



## Brent Schools Forum

### **Minutes of the 56<sup>th</sup> Schools Forum held on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2013 at the Village School**

#### **Attended by:**

#### **Members of the Forum**

<b>Governors</b>	Mike Heiser - Chair (MH) Martin Beard (MB) Titilola McDowell (TMcD) Umesh Raichada (UR) Alan Carter (AC) Herman Martyn (HM) Cllr Helga Gladbaum (Cllr HG) Cllr Lesley Jones (Cllr LJ)
<b>Head Teachers</b>	Sylvie Libson – Vice Chair (SL) Gill Bal (GB) Lesley Benson (LB) Matthew Lantos (ML) Rose Ashton (RA) Terry Molloy (TM) Sabina Netty (SN) Rabbi Yitzchak Freeman (YF)
<b>PRU</b>	Terry Hoad (TH)
<b>PVI Sector</b>	Paul Russell (PR)
<b>Trade Unions</b>	Lesley Gouldbourne (LG)
<b>Others</b>	Sue Knowler (SK)
<b>Officers</b>	Sara Williams (SW) Norwena Thomas (NT) John Voytal (JV) Devbai Patel (DP) Rebecca Matthews(RM)

ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Apologies</b>	
1.1	Cllr Michael Pavey (Cllr MP) Janice Alexander (JA) Andy Prindiville (AP) Kay Johnson (KJ) Maggie Barth(MB) Elizabeth Jones (EJ)	
<b>2.0.</b>	<b>Minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2013 and Matters Arising</b>	
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Accuracy</b>	
2.1.1	Item 5.6 - AC said that he did not say that the running costs should be included but what he said was that they are ridiculously high.	
2.1.2	GB and Cllr LJ were present at the last meeting.	
2.1.3	The above amendments were noted and the minutes were approved as accurate record.	
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Matters Arising – (From the Action Log)</b>	
2.2.1	<b>Schools Forum Governor Representation at Brent Schools Partnership</b> - MH said he put himself forward and so did UR and Cllr HG. It has been agreed by BSP that MH would attend and UR and Cllr HG would cover his absence.	
2.2.2	<b>Confirm if Schools in Financial Difficulty or Schools in Difficulty</b> – This is as the historic holdback for Schools Causing Concern. This budget funds support for schools with particular challenges, either having failed or with risk of failing Ofsted.	
2.2.3	<b>Report on adequacy of growth funding in 2013/14 to inform provision for 2014/15</b> – This report is to be brought to the December’s Forum	Carmen Coffey
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Schools Funding Reforms – 2014/15 Update</b>	
3.1.1	JV introduced the report. He apologised for not being able to attend the last Schools Forum. He provided an update on the	

consultation sent out to schools. In total six schools responded and the schools will be responded to the points raised. There were no overall objections to the proposed change in the primary and secondary ratios but some observations regarding the loss of funding in 2014/15.

- 3.1.2 A couple of responses were around schools losing even more money if they have had an increase in pupils in their ARP units. DP explained that this is because the ARP unit pupil numbers are deducted from the total pupil number but in reality this is also an increase to the total number on roll but increasing total pupil number was not possible. In the final budgets, this won't be an issue as it will be based on the actual pupil numbers.
- 3.1.3 JV reported that one school has responded saying it receives the lowest per pupil amount and is an outlier in 2013/14 and remains so in 2014/15. This is due to the fact that they have low number of pupils that attract the Additional Educational Needs funding. The officers have been helping them and supporting them in clarifying their funding position. Under the new funding reforms this situation is outside of the LA's control and reflects the workings of the pupil led factors in the formula created by the DfE.
- 3.1.4 YR said he would have liked to see the budgets presented earlier but due to the religious day he couldn't attend the last Forum. He thanked the Chair and officers for acknowledging and noting not to arrange Schools Forums on religious days for the future. He recognises that LA's proposal to move towards the right direction but is concerned that the move is in one year. The move is affecting around 30 schools in losing funding. He is aware that the intention to move in one year is if the MFG was removed but felt that it should happen over two years.
- 3.1.5 JV said that this was discussed at the Schools Funding Sub Group (SFSG). ML said the sub group looked at two models and which ever model was being used, there were winners and losers. SL said there was not a better way where it was benefitting all schools.
- 3.1.6 LB said it seems that whatever the direction the move takes place, different schools will lose funding. It is best to go with principles. There is always going to be a problem for some schools.
- 3.1.7 AC said no schools will lose more than 1.5 %. A clarification was raised regarding whether 2014/15 will be cash flat and if the funding has been calculated on this basis. MH said it's not likely to increase next year. DP explained that it is the same total as the

actual amount used in 2013/14. However, there is an unallocated amount of £647K which we reported at the last schools forum that £500k was to increase the growth funding and a small balance was left unallocated. SW said that the paper on Growth funding is to be brought to the next schools forum in order that the actual growth amount can be agreed.

3.1.8 HM said that Sinai School is facing total loss of around 6% and this is significant to the school. In total this equates to over £160k. ML said he was present when Sinai School's budget position was being reviewed by the SFSG. His school is also losing money under the new funding formula but Sinai's problem is a result of the national rules. The secondary schools are facing a reduction in 6<sup>th</sup> form funding.

3.1.9 MH asked if members concerned agreed that their issues have been considered and this was accepted.

### **3.2 Request to fund Gordon Brown Outdoor Education Centre Facilities Centrally**

3.2.1 SW said that the centre operates on a trading basis which covers its costs apart from a small subsidy. If the DSG subsidy was not there, it would possibly be necessary to establish a trust to run the centre or transfer it to an appropriate charitable organisation as other LAs have done with their outdoor centres.

3.2.2 TM said it would be useful to have sight of the more detailed business plan information. We can give a decision this year but in future Schools Forum should be provided with more detailed figures. It was suggested that other options should also be explored e.g. charities. UR said that a change of status could assist in raising funds.

Angela  
Chiswell

3.2.3 Cllr HG said she is a governor at a primary school where if not for the GBC, children would not get to see goats and chickens and other animals. She was fully committed to support funding the centre. She said £50k is a small amount for the benefit generated. The children get experience of outdoors which they do not get anywhere else and pleaded that this service was supported with DSG allocation.

3.2.4 RA said that we have parents who cannot afford to take their children abroad and this centre is incredibly valuable. Many children in Brent do not get to go Spain or other countries or even out of London and by going to this centre it allows them to go away

out of London.

3.2.5 LB asked if Early Years can use the service within this cost. DP said this is a historical funded DSG service for which approval is required every year therefore the funding covers all phases.

3.2.6 It was clarified that all can vote for this service as it is funded from DSG held centrally.

**Recommendations:**

- Note the consultation responses received to date – **Noted**
- Continue to fund Gordon Brown Centre at the current rate – **Approved**

**4.0 De-delegation Request – Free School Meals Eligibility Assessments**

4.1 There were no maintained secondary schools representatives at this meeting. ML said that DP has agreed for him to report decisions on all de-delegation requests on behalf of AP for secondary schools. DP confirmed that this was correct. There continues to be a vacancy for the maintained secondary schools governor.

4.2 SW presented this report and explained that the service is provided by Customer Services on the basis of them doing all checks including liaising with DfE and DWP. This makes it easier for schools and lessens the burden of schools having to do these checks individually. They also do the electronic checks.

4.3 SL was in agreement to de-delegate and SN supported her. ML said he would have liked to see the rates for the academies which each paper should indicate. TM said his school is receiving this service free of charge. LB asked if the parents are claiming on line, how are the charges separated between maintained and academies. SW said we will check and respond back. TM said it's DP not the value of FSM that matters to schools but it triggers Pupil Premium allocations making a significant difference to the schools budget.

4.4 Cllr LJ asked what happens when all infant school children receive free school meals. The whole incentive to apply for FSM changes. MH said we will have to wait until we are guided by the DfE on this. They will probably introduce another factor.



4.5 The Early Years meeting was to take place on the same day as this schools forum, 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2013. The meeting couldn't take place as it was inquorate. It was suggested that may be the membership needs to be increased. LB said that it was arranged at short notice and members could not attend. Members were concerned about this.

4.6 MD said can we agree that there is a general support to de-allocate this service and asked for votes:

Primary -     - Agreement – 8  
                  - Disagreement – 0  
                  - Abstained – 0  
Secondary - Agreement – 1 (as per paragraph 4.1 above)

## **5.0 Schools Causing Concern**

5.1 JV apologised for not removing draft on the reports.

5.2 RM presented the report. RM said the appropriate heading for this budget is Schools Causing Concern and asked if it could be called that. The report provides details of changing the methodology in the way this funding will be allocated to schools. The funding will be made as described in the new Core School Improvement offer. For the current academic year, all schools causing concern will have a Rapid Improvement Group (RIG) established, and that group will produce an action plan. The action plan will be costed and the school will receive funding for the improvements that the school cannot fund from its own resources. RM said that they are creating a risk assessment to ensure that the School Improvement Service is able to address the greatest need and to create greater transparency. Once the school's profile improves, so that there are fewer schools causing concern, there will be less call on this funding but until that happens, the request for the same level of funding is being made.

5.3 MB asked why the budget in 2012/13 was £185k but £254k was used. RM said that the call on the budget was greater than the funds available, but that the School Improvement service had found the surplus from its own resources. But for the current year, because of service cuts, the service is determined to keep within the allocated budget.

5.4 It was questioned as to how many headteacher consultants are engaged. RM said she could not answer for the past but last year when she arrived there were 2 people but these are no longer

being used. TM asked if this budget wasn't available, how would we support schools? RM said there is no other budget available.

5.5 A clarification was sought for de-delegations for nursery schools with reception children. This is a historic holdback so covers all sectors.

5.6 MH invited appropriate members to vote.

Primary -       - Agreement – 7  
                  - Disagreement – 0  
                  - Abstained – 0  
Secondary -     - Agreement – 1 (as per paragraph 4.1 above)

## **6.0 The Learning Zone at Wembley Stadium**

6.1 The programme is funded partly by Wembley Stadium, Traded Service income and from the DSG contribution. The literacy and numeracy programmes continue to be provided by Wembley Stadium as part of its programme of support for the local community since its funding ceased to exist in March 2011 under the DfE's programme 'Playing for Success'. The whole programme delivers six week courses as well as one day experiences to primary school children. The DSG funding supplements assistance-in-kind funding from Wembley Stadium for the use of the stadium facilities. The programmes have a positive impact on the children's confidence, self-esteem and learning through projects and activities developed with schools. The programme also gives a link to special events such as the NFL, rugby world cup and football which without the DSG may not be supported and the access to stadium is at risk.

6.2 The DSG element funds a full time and a part time post. The funding has had a positive impact on young people in terms of their confidence. UR commented that the ability for local children to use the stadium was brilliant!

6.3 RA asked why this is only supporting primary schools as Copland is also using it. SW said that primary may have voted last year but if it is used by both sectors then both sectors can vote this time. DP said this is another service historically funded centrally and both primary and secondary schools could vote.

Primary and Secondary - Agreement – 9

## **7.1.0 Maternity Grant, Trade Union Facilities and Licences Budgets**

- 7.1.1 **Maternity Grant** – the allocation is based on £4,206 for teachers and £3,179 for non-teachers at a rate of £8.48 per pupil. It excludes SMSA's. The overall amount that is required for de-delegation is £223,143. It's a reduction of £116,524 from 2013/14 due to more schools converting to academies
- 7.1.2 The view was that this is insurance and not a disproportionate way of funding maternity cover. TM asked how much was it before academy conversions and NT referred him to paragraph 2.2.4 of the report which provides the details of 2014/15 provisional amounts to be divided with October 2013 pupil number.
- 7.1.3 LB motioned that the maintained nursery schools have had access to the benefits offered by this cover but had no funding via the EYSFF. NT clarified that the nursery and special schools would have to access this cover on a buy-back basis at £8.48 per pupil.

**Recommendation** - MH asked the Forum for a vote with the following outcome :

- Primary -     - Agreement – 9  
                  - Disagreement – 0  
                  - Abstained – 0  
Secondary -   - Agreement – 1 (as per paragraph 4.1 above)

- 7.2.1 **Trade Union** – This covers schools with staffing involved on Trade Union duties. The funding is reimbursed to schools on an average cost of an M6 teacher salary cost. The proposed budget is £140,000 and is a reduction of £20,000 from 2013/14 to reflect the value of the academy buy-back. With the academy buy back this will support the current 3.52 FTE staff cost. Nursery and Special Schools would have to buy-back into this service.
- 7.2.2 As the funding was meant to reflect reasonable time off to deal with trade union activities SN wondered what was, in the view of the funding requested, reasonable time off to arrive at an appropriate cost.
- 7.2.3 TM then raised a point of order regarding the presence of LG as a Trade Union representative as this could create a conflict of interest. LG said she was happy to leave the room if the Chair wanted her to. On this point of order the Chair MH did ask her to leave the room. LG left the room for this item. She said before leaving, in reply to SN's point, that it was difficult to quantify time for

example if a school is having a restructure this involves a significant level of Trade Union representative time.

- 7.2.4 SW said it's a matter of judgement in deciding what constitutes 'reasonable' time off.
- 7.2.5 ML said he would still prefer the figures to be presented on a per-pupil amount rather than on posts. ML also offered the view that the Forum should not be doing the government's 'dirty work' in ending or greatly reducing the level of TU representation in schools.
- 7.2.6 It was suggested by secondary headteachers that borough trade union representatives should be required to be serving teacher with a timetable in school who spent part of their time on trade union duties and that we should not have full time representatives or representatives who did not teach as this risked diluting their representative role.
- 7.2.7 An academy headteacher who has not seen any value in buying into this service took the view that the LA has allowed the money to be used inappropriately and it was not a good use of public funds.
- 7.2.8 A primary headteacher stated that in her experience, particularly for schools in difficulty, they have benefited greatly from this funding and the Trade Union support has been invaluable. They have supported schools in addressing issues around unsatisfactory staff performance. SW added that as part of any changes, it was vital to develop a formal TU facilities agreement in consultation with schools since this was not currently in place.
- 7.2.9 TH said it should be noted that the issues which TUs get involved in are time consuming. It involves meetings and attending disciplinaries etc so it would be difficult to calculate reasonable time off. We have to recognise that Trade Union membership and representation is a 'right' and needs to be paid for by schools.
- 7.2.10 TM asked how our budget compares with other LA's. SW said that the HR undertook some benchmarking recently which showed a range between £50k to £140k. There is no particular accepted rate around how staff should be represented.
- 7.2.11 SW said that the proposed de-delegation amount will be included in the provisional budget and the LA will report back with a report that sets out what schools will be looking for from facilities time and

some benchmarking.

- 7.2.12 AC said this de-delegation relates to next year so we do have time to review and come back. We can look at benchmarking it against other authorities. It was agreed to include it in the provisional budget and if the decision is made to reduce it later or to delegate it, adjustment to the final budget can be made accordingly.
- 7.2.13 **Recommendation** - It was agreed to defer decision on this request for de-delegation until funding level from other comparative authorities is received and schools' views could be taken into account.
- 7.2.14 LG was invited back in the room and was informed of the decision that the item is deferred for decision to the next schools forum when the other comparative local authorities' data is available. HR
- 7.3.1 **Licenses** – A request for de-delegation to fund a number of licenses on behalf of maintained schools was made. The total funding required is £44,418 and is subject to confirmation based on the October 2013 actual pupil numbers. The de-delegation offers maintained schools a more efficient method of acquiring these licences removing the need for each school to purchase on an individual basis.
- 7.3.2 The DfE purchases a blanket license for CLA and MPA and invoices Local Authorities for these two licences. The academies are also covered under these licenses. The funding of £75,000 for these two licenses is to be top-sliced from the ISB and is currently not an option for de-delegation.
- 7.3.3 LB was concerned that they will not have access to the funds for de-delegated services when it has been provided to nursery schools previously. SW said that officers will look to see how the nursery and special schools can continue to be supported without additional impact on their delegated budget. NT highlighted that the guidance says that the funding for the special schools is included in the top-ups. SW said that we will need to review this. NT/DP
- 7.3.4 **Recommendation** to de-delegated licenses funding was approved by all primary and secondary school members. For secondary schools paragraph 4.1 above refers.

## 8.0 Any Other Business

- 8.1 Terry Hoad, a representative for PRU's was introduced to all. MH



apologised for not having introductions at the start of the meeting mainly due to having table name plates.

8.2 The meeting ended at 7.50pm.

## Action Log

No	Action	Completion Date	Owner
1	Find out if parents apply on-line for FSM eligibility assessment, how they are identified if they attend maintained school or academy.	4 <sup>th</sup> December 2014 Schools Forum (Matters Arising)	Paula Buckley/DP
2	Benchmarking of End to End process and cost per pupil in processing admissions application	December 2013 Forum (Matters Arising from Sept 2013)	Paula Buckley/ Margaret Read
3	Benchmarking on funding for Trade Union activities with our comparative authorities	December 2013 Forum (Matters Arising from Sept 13)	HR/SW
4	Report on adequacy of Growth Funding in 2013/14 to inform provision for 2014/15	4 <sup>th</sup> December 2013 Forum	Carmen Coffey/ SW
5	Review of Early Intervention Team – to be presented to EY Sub Group prior to being presented to Schools Forum	December 2013 Forum	Sue Gates
7	Strategy for Full-Time Nursery Places - to be presented to EY Sub Group prior to being presented to Schools Forum	December 2013 Forum	Sue Gates
8	If the funding for de-delegations can be funded centrally or additional funding provided to nursery and special schools	January/February 2013	NT/DP
<b>2014/15 Action Points</b>			
9	Budget Review of Alternative Education Service – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To present partnership model that oversees devolved funds</li> <li>Develop further proposals to introduce a rewards and incentives funding framework</li> </ul>	February 2014	Sara Kulay
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