



Brent Schools Forum

**Minutes of the 57th Schools Forum held on
Wednesday 4th December 2013 at Queens Park Community School**

Attended by:

Members of the Forum

Governors	Mike Heiser - Chair (MH) Martin Beard (MB) Titilola McDowell (TMcD) Umesh Raichada (UR) Alan Carter (AC) Herman Martyn (HM) Cllr Lesley Jones (Cllr LJ) Janice Alexander (JA)
Head Teachers	Sylvie Libson – Vice Chair (SL) Lesley Benson (LB) Matthew Lantos (ML) Rose Ashton (RA) Terry Molloy (TM) Sabina Netty (SN) Andy Prindiville (AP) Kay Johnson (KJ)
PRU	Terry Hoad (TH)
PVI Sector	Paul Russell (PR)
Trade Unions	Lesley Gouldbourne (LG)
Others	Sue Knowler (SK) Muriel Rant (MR)
Officers	Sara Williams (SW) Ravinder Jassar (RJ) Norwena Thomas (NT) Devbai Patel (DP)
Circulation to all present	Gill Bal
plus:	Cllr Helga Gladbaum Ribbi Yitzchak Freeman Maxine Henderson Maggie Cllr Michael Pavey Elizabeth Jones

ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION
	<p>MH opened the meeting at 6.05pm. He asked if anyone was new to the Forum and if so to introduce themselves. RJ was the only new officer and he introduced himself. He said he is the newly appointed Head of Finance in the Authority's Finance and Corporate Services.</p> <p>MH welcomed MR from DfE. MR introduced herself and explained the reason for attending Brent's Schools Forum. She said as part of the Schools Forum Regulations, the Department is required to observe the Local Authorities' Schools Forums to ensure that standards are met and that there is transparency. She said that members will have seen the good practice guidelines issued recently which should have been circulated to all members. This was their 123rd Local Authority Schools Forum visit.</p>	
1.0	Apologies	
1.1	<p>Cllr Michael Pavey (Cllr MP) Maggie Barth(MB) Elizabeth Jones (EJ) Cllr Helga Gladbaum (Cllr HG) Rabbi Yitzchak Freeman (YF) Gill Bal (GB)</p>	
2.0.	Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd October 2013 and Matters Arising	
2.1	Accuracy	
2.1.1	Paragraph 3.1.4 – should have stated YF not YR.	
2.1.2	Paragraph 7.2.3 – MH said from memory he did not ask LG to leave but LG offered to withdraw. He asked LG if this was correct and she confirmed it as it was correct. He added that we will consider her position in this Forum before the Trade Union Facilities report is discussed.	
2.1.3	The above amendments were noted and the minutes were approved as accurate record.	
2.2	Matters Arising – (From the Action Log)	
2.2.1	Item 1 – FSM eligibility assessments – A report to be brought to the February Schools Forum.	
2.2.2	Item 2 – School Admissions – A report to be brought to the February Schools Forum.	
2.2.3	Item 3 – De-delegation of Trade Union Facilities on agenda for this forum.	
2.2.4	Item 4 – a report on adequacy of growth funding to be brought to the January Schools Forum.	

- 2.2.5 Item 5 – Review of the Early Years Intervention Team is to be brought to the Schools Forum.
- 2.2.6 Item 6 – Strategy for FT Nursery Places is on the agenda for this Forum.
- 2.2.7 Item 7 – Central Services funding for Special Schools and Nursery Schools – DP reported that Special Schools’ central service budget was presented to the SEN Sub-Group and KJ was going to discuss it with the other Special Schools Headteachers. Nursery Schools funding will be presented to the next EY Sub Group.
- 2.2.8 Budget Review of Alternative Education Service will be presented to the February Schools Forum.
- 2.2.9 SEN Update Report is being deferred to January 2014 Schools Forum.
- 3.0 2014/15 Early Years Funding – Consultation with Schools and PVI Sectors**
- 3.1 SW presented the report as Sue Gates was unable to attend. She said that it had proved difficult to organise a meeting again and therefore the members have been consulted by e-mails to obtain their views on two items.
- 3.2 The Forum decided however not to consider these matters and leave them to the sub-group.
- 3.3 DP confirmed that the meeting is arranged on 6th January 2014 which is two days before the Schools Forum papers need to be sent out. There is sufficient time to report outcome from the Sub Group to the Schools Forum in January.
- 4.0 SEN Update**
- 4.1 This item is deferred to the January Schools Forum.
- 5.0 Schools Budget Outturn 2012/13 and Final DSG Settlement for 2013/14**
- 5.1 NT Presented this report. She said the report is for information. She referred to the table in paragraph 2.1 which were the closing balances of each phase and comparisons between 2011/12 and 2012/13. ML noted there was a slight increase in surplus even though more schools have converted to academies. NT said this is mainly in the primary sector of £1.3m. The overall change is the closing balance in 2011/12 was £16.5m and in 2012/13 it’s £17.5m
- 5.2 MH asked if this was maintained schools only to which NT confirmed as it was. She said the academies that converted in 2012/13 have been removed from both the financial years to obtain a true comparison.
- 5.3 LB said that it should be noted that a couple of nursery schools’ carry forward figures have been artificially inflated as they became the holders of the School Improvement Services ring-fenced grant.

- 5.4 UR pointed out that some schools have a very high carry forward and gave an example of Oakington Manor with 45.96% and asked why it was so high. SL said she could speak for her own school. This is due to the school having a large building project for which it has been saving money for over a number of years. It is likely that the high carry forward will remain at the end of next year as the project will not have been completed in one year. She said Chalkhill also has a high carry forward figure because they are also planning a building project. SN said it's the same for Princess Frederica School. NT confirmed that all schools with large surpluses were required to report to the LA on their financial plans.
- 5.5 NT said there was an underspend in 2012/13 in the overall DSG allocation of £1m which will contribute to the DSG recovery plan, reducing the deficit from £5.7m to £4.6m.
- 5.6 MH said this is due to the success story of the SeN transformation project to which NT said yes and there should be similar savings in 2013/14, as well as additional further savings anticipated from the new funding reforms.
- 5.7 MH asked if there will be any savings in the current financial year on high needs. DP said not from special schools and PRU's budget because these were kept the same as the previous years by splitting the total per pupil amount between the base funding and top-up.
- 5.8 MR said it was important that balances are looked at by Local Authorities. Normally if high carry forwards continue on average over 3 years, the DfE does contact the LA to review these. She said that Local Authorities need to ensure they have a process in place which Brent does seem to have. She suggested having a summary of where schools are rather than details of individual schools at the Forum.
- 5.9 MH asked if members wanted to have further details and the general consensus was that it was not necessary.

6.0 De-Delegation: Trade Union Funding

- 6.1 MH said before we proceed with this report we need to consider LG's position. SW said she has checked with Legal and 'the legislation and regulations are silent'. It is up to the Schools Forum to decide. SW said her view was that LG does have a direct financial interest, and as last time, it would be best for her to leave. But before she leaves, she should be allowed to put a case forward on behalf of Trade Unions. MH asked if she was happy to leave and she responded by saying 'as I said last time I do not want it to be an issue'.
- 6.2 SW presented the report. The initial report was presented to the Schools Forum on 23rd October 2013. At that Forum it was requested that further information was provided on benchmarking against other local authorities. SW said that a contact was made with other authorities but it has proven to be challenging. It has

been difficult to get the information from other Local Authorities. Three options are being put forward for consideration for de-delegation and the fourth option is not to de-delegate.

- 6.3 SW recommended Option 2 which allows a reasonable degree of Trade Union cover. The members will have the time to reflect and review the arrangements annually. This option benefits all. She asked everyone to draw their attention to her e-mail sent out subsequently on 3rd December and apologised for the mistake on her side as LG's comments were not included in the report. LG would be given the opportunity to present her paper before leaving.
- 6.4 MH asked if 3336 members of staff were everybody and LG replied 'yes'. ML asked if they are all teachers and LG replied as 'no they include teachers and teaching assistants'.
- 6.5 LG made a reference to the type of activities that are listed in her paper which are carried out by the Trade Union representatives. It also includes the benchmarking data which is claiming to be fair compared to SW's paper. E.g. Camden has 1000 members and Brent has 3000 so if you were to compare, the facilities time would need to be tripled.
- 6.6 She added that the underspend referred to in SW's paper does not reflect the true Trade Union needs. This was due to a difficulty in Headteachers and Governors releasing members which was understandable as they consider the best running of the school for the needs of the children.
- 6.7 TH said the issue isn't about what's paid for but a central basis of coming from a school for a reasonable time off. It's to pay for a replacement of the person that does the Trade Union activities. TM said no union representatives should be released full time from a school. He asked what the current time table is for representation. LG said 1 representative at 0.2 facilities to 0.8 teaching, 1 representative at 0.6 facilities to 0.4 teaching and 1 representative to 0.2 facilities in teaching for other 4 days.
- 6.8 SN asked if there was anybody who was fully released from all their teaching duties for TU activities and the answer was yes.
- 6.9 SL asked if it was all Trade Unions for teachers and non-teachers. It was confirmed that it is NUT, NASUWT and ATL since unison and GMB are covered by a separate council agreement
- 6.10 AC said that local comparators have been presented as requested and the paper has been amended and suggested Option 2.
- 6.11 LG left the room at this stage.
- 6.12 SW said that this funding pays for Trade Union representatives to attend meetings with senior staff on borough wide issues and on complex case work especially where there are reorganisations. The principle is that everyone pays into this pot to avoid it falling on individual schools disproportionately.

- 6.13 LB asked what her obligation to her members of staff? What is she paying for? SW said if there was no buying-in, the schools local representative would have to be given paid time-off.
- 6.14 SK said views should not be coloured by in the past experiences. The key people support everybody and it is sensible for maintained schools to pay into a pot. She asked how much members thought it should cost. TM suggested that costs could be met from subscriptions.
- 6.15 TH said this is a legal entitlement which exists. Some kind of representation falls under reasonable obligation for paid time off and schools cannot get away from their obligations. SN said she is not saying we are not going to support it, but it is important to have it and at the same time not to ignore history. We are very happy to support it and it is very clear that six members are going to benefit from this money but the burden should not fall on schools. If schools are paying what are the membership fees for? SL said we are obliged to provide our staff with the best possible advice as staff are the basis for our children and was happy to support Option 2. She said there were a number of schools in difficulty and in special measures and unions are needed to be with schools at these times not against them.
- 6.16 AP said fortunately no incidents have happened in his school but was in favour of Option 2 as a way of insurance and so that the cost isn't disproportionate on individual schools. He was concerned that payment made by maintained schools did not support academies.
- 6.17 ML agreed with reasonable time off and that it needed to be a borough-wide, but Point E needed to be that no one should be released for more than 0.5 of their work time. This is in order that the burden does not fall on maintained schools. Academies offer need to be more attractive.
- 6.18 LB asked where does the Special Schools and Nursery Schools funding from? DP said that the same amount per pupil as maintained schools will be allocated to Nursery Schools. This will be brought to the EY Sub Group in the same way as was taken to SEN Sub Group for Special Schools.
- 6.19 TM referred to Option 2 where for maintained schools the charge is £4.05 and for academies it is £4.00. Should it not be marginally higher for academies? NT said this may have been to do with rounding the figures.
- 6.20 MH reminded members that this is a de-delegation item and only the maintained primary and secondary schools could vote for their own share of the budget and invited members to vote separately. He highlighted that majority were in agreement with Option 2 and with recommendation A-F but with Recommendation E amended to half the time off. He said SL is right that it is in the schools best interest to work with the Trade Unions. He invited all to vote on Option 2 and added which LG has reluctantly agreed. The votes

were:

Primary – 5 Agreed
2 Disagreed
0 Abstained

Secondary - 1 Agreed

- 6.21 LG was invited back in the room and MH updated her with the members decision which was that members have agreed to **Option 2** to de-delegate the funds but in Recommendation E, this should be amended to, ' **no member should be released no more than half the time of their work time**'.

7.0 Any Other Business

- 7.1 Cllr LJ asked if this was the right place to discuss the support to Children's Centres. SW said they are funded from the General Fund so it wasn't the appropriate place for discussion.
- 7.2 LB said that she had told DP that a short update on CWD should be brought to the Schools Forum. KJ would be very interested in this and the SF needed to be broadly aware of the funding. DP said that it has already been presented to the SEN Sub Group and is to be brought to the January's Forum.
- 7.3 LG asked MH if he has had time to look into the issue she raised in her e-mail about Trade Union member's voting rights. She said she should have been allowed to vote on non-delegation items. MR MH/DP said these are non-delegation items which are not funded from the funding formula but she will check and confirm.
- 7.4 MH informed Members that he attended his first meeting held by BSP.
- 7.5 UR wanted to acknowledge and thank Christine Gilbert for giving three Schools Forum members the opportunity meet with her.
- 7.6 MH concluded the Forum by highlighting that the DSG settlement is expected in a week. The meeting ended at 8pm.

Action Log

No	Action	Completion Date	Owner
1	Clarification on voting rights at Schools Forum for Trade Union representative	January 2013	MR/DP/MH
2	Report on adequacy of Growth Funding in 2013/14 to inform provision for 2014/15	January Schools Forum	Carmen Coffey/ SW
3	SEN Funding Update	January 2013	Carmen Coffey/ SW
4	Review of Early Intervention Team – to be presented to EY Sub Group prior to being presented to Schools Forum	January Schools Forum	Sue Gates
5	Strategy for Full-Time Nursery Places - to be presented to EY Sub Group prior to being presented to Schools Forum	January Schools Forum	Sue Gates
6	Find out if parents apply on-line for FSM eligibility assessment, how they are identified if they attend maintained school or academy.	February Schools Forum	Paula Buckley
7	Benchmarking of End to End process and cost per pupil in processing admissions application	February Schools Forum	Paula Buckley/ Margaret Read
8	Review of Early Intervention Team – to be presented to EY Sub Group prior to being presented to Schools Forum	February Schools Forum	Sue Gates
9	Budget Review of Alternative Education Service – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To present partnership model that oversees devolved funds • Develop further proposals to introduce a rewards and incentives funding framework 	February 2014	Sara Kulay
2014/15 Action Points			
10	Schools Forum Membership to be recalculated if any more schools convert to academy. Otherwise refresh for the start of the year using the latest (January) census	As and when required / March	NT/DP
11	Low Carbon Schools Programme Update Report	September 2014	Emily Ashton
12	Provide details of what service is covered by DSG allocation at GBOEC	September 2014	Angela Chiswell