

SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 14 January 2020 **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
Louise Browning – Headteacher, Norbury Primary School
Patrick O'Dwyer – Div. Director Education Services (Special Needs Services)
Clare Tarling – Finance Director, Pinner High School
Mike Baumring - Headteacher, Kenmore Park Junior School
Simon Arnell – Principal, Avanti House Secondary School
Anna Smakowska – Headteacher, Woodlands 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:

Geraldine Higgins – Headteacher, Sacred Heart Language College
PK Maselino – Headteacher, The Helix
David O'Farrell – Headteacher, St Bernadette's Primary School
Christine Robson – Portfolio Holder, Young People & Schools
Rutinder Mahil-Pooni – Headteacher, Kenmore Park Infant School
Nigel Hewett – AHGB

- 2.** The order of the agenda was agreed.
The minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2019 were agreed.

3. Matters Arising

School Place Planning & Admissions

Ensure that the school census numbers are available to the School Place Planning group

ACTION POD

Secondary Growth

A discussion was had about secondary school places for September 2021. Secondary Heads are working with Admissions to look at options for placing additional children. It was noted that there is currently no provision in the growth fund or agreed mechanism for allocating funding but this could be revisited if required.

4. DSG Budget Setting 2020-21

JF introduced the report which set out the latest 2020-21 DSG settlement and proposed school budgets for 2020-21.

Schools Forum noted the DSG allocation.

Growth Fund

Schools Forum agreed the growth fund methodology and commitments.

Schools Forum noted the additional one off funding of £131k due to historical errors in calculations of funding to the LA.

Schools Block

Schools Forum noted the proposed schools funding formula for 2020-21 and indicative school budgets.

Schools Forum discussed the implications of the implementation of the NFF in respect of Mobility and consequent changes to the mobility factor cohort and values and noted that the majority of schools affected by this were, in the main, compensated through protection in the MFG. This was the agreed approach voted for by schools and Schools Forum in the Autumn consultation.

Schools Forum discussed the implications of the October census 2019 dataset which identified fewer primary school children eligible for Low Prior Attainment funding. Such a reduction had not been anticipated and it has had an impact on overall funding to primary schools as the rate per pupil has not changed but the number eligible has.

Schools Forum noted the proposal to set a positive MFG at +1.84% which was the preferred approach voted for by schools and Schools Forum in the Autumn consultation (although it was subject to affordability of the overall formula).

Schools Forum discussed the schools block allocation and commitments. This includes £2.2m from within the 2020-21 Schools Block allocation and a further £1m from underspend currently held within the brought forward contingency to be committed to the 2020-21 schools funding formula.

JF explained that this had been included in the proposed budgets as a technical adjustment so that it did not impact on future MFG baselines. The rationale for this is that by increasing the AWPU all schools will see a share of additional funding proportionate to pupil numbers in 2020-21 regardless of their NFF or MFG position, notwithstanding any losses for reducing rolls. Schools Forum agreed this approach.

De-delegation for Trade Union Duties

Schools Forum discussed de-delegation for TU duties. At present maintained schools contribute to TU duties through de-delegation but academies do not contribute through any mechanism. The previous history and rationale for this decision was discussed and it was agreed that this needs to be revisited. It was agreed that the LA would consult with academies in respect of buy-back arrangements.

ACTION POD/JF

High Needs Block

Schools Forum noted the High Needs Block funding for 2020-21.

JF set out the previous decision made by Schools Forum in consultation with all schools in the Autumn Term to vote against a transfer from the Schools block to the High Needs Block for 2020-21.

However Schools Forum was asked to undertake another vote in light of the additional funding available within the Schools Block which was not known about in the Autumn Term. In addition the paper set out the practical steps the LA is taking to mitigate pressures on the HNB and create additional in-borough specialist provision.

There was a short discussion which raised the following points

- When the hard NFF is introduced this won't be possible so need to prevent a 'cliff edge'
- Acknowledgment that this is a morally difficult decision but would mask the extent of the HNB deficit
- Mainstream schools are dealing with more children with complex needs and topslicing puts more pressure on mainstream schools.

Schools Forum agreed to undertake another vote.

	0.5% transfer	Some transfer	No transfer
Members (11)	0	4	7

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

Early Years Block

Schools Forum noted the indicative position on Early Years funding for 2020-21.

Other School Budgets

Schools Forum noted the other sources of funding available for 2020-21.

Any Other Business

None.

Next Meeting

The meeting closed at 2.25pm

The next meeting will take place on 10 March 2020 at Whitmore High School

Future Dates

5 May 2020

7 July 2020