

Hammersmith & Fulham

Schools Forum

Minutes

Tuesday 2 July 2019

Present

Voting members	Non-voting members
Primary School Heads Claire Fletcher, St Paul's CE Primary Kathleen Williams, Holy Cross Primary	School Representatives Tim Scott, Fulham College Giles Finnemore, Brackenbury Primary Aidan Smith, LA Governor at Jack Tizard Jessica Mair, John Betts
Governors Sharon Robinson, John Betts	Trade Union Representatives Dave Anderson Denis Charman
Academies and Free Schools Gary Kynaston, Hammersmith Academy (Chair)	
Special Schools (Head) Alan Campbell, Head at Cambridge	
Alternative Provision Academies Krishna Purbhoo, Exec Head of TBAP	
Non-Schools Members Jane Gleasure, Little People (EY PVI)	

H&F Officers
Steve Miley, Director of Children's Services Tony Burton, Head of Finance Jan Parnell, Assistant Director of Education Kevin Gordon, Assistant Director of Assets, Operations and Programmes Honor Green, Schools Finance Team David Abbott, Clerk

1. **WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and led a round of introductions. Attendance is listed above.

2. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Matters arising

Jack Tizard - Officers noted they had written to the other Local Authorities concerned.

BACs roll out - Giles Finnemore noted that he had met with Tony Burton's team and they were updating the procedures.

RESOLVED

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.

3. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT DEFICIT REDUCTION - SUBMISSION TO THE ESFA

Tony Burton introduced the report that informed Schools Forum of the proposed response to the DfE's request for a Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Recovery Plan. Tony noted that the scheduled returns had been omitted from the report and tabled it at the meeting.

The Chair asked if the plan was likely to be accepted by the ESFA. Steve Miley said it was hard to know exactly what the DfE wanted. There were a number of Councils with in-year overspends in the £5m range and accumulated deficits similar to H&F. He felt it was positive that the ESFA had asked for this information as it clearly showed what pressures were there. The key problem was that the National Funding Formula for the SEND was not based on the current number of children with SEND or the complexity of their needs. Officers hoped the submission would be helpful for the ESFA and hoped the funding formula for SEND was revised.

Tony Burton added that the ESFA had also put out a 'call for evidence' on SEND pressures separate to this. It was hoped this information would be used in the forthcoming government spending review.

Officers noted that the ESFA was providing a 'link officer' for each Local Authority where the High Needs Block was a particular issue which was a helpful step.

A member of the Forum asked why the deficit was so high in H&F. Tony Burton explained that there were a number of reasons:

- Funding was not linked to need, it was simply a set amount. The formula was linked to historic levels of spend which didn't reflect the current situation in H&F
- The Government increased responsibility for Local Authorities for young people with SEND from 18 to 25 but didn't provide any additional funding
- The 2014 legislation on EHCPs raised expectations for parents without providing funding to meet those expectations

The Chair asked if there was a way of representing the efficiencies made in the service separately from the deficits accumulated because of costs the Council couldn't influence.

The Chair said it would be useful to get figures from schools on how much they were spending to meet need and how much funding they get to cover it.

ACTION: Tony Burton

A headteacher said her school had a gap of around £200k a year. She said it was 'impossible' to hire support for 20 hours a week so they had to use more expensive agency staff.

Jan Parnell recommended sending the ESFA a letter from Schools Forum on the impact on school budgets.

ACTION: Jan Parnell to draft a letter and circulate to primary heads

4. SCHOOL REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE - VERBAL UPDATE

Kevin Gordon gave a presentation on the school repair and maintenance programme. He noted that all maintained schools had been surveyed and £5.4m of works had been identified. Officers were currently working on putting a team in place to progress the works. They were looking to build up a local supply chain, opening work in schools to wider set of contractors. A supplier event was planned for next week and the Council was staffing up an internal team of surveyors etc.

The Chair asked if the new team would have one interface for schools. Kevin Gordon said it would. The programme was scheduled for the next 2.5 years.

The Chair asked for a schedule of works to be presented at the next Schools Forum. He also asked for feedback from schools on the quality of the new works.

ACTIONS: Kevin Gordon (schedule of works) and headteachers (feedback on quality)

5. SCHOOLS REGENERATION - VERBAL UPDATE

Kevin Gordon and Alex Neate (from the Economy department) gave a presentation on the schools regeneration project.

Kevin Gordon noted that H&F's Cabinet had signed off a report to improve the school estate by redeveloping school sites. The first phase would be targeting planning permission in October 2020.

The projects would be done in partnership with schools and a design advisor had been brought in to understanding what schools would like, what those ideas would cost, and the cash envelope they would be working with.

It was clear there would be no capital injection from the DfE so funding would have to come from housing receipts but officers were also looking at other

facilities and community assets that could be put on school sites. Jan Parnell added that officers were also looking at building in key worker accommodation.

Kevin Gordon made clear that these projects would only go ahead if schools wanted them and the Council was open to discussions with any school - academy, maintained, religious school etc.

The Chair asked if there had been an audit of interest from primary schools. Kevin Gordon replied that they had publicised the programme at heads partnerships meetings but the Council didn't want to put pressure on schools – they would be led by schools.

A forum member raised concerns around the impact of newly built schools on the rolls of current schools. New buildings were attractive to parents and if they were popular they may push for additional forms of entry. Officers said the Council was very clear that the borough didn't need any additional capacity.

The Chair thanked officers for their presentation.

6. SCHOOLS BUDGET PROCESS 2020-21

Tony Burton presented the report that describes the proposed outline process for setting school budgets for 2020-21. He took members through the timeline for the budget process, noting that he wanted headteachers briefed before the October Schools Forum and to that end proposed two briefings in the week commencing 16 September. Members asked for one at 8.30am and one at 2pm (not on the Monday morning).

Members also asked that officers avoided the 6th and 7th for the budget briefing in January as they were inset days.

Tony Burton noted that there was very limited information available on any budgets/funding from April 2020 which was subject to the outcome of the central government spending review.

Funding that was known had been included on the monthly schedules provided to individual schools for 2019/20. Funding updates will be provided in the September workshops for information that is available from the ESFA at that time.

The Chair asked if there was any news on the teacher pay award. Officers said there wasn't but it was felt to be prudent to work on the basis of a 2 percent uplift.

The Chair asked that officers set out for schools what was changing this year – e.g. the sports premium may be stopping.

ACTION: Tony Burton

There was also the issue of the re-calculation of term time only for support staff.

ACTION: Tony Burton to follow up with Dave Rogers

7. DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME (FOR INFORMATION)

The draft work programme was presented for information and was noted.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

NOTE: The item below was considered at the start of the meeting

Tabled Paper - Regularising Funding for Trade Union Facility Time

Tony Burton introduced the tabled paper, explaining that it was proposing regularising school contributions to the costs of trade union facilities. Historically these facilities had been paid for by top-slicing the de-delegated mainstream primaries dedicated schools grant. The paper proposed regularising this position to ensure a fairer and more transparent process for sharing costs amongst all schools. The total expenditure to be covered was £70k per year and there would be a £3k cap for individual schools.

Denis Charman, union representative, attended the meeting to discuss the proposal and answer any questions. Denis Charman explained that some form of trade union facilities were a legal right. The facilities enabled the unions to fulfil their union duties – i.e. representing people, providing support and training, and negotiating contracts. The cost paid for the equivalent of 1 additional teacher across H&F. Recently the role has been fulfilled by a number of people working part time.

Members asked if the £70k was a fixed budget and if so, what happened to any over or underspends. Tony Burton said the £70k was based on a best estimate of the actual cost - but it may vary.

Members asked if this was funded from the total DSG or the de-delegated part of the DSG. Tony said historically it was taken from the de-delegated part of the DSG from mainstream maintained primary schools. That hadn't changed with the schools funding changes of recent years.

A headteacher said the involvement of unions was invaluable and felt it was value for money. He noted that in their annual report they were required to report facility time and costs and they had reported that the cost was zero. Would that create an issue with the ESFA if the proposals in the paper went ahead?

Denis Charman said he could find out from other schools. Tony Burton said officers wanted to keep it simple to administer.

A headteacher asked what if an academy refused to pay their contribution. Tony Burton said if there was any challenge it would be directed to the facilities staff.

Schools Forum members agreed the proposal in principle. The Chair asked for a fuller paper back to Schools Forum with some research, FAQs on common issues for schools, and benchmarking of H&F compared with other areas. He recommended that a paper on this came back on an annual basis to agree any variations.

ACTION: Tony Burton

Meeting started: 2.00 pm

Meeting ended: 4.15 pm

Chair

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