

Meeting of the Schools Forum

Wednesday 1 February 2012

(4.00 pm, Conference Room 1, NLBP)

<u>Attended</u>	Members:	<p>Tim Bowden (Head, Holy Trinity) Jane Chew (St Margaret's Nursery) Shelley Dannell (Head, Pavilion Pupil Referral Unit) Paul Ferrie (Head, The Totteridge Academy) Patricia French (Governor, St Mary's High) Kim Garrod (Governor, Church Hill Primary School) Alison Gould (substitute for Catrin Dillon (Governor, Martin Primary)) Jenny Gridley (Head, Oakleigh) Gilbert Knight (Governor, Oakleigh) Sally Lajalati (Head, Collindale) Janet McIntyre (Chair, Christ Church) Keith Nason (NUT) Clare Neuberger (Head, Menorah Foundation) Dee Oelman (Head, St Mary's & St John's) Elizabeth Pearson (Governor, Livingstone) Angela Trigg (Principal, London Academy) Jeremy Turner (Head, Friern Barnet) Kate Webster (Head, QE Girls)</p>
	LA Officers:	<p>Carol Beckman (School Funding Manager) Anisa Darr (Finance Manager, LBB) Claire Gray (Deputy School Funding Manager) Robert McCulloch-Graham (Director of Children's Service) Zahid Parvez (Business Consultant) Kerry-Anne Smith (Head of Finance Children's & Adults) Val White (Assistant Director, PPP) Stav Yiannou (BRSI Manager)</p>
	Consultant:	<p>Geoff Boyd (Independent Consultant)</p>
	Observers:	<p>Maggi Myland (Barnet UNISON) Louis Smyth (Assistant Branch Secretary of Barnet UNISON)</p>
	Clerk:	<p>Mark Callaghan (School Resources and Support Officer)</p>
<u>Not Present</u>	Members:	<p>Jeanette Adak (Head, Monkfrith) Susan Convery (Head, Whitings Hill) Jayne Franklin (Head, Childs Hill) Seamus McKenna (Head, Finchley Catholic) Keith Murdoch (Principal, Woodhouse College) Helen Schmitz (Head, Cromer Road) Geoffrey Thompson (Head, Mill Hill High) Sarah Vipond (Early Years Working Group) Anthony Vourou (Governor, St John's N11) Michael Whitworth (Principal, Wren Academy)</p>

1. Welcome and apologies for absence	
Apologies were received from Jeanette Adak, Cllr Andrew Harper, Seamus McKenna, Keith Murdoch, Helen Schmitz, Sarah Vipond, Anthony Vourou and Mick Quigley.	
GK advised that items 7.1 and 7.3 on the agenda will be considered prior to item 6.1 as they will inform the discussion on the schools budget.	
2. Declarations of Interest	
GK declared an interest in item 6.4 in his capacity as Chair of governors at Oakleigh. He advised that he will step down as Chair of the Forum for this item. JG declared an interest in item 6.4 in her capacity as headteacher at Oakleigh.	
3. Minutes of previous meeting: 7 December 2011	
KN advised that he was incorrectly recorded as an interim member in the membership list and questioned why he is listed as a stakeholder rather than a member. CB advised that the membership is divided into school members and stakeholder representative members, and as the Union representative he should sit in the stakeholder section.	
Janet McIntyre advised that she was incorrectly recorded as present at last meeting which she did not attend.	
Action: MC to amend the membership list and minutes of the previous meeting accordingly.	
4. Matters arising (not occurring elsewhere on the agenda)	
No issues were raised.	
5. Actions from previous meeting	
Item 6.2 – LA to email variations of Option Two to members sufficiently in advance of the February meeting to allow email consultation. CB advised that this had been delayed due to the Christmas break, however, the paper presented to the Forum was circulated to primary headteachers prior to the meeting. To be discussed in item 6.3 of the February meeting.	
Item 7.1 – Council Budget consultation analysis to include a breakdown of respondent groups. VW advised that the consultation has not yet been published or been submitted to cabinet, but a breakdown will be provided to the Forum in due course. VW confirmed that the consultation content picks up feedback from the consultation with headteachers around Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).	
6 ITEMS FOR DECISION	
7.3 Family Focus and Community Budget	Jay Mercer
JM delivered a presentation to the Forum on Family Focus and the Community Budget, updating members on the presentation given last year. Item 7.3 was heard prior to item 6.2 to feed into the group's discussion on the DSG.	
The presentation highlighted that Barnet is one of the first 16 areas in the country to setup a community budget which has developed the Family Focus Programme, a combination of intervention measures for Tier Two, Three and Four families. JM explained the triangle of need and the business process for working with families. There is no fixed timescale for progression through the system, however, an average period of intensive assistance would be twelve months. One of the unique benefits of the programme is the use of Family Focus Workers who are not qualified social workers, which allows access to families traditionally reluctant to engage with Social Care.	
JM presented scores for the first cohort of families in the programme measured against the Home Office's "Resolving Chaos" index with 48 different categories. Estimated costs for the initial cohort of families without intervention were £1.65m per year.	
The intensive programme is now expanding with contributions from other community agencies targeting 54 families and 278 individuals. The key issue for success is data sharing and multi-agency governance.	
JM explained the government's new Troubled Families initiative with an estimated 705 families in Barnet likely to meet the intervention criteria. The local authority's role will be to verify the level of need and make planned interventions by 2015. This work will be co-ordinated by the appointment of a Troubled Families Manager. If Barnet hits the required criteria for intervention then it will receive back 40% of the	

investment. Schools can play a key role in this work.

It is proposed to continue to contribute the £450,000 towards this out of the DSG, which was originally for Extended Schools Co-ordinators and now equates to 4 Multi-Agency Co-ordinators. An additional £177,000 continues to be linked to the Safer Families Project intervention to prevent Domestic Violence. This totals £627,000, which it is hoped will be eligible for government match funding of 40%.

KW asked whether there are national guidelines for the proportion of investment contributed by each agency, noting that the contribution from police is small in relation to some of the other agencies. JM advised that the police were very proactive in ensuring that Community Safety grant money of £330,000 was used for this purpose. This highlights a difficulty when developing community budgets for central government initiatives as when attempting to engage local arms of organisations, it is much more difficult to persuade local managers to become involved.

RMG stated that through the Children's Trust Board the Council's growth funding totalling £1m, along with contributions from other budgets as outlined by JM, has been invested, into intervention for Tiers Two, Three and Four which has led to projected savings of more than £2m over the next two years. RMG explained that it is at the Children's Trust Board that investment levels are outlined. This is investment to provide future savings that will allow the continuation of early intervention work which would otherwise not be possible. The continuation of this work benefits schools by working with troubled families in the local community. RMG provided an example of such practical results where the intervention with one of the initial cohort families has led to three children no longer being in care, with an annual saving of £150,000.

PF requested further clarification regarding which budget lines the £627,000 investment from schools comes from. KAS explained that the £627,000 is a subset of line 1.2.8 and forms part of the £907,000 total for this line. PF asked how this compares to the contribution from the DSG last year. KAS advised that this is the same amount contributed in 2010/11. RMG added that there will be no impact to the schools budget by contributing the £627,000, but hopefully the investment will lead to future budget savings.

6.1 2011/12 Dedicated Schools Grant

Kerry-Anne Smith

CB advised the group that the spreadsheets circulated and tabled at the meeting replace the budget tables in items 6.1 and 6.2 of the papers.

KAS presented the budget paper on the 2011/12 DSG to the group and advised that the updated spreadsheets contain greater detail around recoupment. There are no differences in the centrally retained budget lines.

There is currently a projected underspend of £656,000, against a reported underspend of £287,000 at month six. The main variances are on the SEN lines:

- a reduction in SEN pupil costs
- increased underspend on inter-authority recoupment from £46,000 at month six to £131,000 at month nine
- one-off staffing underspend of £38,000
- reduction of £17,000 through the discontinuation of FMSiS

PF noted that Forum members asked officers at this time last year for a projection of the underspend which turned out to be higher than expected, and asked whether any assurances could be given at this stage of the accuracy of the projected underspend for 2012/13. KAS advised that managers review budgets regularly to work as efficiently as possible. The large increase in the underspend from month nine to twelve in 2010/11 was due to the exercise conducted around SEN accruals. A great deal of work has been done around improving the accuracy of the budget monitoring, including benchmarking against other local authorities, and the figures presented are as accurate as possible based on current information. VW stated that the underspend at month six was an indicator and the currently projected underspend at month nine is not unexpected. The SEN budgets are heavily demand led and it is difficult to predict precisely what the levels of need will be.

JM stated that there is a positive trend where the quality of local placements is being recognised and the money involved is being used efficiently through excellent in-borough placements. This is in part

attributable to the work which has been done to educate parents in the borough of the quality of provision. JG added that she attends tribunals where Barnet's decisions are upheld to place SEN children in-borough which leads to great financial savings comparative to out-of-borough placements.

6.2 2012/13 Proposed Schools Budget

Kerry-Anne Smith

KAS presented a paper outlining the proposed schools budget for 2012/13, noting that the recoupment was based on current academy conversions and estimates on the number of schools likely to convert during 2012/13. It is expected that the AWPU rate will remain approximately the same as in 2011/12 and the centrally retained budget will reduce slightly to take into account the impact of Academies on the DSG funding.

VW updated the Forum regarding the capital funding announcements made at the end of 2011. Barnet was allocated £9.4m in basic needs funding for 2011/12, reducing to £5m in 2012/13. Funding has been allocated based on local authority submissions on capacity in schools. The information for the borough of Barnet is up to date, and there is some capacity in secondary schools, so the formula used may have been disadvantageous to Barnet. RMG advised that there has been a strong lobbying campaign led by Cllr Harper regarding the distribution of the capital as 60% of the funding was allocated to London, but there were large discrepancies around how this money was divided across the boroughs with Barnet receiving only £3.3m and some boroughs such as Redbridge receiving up to £15m. There has been an announcement of £500m capital funding for free schools and the borough will need to look at how to access this.

KAS advised that the £468,000 academies recoupment included in the proposed budget is an updated estimate of the recoupment value based on Academies converted to date and 2 others expected at the time to convert at the 1st of April 2012. There is a contingency for future academy conversions and the part year impact of those on the budget. This estimate includes part-year costs for all secondary schools not yet converted and three primary schools.

KAS explained the calculation of the centrally retained budget and the Central Expenditure Limit (CEL). GB noted that some of the activities which local authorities do on behalf of schools should be undertaken by academies as they receive the recouped funding for this.

KAS explained the impact of academy conversions and the projected reduction of the centrally retained budget by £311,904. Changes in figures presented in the tabled report in line 1.2.1 relate to updated pupil numbers for SEN. The total for line 1.2.1 is £4.4m, from which the local authority will provide support for statements at academies. There will be no redundancies as a result of the reduction in the centrally retained budget. VW advised that the cut to the centrally retained budget will be met by reductions in service provision such as the behaviour service and narrowing the gap. GB asked whether a contingency of £160,000 is still required if the impact of academy conversions results in a reduction of the centrally retained budget by £311,000. KAS advised that this is currently an estimate of academy conversions and the contingency is in place to ensure the provision of services. PF asked why the contingency has reduced from £440,000 to £160,000. KAS advised that the revised figure is based on the scenario of all secondary schools and four primary schools converting to academies by September 2012.

DO asked whether school admissions will remain a co-ordinated service. VW advised that although this is a recouped service, the local authority retains statutory responsibility for admissions. RMG advised that it is very difficult to reduce budgets like for like in response to academy conversions as this would lead to the decommissioning of services. The borough has therefore made reductions to budget lines which have more flexibility for reduction.

KN asked whether free schools have any impact on the schools budget. CB stated that this will potentially be the case as the local authority will remain responsible for children with statements in free schools, as well as any other SEN costs. This year there has been a very minimal impact as the borough currently has only one free school.

RMG clarified that even though there has been an increase in funding due to a rise in pupil numbers, the centrally retained elements of the budget have remained the same. CB noted that the only area of the centrally retained budget which may see an increase is for statemented children in academies for which the borough retains financial responsibility. This expenditure would previously have been from the

individual schools budget (ISB) which has reduced correspondingly.

PF asked why some of the budget lines where underspends are projected have the same proposed budget for 2012/13. VW advised that officers have looked into this and are conscious that there has been an underspend over three years, however, this needs to be balanced against increasing need as pupil numbers are continually raising. The SEN budget is particularly volatile and the large underspend at the end of the last year was a one-off. JM stated that the borough can not rely on the trend of having an underspend to continue. Due to the nature of SEN provision, when issues arise they may require large amounts of funding PF stated such an underspend should be utilised by the LA to maximise outcomes for SEN children. GB pointed out the FMSiS budget on line 1.6.5 has been removed as the LA are no longer required to provide this service and it should not appear in the 2012/13 projected budget. KAS confirmed it has been removed.

VW delivered a presentation highlighting the impact of academy conversions on the CEL in relation to the delegated element of the schools budget.

RMG advised that the role of the Schools Forum is likely to continue and cabinet and the lead member are lobbying to retain it as a means of continuing a degree of local autonomy in the schools budget. It is possible that next year the Forum will be asked to consider the proportional allocation of funding across primary and secondary schools.

GK asked the Forum to vote on the proposed draft budget for 2012/13. Ten forum members voted in favour, with no abstentions and no votes against. GK advised that the vote be recorded unanimously in favour of approving the proposed budget.

RMG added that the expected variance to the 2011/12 budget outturn did not include the allocation of £170,000 in SEN funding to individuals with SEN identified today.

6.3 Infant Class Size Funding 2012/13

Carol Beckman

CB presented a paper and summarised the amended options proposed from those discussed at the previous meeting. CB reminded the group that the options arose from concern that the borough would have a large number of classes over size, but under the trigger point which would make them financially viable. There is additional concern that such classes will receive funding for a whole year when they are likely to reduce below the maximum size early in the year. CB advised that since the paper was circulated the January census data has become available and indicators suggest that there are only likely to be 12 or 14 classes eligible for the funding for infant class size.

KN noted from a union perspective that it is important not to encourage the use of unqualified teachers when taking qualifying measures.

TB raised concern that there is quite a contrast between the £40,000 proposed in the options at the previous meeting and the £3,500 proposed in the current paper. CB stated that the £3,500 would be for pre-qualifying measures as it is unlikely that classes will remain over size for more than five months. The aim is to find a logical amount of money which reflects the cost to schools.

KG asked what will happen if there are still 31 children in the class in September. CB advised that under the proposal the school would receive no additional funding. In reality it is unlikely that this will happen. CN stated that although this is unlikely, it would make a great difference to a school in terms of costs if they had to employ an additional teacher for twelve months with only £3,500 additional funding.

CB advised the group that the intention of the proposal is to find a resolution which least impacts on the DSG and invited discussion around varying the options put forward with estimates of the actual costs involved. An additional difficulty is that the pupil numbers for September are based on a snapshot from the previous January census.

CB asked Forum members what the practice is in schools when this situation arises. The group consensus was that qualifying measures are not usually taken until they are legally required to employ an additional teacher.

TB suggested that it should be based on a M1 salary allocated in proportion to the number of months the teacher is in place. CB advised that if this was the case then there would need to be an application process with a procedure to establish who are the eligible children. VW noted that it would be necessary

to prove that it was a particular child who triggered the measure. Additionally this would have to consist of a contingency fund which would further affect the ratio of the CEL.

JM noted that any procedure agreed at the meeting would only be for the financial year 2012/13 as the new admissions code states that a child over number is excepted for the whole of their infant schooling. There are two options available to the group: to leave the current system in place for 2012/13 or ask the local authority for a further proposal. CB reminded the Forum that pupil data indicates that this will not be the problem that officers initially thought.

Forum members agreed that the original proposal of £40,000 is too high and it should be reduced and extended to a greater number of schools.

JM proposed making the allocation 7/12 of an M1 salary plus on-costs for all schools who have classes over number. CG estimated that this would be approximately £17,500.

GK asked the forum to vote on the proposal put forward of 7/12 of an M1 salary plus on-costs for schools with infant class sizes of more than 30. The AWPU for those on roll should not reduce this amount.

Eleven forum members voted in favour, with no abstentions and no votes against. GK advised that the vote be recorded unanimously in favour of approving the proposed budget.

CB explained the proposal for bulge classed to the forum noting that it would be based on the same principle of a fully qualified teacher and for a whole year. KN asked how many bulge classes this would apply to. CB said about a dozen.

GK asked the Forum to vote on the proposal for bulge class funding for 2012/13. Forum members voted unanimously in favour of the proposal.

6.4 Oakleigh Invest to Save Proposal

Val White

PF assumed Chair of the Forum to allow GK and JG to withdraw from the discussion following their statement of declared interest.

VW explained that the proposal is a response to the pressure on SEN and primary places. The local authority has been working with the special school to increase in-house provision to create 21 more places. Plans included the construction of a portacabin at Oakleigh which was postponed last year due to a tree falling on site. VW acknowledged the assistance provided by Mapledown and Colindale schools to absorb extra places in response.

VW outlined the three options in the proposal, stating the local authority's preference is to invest in three additional classrooms to resolve pressure on places. The preferred proposal involved contributing a maximum of £440,000 from the underspend from 2011/12. In return this would reduce the need for expensive out of borough provision.

KN asked what would happen if the council is unable to bridge the gap in funding, and whether schools could contribute the same amount towards option two. VW advised that she has received confirmation that the council will bridge the gap.

PF asked Forum members to vote on the proposal to contribute £440,000 towards option three. Forum members voted unanimously in favour of the proposal.

7 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

7.1 Funding Settlement 2012/13

Kerry-Anne Smith

Discussed in item 6.2.

7.2 Children's Centre Funding Formula

Zahid and Stav

JM introduced Stav Yiannou and Zahid Parvez to the Forum.

SY provided a summary of the consultation which took place last year that led to a reduction in the number of children's centres and the subsequent financial impact on schools. Last year saw a process of consultation which led to reduction in children's centres. It is no longer required to offer childcare at children's centres, and Barnet intends to offer cost neutral childcare at Children's Centres. The requirement for a qualified teacher at Children's Centres would require the continued contribution from the DSG.

ZP explained that the view of the coalition government is that children's centres should meet the needs of the most deprived children and families, and therefore proposed shifting the funding towards the requirements of the local community. In so doing the aim is to remove the existing subsidy for centres with childcare, and to redistribute this to community work. The effect will be a reduction in funding of 10 – 15% on average for centres with child care. A transition plan has been put together to move towards cost neutral childcare.

SY noted that children will still have access to the two, three or four year old free entitlement, and support for vulnerable children who require addition assistance above this will continue.

EP requested clarification regarding payment by results referred to in point three. ZP advised that there is a trial taking place with 30 local authorities looking into a potential measure to reward Children's Centres around school and parent readiness. Barnet is proposing a SLA with an element for results for the 2012/13 financial year.

SY noted that the increased access to children's centres reflects positive measures taken by headteachers.

JM advised that a public consultation will be launched in due course.

7.3 Family Focus and Community Budget	Jay Mercer
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Discussed prior to item 6.1

8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

8.1

RMG tabled a paper presenting results of the early intervention work conducted with the initial cohort of families referred to in JM's presentation in item 7.3.

RMG thanked all school headteachers and governors who took part in the recent Ofsted inspection. Informal results will be available on 2 February and formal results will be released in three weeks time.

Meeting closed: 6:10pm.

Dates for future meetings

1 May 2012	4.00pm
12 July 2012	4.00pm
8 October 2012	4.00pm
4 December 2012	4.00pm