

## **SCHOOLS FORUM**

### **Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 16 October 2018** **at 1.00 pm at Whitmore High School**

**Members Present:** Sue Hammond – Headteacher, Whitmore High School (CHAIR)  
Pam Virdee – Headteacher, Longfield School (VICE CHAIR)  
Geraldine Higgins – Headteacher, Sacred Heart Language College  
Patrick O'Dwyer – Div. Director Education Services (Special Needs Services)  
Paul Gamble – Headteacher, Harrow High School  
Mike Baumring - Headteacher, Kenmore Park Junior School  
Claudia Calogero – Governor, Hillview Nursery School  
David O'Farrell – Headteacher, St Bernadette's Primary School  
Sara McCann – Stanmore College (rep. Sarbdip Noonan)  
Matt Silver – Shaftesbury High School (rep. Anna Smakowska)  
Nigel Hewett - AHGB Representative  
Ian Noutch – Academy High School Finance Manager

**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:

Sarbdip Noonan – Principal, Stanmore College  
Paul Hewitt – Interim Corporate Director People Services  
Jo Daswani – Headteacher, Whitchurch Primary School  
Rebecca Hastings – Headteacher, Cedars Manor School  
Louise Browning – Headteacher, Norbury Primary School  
Christine Robson – Portfolio Holder, Young People & Schools  
Rutinder Mahil-Pooni – Headteacher, Kenmore Park Infant School  
Sue Maguire – Headteacher, Hatch End High School  
Anne Monahan – Headteacher, St Anselm's Primary School  
Anna Smakowska – Headteacher, Woodlands School

The order of the agenda was agreed.

#### **2. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 11 September 2018**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2018 were agreed as an accurate record

#### **3. Matters Arising**

##### **a. School Funding Consultation 2019-20**

SH reminded colleagues to respond to the Schools Funding Consultation which closes on 19<sup>th</sup> October. SH to remind secondary colleagues and PV to remind primary colleagues

ACTION SH/PV

b. Admissions update

POD reported that there were no primary and secondary children who had applied for a Harrow school without a Harrow school place on census day

**4. 2018-19 DSG Budget Monitoring Q2**

JF introduced the report which set out the DSG budget monitoring position for Q2 2018-19.

The report shows an increase in the projected overspend of the High Needs Block taking the total to £2.1m by the end of this financial year.

A discussion and a number of questions arose

SH queried why the LA could continue to overspend and how is it not in breach of financial regulations. POD explained that the law says the LA must meet a child's needs. The LA must meet the growing demand and therefore must choose the most cost effective provision. In addition tribunals often do not rule in favour of the LA. This is a regional and national issue.

IN queried the number of tribunals and the cost of these. POD explained that it is not always the number but the associated cost if the LA is unsuccessful. POD agreed to provide tribunal data showing the numbers and costs/savings as well as for those at the tier below ie mediation level

ACTION POD

POD also explained that the SEND Reforms extended the age range from 19-25 and this is unfunded. IN agreed that funding for post 16 had generally always been inadequate. POD is requested to provide the number and cost of 19-25 year olds

ACTION POD

JF explained that in relation to the financial regulations these allow the LA to either fund any deficit or carry forward to future years.

Schools Forum requested assurance that decisions are made at appropriate levels and that financial controls are in place and being followed and this was given.

SH stated that the deficit with the High Needs Block sits with the LA in the future and by Schools Forum agreeing to fund this deficit from the schools contingency it does not ensure visibility at a local and national political level or force the LA into providing a recovery plan.

Schools Forum agreed to note the pressures on the High Needs Block but did not agree to fund this from the schools contingency.

**5. Review of funding for EHCPs in mainstream schools and academies**

JF introduced the report which set out the LA's proposals to introduce a new matrix banding system for providing top-up funding for Education Health & Care Plans in mainstream schools and academies.

MS raised a concern on behalf of AS that some of the language is open to interpretation. In addition whilst the banding system is for EHCPs in mainstream schools the funding levels assigned to a Band 4 child is similar to the funding for a child at Shaftesbury.

SH queried whether there could be a pilot with 2 or 3 schools to see if the language works.

PG queried whether the panel could use this as well as the current system as part of a pilot for new EHCPs to see if this matrix is workable. SH explained that the panel is under a huge amount of pressure with the volume of referrals and this would probably be unmanageable.

IN queried the minimum number of points a child could be allocated before an EHCP is given.

In relation to funding levels JF explained that all current EHCPs have been notionally plotted into the matrix and the funding levels for each band has been calculated based on current levels of overall spend. JF explained that there may be some EHCPs which attract more funding and some which attract less but these differences are expected to be minor.

SH suggested that there should be transitional protection for schools that lose.

IN asked the LA to demonstrate the position for each school and how many EHCPs attract more or less funding through this system.

ACTION JF

PG queried whether the LA should be consulting with parents/carers particularly if funding assigned to each EHCP might be different to current funding.

POD explained that the LA is still consulting with Legal Services and would be taking their advice into consideration before finalizing next steps.

Schools Forum requested to see the final consultation document before it is distributed although recognize that this is an LA consultation.

Schools Forum thanked Carole Wells and Gladys De Groot as well as others involved in the process so far.

### **Any Other Business**

None

### **Next Meeting and Agenda Items**

The next meeting will take place on 20 November 2018 at 1pm at Whitmore High School.

The meeting closed at 2.15pm