

SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 19 November 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)
Rebecca Hastings – Headteacher, Cedars Manor School
Sue Maguire – Headteacher, Hatch End High School
Anne Monahan – Headteacher, St Anselm's Primary School
Paul Gamble – Headteacher, Harrow High School
Christine Robson – Portfolio Holder, Young People & Schools
Louise Browning – Headteacher, Norbury Primary School
Patrick O'Dwyer – Div. Director Education Services (Special Needs Services)
Clare Tarling – Finance Director, Pinner High School
Rutinder Mahil-Pooni – Headteacher, Kenmore Park Infant School
Mike Baumring - Headteacher, Kenmore Park Junior School
Simon Arnell – Principal, Avanti House Secondary 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:

Jo Daswani – Headteacher, Whitchurch Primary School
Geraldine Higgins – Headteacher, Sacred Heart Language College
PK Maselino – Headteacher, The Helix
Anna Smakowska – Headteacher, Woodlands School
David O'Farrell – Headteacher, St Bernadette's Primary School

- 2.** The order of the agenda was agreed.
The minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2019 were agreed.

3. Matters Arising

School Place Planning & Admissions

Schools Forum requested an indication of the change in pupil numbers between the October 2018 and October 2019 School censuses.

ACTION JF

4. DSG Budget Setting 2020-21

JF introduced the report which set out the outcome of the schools funding consultation held in November.

Schools Forum noted that there was a consultation response rate of 54%. There was a discussion about the low response rate particularly from the primary sector. A number of members felt that a

significant amount of effort had been made by Schools Forum members to support and encourage colleagues to respond and it was disappointing that the response rate had been so low.

It was agreed that JF would talk to primary headteachers about the significance of the roles and responsibilities of Schools Forum in relation to school funding.

ACTION JF/PV

Following review of the paper, Schools Forum was required to vote on a number of questions.

Q1 Mobility

Schools Forum noted the consultation responses of which 72% of respondents supported the implementation of the National Funding Formula in respect of the mobility factor.

Schools Forum vote:

	Yes	No	Abstain
Members (11)	10	0	1

Outcome: the NFF mobility factor rates will be implemented in the Harrow Schools Funding Formula for 2020-21.

Q2 Minimum Funding Guarantee

Schools Forum noted the consultation responses of which 100% of respondents supported the application of the highest MFG possible without distortion of funding.

Schools Forum vote:

	Yes	No	Abstain
Members (11)	11	0	0

Outcome: The final MFG will be determined through the overall budget setting process and will be subject to affordability

Q3 High Needs Block Transfer

Schools Forum noted the consultation responses of which 93% of respondents did not support a transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block.

However in the commentary a number of schools indicated that they may reconsider the decision if there was clarity about what the transfer of funding would be spent on.

JF reiterated the existing pressures on the HNB and the proposal to increase the funding available for mainstream EHCPs and special school funding top ups. There was a query as to whether these proposals would be dependent on a transfer being agreed. JF explained that this is not the case and that the proposals would further impact on the deficit but would not be withdrawn if the transfer was not agreed.

There was a general discussion about the perceived lack of transparency of the HNB question being included in the consultation document without prior discussion. JF explained that this is one mechanism available to help manage the deficit in the HNB that is available to the LA and the LA must ensure its due diligence by consulting on this. It was not intended to be a non-transparent process. There was also a discussion about the pressure on school budgets and previous years'

topslicing that has contributed to this as well as the LA's decision to no longer fund the £6k place element of EHCPs in mainstream schools from the HNB.

Schools Forum vote:

	Yes	No	Abstain
Members (11)	0	11	0

Outcome: there will not be a transfer of funds from the Schools Block to the HNB in 2020-21.

Any Other Business

Schools Forum asked POD to remind schools to respond to the EHCP consultation which ends on 29 November 2019. Schools Forum members have done so but it was thought a reminder would be helpful.

ACTION POD

Next Meeting and Agenda Items

The meeting closed at 2.45pm

The next meeting will take place on 14 January 2020 at Whitmore High School

Future Dates

10 March 2020

5 May 2020

7 July 2020