

LEWISHAM SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 22nd June 2017

Membership (Quorum = 40% i.e. 8) ✓ = present ✗ = absent a = apologies
s = substitute

		Attendance				
		06/10	08/12	17/01	16/3	22/6
Primary School Headteachers						
Liz Booth	Dalmain	a	✓	✓	✓	✓
Paul Moriarty	Good Shepherd	✓	✗	✓	a	✓
Michael Roach	John Ball	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Sharon Lynch	St William of York	✓	✓	✓	✓	a
Keith Barr	Kender	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nursery School Headteacher						
Nikki Oldhams	Chelwood	✓	✓	a	✓	✓
Cathryn Kinsey	(Substitute)			s		
Secondary School Headteachers						
Jan Shapiro	Addey & Stanhope	✓	a	✓	✓	a
David Sheppard	Leathersellers Federation	✓	✓	✓	✓	a
Mark Phillips	Deptford Green	✓	✓	a	✓	✗
Ruth Holden	Bonus Pastor	✓	a	a	a	a
Special School Headteacher						
Lynne Haines	Greenvale	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pupil Referral Unit Headteacher						
Dr Liz Jones	Abbey Manor	✓	✓	a	✓	✓
Primary School Governors						
Rosamund Clarke	Perrymount	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dame Erica Pienaar	John Ball	✓	✓	✓	a	✓
Keith Dwan	King Alfred Federation	✓	✗	✓	a	a
Secondary & Special School Governors						
Pat Barber	Bonus Pastor	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
James Pollard	Addey & Stanhope	✓	a	a	a	✓
Ruth Elliot	Watergate	a	✓	✓	✓	✓
Academies						
Declan Jones	Haberdashers' Aske's	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
14-19 Consortium Rep						
Gordon Gillespie	14-19 Consortium	s	✗	a	✗	✗

Early Years - PVI						
Dawn Nasser	Rose House Montessori			✓	✓	✓
Diocesan Authorities						
Sara Sanbrook-Davies	Southwark Diocesan Board of Education		✓	✓	✓	✓
Stephen Bryan	Education Commission – Catholic Diocese Southwark	✓	*	a	a	a
Yvonne Epale	Education Commission – Catholic Diocese Southwark (Substitute)				s	s

Also Present	
Sara Williams	Executive Director CYP
Dave Richards	CYP Group Finance Manager
Hayden Judd	Principal Accountant - Schools
Kate Bond	Head of Standards & Inclusion
Warwick Tomsett	Head of Joint Commissioning & Targeted Services
Nikki Sealy	Early Years Quality & Sufficiency Manager
Ruth Griffiths	14-19 Strategic
Selwyn Thompson	Head of Financial Services
Councillor Paul Maslin	Cabinet Member - CYP
Eddie Dove	Headteacher Marvels Lane
Lea Bonnell	NUT
Janita Aubun	Clerk

1. Apologies and Acceptance of Apologies

Apologies received from Sharon Lynch, Stephen Bryan, Dave Sheppard, Jan Shapiro, Ruth Holden and Keith D'Wan.
Apologies accepted.

Forum informed that Ruth Holden has resigned.

Substitute for Education Commission – Catholic Diocese of Southwark, Yvonne Epale.

2. Declaration of Interests

There were no declaration of interests.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held 16 March 2017

Item 9. Scheme of Delegation, Finance Manual & Forum Terms of Reference – clarified new escalation process timetable for a school that fails to submit a budget plan or budget monitoring return 1 week after deadline. This will require a letter from Kate Bond to the Head and Chair of Governors.

Schools Forum Action Summary – Item 5, Apprenticeship Levy – HR report for Forum to be chased.

Schools Forum Action Summary – Forum were advised that the central calendar which includes key meetings, such as the SAO briefings for example

and deadlines such as the SFVS, has been drawn up, and was circulated in April. Officers will arrange for it to be sent out again.

Minutes were agreed.

4. Matters Arising

No matters arising.

5. Annual Internal Audit Report

Forum were presented with a 2016-17 summary report of the internal audit work in schools.

The findings of the report highlighted the fact that there are recurring issues in governance, assets and procurement. Internal audit informed Forum that in addition to the overall opinion for the whole audit, for the next round of reviews, they will provide an assurance opinion on the main risk areas.

Audit recommended Governors include a review of recommendations as one of their regular agenda items.

Forum also suggested peer review as a key piece of work which could be used to pre-empt audit recommendations.

Decision:

- Report noted.

6. Recording Managed Moves

Forum discussed and reviewed the results produced by the Primary Fair Access Panel on how schools should take a share of managed moves.

Recommendation

- Forum agreed a voluntary code of practice of funding following a managed move between primary schools.
- Agreed that the funding would be based on the AWPU unit and the date of admission. Formula to be circulated to all schools in September.

There was one abstention.

7. DSG End of Year Financial Position

Forum were presented with a report which considered the schools' carry forward position and the final position on the Dedicated School Grant at the end of the financial year.

Schools' Carry Forwards

Year end balances total in schools is £12.4m excluding external funds. This represents a £0.3m increase between end of financial year 2015-16 and 2016-17.

9 secondary schools, 3 primary schools and the pupil referral unit (PRU), had a deficit budget at the end of the financial year 2016-17. Agreed budget recovery plans are in place for 6 of these schools and the other schools are working with the Local Authority to agree plans. Forum considered whether we should extend the loan period to 5 years however the 2015 statutory guidance from the DfE says a maximum 3 years should be given.

Mutual Funds

Non-Sickness Supply are reporting an overspend 2016-17.

Finance and HR Support

Forum were informed of the numerous finance training sessions which have been held and visits to over 60 schools. 50 HR health checks have been completed as well as a number of reorganisation/redundancy consultations being undertaken.

Financial Performance and Compliance

Forum were informed of the notable improvements in the return rates for the SFVS (Schools Financial Value Standard) – 100 % compliance. There are 2 schools with outstanding budget plans but they are in communication with finance about this. Overall there is significant improvement in the quality of and in meeting the earlier deadline for budget submissions.

Loans to Schools

5 loans have been agreed to schools. Loan amounts are credited to the school account and so the school will no longer show a deficit. The school will need to budget for the loan however.

Recommendation

- Noted the balances held by schools.
- Noted the DSG position.
- Agreed to roll forward the mutual fund balances into 2017-18.

8. School Budgets 2017/18 and Financial Update

Submission of Budget Plans

Forum were updated on the budget plan submission position for schools in view of the fact that the deadline has been brought forward to 1st May. 3 schools who have not submitted a plan. 2 of the schools are currently working with the LA and the remaining school has been written to.

Nursery Schools Protection

The Early Years funding reforms have cut the nursery school funding hourly rate from £7.70 to £4.94.

In light of this the Local Authority are proposing the following:-

- 2017/18 – nursery schools funding for statutory hours be protected at £7.70.
Additional Free Hours funded at £4.94.
£100k split equally between the 2 nursery schools.
- 2018/19 – nursery schools funding for statutory hours (as above).
Additional Free Hours (as above).
£50k split equally between the 2 nursery schools.
All subject to DfE proposals.
- 2019/20 – as per 2018/19 proposals, again subject to the DfE.

Growth Fund

Earlier this year Schools Forum made a decision that schools would not receive additional funds for recycling a bulge class. However due to the timing of this decision (i.e. happening after schools had made the decision to recycle), and the fact that the information sent out by the council was not explicit enough, we had no alternative but to top-up funding on a pro-rata basis using schools most recent declaration of Year 6 bulge class numbers. Five schools were affected by this and officers apologised to Forum about the situation. This issue is to be further discussed at the Pupil Placed Planning Admissions Forum.

Schools Financial Package

One of the main finance software providers to schools is undergoing change and this is likely to result in approximately 40 Lewisham schools not having a finance package. Officers are asking that schools work in partnership to see the best way forward and in order to acquire the most suitable replacement package.

Recommendation

Forum agreed the following:-

- To note the position on schools budgets.
- The Nursery School protection allocation.

- The position of the growth fund.
- To consider whether schools should come together to review the future of the finance package used by schools.

9. Schools Finance Support

Forum were presented with a report which looked at the existing support available to schools from the local authority, and considered whether the level of support is appropriate short and medium term, in light of the increasing financial burden and cost pressures.

Budget Pressures

- Significant increase in the number of schools in deficit.
- Impact of the national funding formula and unfunded cost pressures over the next 3 years.

Schools Finance Support Team

Support is offered directly to schools and also through a service level agreement (SLA). The Finance Support Team comprises of 3 officers (principal accountant, accountant and assistant accountant), and is managed by a finance manager.

Forum were informed that the Finance Team is small in comparison with other boroughs, but there is not a great deal of evidence on benchmarking of costs.

Forum were also advised that finance support for Lewisham schools is challenging and unique as schools can use a number of different software systems.

In recognition of the problems faced, a principal accountant has been appointed short-term till end July and an additional two staff are to be recruited for 12 months fixed term, pending any finance review 2018/19 and 2019/20.

Forum looked at the income level generated and considered the future of the Service Level Agreement.

Decision

- Report noted.

10. Early Years Sub Group Report

Schools Forum were updated on the progress surrounding the implementation of the 30 hrs free childcare for working parents, which commences September 2017.

Childcare Choices – The Childcare Service System

This system is now in operation for parents with children up to the age of 4 who want to access the funded childcare entitlement from September. Lewisham have received 350 applications so far and a web services system will be used which will allow providers to submit codes initially via the portal to check eligibility themselves. The software for this system has been installed and tested and further details on this will be provided in the next schools mailing.

Early Years Partnership Board

The sub group met this afternoon and considered the terms of reference and make-up of the Early Years Partnership Board.

Recommendation

Forum agreed the following:-

- That there should be a review of the agreed charge that a maintained provision should make for any additional purchased hours and that schools should consider which of the charges shown, should apply:-

Basic rate as provided by the new Early Years Funding formula = £4.94 per hr

Rate increase of 56p per hr = £5.50 per hr

Rate increase of £1.06 per hr = £6.00 per hr

The result of the consultation to be brought back to the next schools forum meeting and if agreed will be taken to mayor and cabinet with the recommendation.

11. Any Other Business

This is the last Forum meeting for Dr Liz Jones – Abbey Manor College, who will be leaving Lewisham. Forum congratulated her for her contribution and wished her well for the future.

No other business was raised.

Meeting closed 18.15pm.

Date of next meeting:-

05 October 2017 4.30 to 6.30pm

SCHOOLS FORUM ACTION SUMMARY

ITEM	ACTION TO BE TAKEN	OFFICER (S) RESPONSIBLE	OUTCOME/ CURRENT POSITION
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Sub Group Membership March 2016	Add Secondary Head to Formula Consultation Task Group	Ruth Holden	TBC
Forum 16 March 2017, Item 5 – Apprenticeship Levy	Report to Schools Forum	Diane Parkhouse	Outstanding
Forum 22 June 2017 – Item 10 – Early Years Sub Group Report	Early Years Standard Charging Rate Consultation result to be brought back to Forum	Warwick Tomsett/Nikki Sealy	TBC