

Schools Forum

Minutes

Tuesday 5 March 2019

PRESENT

Schools Forum Members

Gary Kynaston, Hammersmith Academy (Chair)

Daisy Armstrong, Avonmore (Governor)

Robert Jones, London Oratory

Sharon Robinson, John Betts (Governor)

Peter Smith, Jack Tizard

Jana Hassan, Harmony Nursery (PVI)

Caroline Plummer, Wormholt Park

Giles Finnemore, Brackenbury Primary

Tim Scott, Fulham College Boys

Michelle Barrett, Randolph Beresford EYC and Vanessa Nursery

Alan Campbell, Cambridge School

Jane Gleasure, Little People's Nursey (PVI)

Clare Wagner, WLFS

LBHF Officers

Steve Miley, Director of Children's Services

Kevin Gordon, Head of Assets, Operations and Planning

Mandy Lawson, Assistant Director of SEND

Satwinder Saraon, Head of SEND Development

Tony Burton, Finance Manager

David Abbott, Scrutiny Manager

Apologies were received from Wayne Leeming and Jan Parnell

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Attendance is listed above.

The Chair noted that it was Robert Jones's last meeting and thanked him for his hard work on the forum.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Matters arising

Item 3 - Members noted that Earl's Court were no longer moving – they would be staying at the West London Free School site. Now that the arrangement

was permanent they asked officers to clarify whether they would still receive separate lump sum payments. Tony Burton said that as long as the DfE considered them two separate schools they would receive separate lump sums.

Corrections

Members noted that apologies should have been noted from Jane Gleasure, Daisy Armstrong, and Sharon Robinson

RESOLVED

With the amendments noted above, the minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.

3. COMMUNITY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME - APPROVAL OF SCHOOL RENEWAL STRATEGY AND PROCUREMENT OF INCLUSIVE DESIGN TEAM

Kevin Gordon (Head of Assets, Operations and Planning) presented the report that set out the rationale for a self-funding programme to renew the borough's primary school estate, creating fit-for-purpose 21st century schools. He noted Cabinet had agreed the programme of school renewal on 4 March 2019.

Kevin Gordon informed members that the intention was to both rebuild schools to make them fit for the future – but also to generate additional receipts to invest back into the wider school economy (e.g. the high needs block). The programme would start with some maintained schools, but officers would also be speaking to Academies and other voluntary aided schools.

Members noted that in 4.6 there was a reference to the national Priority School Building Programme, which had benefited some of the schools in the borough. Members asked why officers didn't expect any further investment from that programme? Kevin Gordon said there had been nothing for maintained schools in recent years – the money had been channelled into Academies.

Members asked if the DfE were looking at a national stock condition survey. Kevin Gordon said the DfE did do that – but it was used for their Treasury submission rather than an investment programme.

Kevin Gordon said he would be taking the proposals to the headteachers groups and lay out some of the opportunities to sit on the board and explain the governance structures for the programme.

4. SCHOOL STOCK CONDITION CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE - PRESENTATION TO BE TABLED

Kevin Gordon (Head of Assets, Operations and Planning) gave a presentation on the school stock conditional capital programme. He notes that 23 schools had been surveyed and £4.3m of works had been identified. In addition, there would be a further £600k for upgraded fire doors. Officers would be sharing the grading with all schools to ensure the process was transparent.

If there were any additional requests from schools, they would have to be considered within the same envelope. The Council wanted to keep the allocation process fair and equitable.

5. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT BUDGET 2019/20 UPDATE

Tony Burton (Head of Finance) presented the report that set out the allocation of the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2019/20. He noted that the DfE had formally approved the disapplication request and agreed the schools block budget for 2019/20.

The ESFA had queried the split-sites factor – they wanted H&F to fully regularise it before full implementation of the NFF in April 2020.

On Early Years, changes were recommended to Schools Forum – namely an increase in the CP CIN weighting and a contingency of £168k to manage the transition to the new model. In section 3.4 of the report there were two options for moving forward:

- Option A – the modelling as presented to Schools Forum on 15 January 2019
- Option B – the modelling including the further 5 pence reduction in Deprivation hourly rates requested by Schools Forum at the meeting on 15 January 2019

A representative from the PVI sector said the deprivation funding helped them to provide facilities for children with greater need. The PVI sector took a considerable number of CP CIN and SEN children. In the south of the borough all CP CIN children were in the PVI sector. They said they'd like to see the figures for where the children with the most need were.

Tony Burton noted that in section 3.11 the report explained that the Council was looking at the process of assessment for CP CIN across the borough. That would give officers better information about the cohort and where needs were being met. Table 2 showed there would be £300k set aside for SEN inclusion available to all providers. There would be clarity by April as to how to access this money.

There was a recognition that the Council hadn't been proactive enough getting inclusion funding out to all providers. Officers would be providing more support to PVIs, child minders etc.

The Chair asked for a one pager from the PVI sector including an overview of what they provide and the key issues for them.

The Forum then discussed the two options for Early years funding and agreed Option B – but the Chair asked for a quality programme of support over the coming year that the PVI sector can access. Officers agreed and said Satwinder Saraon would help to coordinate that programme.

ACTION: Satwinder Saraon

RESOLVED

1. The Forum agreed Early Years Funding Option B – the modelling including a further 5 pence reduction in deprivation hourly rates as requested by Schools Forum at the meeting on 15 January 2019.
2. The Forum noted the planned use of Central Services DSG in Table 3 of the report.

6. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT MONITORING UPDATE 2018/19

Tony Burton (Head of Finance) presented the report that set out the forecast variances in each of the blocks of the Dedicated Schools Grant in 2018/19. He noted that the unallocated falling rolls protection would carry forward to 19/20. The maintained schools 150k de-delegated budget would also be carried forward.

Members asked if the schools applying for contingency funding had significant reserves. Tony burton said no but officers were working on budget planning with them to ensure they were sustainable for 2019/20.

The Chair asked Tony Burton to communicate the requests for schools in financial difficulty/contingency to schools to ensure the process was transparent and all had an opportunity to access it.

Tony Burton noted that St. Stevens had been expecting an outstanding payment from the Council in 17/18 that turned out to not be due. That error had tipped them into deficit and the Council wanted to support the school through that.

RESOLVED

The Forum agreed the requests for schools in financial difficulty/contingency (Table 2 of the report) in principle. The Chair asked that this was communicated to schools. A further paper was requested on this for the next meeting.

The Chair thanked Tony Burton and the finance team for their hard work.

7. HIGH NEEDS BOCK BUDGET UPDATE - ORAL UPDATE

Steve Miley (Director for Children’s Services) addressed the forum and noted that Satwinder Saraon (SEND) had been appointed to lead the high needs block project work. Officers would be looking at how to make the education budgets work better for the sector and how to meet the needs of children without escalating to EHCP high levels of support. Officers would like to shift

the focus to be more preventative where appropriate. He stressed that this was a challenge for the whole sector and wanted the Council to work closely with schools and other partners on a solution.

Gary Kynaston had been seconded to work on redesigning alternate provision to move towards a broader spectrum of support. Alan Campbell would also be helping with SEND services – looking at ways to make them more preventative, more upstream, to meet needs earlier.

A member noted that a key issue would be educating parents as they often, understandably, pushed for highest levels of support. Another member added that what was in the EHCP was problematic – what they stipulated was often unrealistic for schools to deliver. These issues should be addressed in annual reviews but rarely were. Also – given the demands – it was currently almost impossible to meet needs for children without plans. Steve Miley said this was where we needed to reshape services so there was something available at the lower level. In theory there was nothing that could be provided in an EHCP that couldn't also be offered without one.

8. DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME (FOR INFORMATION)

The work programme was presented for information.

14 May

- Draft of high needs block recovery plan.

Members asked that the meeting be moved to the following week (21 May) as the original date was in SATs week.

2 July

- Dedicated schools grant outturn
- A paper modelling the 2021 budget to start discussions

The Chair said he would like schools to feedback on the budget, MFG, and the direction of travel.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

Meeting started: 2.00 pm
Meeting ended: 3.40 pm

Chair

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