



BRENT SCHOOLS FORUM
Minutes of the Schools Forum held on
Wednesday 7th December 2016 at The Village School

Attended by Members of the Forum:

Governors:

Martin Beard (MB)
Helga Gladbaum (HG)
Mike Heiser (MH) - Chair
Jo Jhally (JJ)
Sue Knowler (SK)
Titilola McDowell (TM)
Narinder Nathan (NN)
Umesh Raichada (UR)

Head Teachers:

Rose Ashton (RA)
Lesley Benson (LB)
Martine Clark (MC)
Kay Charles (KC)
Rabbi Yitzchak Freeman (YF)
Rachel Kitley (RK)
Gerard McKenna (GM)
Desi Lodge Patch (DLP)
Andy Prindiville (AP)

PRU:

PVI Sector:

Paul Russell (PR)

Trade Unions:

Lesley Gouldbourne (LG)

14-19 Partnership:

Lead Member (C&YP):

Officers:

Gail Tolley (GT)
Brian Grady (BG)
Andrew Ward (AW)
John Holden (JH)
Devbai Patel (DP)
Sandra Bingham (SB)
John Galligan (JG)
Sue Gates (SG)
Shirley Parks (SP)

Others:

Sotira Michael – Observer

ITEM DISCUSSION

i. Introductions

The Forum commenced at 6.10pm.

Everyone introduced themselves.

ii. Apologies

Herman Martyn
Troy Sharpe
Cllr Wilhelmina Mitchell Murray

iii. Absence

Melissa Loosemore
Danny Coyle

iv Membership

DP reported that three vacancies remain. These are for a EY PVI representative, a Nursery School Governor, and a 14-19 Partnership. Officers are continuing to seek nominations to fill the vacancies.

1 Declarations of Interests

1.1 None

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 21st September 2016 and Matters Arising

2.1 'Gerard' was incorrectly spelt under Apologies.

2.2 Paragraph 6.7 – 'Brent' was incorrectly spelt.

2.3 The above corrections were noted and the minutes were approved as an accurate record.

3.0 Action Log and Matters Arising

3.1 Paragraph 8.4 – GM asked if an explanation could be provided on the IDACI changes. AW said this was covered in the agenda item 12 and could be dealt then.

4.0 Update on High Needs Funding of the DSG

[The report was for information](#)

4.1 SB presented this report. She reported that both the National Fairer Funding and High Needs Block funding consultations are due imminently. There will be detailed work on the High Needs consultation carried out by the established High Needs Task and Finish Group in the New Year. There has been significant growth

in the number of children with High Needs, this has meant that 754 of the planned 756 places are currently occupied. Alongside this the current number of children with statements of SEN or EHCPs is likely to outstrip the existing forecast growth trajectory to 2020. Because of this it is becoming necessary to send children out of borough.

- 4.2 However, Brent's policy to make places available locally continues to be pursued. A new Free Special School is due to open in Brent once a suitable site is confirmed by the EFA, but in the meantime there are pressures and continue to be so going forward. She referred to Appendix 1 based on current year's allocations. This will change once the consultation comes out.
- 4.3 KC asked what the LA is doing with regard to the following:
- *Unpicking and clarifying post 16 funding and associated provision.*
 - *Managing the number of placements in out of borough settings.*
 - *Managing the alternative provision offer across PRUs and special provisions.*

SB said that these are issues the Task and Finish Group intends to address.

- 4.4 LB queried how early years provision sits within the budgets contained in the report. The two High Needs units at nursery schools do not seem to appear in the High Needs block. Also excluded are the Children in Need (CIN) and Children with Difficulties (CWD) services. A clarification was sought on how the two nursery schools' Additional Resourced Units (ARP) units were funded. AW said that in the Section 251 return the Early Years central spend sits separately in line 1.3.1, but that he expected the ARPs to be within the High Needs Block budgets presented, but agreed to check and clarify for the minutes.

(Post meeting note: The place funding for the ARP units at Granville Plus and Fawood Nursery Schools, is budgeted for in the High Needs Block under line 1.0.1, the top up funding is budgeted for in the High Needs Block under line 1.2.1. Andrew Ward, 12/12/2016)

- 4.5 **The report was noted.**

5.0 De-Delegation 2017-18 – Free School Meals Eligibility Assessment

[This report was for Decision.](#)

- 5.1 AW was asked to explain the purpose of de-delegation. He said that the de-delegation allows maintained schools to contribute to a central pot from which the service can be provided. It is allocated in the funding formula to individual schools and then taken back to hold centrally. It saves individual schools an administrative burden

and allows the LA to continue with the service arrangements that are already in place.

5.2 SP presented this report. She said this item will be familiar to Schools Forum members. The LA carries out the eligibility checks for free school meals and for the pupil premium. The service sits within the Council's Admissions Team. The funding required is £27,750 which is the same as last year. The budget is not increasing but officers are trying to work more efficiently to contain the service within the existing resource.

5.3 RA asked whether the historic backlog in the FSM checks was now cleared. SP said that officers are ensuring that there is no backlog, and would look to other resources if one did occur.

5.4 MC said schools do carry out some checks and was concerned if there was a duplication of work. SP confirmed that these were additional checks.

5.5 MH invited maintained school representatives to vote on the recommendation. Maintained primary schools voted as follows:

- **Favour – 7**
- **Against - 0**
- **Abstention – 0**

5.6 There was no maintained secondary school representative present. It was therefore agreed to obtain confirmation by email.

6.0 De-Delegation 2017-18, Maternity, Licenses & Trade Union Facilities Funding

[This item was for decision.](#)

6.1 AW presented this report. He reminded members that the de-delegation applies to maintained schools only. Academies, nursery and special schools also have the option to buy into maternity and trade union facilities as a traded service. All schools and academies are covered for the copyright licenses under the DfE's blanket cover. For Brent this is estimated at £195k which is top sliced from the LA's DSG allocation. In addition the Local Authority (LA) purchases British Pathe and CLEAPSS licences for which a de-delegation is requested. RU asked if the rates were the same as last year and this was confirmed.

6.2 MC asked if there was an option to purchase maternity cover privately and if there was an option to opt out of the trade union scheme. It was also asked how the Trade Union funding contributes to pupil outcomes. AW said yes the services could be purchased if not de-delegated. LG responded on the Trade Union question and said that the staff meet to draw up policies together. The policies are designed to help staff work as smoothly as possible

and to develop teachers. It also helps with capability and sickness issues. Recently a Free School has signed up for this as well. MC said it would be good to see this included in the report. LG said this was circulated last year and will provide a copy to be included with the minutes of this meeting. HG asked if there was an option to opt out of any of the licenses and AW replied that this was not possible as they are packaged by the DfE and they have to be accepted as they are.

6.3 Representatives of the maintained primary schools were asked to vote on each of these de-delegations and it was agreed as follows:

- Maternity Grant
 - **Favour – 7**
 - **Against - 0**
 - **Abstention – 0**

- Trade Union Facilities Funding
 - **Favour – 7**
 - **Against - 0**
 - **Abstention – 0**

- Licences
 - **Favour – 7**
 - **Against - 0**
 - **Abstention – 0**

It was agreed to obtain an email response from the secondary school representative.

7.0 De-Delegation 2017-18, Schools Causing Concern Budget

[This report was for decision.](#)

7.1 JG presented this report. He thanked colleagues for funding this service last year. The funding supported schools to address weaknesses and is mainly used to fund peer support from other schools. In 2015-16, 13 schools with Rapid Improvement Groups (RIG) secured improvement. Eight of these had follow up inspections and have all been judged good by Ofsted. Because of the increased level of improvements in the schools, and consequent drop in demand, it is proposed the budget is reduced by £50k for 2017-18.

7.2 HG asked how many schools are currently causing concern. JG said there are 5 including one with an Interim Executive Board (IEB). In addition three schools are concerning but are not requiring regular Rapid Improvement Groups.

7.3 AP reported that Governors at St Mary's RC School have asked him to thank JG and his team for all the support they have provided.

Because of good leadership and the efforts of the governing body the school has secured improvement.

7.4 LG said that primary and secondary schools should acknowledge and celebrate this, and commended JG and his team. Some years ago the LA used to write to schools and staff congratulating them for their achievements and she thought this was the ideal opportunity to do so again. GT said she would take this back to the elected members.

7.5 SK asked what level of financial support is provided to schools in managing their budget. JG said that the funding is delegated to schools. The LA do intervene and arrange other head teachers to support where required, as they have more experience managing these budgets. School to school support has been found to be more effective. MC said it was a credit to JG and his team, and a creative way of addressing concerns. LB said that years ago schools were asked to attend council offices and were congratulated and thanked personally for improvements. GM said that he has worked with JG's team and found their support incredibly useful, and he thanked him for the work that was put in.

7.6 Representatives of the maintained primary schools were asked to vote on this de-delegation and it was agreed as follows:

- **Favour – 7**
- **Against - 0**
- **Abstention – 0**

It was agreed to obtain an email response from the maintained secondary school representative.

8. Pupil Growth Budget 2016-17 and Request for 2017-18 Funding [This report was for decision](#)

8.1 SP presented this report. In 2016-17 £3.5m was agreed by the Schools Forum for the growth fund. This is used for school expansions, and additional provisions for new arrivals and infrastructure. The forecasted spend for 2016-17 is £2.7m. SP was confident that £2.5m would be sufficient in 2017-18. The majority of the permanent expansion required has now been completed, however where schools have expanded it was agreed to guarantee or underwrite funding for them for the first 5 terms.

8.2 RA said she has a fear that pupil numbers are falling at her school. They have vacancies for 17 nursery places. NN agreed that that is the case with the school where she is a governor, and that there is high mobility. SP said that there are still pressures in Year 3 and that she was aware of vacancies in Reception. The LA's strategy is to retain 5% vacancies and currently these are recorded at 2.5%.

- 8.3 BG said he would take an action away to see how school held intelligence on demand for school places and demographic projections could be better shared.
- 8.4 LB asked how the CAFAI funding worked. SP responded that the arrangements were set out on a service level agreement, but that this should now be a contract as the provider is an academy, and so commissioned through a procurement strategy. Initial work is being carried out with secondary heads. UR asked if the funding is ring-fenced. SP said that funding was time limited to each financial year.
- 8.5 The following recommendations were voted on:
- a Approve pupil growth funding for additional classes and places needed for 2017/18 at the projected expenditure of £2,500,000.
 - b Approve Rising Rolls funding for financial year 2017/18 of £1,129,952 at the same funding level as for 2016/17.

Favour – 17
Against - 0
Abstention – 1

9. Early Years National Funding Formula – Possible Implications for Brent

[This report was for information](#)

- 9.1 SG presented the report. The Early Years Task and Finish Group will meet in January and an updated report will be brought to the January Schools Forum. The funding that can be retained centrally will be reduced to 7% next year and 5% in the following year. The outcome from the consultation for maintained nursery schools is that the supplementary funding is secured for at least 2 years and at a slightly higher amount than previously indicated. The Early Years block of funding will be ring-fenced. This would result in CIN and CWD provisions moving to be funded from the High Needs block.
- 9.2 Illustrative figures were presented in the report but SG stated that these figures are consistent with the consultation response. A Nursery school lump sum amount will be protected in this parliament. The deprivation supplement was debated at the Task and Finish group and was agreed at 10% which is less than the amount currently allocated at 15%. Two Task and Finish Groups have taken place. A key item at the next Task and Finish Group is to allocate true figures to providers.
- 9.3 Some providers have raised concerns about losing the Quality Improvement and Inclusion Teams. It is hoped that staff will be retained in the first year but this may be difficult in the second year.

- 9.4 The funding for 2 year olds is funded by the DfE at £5.92 per hour and Brent funds providers at £6.00 per hour. This is one of the areas under pressure in the DSG. There has been local disappointment with the DfE rate and some providers have said they may withdraw providing places if it were to fall below £6.00.
- 9.5 HG referred to the appendices which were the LA and London Council (LC) responses and she asked if LC's response was considered in drafting Brent's response. GT said that Brent's response was prepared after LC's response came out, and that this was raised at the last meeting, and she referred to item 6.1 of the minutes.
- 9.6 LB said that the supplements will need to be revisited at the next Task and Finish Group following the consultation response as there are further options. Nursery schools lump sum protection is less than current arrangements but at least the DfE have acknowledged the need. She was concerned if these will be sustainable. SG said finance colleagues are working on modelling so the impact will be known and will be included in the January's report. LB was also concerned that the funding for very vulnerable children will be lost and these are the children who would otherwise be in special schools. SG said that they could be funded from the balance of Pupil Premium but this would only be a short term solution.
- 9.7 SG stated that LB's email would be responded to in the January report.
- 9.8 The following **recommendation was noted**:

The Schools Forum is requested to note the contents of this paper as initial information. The Local Authority will provide an updated report as the response to the national consultation is received from the Department for Education and the local consultation completed on Brent's local early years formula later in autumn 2016. The report reflects the work of the task and finish sub-group of the Schools Forum.

10. Decision on Funding Current Full Time Nursery Places from September 2017

[This report was for decision](#)

- 10.1 SG presented this report. She said one of the pressures on DSG is the currently funded additional full time places to families entitled to free school meals and who live within the Borough. This full time provision has never been offered to PVI providers. The consultation response does allow LAs to make a disapplication to continue to fund full time places in this way, but the funding for this has to be contained from within the overall Early Years DSG allocation. This

therefore means that the other funding distributions would have to be reduced.

- 10.2 LB said it would have been really helpful if the DfE had not given an option as then there would not then be a need for any controversial discussions. The children affected are needy children as evidenced by them getting pupil premium. Without the funding their outcomes would be very different. This was a very difficult decision to make in view of the government's conflicting priorities. It was a genuine dilemma for Schools Forum.
- 10.3 PR said funding additional hours would be an unfair decision, and limit funding to PVI's. PVI providers will have to make redundancies. It may not be viable for some providers to continue to provide places.
- 10.4 SK suggested taking a different view. What happened to vulnerable children in the past? Should there be additional resourced provisions for children that are eligible for free school meals and who have special educational needs?
- 10.5 SG said additional funding already goes to schools for this. There are only 204 children currently accessing the FSM 30 hour and it's not equitable at all. How would the children be selected? The pilot for free 30 hours for working families indicated that the biggest take-up was from vulnerable families. PR said only 204 pupils are benefiting whereas around 98% of children will received a reduction in funding. LB said it would be helpful to know what impact this will have on the base rate. HG asked LB to come up with a proposal and she would support her.
- 10.6 LB said that some primary schools are funding all children full time and this is having an impact on nursery schools and PVI providers.
- 10.7 The submission for disapplication is 31st December 2016. SG said it should be noted that disapplications will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and only extend arrangements for a certain period.
- 10.8 BG said whatever decision is made, the DSG has to balance. If there was an alternative process, the funding would still need to be identified.
- 10.9 It was recommended that the current arrangements for funding full time places for Brent children who would qualify for FSM cease from September 2017. All members were invited to vote:

Favour – 1
Against – 3
Abstentions - 10

- 10.12 The recommendation was therefore defeated. The Early Years Task and Finish Group meeting is not meeting before the disapplication needs to be made. SK said the problem with abstentions is that the agreement is reached without knowing what else can be done for the vulnerable children. GT clarified that the Schools Forum has voted not to cease the free 30 hours. There is no additional resources or other sources of funding and that it will have to have an impact on the 15 hours funding rates.

11. Update on the Implementation of the 30 Hours Childcare

[This report was for information](#)

- 11.1 SG presented this item. This report was brought to Schools Forum to provide a further update on the implementation of 30 hours childcare from September 2017. Officers are currently looking at an online system. A pilot is being set up and developed for parents to use at a variety of settings, which is due to start in January.
- 11.2 The recommendation was to note the report and **this was noted**. Further update will be provided in February or June Forum.

12. Schools Funding Formula 2017-18

[This report was for decision](#)

- 12.1 AW presented the report. He said the arrangements for 2017-18 remained largely unchanged due to the new national fair funding formula being postponed by a year. There was one technical issue which related to the 2015 IDACI update and resulted in a drop in the recorded deprivation levels. However this was not felt to be a true reflection. Further details on this will be provided with the minutes as requested by GM under matters arising. Because of these changes there was turbulence in funding with the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) compensating for the drop in deprivation funding.
- 12.2 The MFG is calculated year on year and this leads to some schools losing funding again in 2017-18. A modelling exercise with the same data as for 2016/17 was carried out and this resulted in £1.5m decrease in allocations. A further modelling exercise was carried out which allocated the remaining £1.5m to ensure that it did not disappear from the Schools Block of funding. This was allocated by increasing pupil funding factors which was reviewed and agreed by the Task and Finish Group.
- 12.3 The Education Service Grant (ESG) is reduced. Some of the former ESG is being put back into the DSG and then into the funding formula and this was agreed by Task and Finish Group. The DfE recognises that local authorities will need to continue to provide retained services and have allowed for Schools Forums to agree a top slice in support of central services listed in the report.

- 12.4 Final funding announcements are due before Christmas and these will be brought to Schools Forum in January for consultation and approval where required.
- 12.5 MH asked MC if she had any questions because she had asked him for clarification in an email prior to this Forum. MC did not have any questions as most of them were answered during the Forum. GM asked if the IDACI bandings were national. AW replied as yes and added that when modelling this with the 2015 update compared to the 2010 version, it left £1.5m unallocated. GM also asked if 1.5% MFG was operating on one year basis. AW said it has been consistent in the recent past, but was currently only known for 2017-18 as the new funding formula comes out in 2018-19.
- 12.5 The recommendations were put forward for approval and were **agreed unanimously**.
- 12.6 The following additional recommendation was put forward to maintained school representatives:

Agree to the Local Authority retaining the ESG allocations for maintained schools in order to continue to support education services provided by the Local Authority.

This was also **agreed unanimously by maintained school representatives**.

13. AOB

- 13.1 MH asked for a report on the Apprenticeship Levy and asked if it could be brought to January Forum. GT said it will be brought to the February Forum. The Corporate Management Team (CMT) is reviewing it at their meeting in the New Year, so it will be more appropriate to bring it after it has been to CMT.
- 13.2 AW said that Schools Forum Induction training will be provided to members, particularly new members. If any members were interested, they should email DP. This will be arranged to take place in the New Year.

The Forum ended at 20:05.

ACTION LOG

Item No.	Action	Due	Owner
1	Wembley Learning Zone - To provide a breakdown of expenditure of the £88k allocation for 2016-17 and details of other income generated especially charitable. To list criteria for the free 6 week multi-sport programme and confirm the 10 Brent schools who participated.	Feb 17	SB
2	BG said he would take an action away to see how school held intelligence on demand for school places and demographic projections could be better shared.	Feb 17	BG
3	Which block are the two nursery school ARP units funded from.	Jan 17	AW
4	Obtain e-mail response on the following from the maintained secondary Head teacher. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • De-delegation, Free School Meals Eligibility Assessment • De-delegation, Maternity, Licenses & Trade Union Facilities Funding • De-delegation, Schools Causing Concerns Budget 	Jan 17	AW
5	Details of Trade Union Support to staff and how the funding helps pupil's outcome.	With Jan 17 Minutes	LG