

**Meeting of the Schools Forum**

**Monday 10 October 2011**

***(4.00 pm, Sapphire Room, The Emerald Suite, NLBP)***

**Attended**

- Members:
- Jane Chew (St Margaret's Nursery)
  - Susan Convery (Head, Whittings Hill)
  - Shelley Dannell (Head, Pavilion Pupil Referral Unit)
  - Paul Ferrie (Head, Ravenscroft)
  - Patricia French (Governor, St Mary's High)
  - Kim Garrod (Governor, Church Hill Primary School)
  - Jenny Gridley (Head, Oakleigh)
  - Gilbert Knight (Governor, Oakleigh)
  - Janet McIntyre (Chair, Christ Church)
  - Seamus McKenna (Head, Finchley Catholic)
  - Keith Murdoch (Principal, Woodhouse College)
  - Clare Neuberger (Head, Menorah Foundation)
  - Geoffrey Thompson (Head, Mill Hill High)
  - Angela Trigg (Principal, London Academy)
  - Jeremy Turner (Head, Friern Barnet)
  - Anthony Vourou (Governor, St John's N11)
  - Kate Webster (Head, QE Girls)
- LA Officers:
- Nick Adams (Schools Finance Services Manager)
  - Carol Beckman (School Funding Manager)
  - Anisa Darr (Finance Manager)
  - Brian Davis (Principal Education Psychologist)
  - Robert McCulloch-Graham (Director of Children's Service)
  - Mick Quigley (Assistant Director Schools and Learning)
  - Val White (Assistant Director, PPP)
  - Keith Nason (NUT)
- Consultant:
- Geoff Boyd (Independent Consultant)
- Clerk:
- Mark Callaghan (School Resources and Support Officer)

**Not Present**

- Members:
- Jeanette Adak (Head, Monkfrith)
  - Tim Bowden (Head, Holy Trinity)
  - Catrin Dillon (Governor, Martin Primary)
  - Jayne Franklin (Head, Childs Hill)
  - Sally Lajalati (Head, Collindale)
  - Andrew Macalpine (Governor, Hendon School)
  - Dee Oelman (Head, St Mary's & St John's)
  - Elizabeth Pearson (Governor, Livingstone)
  - Helen Schmitz (Head, Cromer Road)
  - Michael Whitworth (Principal, Wren Academy)
  - Sarah Vipond (Early Years Working Group)
- LA Officers:
- Kerry-Anne Smith (Joint Head of Finance Children's & Adults)
  - Andrew Travers (Deputy Chief Executive)
- Other:
- Cllr Andrew Harper (Cabinet Member for Education, Children & Families)

<b>1. Welcome and apologies for absence</b>	
Apologies for absence were received from Jeanette Adak, Tim Bowden, Catrin Dillon, Sally Lajalati, Dee Oelman, Liz Pearson, Helen Schmitz, Kerry-Anne Smith and Sarah Vipond.	
GK welcomed new members Janet McIntyre, Susan Convery, Sally Lajalati and Jeremy Turner to the Forum.	
GK advised that Keith Nason from NUT is in attendance at the meeting to represent unions until a union member is appointed to replace Alan Homes.	
<b>2. Election of Chair and Vice Chair</b>	
CB explained the procedure for election of Chair and Vice-chair to the group.	
RMG requested nominations for Chair. KG nominated GK, seconded by AV. GK accepted the nomination for the position of Chair and was elected unopposed.	
GK requested nominations for vice chair. KW nominated PF, seconded by AT. PF accepted the nomination for the position of Vice-Chair and was elected unopposed.	
<b>3. Declarations of Interest</b>	
No declarations were received.	
<b>4. Minutes of previous meeting: 14 July 2011</b>	
The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.	
<b>5. Matters arising (not occurring elsewhere on the agenda)</b>	
No issues were raised.	
<b>6 Actions from previous meeting</b>	
GK updated the Forum on actions from the previous meeting:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A letter of thanks to Linda Parker for her contribution on the Schools Forum was sent from GK on 7 October 2011.</li> <li>• The first Schools Forum training session took place on 20 October 2011 and a second session has been scheduled for 21 November 2011. GK thanked the local authority for arranging the training, noting that feedback from the first session was excellent.</li> <li>• MC emailed the Forum the link to the page of the website where information on school contracts is held.</li> <li>• There is now one Free School in Barnet and the Terms of Reference will be amended to reflect this.</li> </ul>	

## 7 ITEMS FOR DECISION

### 7.1 Schools Budget 2011/12 – distribution of additional funding

Carol Beckman

CB explained that the additional funding of £1.6m has resulted from a change in the way the number of three year olds is calculated by the DfE and is money that the local authority did not expect to receive. The local authority was notified about the additional funding the day before the July meeting. It was therefore not possible to take options to the last meeting.

CB presented an options paper to the Forum for the inclusion of the additional funding into the Schools Budget, clarifying that the sum is not sufficient to avoid a breach of the CEL for 2011/12.

If the money is placed into the contingency fund (option A), this may result in the DfE top-slicing some of the money in 2012/13 for academy funding. In a letter received by the local authority last week from the DfE, it was announced that recoupment for academies through the LACSEG will now include the contingency line. Barnet intends to appeal this as, in Barnet, academies can access funding for services provided from the contingency fund such as SEN and new school places. Option B shares the money between the centrally retained budget and the Individual Schools Budget (ISB) and option C delegates all of the funding to the ISB.

CB summarised the distribution methods for the funding if options B or C are preferred. Although the money generated was associated with the 'three year old top-up', it would not be fair to allocate it all to the nursery sector as the money was originally divided without reference to the source of income.

GK stated that when this was discussed previously it was agreed that any excess funding should be distributed to schools, therefore option C would seem the most appropriate. GT stated that the funding should be distributed in the same way as it would have if it had been included in the original budget allocation. CB clarified that option 1 is the closest measure to this i.e. the AWPU.

GK asked the group to vote to indicate how the Forum felt the additional funding should be included in the Schools Budget:

Option A: 0 votes  
Option B: 0 votes  
Option C: 16 votes

GK asked the group to vote to indicate which distribution method within the ISB was preferred by the Forum:

Option 1: 14  
Option 2: 0  
Option 3: 2  
Option 4: 0

The Forum favoured Option C to delegate all of the additional funding into the ISB via distribution method 1.

## **8 ITEMS FOR CONSULTATION**

### **8.1 Barnet funding formula consultation**

**Carol Beckman**

CB presented an addendum to a consultation report issued the previous week, which highlighted the changes for schools and re-phrased the final questions of the consultation to improve clarity.

The paper was presented to the Forum for approval to proceed with the consultation with all schools. It was not for decision about the individual proposals at this stage. The consultation presents options to bring Barnet's funding formula a step closer to the centralised funding model which the government is moving towards.

RMG advised that he is on the Task and Finish group alongside Children's Service Directors from other local authorities. The government's current intention is for a new funding agency to replace the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) and it is likely that this will be part of the DfE. Children's Service Directors on the group have been arguing for some degree of local determination and that the Schools Forum would be the appropriate way to provide this.

VW attended the last meeting of the Task and Finish Group and stated that Schools Forums will still very much be in the picture in 2012. The proposals for changes to Barnet's funding formula for next year paper is a step towards simplification. Schools and the local authority should view 2012/13 as a transition year with the aim of simplifying a formula which currently has a large number of funding factors.

CB summarised the proposals in the paper advising that the consultation will be issued to all Barnet schools. The proposals in the first 6 questions are straight forward. There were no comments from the Forum on these proposals.

Questions seven and eight relate to Standards Funds which equate to about £30m of the ISB. This is complicated as many of the Standards Funds are aimed at sixth form students and continuing to fund schools on this basis would mean that those with sixth forms would receive this in addition to their YPLA funding. At this stage it is not proposed to remove this element. Similarly former standards funds benefit nursery classes over private early years providers. This again is an issue which will need resolving at a later stage with the advice of the DfE

PFR asked what the column titled Post LIG refers to in the spreadsheet distributed. CB advised that this was the Leadership Incentive Grant, an historic grant.

CB explained that the Transition column of the spreadsheet displays the amount of money that would be required to add or subtract to bring each school budget within plus or minus £1000 of the current 2011/12 former standards funds budget.

CB clarified that the Forum was being asked if the Forum is happy for the consultation to be issued to all Barnet's schools this week.

PF asked for clarification that the proposals would be implemented in the 2012/13 schools budget. CB confirmed that this is correct, but that the former Standards Funds will be restated in 2011/12 so that schools will be able to see how their allocation would have been calculated under the new formula.

JM asked for clarification that where the Standards Funds Transition column on the spreadsheet is negative the school will eventually be slightly better off than now. CB confirmed that this is the case.

PF noted that a 4 week consultation period was short as half-term occurred within the period. CB said a longer period would be desirable, but is not possible as the results need to be collated and published in advance of the next Forum meeting.

GK asked the Forum members whether they were happy to approve the proposals.

All Forum members agreed in favour of the consultation going ahead as presented.

## 8.2 Children's Service budget proposals for 2012/13 – informal consultation

Val White

VW briefed the Forum on the Children's Service budget proposals for 2012/13 advising that an informal consultation period has now started. In 2011/12 the Children's Service reduced its budget by £6.4m and made an investment of £2.5m. The budget savings for 2012/13 will be £1.044m and are the same as proposed in the medium-term financial strategy published last year. The budget report will go to cabinet in November 2011, followed by a formal consultation. A report will then come back to the Schools Forum.

VW summarised the key savings areas:

1. Further savings in youth services of £500K. This is in addition to the large saving made last year. The aim is to move towards being an enabler of services with a reduction in the local authority's role as a direct provider of services. The local authority is also looking at investing to support the voluntary sector and other providers through for example, a shared equipment store and administering CRB checks for voluntary organisations.
2. A reduction of £100k in the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) commissioning budget.
3. Corporate parenting support savings of £100K by reconfiguring back office services.
4. Adoption allowances savings of £110K. This will be achieved by making sure all payments are reviewed to ensure that they are correct as well as looking at allowances for new adopters.

AT asked whether any work has been done on the impact of the cuts from the 2011/12 budget. VW advised that work is being done to assess impact but it is too early yet to see any impact through performance indicators etc. KW raised concern that the cut in the CAMHS budget is contrary to the early intervention strategy advocated by the borough last year. RMG advised that reductions in funding may also have to come from the Primary Care Trust's budget. They currently jointly fund CAMHS services.

KW stated that her school has had a level of service taken away without being informed what will replace it. VW stated that some CAMHS services historically funded through early intervention and prevention funding are being de-commissioned as the service was not successful in a recent commissioning round of tendering.

KW asked where the route is into CAMHS provision for schools and how do schools make sure that they are getting best value for money. There are occasions where a headteacher is informed that CAMHS will not be available for six weeks when they know that the child in question will do something in that time which could lead to permanent exclusion. BD explained that there is a clear link between CAMHS and schools and the relationship between the local authority and CAMHS is currently undergoing a restructure, the local authority is looking at improving and reshaping services along evidence based lines. In response to a concern about schools purchasing CAMHS services, BD confirmed that schools have always had the option to buy into CAMHS services directly.

RMG advised that funding for CAMHS has always been a partnership with the PCT and the arrangements about which partner pays for which element varies between different local authorities. The council has to reduce its budgets in excess of 25 percent over four years. RMG reported that questions around reducing funding for early intervention are being raised increasingly frequently, but most children's services are early intervention. There are significant pressures on statutory services, the Children's Service recently had to employ extra social work support in order to fulfil child protection plans. RMG noted the local authority and schools share the responsibility for looking after Barnet's children and that for the meanwhile, schools funding is being protected nationally. Although there is a £1m cut in the Children's Service budget for 2012/13, the local authority is doing everything it can to minimise the impact of cuts. It is important to prepare for budget cuts and look at how economies of scale can be utilised to improve provision via cross service working.

KN asked whether the £100K reduction in the CAMHS is coming out of the local authority or the PCT element of the budget and whether any local authority cuts are being made with the knowledge of what the PCT will do. VW advised that we now have a shared post occupied by Vivienne Stimpson, with the PCT so the working relationship and information sharing on budget pressures and savings is improving.

PF stated that we now have an opportunity in terms of reshaping services to involve partners six months in advance to ensure that the best provision is available, whereas last year the main concern was around job losses. RMG noted that PF's comments were very helpful and encouraging. A group of headteachers has been convened to act as a think-tank to work with the Director and Assistant Director on a number of policy issues.

## **9. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

### **9.1 DfE funding consultation**

**Carol Beckman**

CB noted that this was summarised by RMG in item 8.1. The consultation consists of 46 questions and in places is complex and unclear. Cllr Harper has had input into the local authority response and members of the forum have had access to the consultation for some time. CB asked the Forum if they would like to submit a joint return with the local authority or would prefer to submit their own.

GK stated that a query was raised at the Forum pre-meeting regarding question 33 around determining which pupils have high needs. GB advised the Forum that the build-up to the local authority response has had political input so the Forum may wish to modify their response in relation to the high needs block. The suggestion of formula funding for the high needs block in the consultation may be detrimental to an area such as Barnet that has historically put a lot of work and resources into high needs and has educated residents who expect continuing levels of provision.

The Forum agreed to make a joint submission with the local authority with an additional comment on question 33 that historical investment into high need should be taken into account.

**Action: GB to send an addendum to the consultation response by 11 October. VW to forward this to Cllr Harper for approval before the consultation response is submitted.**

### **9.2 Schools Financial Value Standard**

**Nick Adams**

NA presented a paper for information on the new Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS). Following DfE consultation, it is proposed that the new SFVS with 23 questions is conducted annually and replaces the old version which had 103 questions and was conducted every three years. There will be no external assessment of the standard and schools should use it for internal evaluation with the expectation of year on year improvement in question responses. It can also potentially be used to advise audit processes. NA is running one hour training sessions on completing the new SFVS and invited questions from the Forum.

AV requested clarification that it is encouraged rather than compulsory for schools for 2011/12. NA confirmed that it is a requirement for 2012/13 but a number of schools are going to complete it for 2011/12 which will be useful to identify any difficulties

SM asked what happens after the reports are lodged with the local authority. NA advised that the local authority will only come back to the school if it is not completed properly. The SFVS is for the benefit of the schools more than the local authority.

### **9.3 Funding of Redundancies in Schools**

**Deborah Shaw**

VW introduced Deborah Shaw (DS) who was in attendance from Human Resources. The aim of the procedure presented is to provide clarity around the relationship between local authorities and schools regarding redundancies and the practice which has developed historically. The paper is informed by legal advice and guidance over the last year and sets out the legal criteria for redundancy payments. The local authority is trying to avoid redundancies at all costs and wishes schools to adopt the same practice. The paper provides guidance on managing change and the criteria for referral to the Deputy Chief Executive.

DS invited questions from the Forum. KN asked whether schools have to bear the pension costs for teachers aged over 55 and that the local authority is only eligible for the severance cost. DS confirmed this is the case and is stated clearly in section 37. There are some exceptions which are listed in the procedure, for example, school closures.

KN asked whether part of the money being used for redundancies could be used to support redeployment of the teacher to another school. DS stated that technically, there is no reason why not and the purpose of any consultation is to avoid redundancy.

PF asked how this information will be cascaded to schools. VW advised that schools will be notified via the School Circular and the procedure will be valid from November.

**Action: DS to insert item in school circular.**

**9.4 Capital**

**Val White**

VW advised that capital funding for £500m for pupil places has been announced, and the government is looking at the net capacity of schools as a distribution methodology. Barnet has already done work to update data on net capacity.

VW updated the Forum on the priority schools program. The Private Finance Initiative (PFI) is a successor to BSF and is open to all schools, as well as academies which can make their own applications. Cromer Road and Pardes House are the only two schools making applications. VW advised the Forum that schools with successful bids will be making a 25 year commitment to pay service costs. Any school participating will have to sign a strict undertaking agreeing to meet their element of costs associated with PFI.

**8 Any Other Business**

No items raised.

Meeting closed at 17:27

**Dates for future meetings**

7 December 2011	4.00pm
1 February 2012	4.00pm
1 May 2012	4.00pm
12 July 2012	4.00pm