

Hammersmith & Fulham
Schools Forum – 14 June 2022
Minutes of the meeting

NOTE: This meeting was held remotely

Present

Voting members	Non-voting members
<p>Primary School Heads Claire Fletcher, St Paul's CE Primary Sam Naismith, Flora Gardens Primary Michele Barrett, Randolph Beresford / Vanessa Nursery Wendy Aldridge, Sullivan Primary</p> <p>Academies and Free Schools Gary Kynaston, Hammersmith Academy (Chair)</p> <p>Non-Schools Members Jane Gleasure (Little People, Early Years PVI)</p>	<p>Observers Aidan Smith, Governor</p>

Officers

Jacqui McShannon (Director of Children's Services)
Peter Haylock (Director of Education and SEND)
Tony Burton (Head of Finance for Children's Services and Education)
Satwinder Saraon (Strategic Lead for Education, Early Years and Transformation)
Ozioma Onwochei (Principal Accountant)
Valerie Irolla (Principal Accountant)
Gayan Arachchi (Finance Team)
Adele Patriciello (Senior Accountant)
Susan Hillis (Operations Team Manager)
David Abbott (Head of Governance)

Councillor observers

Councillor Aliya Afzal-Khan

1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Apologies

Apologies were received from Karen Cunningham and Kathleen Williams.

Introductions

Peter Haylock was introduced as the new Director of Education and SEND.

Minutes

Tony Burton noted the action on page 3 of the minutes regarding pension contribution rates. He said he would circulate information on rates to the group.

Jacqui McShannon gave an update on Ukraine refugees, noting that 80 children had been placed in the borough. She thanked schools for their generous support.

RESOLVED

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

2. Q4 UPDATE: HIGH NEEDS BLOCK 2021/22

Satwinder Saraon (Strategic Lead for Education, Early Years and Transformation) presented the update report on the High Needs Block programme of work and performance against the Safety Valve agreement at Q4.

Claire Fletcher asked for an update on whether the increase of £500k had been fully committed. Satwinder Saraon said it would be committed by the end of the academic year. The focus was on early intervention. It would be reviewed at the end of each year to see how effective it was. Claire Fletcher asked if there was a plan to gather feedback from end-users on the initiatives. Satwinder Saraon said feedback mechanisms were in place for each programme, but they were thinking about a more strategic approach to gathering feedback.

The Chair asked for an update on the SEN sufficiency review and the impact on decisions for the High Needs Block. Satwinder Saraon said the team would be starting multi-agency workshops soon to understand where gaps were and what was needed to fill them.

Peter Haylock noted how important it was to get impact data to ensure financing and resources were being targeted to the areas of greatest need. He had been very pleased with the level of engagement so far.

The Chair asked for an update in the Autumn on the sufficiency review and the implications for the safety valve agreement.

ACTION: Satwinder Saraon / Tony Burton

3. 2021/22 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT OUTTURN

Tony Burton (Head of Finance for Children's Services and Education) presented the report which confirmed the 2021/22 Outturn for the Dedicated Schools Grant and balances held on 31 March 2022.

Claire Fletcher asked about the level of feedback the Department for Education (DfE) were asking for to manage the High Needs Block going forward. Tony Burton said the DfE were looking at the transformation programme and financials through the medium term. The safety valve agreement came to an end in 2025/26.

When the safety valve was agreed the final position was balanced. Since then, some assumptions had been adjusted down due to lower expectations of funding which had opened a gap. Officers were working to understand what that gap was. There was a lot of uncertainty over the medium term.

The Chair asked for a high-level paper (around 2 pages) before the Autumn term on what had been agreed and where we are now to give the Forum greater clarity.

ACTION: Tony Burton

The Chair asked if the Autumn term would be a soft, medium, or hard landing. Tony Burton said, based on the July guidance from the DfE, he expected another year of the 'soft' National Funding Formula and implementation.

The Chair thanked the finance team for their work.

4. DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE (FOR INFORMATION)

The draft work programme was noted.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair asked officers to poll members on their preference for in person, hybrid or fully remote meetings in future.

ACTION: David Abbott

Meeting started: 2.00 pm

Meeting ended: 2.45 pm

Chair

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