



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM held on Wednesday 14 June 2017 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Governors

Mike Heiser (Chair)
Karen Zajdel
Helga Gladbaum
Jo Jhally

Head Teachers

Lesley Benson
Martine Clark
Melissa Loosemore
Kay Charles
Gerard McKenna
Rose Ashton (Vice-Chair)
Desi Lodge Patch

PRU

Vivien Dean

Trade Unions

Lesley Glouldbourne

Officers

Sue Gates
Brian Grady
Andrew Ward
Nikolay Manov

ABSENT

Governors

Herman Martyn
Martin Beard

The meeting started at 6:11 pm due to lack of quorum.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and Karen Zajdel introduced herself.

1. Apologies for Absence and Membership

Governors

Narinder Nathan
Umesh Raichada
Titilola Mc Dowell

Head Teachers

Rabbi Yitzchak Freeman
Rachel Kitley
Troy Sharpe
Andy Prindiville

Early Years PVI

Paul Russell
Sylvie Libson

Desi Lodge Patch announced that this was the last meeting of the Schools Forum she was attending and the Schools Forum Members expressed their gratitude for her service on the Forum.

Sylvie Libson had been elected to represent the Early Years Private, Voluntary and Independent sector.

Gill Bal had been elected to represent Secondary Headteachers.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 8 February 2017, be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. Action Log and Matters arising

In response to paragraph 4.4 Special Schools funding bandings. This is being examined by the High Needs Task and Finish Group.

The Forum heard that progress on actions due to be completed in October 2017 was satisfactory and expected to meet the deadline.

5. Deputations

There were no deputations received.

6. Update on implementation of the 30 hours entitlement in Brent

Sue Gates introduced this report. Brent was on track to have enough places available when the entitlement came into force. Brent Council had worked with settings to communicate information on the entitlement to parents. A marketing campaign consisting of outreach events, publications in the Brent Magazine and social media posts, would take place over the summer. Ms Gates estimated a low initial take-up due to the fact that families had to apply the term before their child was eligible for the entitlement. The estimated number of places expected to be available in September 2017 was 1,313, with a number of providers yet to confirm the numbers they could offer. In contrast, the Department for Education's (DfE) estimate was that the number of children likely to be eligible for the extended entitlement was 1,550. Ms Gates informed the Schools Forum that capital funding of approximately £1.6 million had been approved as three childcare providers had been successful in the Early Years Capital Funding bidding rounds launched by the DfE in the summer of 2016 and 2017.

There had been a few IT challenges to resolve. Brent had been able to secure £8,800 from the DfE to purchase the 30 hours Synergy module. Ms Gates said that training sessions would be organised at the end of June and throughout July 2017 for settings on the module.

Brent Council staffing implications would not be known until the additional entitlement came into force but existing staffing capacity was currently being used to manage additional administration which the entitlement required the Council to undertake. Future funding would be calculated based on take-up of the additional entitlement and therefore it was important to meet the estimations so funding could be secured. The Early Years Service would need to continue to plan so that 95% of funding could be passed through directly to providers from 2018/2019 (at the moment this percentage was 93%).

Andrew Ward explained that the payment mechanism for schools would change to be brought in line with all providers, meaning that schools would get their usual funding up until August when a final reconciling adjustment would be made. He stressed that the amount of funding each school received would not change, but this could have implications for schools cash flow.

Members of the Schools Forum commented that providers had to supply information using more than one channel and multiple databases. They enquired what progress had been made on linking databases to eliminate the duplication of administrative work. Ms Gates said that the Early Years Service was actively looking into this.

A Member of the Schools Forum asked whether the funding available across all provisions for each child was equal. In response, SG replied that core funding was the same, but there was an addition for deprivation.

In relation to auditing the funding, Ms Gates informed the Schools Forum a Memorandum of Understanding would be circulated by the end of June 2017.

Melissa Loosemore entered the meeting during discussion of the above item at 6:20 pm.

Rose Ashton entered the meeting during discussion of the above item at 6:30 pm.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) The contents of the 'Update on implementation of the 30 hours entitlement in Brent' paper be noted, taking account of the comments made during the meeting; and
- (ii) An update on the implementation of the 30 hours entitlement be provided at the next meeting of the Schools Forum on 4 October 2017.

7. Schools Forum Terms of Reference and Constitution

Nikolay Manov introduced the report which summarised changes proposed to the Schools Forum's Terms of Reference and Constitution. He explained that most of the changes reflected the Governance Team taking over the administration of the Forum and did not affect the way Forum meetings would be conducted in the future. Mr Manov drew Members' attention to section 3.4 which detailed the proposed changes. He added that a detailed account of any proposed alternations was available in the Appendix to the report.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) The contents of the 'Schools Forum Terms of Reference and Constitution' be noted; and
- (ii) The proposed changes to the Schools Forum Terms of Reference and Constitution be approved, subject to paragraph 2.4.1 of the appendix being amended as follows:
 - a. A Schools Forum member, who is unable to attend a meeting, will attempt to arrange a substitute to attend to represent the same sector and to have voting powers. This must be notified to the Clerk of the Schools Forum, in writing, at least three working days in advance of the meeting

8. Updates to the Schools Forum Rules and Procedures

Nikolay Manov presented the report which summarised changes proposed to the 'Schools Forum Rules and Procedures' document. He noted that this document complemented the Schools Forum Constitution and Terms of Reference.

Members of the Schools Forum suggested agenda packs to be distributed ten clear working days before a meeting to enable them to share the papers with their colleagues and seek feedback and recommendations. Andrew Ward explained that while he understood the logic behind this recommendation, a provision should be made for papers to be submitted after the deadline in cases where officers were reliant upon third party information such as data from the Department for Education.

It was also noted that Special Education Needs schools should be referred as 'Special' in Section 8 of the Schools Forum Guidance.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) The contents of the 'Updates to the Schools Forum Rules and Procedures' paper be noted; and
- (ii) The proposed changes to the Schools Forum Guidance be approved, subject to the following changes:
 - a. Paragraph 7.2 be amended to reflect that reports be circulated at least ten clear working days before the next meeting of the Schools Forum.
 - b. Paragraph 8.1 be amended to reflect that Special Education Needs schools would be referred to as 'Special'.

9. DSG Financial Outturn 2016/2017

Andrew Ward introduced the report.

In relation to the Schools block, the formula had been set in December 2015 and no changes were expected apart from the national non-domestic rates (NNDR) builds.

An underspend of £1.2M on Pupil Growth budget was reported. This budget had been reduced by £1M to reflect the slowing down of demand for primary school places. AW highlighted underspend in the Nursery Education Grant (NEG), but assured the Schools Forum Members that the Early Years Block had been balanced. There was underspending on High Needs Block residential and independence settings which had been consistent with the Brent's strategy to create more placements in the borough.

Members of the Schools Forum asked questions of clarity regarding the DSG Early Years and High Needs blocks. Forum members asked what was done to monitor individual schools budget positions. Brian Grady confirmed that Brent Council had assurance processes in place and a paper on these processes would be brought to a future Schools Forum meeting.

The Department for Education (DfE) recoup formula and high needs place funding from the DSG had been allocated directly to academies and free schools. Therefore, this was the difference between the £302 million DSG for Brent and the £195 million reported in appendix A.

Lesley Gouldbourne addressed the Schools Forum in relation to the Trade Union's Facilities Funding 'pot'.

The underspend in 2016/17 was £47,610.91 (out of a fund of £143,830) Lesley Gouldbourne requested that the underspend was allocated to reimburse schools who released representatives for training in 2016/17, with the remaining amount being carried forward to the 2017/18 to mitigate the current shortfall.

A Forum Member enquired how proactive Trade Union representatives had been as her school had not been approached by a Trade Union to elect representatives. In response, Lesley Gouldbourne said that Trade Unions emailed members three times a year, encouraging them to select representatives.

A Forum Member enquired why the figures presented by Lesley Gouldbourne were different from the ones presented by the Council (Appendices A and C on pages 53 and 58 to the Agenda Pack). The chair requested the figures in both appendices to be checked and a reconciled figure sent to the Schools Forum members.

A Forum Member enquired whether it would be possible for Trade Unions to contribute to the Brent Facilities Funding 'Pot' and whether support provided to academies could be charged at MP6 rates. Lesley Gouldbourne explained that changes would not reflect the actual cost for releasing officers and it would be difficult to adapt the system as officers could change. Andrew Ward said that he would look into this issue and report back to the Schools Forum.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) The contents of the 'DSG Financial Outturn 2016/2017' paper be noted;
- (ii) An update on the new Pupil Growth and Infant Class Sizes formula developed by the LGA be presented to the Schools Forum at a future meeting;

- (iii) A report related to possible options and arrangements for budgeting and spending the DSG underspends currently in reserve be brought to the next Schools Forum meeting.

10. Dates of 2017-2018 Forums

RESOLVED that future meetings of the Schools Forum would be held on:

4 October 2017 at Queens Park Community School
6 December 2017 at The Village School
17 January 2018 at Queens Park Community School
21 February 2018 at The Village School

11. Any Other Urgent Business

RESOLVED that the Schools Forum Members' special gratitude to Devbai Patel (former Finance Analyst at Brent Council) for her work supporting the Forum be formally recorded.

The meeting ended at 7:59 pm.

MIKE HEISER
Chair

ACTION LOG

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Lead Officer	Action Arising	Due date (if applicable)	To be brought to a future meeting	RAG
14/06/17	Agenda Item 6 - Update on implementation of the 30 hours entitlement in Brent	Sue Gates	An update on the implementation of the 30 hrs entitlement be provided	Oct-17		Completed
14/06/17	Agenda Item 7 - Schools Forum Terms of Reference and Constitution	Nikolay Manov	Implement the changes to the Schools Forum Terms of Reference and Constitution as agreed by the Forum	Jun-17		Completed
14/06/17	Agenda Item 8 - Update to the Schools Forum Rules and Procedures	Nikolay Manov	Implement the changes to the Schools Forum Guidance as agreed by the Forum	Jun-17		Completed
14/06/17	Agenda Item 9 - DSG Financial Outturn 2016/2017	Andrew Ward	Provide a reconciliation of Trade Union Facilities time costs (email to all Members).	Oct-17		Outstanding
14/06/17	Agenda Item 9 - DSG Financial Outturn 2016/2017	Brian Grady	An report on Pupil Growth allocations affected by the new formula developed by the LGA be presented to the Schools Forum at a future meeting		YES	Ongoing
14/06/17	Agenda Item 9 - DSG Financial Outturn 2016/2017	Brian Grady / Andrew Ward	Feedback on Brent's assurance processes, especially with regard to schools with low balances.		YES	Ongoing
14/06/17	Agenda Item 9 - DSG Financial Outturn 2016/2017	Brian Grady / Andrew Ward	A report on the process of using the cumulative underspends that make up DSG. To outline the decision making process to utilise these funds.	Oct-17	YES	Ongoing
14/06/17	Agenda Item 9 - DSG Financial Outturn 2016/2017	Andrew Ward	Andrew Ward to clarify charging and reimbursement rates for the Trade union facilities time scheme.			Ongoing