

**Brent Schools Forum**

**Minutes of the Schools Forum held on  
Wednesday 14 January 2015 at Queens Park Community School**

**Attended by Members of the Forum:****Governors:**

Mike Heiser (MH)  
Martin Beard (MB)  
Sue Knowler (SK)  
Richard Martyn (RMa)  
Cllr Lesley Jones (LJ)

**Head Teachers:**

Rose Ashton (RA)  
Gill Bal (GB)  
Rabbi Yitzchak Freeman (YF)  
Terry Molloy (TM)  
Sabina Netty (SN)  
Sylvie Libson (SL)  
Matthew Lantos (ML)  
Lesley Benson (LB)  
Andy Prindiville (AP)

**PRU:**

Terry Hoad (TH)

**PVI Sector:**

Paul Russell (PR)

**Trade Unions:**

Lesley Gouldbourne (LG)

**14-19 Partnership:****Observer:****Lead Member  
(C&YP):**

Cllr Ruth Moher (RMo)

**Officers:**

Gail Tolley (GT)  
Sara Williams (SW)  
Minesh Patel (MP)  
Devbai Patel (DP)



| ITEM  | DISCUSSION   | ACTION            |
|-------|--|-------------------|
|       | The Forum commenced at 6.05pm.   |                   |
| 1.0   | <u>Apologies</u><br><br>Kay Charles<br>Herman Martyn<br>Umesh Raichada<br>Cllr Ketan Sheth (retrospectively)<br>Norwena Thomas   |                   |
| 1.2   | <u>Absences</u><br><br>Helga Gladbaum<br>Marc Jordan<br>Titilola McDowell  |                   |
| 2.0   | <b>Minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2014 and Matters Arising</b>   |                   |
| 2.1   | <u>Accuracy</u>  |                   |
| 2.1.1 | There were no corrections to be made to the minutes which were therefore approved as accurate record.  |                   |
| 2.2   | <b>Matters Arising</b>   |                   |
| 2.2.1 | <u>Write to Schools Forum Members who have missed three or more Schools Forums consecutively</u> – SW has written to the two members but has not had a response yet.   | SW                |
| 2.2.2 | <u>Benchmarking of End to End process and cost per pupil in processing admissions application</u> – SW reported that this is still on our list to bring to the Schools Forum soon.   | SW / C.<br>Coffey |
| 2.2.3 | <u>Update on VAT as to why the VA schools are not exempted from paying VAT on the governors' liability of capital funding and Academies are exempted</u> – MP reported that we have received legal aspects of VAT that cannot be claimed and the letter will be drafted for the Chair to sign and send to DfE. | SW/MP             |
| 2.2.4 | <u>School Meals budget – officers to find out from other authorities if their schools have funding issue for meals that have to pureed and for kosher meals</u> - it was agreed to formally write to DfE on this issue.  | SW                |
| 2.2.5 | <u>Follow up with Legal on when the settlement agreement policy will be available to schools</u> – This has been received but it is not  |                   |

a policy or guidance but a summary. NT will draft this for schools and put it on Schools Extranet by the end of the month. NT

2.2.6 Update on cost implications to send SEN pupils out-borough – This will be brought to June 15 Forum SW / C. Coffey

2.2.7 Review of CIN and CWD Funding – This will be brought to February 15 Forum SW / S. Gates

### 3.0 Schools Budget 2015-16

3.1 MP presented this report. This report provides details of the DSG allocations made on 17<sup>th</sup> December. Table 1.2 provided comparative allocations between 2014-15 and 2015-16. The Schools Block is the biggest gainer with increase in the budget of £29.302m. The real increase is £10.690m to the Schools Block. The other two additional funding streams are for non-recoupment academy which is now included in the LA's funding formula and pupil population increase. The 2 year old funding is no longer funded through DSG which brings the current DSG allocation down under other by £6.486m but will be included with early years when known. The allocations are prior to academy recoupments.

3.2 ML asked what the difference was in pupil population increase and pupil number adjustment for permanent expansion. This was clarified that the permanent expansions are those planned from April 2015, whereas the pupil number increase is for the change in pupil number between October 2013 to October 2014.

3.3 LB asked if Children in Need (CIN) funding was included in this and it was confirmed that it was not included.

3.4 MP said that an analysis has been carried out to compare individual schools budget between 2014-15 and 2015-16 and seven schools are losing funding. This is due to these schools receiving high MFG last year and even with the additional £11m they do not yet come out of MFG protection fully.

3.5 TM asked if there are any changes to the formula from what has been agreed. It was confirmed that there were no changes.

3.6 MH asked Members if there had anything further to add. SW confirmed that technically the Council makes the overall decision but welcomed views from members.

3.7 The deadline to submit the schools budget is 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015 for DfE approval. The final budgets (Individual Schools Budget – Schools Block) will be released to schools by 27<sup>th</sup> February 2015.

3.8 The Schools Forum was asked to note the 2015-16 Provisional DSG Allocations and was formally consulted on 2015/16 Final Schools ISB (Schools Block only).

#### 4.0 Schools Forum Membership

4.1 MP presented this report. The report is prepared in line with the DfE's Schools Forum regulations. Table 2.5 showed the changes required in the membership. The membership needs to change by reducing maintained secondary school and increase maintained primary representation by one. Similarly in the academy sector representation needs to shift from the secondary to the primary phase by two members.

4.2 MH asked if the pupil number for secondary schools were correct as they seemed significantly lower than last membership report. DP confirmed that they have been double checked and that figures are Year R to Year 11 of October 2014 census. In addition a query was raised if there was a rounding that made the difference in which case it can be accepted as just one member change. MH asked if sixth forms were included in the last membership calculations. If so then it explained a big drop in secondary pupil number.

DP/NT

4.3 LG asked if the same school can have more than one representative and it was confirmed as yes.

4.4 LB asked what if all the members were governors. SW said that this would need to be balanced out so there was even representation. SW asked if there was a way of losing one secondary academy to gain one primary academy and if anyone from secondary was prepared to stand down or move to represent primary academy. No volunteers were received. It was suggested approaching all Heads to seek nominations.

DP

4.5 LB said that Appendix B indicates that Early Years representatives can vote under Schools Funding Formulae but it hasn't actually been the case.

4.6 There have been two vacancies for some time now for PVI representative and a Nursery Governor. DP said she has tried twice to seek a Nursery Governor since the last one left but is not receiving any nominations. She will e-mail all Nursery School Head teachers again to forward the nomination request to their governors. With regards to PVI vacancy, again no nominations are coming forward. DP will ask Early Years to find a representative. PR said a child minder or Voluntary and Independent representation would be good as he represents Private nurseries.

DP

4.7 MH concluded this item by saying that officers will invite nominations for primary and secondary academy representations. DP

## **5.0 Council Budget Consultation 2015-16**

5.1 SW presented this report. The council is required to make a saving of £53.9m over the next two years. It is more frontloaded in 2015-16. The council has proposed to make 40 % savings in all back office functions and 20% savings in front line services. The services proposed for cuts are identified in Appendix 1 including the services that will impact on schools.

5.2 This report is brought to Schools Forum to give members an opportunity to comment on the proposed savings. The majority of these will have to be made to balance the budget. Reductions in C&YP will hopefully still allow children's centres to remain open. There are other services such as School Crossing Patrol and Welsh Harp included in the Council Budget savings that will affect schools.

5.3 MH asked if this affects the Education Service Grant (ESG) or does it just cut the General Fund and SW replied that all the cuts identified are from the General Fund.

5.4 ML said Section 5 of the report is written in an unhelpful tone. It is an unnecessary point to make about balances.

5.5 LG said that the Union met with the Leader and the Lead Member for Children and Young People. She supported what ML said regarding Section 5. She said the consultation was to take place and redundancies issued by December 2014. RMo said that staff were to be notified by Dec 14 but the consultation hadn't started. She added that it must be noted that council tax has not increased over the last couple of years and therefore the council cannot bear costs without savings being made.

5.6 LB said children's centres are important for the Early Intervention Team and making cuts in this area will not support the work of the team. The Youth Service cuts will be evident. In the South Kilburn area, it becomes obvious when the centre is not functioning as the youngsters wander around doing nothing. She asked if there were any other proposals to step into these gaps.

5.7

- GT said that the Chief Finance Officer's report content in section 5 is factually accurate as Schools are holding balances. PE advisor – Primary schools now receive PE grant.



- Both Children's Centres and Youth Service proposals had to be proposed for cuts to achieve £60m savings in order that the Members could have a choice.

- 5.8 There are challenges that LA's are facing in recruiting and retaining good social workers. RMo said that there is high number of agency social workers throughout the country. The new DfE Innovations Bid for Signs of Safety project should make them feel they want to stay.
- 5.9 MH said the Members may want to focus on other areas i.e. street cleaning and filling pot holes over children's centres.
- 5.10 LB said that the impact on closing children's centres has not been thought through. She thought it would create unsolvable problems. RMo said the impact is recognised but they have to save money. LB said she has lost count on the number of times this was completely reorganised.
- 5.11 RA thought that some parts of cuts are depressing. It felt like everything was falling on teachers. At Chalkhill School they have realised that they have to carry a lot of social care cuts and the schools are at a breaking point.
- 5.12 GT said that any service like Welsh Harp will have to be self funded for which schools may wish to take responsibility.
- 5.13 SL said this was the first time Schools Forum was consulted about the Council's budget and was please to have been informed. GB said it was good to know in advance what the proposed cuts are, what the implications will be and thanked officers for the transparency. She appreciated what the Council was doing.
- 5.14 MB added a note of caution DSG has been protected for several years and may not be protected in the future. Schools and the National Health Service need to be aware that they will not be protected indefinitely.
- 5.15 ML said the cuts in the longer term may have other impacts i.e. cutting Children's Centres for 10 years and see an increase in youth crime.
- 5.16 SK reminded everyone to engage BSP if there was anything that they could do to avoid picking up the slack later.



5.17 MH asked members if they wanted to respond to the consultation and they all agreed. It was agreed that the officers would draft a response for the Chair to approve. The main SW points to cover in the response were:

1. SF is pleased to be consulted
2. Express view on different options i.e. Children's Centres, Youth Service.
3. Raise concerns over passing costs on to schools when in a few years time DSG could be cut.
4. Social Care cuts
5. Value of early help and early intervention

**6.0 AOB**

6.1 None

6.2 The Forum ended at 7.40pm.

**ACTION LOG**

| <b>Item No.</b> | <b>Action</b>  | <b>Complete by</b> | <b>Owner</b>    |
|-----------------|--|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1               | Update on Schools Forum Members that have missed three or more Schools Forums consecutively.   | Jan 15             | SW              |
| 2               | Benchmarking of End to End process and cost per pupil in processing admissions application.  | June 15            | SW              |
| 3               | Update on VAT as to why the VA schools are not exempted from paying VAT on the governors' liability of capital funding and Academies are exempted. | Feb 15             | SW/NT           |
| 4               | School Meals budget – officers to formally write to DfE about funding issue for meals that have to be pureed and for kosher meals.                 | Feb 15             | SW              |
| 5               | NT to draft settlement agreement policy for schools and make it available to schools.  | Feb 15             | NT              |
| 6               | Consult academy Heads for nominations to represent at Schools Forums.  | Feb 15             | DP              |
| 7               | Check if sixth form pupil number were included in the last membership calculations.  | Feb 15             | NT/DP           |
| 8               | Seek nominations to fill PVI and Nursery Governor vacancies.   | Feb 15             | DP              |
| 9               | Review of CIN and CWD Funding.   | Feb 15             | SW/<br>S.Gates  |
| 10              | Respond to council on the proposed cuts to services.   | Feb 15             | SW              |
| 11              | Update on cost implications to send SEN pupils out-borough.  | June 15            | SW/<br>C.Coffey |