

LEWISHAM SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 4th October 2018

Membership (Quorum = 40% i.e. 9) ✓ = present ✕ =absent a = apologies
s = substitute

		Attendance				
		07/12	17/01	15/03	21/06	4/10
Primary School Headteachers						
Liz Booth	Dalmain	✓	a	✓	✕	
Paul Moriarty	Good Shepherd	✓	✓	✓	✓	a
Michael Roach	John Ball	✓	✓	a	✓	
Sharon Lynch	St William of York	✓	a	✓	a	✓
Keith Barr	Kender	✓	✓	✓	a	✓
Nursery School Headteacher						
Cathryn Kinsey	Clyde Nursery	s				✓
Secondary School Headteachers						
Jan Shapiro	Addey & Stanhope	a	✓	a	✕	a
David Sheppard	Leathersellers Federation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mark Phillips	Deptford Green	✕	✕	✓	✕	✓
Clare Cassidy	Sedgehill	a	✓	✓	✓	a
Special School Headteacher						
Lynne Haines	Greenvale	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pupil Referral Unit Headteacher						
Heather Johnston	Abbey Manor	✓	✓	✓	✕	✓
Primary School Governors						
Rosamund Clarke	Perrymount	✓	✓	✓	a	✓
Dame Erica Pienaar	John Ball	✓	a	✓	a	
Keith D'wan	King Alfred Federation	x	a	a	✕	✕
Secondary & Special School Governors						
Pat Barber	Bonus Pastor	✓	✓	✓	a	
James Pollard	Addey & Stanhope	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ruth Elliot	Watergate	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Academies						
Dr Tesca Bennett	Haberdashers' Knights Academy					✓
14-19 Consortium Rep						

Adam Fahey	Lewisham Southwark College					*
Early Years - PVI						
Dawn Nasser	Rose House Montessori	a	✓	✓	a	a
Diocesan Authorities						
Sara Sanbrook-Davies	Southwark Diocesan Board of Education	a	✓	✓	✓	a
Yvonne Epale	Substitute – Education Commission – Catholic Diocese of Southwark		✓	✓	✓	a

Also Present	
Sara Williams	Executive Director for CYP
Selwyn Thompson	Head of Financial Services
Hayden Judd	Principal Accountant - Schools
Jackie Jones	School Improvement & Intervention
Diane Parkhouse	Schools HR
Fiona Gavin	LB Lewisham
Ruth Griffiths	LB Lewisham
Murial Rant	Education & Skills Funding Agency
Clare Gurbutt	SEND
Edward Farrelly	Health & Safety Advisor
Michael Scott-MacDonald	Addey & Stanhope School
Troy Robinson	Legal Services
	Newshopper
Janita Aubun	Clerk

1. Apologies and Acceptance of Apologies

Apologies received from Sara Sanbrook-Davies, Jan Shapiro, Yvonne Epale, Claire Cassidy and Paul Moriarty.

Dame Erica Pienaar has resigned as Primary School Governor representative.

Apologies accepted.

2. Declaration of Interests

There were no declaration of interests.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held 21 June 2018

Schools Forum Action Summary

All action points will be covered in today's meeting.

4. Matters Arising

No matters arising.

5. Proposed Amendments to the Scheme of Delegation

Forum were presented with an updated report detailing the proposed amendments to the Scheme of Delegation (SoD).

Background

Amendments to the SoD were initially considered by Schools Forum in October 2017, with subsequent consideration in December 2017. The LA approach was to automatically charge redundancy costs to schools budgets unless good reason to do otherwise, had been identified. Owing to concerns raised by the DfE with the earlier proposals and following legal advice, Forum are being asked to consider today's new revisions.

Forum raised the question of whether the above costs will under the proposal, be met from the DSG. Officers assured forum that the LA will retrospectively assess who is to pick up the costs and that each case will be judged individually based on merit.

In summary, the proposed revisions to the Scheme clarify the circumstances in which costs incurred by way of dismissals, resignations, and/or premature retirement, may or must be met from a schools budget in accordance with the requirements of section 37 of the Education Act 2002.

Decision:

Forum agreed the following:-

- To incorporate the proposed amendments to the Scheme of Delegation to schools as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

6. Finance Team Support

Members were informed of the current finance support team establishment which consists of three officers i.e. a principal accountant, an accountant and an assistant accountant. Forum was advised of the changes that have occurred with the group finance manager post and the ensuing vacancy. It was highlighted that the schools finance team was much larger in the past and that finance budgets have been reduced since 2010. The Finance budget stands at just under £3M and this covers, finance and payroll.

Benchmarking exercises undertaken across London last year, showed that Lewisham's finance costs were significantly lower but in comparison, the overall position of the team appears to be lean.

Officers reported to Forum that there is to be a finance re-organisation in April 2019 and that in the interim they will be appointing a temporary Group Finance Manager and two additional accountants to support the team. These temporary staff are to be in post for approximately 6 months.

Further Discussion

- Forum discussed the fact that schools are in the process of changing their financial management systems.
- The subject of High Needs and how it is currently being managed. Forum are concerned that we may lose the good work that has already been undertaken in this area.
- Finance SLA and what schools can expect. Noted that some schools still receive LA non-statutory finance support irrespective of having bought into the agreement.

Decision:

Forum agreed the following:-

- To note the contents of the report.
- That the Head of Financial Services report back to the next Schools Forum with an update on the finance team capacity issues.

7. Schools Balances Analysis 2017/18

Forum were informed of the following:-

Primary Schools

Many are holding balances in excess of 8% but are expecting to utilise these over the next 3 years.

Secondary Schools

Majority have deficit balances.

Special Schools

Our special schools are holding large balances due to single status delays over the past 8 years. These schools have also been subject to a re-banding and have had school expansions.

Nursery Schools

Period of uncertainty regarding funding for nursery schools in 2020/21.

Comments:-

Forum expressed concern about the timeliness and clarity of information from the finance and payroll teams which contributes to the effectiveness of their budget planning. Forum also raised the issue of student admission and not being able to reach their PAN.

Officers gave assurance that they will be writing to schools with a guidance to assist them with managing their surplus balances over the next 3 years.

Decision:

Forum agreed the following:-

- To note the details regarding school balances.

8. Growth Fund Distribution

Forum were presented with a report which gave information to decide on the action to be taken regarding the undistributed 2018/19 Growth Fund.

Forum were informed that that Lewisham's growth fund stands at a total of £1,230,865, which includes an unspent balance of £130,865 from 2017/18.

As the estimated required funding is £800k, this in turn means an excess of approximately £430k. Officers propose that the excess be distributed to schools during the autumn term – i.e. this term.

Forum were advised that following the October census the amount available will become clearer and schools are likely to be informed of the definitive amount in January 2019.

Also the report detailed how if the Growth Fund had been set at a lower level, Schools Forum would have been able to agree a higher Minimum Funding Guarantee level. Therefore officers asked Forum for the excess amount to be distributed to replicate a higher MFG.

Note, in place of Appendix 1, Forum were given examples of the level of funds that would be available to schools of various sizes.

Comments:-

Forum ask, do these funds have to be given to schools in instalments? Forum also discussed the fact that they could choose to pay the excess funds back.

Decision:

Forum agreed the following:-

- That any excess above the revised estimate of Growth Fund required for 2018/19 be distributed to schools.
- That the above recommendation be actioned during the autumn term.
- That the above recommendation be actioned in line with the Minimum Funding Guarantee.

9. Dedicated Schools Grant 2019/20

Forum were presented with papers updating them with information regarding the Dedicated Schools Grant 2019/20.

The 2019/20 Allocation

Forum were made aware of revised figures which have been received from the DfE after this report had been produced. The revisions relate to the Growth Fund which is being funded differently from 2019/20

The changes to the report to note specifically, were in the Schools Block. Here the latest 2018/19 DSG allocation had been reduced by £683K; this represents an upward movement of £837k i.e. 0.4% increase in cash terms.

Note, there is protection for the changes resulting from the funding change, but Lewisham did not qualify for any protection.

Central School Services Block

From 2020/21 the DfE intend applying a phased reduction in historic commitments allocation. This means that the allocations will be reduced by a set percentage per year.

High Needs Block

The DfE intend implementing the inclusion of special free school funding in the High Needs Block, the inclusion of post 16 funding in the High Needs Block and moving Hospital Education funding to a formularised basis (where a consultation on this is due this term).

Early Years Block

The DfE has not released any information for 2019/20 and nothing is expected before the budget.

Minimum Funding Guarantee Disapplication

The DfE allows for an adjustment to the operation of the MFG in cases where a former secondary school is expanding into the primary phase, and the usual operation of the MFG would lead to new primary pupils being funded inappropriately at secondary funding levels.

As this would be a variation in the regulations, Lewisham would need to apply to the DfE to use their adjustment.

Decision:

Forum agreed the following:-

- To note the provisional figures ahead of more detailed consideration of the 2019/20 budget at later meetings.
- The submission of a Minimum Funding Guarantee disapplication to the Department for Education to ensure primary pupils in former secondary schools are protected at the correct level.

10. Teacher Pay Award 2018

Forum discussed the options available to implement the 2018 School Teachers' Pay Award. Forum were informed that consultation results showed that the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB), found that maintaining teacher supply and the recruitment and retention of school leaders had become more difficult. Consequently, in its 28th report, the STRB recommended an uplift of 3.5% across the board for teachers and school leaders.

However the DfE has not fully accepted this recommendation.

Options for Lewisham

Schools could choose the autonomy proposed by the DfE and create their own range with staff and trade union consultation but on the downside it could prove to be a logistical problem for the authority's payroll to maintain different pay scales for individual schools.

Forum did question however whether any financial modelling has been done to see the effects of any recommendations.

Teacher Pay Grant

This is to cover the amount of the award which is over and above the 1% that the DfE feel schools will have already set aside. The grant will cover the 7 months from September 2018 to March 2019 plus the full 2019/20 financial year.

For mainstream schools, grant allocations will be based on the number of pupils aged between 2 and 19.

For special schools and the PRU, the DfE will allocate funds to the Local Authorities on the basis of place numbers.

Forum were asked to consider whether it would want the allocations to be passported when received or whether it prefer the allocations be held back for consideration at the next meeting. It was agreed that this be considered at the next Forum.

Decision:

Forum agreed the following:-

- To make a recommendation regarding the approach the authority should adopt towards teacher pay spine points between the maxima and minima stipulated by the DfE.

11. Apprenticeship Levy

Forum were informed that as at 31 August 2018, eligible Lewisham schools have contributed approximately £750k into the levy digital account.

Lewisham schools collectively have to work towards creating 224 apprentices by March 2019 in order to meet the public sector target of 2.3% of the workforce.

Discussion was had about the difficulties involved when taking on apprentices alongside teacher redundancies.

Forum were also made aware that since this report had been produced, approval has been obtained from the Executive Director of Resources & Regeneration to join two purchasing frameworks, i.e. Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) and Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO). This will allow both the council and schools to draw down training services in a simple and quality assured way.

Greenwich Council have been set up as a training provider and can offer a range of courses to school staff. Lewisham are looking for an opportunity for Greenwich to come and speak to their leadership teams.

Officers gave assurance that a reminder email will go out in schools mailing encouraging schools to think about what training could be undertaken that would develop staff and give benefit to schools, without significantly impacting on budgets. Schools' HR will be available to receive enquiries and management of the digital account remains with them. In addition the consensus from Forum was to continue

with spine point ranges as Lewisham had done in previous years, as is the case with neighbouring boroughs.

Decision:

Forum agreed the following:-

- To encourage schools to consider training requirements to make effective use of the apprenticeship levy.

12. Catering

Forum were reported on the feedback from the concluded Catering Contract Review.

London Living Wage

The minimum hourly rate i.e. London Living Wage contract has risen to £10.20 and under the terms of the contract, there is an obligation to increase the London Living Wage (LLW) payment each year.

Food Price Increases

This has risen since the beginning of the contract and this along with the recent review has led to an agreement to raise the food element of each meal by 3p.

Contract Review

This review involved a restructure of mobile staff, an improvement in the training available to Unit Managers, an introduction of a new daily checklist, craft training sessions for cooks, improvements to e-learning where the task is now being managed at the Catford office and the records are being stored on line. There has also been a review of the relief team in order to reduce the reliance on agency cover and better communication and engagement with school staff and pupils from senior members of Chartwells who are based at Lewisham. The latter being driven by the need from schools to ensure that their concerns are being met.

Result

Forum were informed that the review is now complete and that a number of ongoing improvements will be continuously monitored. Also the London Living Wage and food price increases has led to a 13p per meal rise in price from September 2018.

Decision:

Forum agreed the following:-

- To note the outcome of the review.

13. Health & Safety Audit

Forum were presented with a report which summarised the Health & Safety activities undertaken by the Authority in 2017/18 and their plans for 2018/19.

Forum were informed that a new Health & Safety Advisor has recently been appointed to the Lewisham team i.e. Edward Farrelly.

Summary and Actions for 2018/19

Action	Date of Action	Evidence of Action/Completion	Any Further Action
Review and send out the new H & S safety self-assessment	Nov 2018	Questionnaires finalised	Follow up after closing date
Carry out onsite audits as per audit programme	ongoing	Audit emails, reports sent to schools	Develop action plan for deficiencies
Health and safety awareness training for Lead Governors	Nov 2017, Feb 2018, June 2018	Training records	Training promotion
Health & Safety training for premises officers and SBMs	Spring term 2019	Improved self-assessment returns.	
Recommend health and safety management training for schools.	ongoing	Schools training records	Continuous monitoring
Supporting schools to develop their H & S policies and ensure the main policy is signed	ongoing	A log of health and safety policies in file and main policy signed	Continuous review
Help schools improve their staff consultation	ongoing	Functional Health and safety committees or other forum	Continuous review
Supporting schools to understand their responsibilities under the COSHH Regulations including having COSHH cupboards for storing chemicals	ongoing	COSHH risk assessments and cupboards in place COSHH in place and chemicals stored safely. COSHH Assessment exemplar template to be provided for schools with training for completing	Continuous review

		assessment	
Supporting schools with PFI.	ongoing	Minutes of schools/PFI meetings	Attend PFI/Schools meetings and give advice
Ensuring schools with Radioactive materials are up to date with their annual checks	ongoing	Schools have completed annual checks	Continuous review
Monitor There and Back Policy and ensure all our EVCs are trained. Create options to cover demise of Wide Horizons	11 Sep 2017	Policy in place	Promote the Policy to schools through schools mailing etc. Engage with Mike Penny. Look at alternative suppliers
Reinforcing procedures for reporting accidents, incidents, dangerous occurrences and work-related ill-health, focussing on RIDDOR reportable incidents and the follow up of investigations, and abuse.	ongoing	Improvement in reported data No late reporting. RIDDORS reported on time Head Teacher school visits.	Continuous review
Reviewing the monitoring of schools statutory compliance.	ongoing	Up to date Records of statutory maintenance in place	Continuous review
Develop a suite of exemplar documents / policies and risk assessments to guide schools	Sep 18 – Jul 2019	These will be released throughout the year and will be available on the Services for Schools portal	
Produce a weekly H&S articles for schools mailing	ongoing from Sep 18	Several articles have already been released	

Notes

Clyde Nursery raised the issue of being audited February 2018 and pending their report. Officers will investigate.

Decision:

Forum agreed the following:-

- To note the contents of the report.

14. Any Other Business

No other business was raised.

Meeting closed 18:30pm.

SCHOOLS FORUM ACTION SUMMARY

ITEM	ACTION TO BE TAKEN	OFFICER (S) RESPONSIBLE	OUTCOME/ CURRENT POSITION
Forum 04 October 2018, Item 5 – Scheme of Delegation	Scheme to be reviewed annually	Officers - Finance	-----
Forum 4 October 2018, Item 6 – Finance Team Support	Finance team capacity issues - update	Selwyn Thompson	For schools forum December 2018
Forum 4 October 2018, Item 7 – Schools Balances Analysis	Procedure note on managing school reserves over the next 3 years	Hayden Judd	Pending