

SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 7 May 2019 **at 1.00 pm at Whitmore High School**

Members Present: Sue Hammond – Headteacher, Whitmore High School (CHAIR)
Pam Virdee – Headteacher, Longfield School (VICE CHAIR)
Mike Baumring - Headteacher, Kenmore Park Junior School
David O'Farrell – Headteacher, St Bernadette's Primary School
Rutinder Mahil-Pooni – Headteacher, Kenmore Park Infant School
Anne Monahan – Headteacher, St Anselm's Primary School
Geraldine Higgins – Headteacher, Sacred Heart Language College
Paul Gamble – Headteacher, Harrow High School
Ian Nutch – Academy High School Finance Manager
Anna Smakowska – Headteacher, Woodlands School
Christine Robson – Portfolio Holder, Young People & Schools
Louise Browning – Headteacher, Norbury Primary School

Officers in Attendance: Jo Frost - Finance Business Partner

SH opened the meeting.

1. Apologies and Order of the Agenda

Apologies were received and accepted from:

Patrick O'Dwyer – Div. Director Education Services (Special Needs Services)
Nigel Hewitt – Association of Harrow Governing Bodies
Rebecca Hastings – Headteacher, Cedars Manor School
Sue Maguire – Headteacher, Hatch End High School

The order of the agenda was agreed.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 5 March 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2019 were agreed

3. Matters Arising

A number of members requested an update on the LA's recent consultation in respect of funding for EHCPs in mainstream schools. SH explained that the LA had gone ahead with the consultation and due to strength of feeling with the responses have agreed to delay implementation for one year.

IN requested the LA consider how to ensure schools with higher numbers of EHCPs are not disproportionately affected by this change.

There was a request for an update on the matrix banding work and how this change will impact on any proposals as well as other work of the SEN strategy group. SH agreed to write to POD to request an update on actions from the consultation and the status of the working group for the next Schools Forum meeting. This needs to include direction of travel and timescales.

ACTION SH/POD

4. DSG Budget 2018-19 Final Outturn

JF introduced the report which set out the final outturn for the DSG budget in 2018-19. The overall position was a net overspend of £49k.

JF explained the underspend of £543k on the Early Years Block mainly as a result of additional funding for 2017-18 in respect of the January Early Years Census and a fewer number of children participating in universal 3 & 4 year old offer in 2018-19. On this basis the LA requested that approx. £340k of the overall underspend be earmarked in the contingency for possible in 2019-20 as the January 2019 census recorded fewer pupils than the 2018-19 and 2019-20 budgets are based on.

Similarly there were a fewer number of children participating in the 2 year old offer in 2018-19 and therefore it is proposed to earmark £104k of the underspend in the contingency for possible clawback in 2019-20.

In respect of the High Needs Block there was a net overspend of £986k. SH observed that all of the overspend is attributed to the independent & non-maintained special school sector. JF explained that the SEND Strategy aims to address this. IN requested that pupil numbers be added to the financial spend for context.

ACTION JF

It was acknowledged that in some cases tribunal decisions can increase costs to the LA with no additional funding. SH suggested that there should be a system that requires a trial period at local provision before getting to a tribunal stage. LB explained that there is some good practice to build on as some transition from out of borough provision has been successful.

JF explained that the LA's special free school bid had been rejected and the LA was due to have feedback the following week.

SH explained that the DfE had issued a Call For Evidence in respect of SEND funding. SH requested that the LA respond to the Call For Evidence and proposed a small group of head teachers pull together a response on behalf of schools.

ACTION SH/JF

Schools Forum noted the underspends in respect of the central items and growth fund.

Schools Forum noted the overall position on the contingency.

Schools Forum agreed that:

- £340k be earmarked within the contingency in 2019-20 for possible clawback in respect of 3&4 year old universal offer funding
- £104k be earmarked within the contingency in 2019-20 for possible clawback in respect of 2 year old funding

JF explained that any clawbacks would be known by July 2019.

Any Other Business

IN requested an update on primary & secondary place numbers, by planning area, by year group and including any temporary PAN adjustments.

Next Meeting and Agenda Items

The next meeting will take place on 2 July at 1pm at Whitmore High School.

The meeting closed at 2pm

Future Dates

2 July 2019

Academic year 2019-20 dates to be agreed at Schools Forum 2 July 2019.