Academisation. It was noted that a letter from the Leader of the Council and the Lead Member for Children and Young People had been sent to schools under local authority control encouraging them to remain with the council's family of schools.

The Teachers' Panel suggested that a document be prepared setting giving examples of how the local authority had been able to support schools.

It was **agreed** that Teachers' Panel produce a draft document suggesting items for inclusion in a pack promoting the council services for circulation to governing bodies and parents of schools considering Acadamisation.

Secondary School Places

Cate Duffy (Interim OD Early Help and Education) advised that there was no further update on a site for the proposed Gladstone Free School.

5. Items raised by the Teachers' Panel

(i) Proposed special and secondary free schools

The Teachers' Panel circulated a joint education unions response on the consultation about setting up a free school dated February 2016 and expressed the view that the local authority should not to accept Free Schools as the only alternative to the shortage of school places but instead should make clear its preference to build new schools. It was noted that some local authorities had expanded existing schools as means of increasing school places and doubt was being expressed by various local authorities over Free Schools as the solution. It was noted that some head teachers in the borough were considering setting up Free Schools. The point was made that several schools were against expansion and additionally, recruitment and retention problems could lead to a shortage of teachers.

Cate Duffy (Interim OD, Early Help and Education) responded that further opportunities for primary school expansion were limited and that the local authority had a legal duty to meet demand for places. The council sought to work with those Free School providers who had a proven track record and plans to provide in good locations.

The committee agreed that it would be more effective for cross council working between like-minded local authorities and teachers panels and also suggested a joint commission on the state of education.

The committee acknowledged that none of the secondary schools in the borough were under local authority control and the council had an obligation to ensure good working relations were maintained.

The committee **agreed** that consideration be given to a joint commission or joint agreement with other councils to expose implications of central government policy and the Teachers' Panel **agreed** to bring to the LA's attention any links with other schools/teachers' panels.

(ii) Funding in London

The Teachers' Panel circulated information on government proposals for a national funding formula and the likelihood of funding cuts that were projected to amount to 9% in Brent. The Teachers' Panel advised that the National Union of Teachers was

starting a campaign in support of London's Education and would be writing to head teachers and governing bodies. They expressed a wish for joint working with the council and support for a public meeting on the effects of a national formula.

Cate Duffy advised that she was aware of the proposals and a report had been submitted to the Schools Forum. It was likely that London would lose funding and models showed differing outcomes for Brent which was already among the least funded. A way forward would be agreed once the funding formula had been announced

The committee **agreed** that the council should consider the possibility of promoting and hosting a meeting, in collaboration with other boroughs such as Hammersmith and Fulham and Ealing, against proposed funding changes.

(iii) *Class size concerns*

The Teachers' Panel expressed concern over the number of class sizes in excess of 30 and questioned how this was being monitored and how the needs of staff were being met. Cate Duffy advised that this matter had been raised previously by the Teachers' Panel and a written response had already been sent. The local authority did not have access to the full picture across the borough as schools outside LA control were responsible for their admission arrangements. At the last Census, there were known to be at least three classes with more than 30 pupils. It was agreed that efforts should be made to establish the position in Brent.

The Teachers' Panel **agreed** to collate data from colleagues to contribute to a class size evidence base so that a case could be made for the Scrutiny Committee to set up a task group on this issue.

(iv) *Asbestos*

The Teachers' Panel advised of a union report on asbestos management in schools that was due to be released and it was agreed that it be submitted to the next meeting.

6. **Any Other Urgent Business**

None.

7. **Date of Next Meeting**

The committee agreed to meet on 11 May 2016.

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm

M BRADLEY
Chair