

## Meeting of the Schools Forum

**Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2010**

***(4.00 pm, Training Room 7, Building 2 NLBP)***

**Attended**

- Members:
- Helen Schmitz (Head, Cromer Road)
  - Jenny Gridley (Head, Oakleigh)
  - Jo Djora (Head, Coppetts Wood)
  - Gilbert Knight (Governor, Oakleigh)
  - Jayne Franklin (Head, Childs Hill)
  - Jeanette Adak (Head, Monkfrith)
  - John Marincowitz (Head, QE Boys)
  - Johnathan Hewlings (Governor, East Barnet)
  - Kate Webster (Head QE Girls)
  - Keith Murdoch (Principal, Woodhouse College)
  - Ken Huggins (Governor, The Compton)
  - Lisa Clarke (Head, Brookhill Nursery)
  - Mick Quigley (Principal Inspector, Children's Service)
  - Stephen Parkin (Governor, St Mary's High)
  - Tim Bowden (Head, Holy Trinity)
- LA Officers:
- Carol Beckman (School Funding Manager)
  - Denise Murray (Strategic Finance Manager)
  - Graham Durham (Assistant Director, Inclusion)
  - Linda Parker (Strategic Finance Manager)
  - Nick Adams (Finance Manager)
  - Robert McCulloch Graham (Director of Children's Service)
  - Val White (Assistant Director, PPP)
  - Andrew Travers (Deputy Chief Executive)
  - Chris Malyon (Assistant Director of Finance)
  - Colin Attree (Head of Procurement)
  - Louise Bird (BDO – Financial Adviser)
- Consultant:
- Geoff Boyd
- Clerk:
- Sarrosch Malik (School Resources and Support Officer)

**Not Present**

- Members:
- Anthony Vourou (Governor, St John's N11)
  - Gary Tucker (Head, Christ's College Finchley)
  - Hazel Godfrey (Governor, Broadfields)
  - Angela Murphy (Head, Bishop Douglass)
  - Derrick Brown (Governor, Ashmole)
  - Dee Oelman (Head, St Mary's & St John's)
  - Sarah Vipond (Early Years Working Group)
  - Alan Homes (NASUWT)
  - Elizabeth Pearson (Governor, Livingstone)
  - Clare Neuberger (Head, Menorah Foundation)
- Others:
- Angela Trigg (London Academy)
  - Cllr Andrew Harper
  - Elaine Runswick (16-18 Commissioning Board)

Lucy Salaman (LSC Partnership Manager)

## **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Harper, Gary Tucker, Sarah Vipond, Elaine Runswick, Derrick Brown, Dee Oelman, Angela Murphy and Clare Neuberger.

## **2. Minutes of previous meeting (2<sup>nd</sup> February 2010)**

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

## **3. Matters Arising**

Minute 4.1 – Contracts

The margin added onto the market rate for the Heating Oil contract is 2.17p and not 217p as stated at the last Schools Forum.

Minute 4.4 – Disadvantaged Subsidy

TB commented on the positive impact of the new grant.

Minute 4.6 – Cashless Systems

JA asked if there had been a feasibility study. VW has met with Teresa Goodall to explore developing a pilot scheme for a primary school. TB added that the money would be best used to support small primary schools. VW explained that the use of the underspend for this small project is still open to discussion.

### **Items for Consultation**

The Chair suggested that item 1 – Building Schools for the Future - should be moved to the end of the agenda, but that a full half-hour would be put aside for discussion. This was agreed.

## **5 2009/10 Dedicated Schools Grant outturn – centrally retained budget**

LP introduced the report. She explained that the final figure is an underspend of £995,400 with the breakdown shown in the report. LP asked for the Schools Forum's view on the use of the rolled forward underspend from 2009/10.

TB suggested that a portion of the underspend could be used towards the cashless system. VW said that the LA will look at the cost of the pilot scheme in primary schools and bring back a report to the Forum.

KW mentioned that the BSF programme seems far from certain. RMG explained that the condition of schools and rebuilding them is known. A lot of investment has already been put in and there is a view that the further we continue in to the programme the more chance of us getting the grant. The full cost of improving the school estate would cost approx £300m. The Schools Forum unanimously agreed to endorse the proposal on the use of the underspend. RMG clarified to the Schools Forum that they are being asked for their view and not endorsement.

## **6 2010/11 schools budget including YPLA funding**

LP introduced the paper to the Schools Forum. She told the members that the DfE would be confirming pupils numbers in the DSG at the end of this month. She added that confirmation has been received of funding from the YPLA. The supplementary sheet distributed showed the breakdown of the Schools Budget.

## **7 Standards Funds 2010/11**

### **Grant 1.5 – One-to-one Tuition in Barnet – 2010/11**

MQ went over the report showing distribution of Grant 1.5 (One-to-one tuition). He explained to the members that last year there was debate around the basic entitlement element of the funding. He said that some schools had found it difficult to manage last year and use all funding.

This year there are two options. The LA recommend option A which includes a basic entitlement. CB added that if the members agree at today's meeting then the allocations can be given very quickly.

Proposer: TB

Seconder: JH

The Schools Forum unanimously supported the implementation of Option A.

### **Other Standards Funds for 2010/11**

CB explained that the table is for information. CB asked the Schools Forum's view on Grant 1.2 (School Lunch Grant) being distributed in the same was as last year.

The Schools Forum unanimously supported the LA's recommendation.

## **8 Consultation on Dedicated Schools Grant 2011-13**

CB delivered a PowerPoint presentation clarifying the DFE's proposed elements of a new formula to calculate each LA's DSG and plans to mainstream most specific grants into the DSG. A response to the consultation is being prepared and the Schools Forum can submit their own version to the DFE if they wish.

JM thanked Carol for the presentation and asked the LA officers for their response.

Andrew Travers explained to the Schools Forum that the economic situation of the country is worse than first thought. The previous Government was protecting schools and health but putting pressure on other services. The new Government will be announcing the emergency budget at the end of the month. 80% of the total savings will come from efficiencies/spending cuts and 20% from increase in taxes. The new government has shown commitment to protect the Health Service but there is no news about schools.

He explained that Barnet is trying to form a strategic response so all budgets in Barnet are used in the most efficient way. He said that flexibility needs to be maximised in Barnet by working around ring fencing. He added that there is less need to look at changes in the funding formula than to be looking at cuts and how to manage.

RMG told the Schools Forum that discussions have already started with all services. The LA is going in the direction of utilising schools more than now and this will also be better for families. Partnerships need to be formed quicker to save money.

JM raised his concern that schools may be left with few options when it comes to looking at funding streams and legislation to schools.

## **9 School Balances, DFE Guidance, Barnet Schools Outturn 2009/10**

NA explained the report to the Schools Forum.

JH mentioned that the DFE and Ofsted calculate balances by different methods. SP asked what the total was for all schools. NA said he will bring both sets of figures to the next meeting.

## **10 Contract Standing Orders for Schools**

NA presented the paper to the Schools Forum. He said that these were last looked at in 2000. There is currently a small working group looking at this and helping schools to achieve value for money.

## **11 Contracts Affecting Schools**

CB explained that the table presented contracts that are going to expire and simply gives the Schools Forum advance notice.

## **12 Early Years Funding Formula**

CB presented the progress report to the Schools Forum. She said that they were still working on the final funding formula for April 2011. She added that Sheila Abbott has been doing a lot of work to ensure all settings will be providing 15hours from September 2010 to all children who want it.

## **4 Building Schools For the Future**

RMG led the discussion surrounding the BSF programme and the paper. He said that there are currently some of the most outstanding schools and buildings in the borough, however there are also some of the worst. He said that the £80m from the BSF programme was only going to make a dent in the £350m investment. Referring to the funding strategy he said that the LA need to position themselves to get Barnet in the best place. The LA proposes that we keep moving towards a solution and we will know more when the government's emergency budget is announced. He added that the work undertaken to date puts Barnet in a good position.

VW explained that there is a strategy for meeting the affordability gap at each of the three stages. VW and DM explained the funding strategies. SP asked how Stage 2 was calculated. DM replied that it was based on amount of investment from the school. KW asked how many years that would be over. VW explained that one PFI scheme is needed to attract investors. She added that a 10-25year commitment would be needed to pay for facilities management, which could be unaffordable for the school.

DM said that it represents a renewal of assets. She explained that she has looked at indicative budgets of schools to see if the schools will be under pressure. LA will work out affordability. SP asked for a breakdown of what all schools will be expected to pay. DM agreed and also confirmed that currently all figures are indicative.

JM asked Andrew Travers if he had anything to add. AT clarified to the Schools Forum that the plan will not work out as was initially thought. There are going to be more money cuts in capital. Even if the programme were agreed it would be done in a different way. He expected that PFIs and LEPs will disappear but that the report is good as the principles can still be applied.

JM thanked Andrew Travers. JD asked if there was any contingency built in. DM said yes it is, however the main concern is about the PFI school. Agreement is needed on what support would be provided.

JM explained that it may be wise to be cautious as it is controversial timing. Andrew Travers added that there would be clarity after the emergency budget at the end of the month and spending review in Autumn. He said that the context may change but the principle should stay. Schools should work together to rebuild estate.

RMG mentioned to the members that they can decide subject to more information. That way it will help the LA to react quickly.

GK asked what the council's attitude towards PFI is. DM said that Barnet currently have a street lighting PFI. Louise Bird said that PFI does get a bad press however there have been improvements. VW asked the members to consider whether the school should fund a high cost PFI or whether the school community should help. KW asked if the £200k would be the same amount annually or would it increase. VW replied that the LA assume it would stay constant. JM added that it was a big ask for the Schools Forum to commit to.

Andrew Travers advised the members that if the Government make any resource available then we should take it. The investment would benefit the whole Barnet community The LA have made significant contribution up until now by using every possible pot of money. DM explained that it is not possible for the LA to contain the full cost and therefore we need to create a strategy which incorporates the school community.

RMG told the Schools Forum that if the LA does not accept Government funding then we would need to find money from somewhere else. This funding will give us a step forward to get to all schools.

JM said that the Heads attending today would need to talk to other Heads. JF added that a consultation paper would be helpful. VW explained that the next deadline is 11<sup>th</sup> August so the process needs to start now. MQ mentioned that the discussion could be held at the Primary Heads meeting in June. JM said that a breakfast meeting could be held for Secondary Heads. KW asked for the papers to be sent well in advance. SP requested papers to be sent to Governors as well.

## **6 Any Other Business**

SP made a proposal to change the term for membership of the Schools Forum from two to three years.

## **8. Dates of future meetings**

Tues 13 <sup>th</sup> July 2010	4.30pm (with briefing at 4pm)
Tues 5 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2010	4.30pm (with briefing at 4pm)
Tues 7 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2010	4.30pm (with briefing at 4pm)
Tues 1 <sup>st</sup> Feb 2011	4.30pm (with briefing at 4pm)
Tues 10 <sup>th</sup> May 2011	4.30pm (with briefing at 4pm)
Tues 12 <sup>th</sup> July 2011	4.30pm (with briefing at 4pm)