

**Meeting of the Schools Forum**

**Tuesday 1 February 2010**  
**(4pm, Training Room 7, Building 2 NLBP)**

**Attended**

Members:

Jeanette Adak (Head, Monkfrith)  
Tim Bowden (Head, Holy Trinity)  
Chris Brook (Barnet LNI)  
Catrin Dillon (Martin Primary)  
Jane Chew (St Margaret's Nursery)  
Jo Djora (Head, Coppetts Wood)  
Paul Ferrie (Head, Ravenscroft)  
Patricia French (St Mary's High)  
Kim Garood (Governor, Church Hill Primary School)  
Jenny Gridley (Head, Oakleigh)  
Alan Homes (NASUWT)  
Gilbert Knight (Governor, Oakleigh)  
Christopher Maslin (Hendon School)  
Seamus McKenna (Head, Finchley Catholic)  
Angela Murphy (Head, Bishop Douglass)  
Clare Neuberger (Head, Menorah Foundation)  
Dee Oelman (Head, St Mary's & St John's)  
Elizabeth Pearson (Governor, Livingstone)  
Helen Schmitz (Head, Cromer Road)  
Geoffrey Thompson (Head, Mill Hill High)  
Angela Trigg (London Academy)  
Kate Webster (Head QE Girls)

LA Officers:

Carol Beckman (School Funding Manager)  
Nigel Bell (Senior Asset Manager)  
Robert McCulloch-Graham (Director of Children's Service)  
Linda Parker (Strategic Finance Manager)  
Mick Quigley (Principal Inspector, Children's Service)  
Kerry-Anne Smith  
Val White (Assistant Director, PPP)

Clerk:

Mark Callaghan (School Resources and Support Officer)

Consultant:

Geoff Boyd

**Not Present**

Members:

Jayne Franklin (Head, Childs Hill)  
Andrew Macalpine  
Keith Murdoch (Woodhouse)  
Stephen Parkin (Governor, St Mary's High)  
Sarah Vipond (Early Years Working Group)  
Anthony Vourou (Governor, St John's N11)  
Michael Whitworth (Wren Academy)

Other:

Cllr Andrew Harper (Cabinet Member for Education, Children & Families)

### **1. Welcome and apologies for Absence**

GK welcomed new members Andrew Macalpine and Jane Chew to the group, noting that AM was being represented by Chris Maslin for the meeting.

GK announced that Jonathan Hewlings from East Barnet is leaving the Forum. JH was thanked for his contribution to the group.

Apologies were received from Andrew Macalpine, Michael Whitworth, Cllr Andrew Harper and Jayne Franklin.

GK requested members to put forward nominations for potential Secondary school governor nominations in due course.

**A:** Letter of thanks to be issued to Jonathan Hewlings thanking him for his support, leadership and interest.

### **3. Declarations of interest**

None received.

CM asked for a definition of interest. GK clarified the definition of interest, stressing the importance of financial and political interest.

### **4. Minutes of previous meeting: 07<sup>th</sup> December 2010**

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

**A:** MC to record CD as present in the minutes of the previous meeting.

### **5. Matters arising**

AM stated that item 7.2.4 of the previous minutes noted the potential redundancies within the Children's Service and asked whether information is available on possible redundancies for staff working in schools and how this may affect the schools budget? MQ advised that the work on redundancies in the Children's Service was quantifiable as the extent of the budget reductions were known whereas the impact on schools will not be known until the schools budget is finalised. AH reminded the meeting that redundancies for school staff would be subject to a consultation process.

AM asked whether numbers for potential school redundancies are included in the provisional budget? MQ stated that the service is only aware of one school with potential redundancies at present and is in consultation with the school regarding this.

AM raised concern that she doesn't feel schools are being consulted with regarding potential redundancies, PF added that his school are having discussions around whether redundancies are likely. RMG explained schools set their own budgets and have responsibility for management of their staff. LP explained that within the LA, when reorganising services or reducing budgets, managers will be expected to minimise potential redundancies wherever possible and advised that schools seeking funding from the LA for redundancies would be expected to adopt a similar approach. VW will confirm that corporate arrangements are in place to cover eligible schools costs, where appropriate.

**A:** VW to raise the issue of contingencies for redundancies in schools with the corporate centre.

## **6 Items for Consultation/Decision**

### **6.1 Funding Settlement 2011/12**

**Linda Parker/  
Carol Beckman**

LP/CB presented a paper to the group outlining the proposed funding settlement for 2011/12.

LP summarised the proposed settlement highlighting the following aspects:

- The per pupil rate for 2011/12 is the same as for 2010/11. Additionally the mainstreaming of Standards Funds into the DSG will amount to an additional £725 per pupil. Schools will also receive a fixed rate per pupil for the pupil premium for children eligible for free school meals, looked after children and service children. The children eligible for the pupil premium will be identified from the January 2011 School Census and schools will receive one lump sum at the beginning of the year.
- The provisional funding settlement for 2011/12 presented is based on pupil numbers from the October 2010 School Census free early years data. Figures from the YPLA for sixth forms are outstanding and the LA is still waiting on an update on the music grant.
- The likely rise in pupil numbers has been factored into the projected budget. The formula for converting 3 and 4 year old numbers into full-time equivalents is complicated, but the LA has a projected figure which has been included.
- Changes to centrally retained budgets – inclusion of PRU funding, contingency for early years, a number of reductions in Schools and Learning, cessation of BSF and a proposed reduction in the centrally retained element of Standards funds from £1,474,668 in 2010/11 to £825,500 in 2011/12
- The Central Expenditure Limit (CEL) will apply next year but the exact level of the CEL is not yet known due to the formula complications of mainstreaming Standards Funds.

LP advised the Forum that on the basis of current DfE advice regarding the accounting treatment of the inclusion of former Standards Funds into the DSG, any central retention of former Standards Fund monies may breach the CEL, but at present this can not be confirmed. AM asked how much the CEL is likely to be breached by? LP stated that the level of any possible breach can not be identified at present due to technical difficulties in the way that the CEL is calculated. AM stated that one of the purposes of the Forum is to ensure that the CEL is not breached and asked for assurance that at this stage the group is being informed of the possibility of a breach and not to agree it at the present meeting? VW advised that the LA is providing all of the information it currently has and that the Forum is being notified at this stage that that on the basis of the current understanding, the item later on the agenda states that the CEL will be breached. If the DfE advice is confirmed, the breach would be due to the technicality of mainstreaming Standards Funds and is likely to affect all LAs.

LP advised that the DfE has confirmed that the recoupment process for academies will continue into the next financial year. SM asked about the level of the Extended Schools Sustainability budget? LP advised that the Extended Schools Sustainability budget for 2010/11 was just over £1m. It is proposed to retain £450K centrally in 2011/12 and devolve the remainder (proposed in item 6.2). AM requested that more detail is included in the Schools Forum papers for elements like this, such as the background and proposed use for retained funds. GK agreed that this would be useful for Forum members. RMG advised that the retained funding is for 4 multi-agency coordinators conducting early intervention work, 4 parental support workers and an element of management costs. HS asked whether this covers speech and language therapy provision? CB advised that Excellence in Clusters (EIC) schools put money into a central fund to pay for a speech and language therapist to service EIC schools. Previously money was devolved to schools but they were not happy holding the money so it reverted to central retention.

RMG advised that centrally retained former Standard Funds also support a dedicated Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) team and a number of posts to support narrowing the gap which have wide-ranging specialised knowledge, comprising 3 education specialists and a data analyst. This is part of a joint Every Child Counts (ECC) programme with Enfield council and Every Child a Writer (ECAW) with Haringey council. It provides an invaluable provision and the proposed amount retained is the same for 2011/12 as for 2011/12.

AT stated that academies do not receive detailed budget information from the DfE and asked if it would be possible for the LA to provide them with further information? LP stated that it would be possible to provide details of how funding for schools of a similar size and nature is calculated. CB added that the LA intend to provide information for new academies demonstrating how their funding is arrived at.

PF stated that schools were advised by the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) that they will be provided with figures at the end of March 2011, noting that it is not possible to do efficient budget planning with data received this late. When he phoned them to request assistance he was advised that he should have attended one of their workshops. He asked whether there is anything that can be done as a LA to stress the importance of receiving this information as soon as possible. SM added that the complexity of how sixth form funding is worked out is also an issue. AT noted that academies were informed by the YPLA that they would get an indicative budget by 31/01/2011 which they did not receive. Also there is concern regarding the quality of the information which they will receive. PF asked whether this is something that could be picked up by the LA. RMG advised that this is something that could be looked at outside of the Forum with the possibility of issuing a letter to the YPLA from the LA.

**A:** RMG to look into the possibility of issuing a letter to the YPLA from the LA stressing the importance of receiving funding information as soon as possible.

CB presented a paper outlining Standards Funds and the proposed options for their distribution noting that it was agreed at the previous meeting to continue to distribute Standards Funds in 2011/12 in the same way as in 2010/11. This includes the absorption of Standards Funds into the DSG. Where possible the mainstreamed Standards Funds will be identified to enable schools to see how their school budget was calculated. This is the case for a 1 year funding cycle as it is not yet known how the DSG will be calculated after this.

CB outlined 3 proposals for the distribution of Standards Funds 1.6, 1.7 and 1.8 in 2011/12.

**Grant 1.6 – Extended Schools Sustainability:**

The proposal is to devolve £600K of the total grant according to pupil numbers. AM asked for confirmation that £450,000 of the grant will be retained centrally? RMG confirmed that this is the case and will be used to cover costs for early intervention work and a parental support worker (as discussed earlier).

JD asked whether there will be an extended network board and if money will still be available for holiday activities? VW confirmed that the money will be devolved rather than having a bidding process.

PF asked whether the devolved money will be ringfenced? RMG confirmed that it will not be. SM raised concern that the Extended Schools money may get used for other purposes when the ringfence is removed. LP stated that this will be the case for all devolved Standards Funds. RMG stated that this will allow schools to manage accounts with a greater degree of flexibility.

JD expressed concern as to whether there will be sufficient money to fund Aiming High in the future. VW confirmed that there is no proposal to cut Aiming High funds.

JG expressed concern that allocating the money on a per pupil basis may have a detrimental impact on pupils with higher needs. VW explained that devolving a greater proportion of the fund to schools allows them to manage this on a local basis.

JD stated that although there is an overlap in services, she believes a priority for extended services is to provide opportunities for all children, and questioned whether pressure is being put on the wrong budget by retaining so much centrally, especially as MAGs were allocated £177K by the Schools Forum. AH stated that in removing the ringfence it leaves groups such as the Schools Forum to have to take decision about targeting the money. The Forum may have to look at an equalities impact process for this as there could be a negative impact on protected groups.

RMG stated that special education and children in need are volatile budgets and dependent on population numbers. The only way to reduce pressure on budgets is to target early intervention. Extra money is being invested in early prevention to target known families to reduce pressures on schools. Centralised retention of an element of the former Standards Fund will pay for workers to go into families to do this work. SM asked how many families are being targeted? RMG stated that 2 groups are being targeted, the first with 25 families and the second with 230 families. From this investment schools should see an improvement in attendance and reduction in exclusions. From this investment future savings of £2m have been identified. JD stated that there needs to be clarity about how the money is going to be split. AM raised concern that the grant is being top-sliced while schools will have to manage with less money. RMG stated that most LAs are in the same position and if early intervention work is not funded then there will be an impact on other budgets.

AM raised concern that the forum was asked to approve the £177K funding for MAGs without sufficient detail about how the money would be used, and that the Forum is now being asked to approve the centrally retained portion of grant 1.6 without sufficient information about how it will be spent.

AM suggested that a paper should be produced for the next Forum meeting with more detail about how the retained funds will be used. RMG confirmed the retained funding is for 4 multi-agency coordinators conducting early intervention work, 4 parental support workers and also to cover management costs. LP advised that if the decision is delayed to the next meeting, the provisional schools budget figures will not be available for half-term. Alternatively, an additional Forum meeting would have to be scheduled in the next 2 weeks.

VW added that each year, over 2000 children are referred to children's social care. The priority is around identifying need and having the infrastructure in place to deal with it. The purpose of MAGs is to get people around the table and achieve results. This infrastructure costs money – the early intervention and prevention service costs around £10m and the retained portion of grant 1.6 is a contribution towards this.

GK stated that there is value in the use of centrally retained funds for early intervention work but that it would be useful to have more detail for such proposals in papers submitted, noting that cabinet papers include this detail. AM requested that more detail is included in such proposals in future and suggested that there should be a ceiling whereby detail should be provided when the Forum is asked to approve a proposal over a certain amount of money.

The group agreed to vote on the proposals.

#### **Grant 1.6 – National Strategies – Primary – A or B**

The group voted to proceed with the proposal with 7 members in favour and 3 against.

#### **Grant 1.7 – National Strategies - Primary**

The group voted to proceed with option B.

#### **Grant 1.8 – National Strategies Secondary**

AM asked whether the proposal includes academies. CB confirmed that it does.

The group voted in favour of the proposal.

**A:** GK to speak to GB regarding whether there should be ceiling above which detail should be provided for funding proposals to the Forum.

### **Item 6.3 Pupil Premium**

**Carol Beckman**

CB presented a paper outlining the distribution of the Pupil Premium for 2011/12 and explained how the funds will be distributed to schools. The draft regulations state how it should be distributed for maintained schools and academies, but there is a choice as to how the Pupil Premium is distributed to PRUs. EP asked whether nursery children qualify for the Pupil Premium? CB stated that they do not. EP asked whether this is still the case if they are looked after children. CB advised that this is currently unclear and need to be looked into. JC noted that 46% of her school children are thought to be eligible for FSMs and if maintained nursery school children were eligible then they would receive the Premium. CB noted that if maintained nurseries schools received the Pupil Premium then it would have to be extended to private providers also. AM asked whether it will be allocated for in-year admissions. CB confirmed that it will not. Also that no adjustment will be made for leavers.

The proposal put to the Forum was to devolve the Pupil Premium down to Barnet's PRUs. The Forum voted in favour of the proposal.

#### **Item 6.4 Minimum Funding Guarantee**

**Carol Beckman**

CB presented a paper to the group outlining proposals for variations to the MFG explaining that it will be -1.5% for Barnet in 2011/12. The MFG is per pupil funding and some elements of last years funding have been excluded. The Forum has influence when the LA want to vary the MFG apart from the 4 instances listed below where an application now has to be made to the Secretary of State:

1. Nursery Funding – Schools Forum approval (excluded from MFG)
2. Primary Strategy - Schools Forum approval (excluded from MFG)
3. Extended Schools – Schools Forum support for application to Secretary of State
4. New class startup - Schools Forum support for application to Secretary of State

The Forum was asked to approve the exclusion of nursery funding and primary strategy, and to exclude extended schools and new class startup with application to the Secretary of State. The Forum voted in favour of the proposals.

#### **Item 6.5 Draft Schools Budget**

**Val White/Linda Parker**

VW/LP presented a paper outlining the Draft Schools Budget for 2011/12 and summarised the elements of the proposed budget. CB confirmed that school budgets will be available on 23/02/2011.

JG asked whether the same amount of money is being allocated for SEN and EASEN in 2011/12 as in 2010/11 noting that there were headteachers who were disappointed that they submitted unsuccessful applications this year. LP confirmed that it is proposed to allocate the same amount of money in 2011/12 although there is an increase in the specific schools contingency budget by £250K. BD stated that the LA is aware of the pressure on schools due to increased pupil numbers and the need to expand provision for early years, for which it is intended to increase places. There is a need to work out how this is done in line with present numbers and negotiate with schools on how best the need is met. The LA will continue to work in partnership with schools regarding this. MQ acknowledged more complex cases are coming into schools and that population numbers are increasing.

JG asked the Forum if they wished to express a view on increasing the budget of SEN and EASEN. JD stated that part of the budget is allocated to children already in schools so the money available to the SEN and EASEN panels is less than indicated in the budget. LP stated that if the DSG numbers are higher than expected then the Forum may propose allocating additional funding.

The Forum was asked to approve the draft budget for 2011/12 in the knowledge that it is likely to change due to pupil numbers (including pupils with SEN) and clarification on the treatment of academy funding. In view of the mainstreaming of standards funds into the DSG, the draft budget as proposed will breach the CEL in 2011/12. The forum requested that as far as possible, any additional funding that becomes available is used to re-balance the CEL. The Forum voted in favour of the proposed budget.



## 8. Items for Information

### Item 7.1 Finalised Terms of Reference

Carol Beckman

CB presented the Term of Reference for the Schools Forum updated following discussion at the previous meeting, noting that item 1.1.5 has now changed and will be amended when the final MFG regulations are received. Also the section on membership needs to be amended with regard to academies and to remove schools improvements partners.

MQ requested that item 2.2 is amended to Barnet headteachers representative bodies.

AM requested that the wording in item 5.7 – all proposals affecting schools is strengthened. CB explained that this item refers to individuals rather than schools.

A: Items 1.1.5 and 2.2 to be amended – CB

### Item 7.2 DSG 2010/11 Projected Outturn

Linda Parker

LP presented a paper detailing the projected outturn of the centrally retained schools budget identifying the main variances. The previously reported overspend of £535,292 has now reduced to £162,372. It is hoped that this overspend will be further reduced and eliminated by the end of the

### Item 7.3 Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme - Update

Nigel Bell

NP presented a paper to the group providing an update on the CRCEES.

The previous recycling scheme was in a league-table, but the CRCESS is now direct tax. The idea behind the scheme is to simplify the process. Allowances will be bought for 2011/12. Currently the responsibility to recharge lies with the LA but the DfE is looking at the possibility of recharging schools. The LA will be writing to schools with current information about supplies and to request information to update records. The LA will also be writing to suppliers in due course which will be the basis for charging. The Forum was reminded of the importance of retaining copies of bills.

CM asked when the baseline is and whether schools are meant to have a reduction in subsequent years. NB confirmed that is it 2010/11. In previous years carbon was the indicator. It is going to be set at £12 pound per ton of emission for the first three years, but the incentive is to reduce output.

CM asked whether there will be any capital money to replace old schools' facilities. NB stated that there will not. The priority is to look at compliance initially with a view to reduction in the future.

AM asked whether the LA will get fined to encourage reduction? NB stated that LAs will be judged on performance and fines will be related to data quality and timeliness of reporting. AM asked whether schools can be fined for providing incorrect information. NB stated that it is unclear at present whether LAs can pass fines on to schools.

KW asked what percentage of the energy price will be charged. NB stated that initial estimates indicate that the charge for secondary schools will be around £6K and £2K for primary schools, but there can be large fluctuations in energy prices.

RMG noted that some of Barnet's schools purchase their energy through the LA brokership team and there were savings for these schools of £120K in 2010/11. RMG asked whether the legislation is likely to last the course? NB advised that it most likely will and that its introduction was planned as the main driver in response to the Climate Change Act. JA stated that Monkfrith have experienced problems getting bills for electricity. NB advised that the LA is working to encourage suppliers to provide bills in a timely fashion.

## 9. AOB

No items were raised. The meeting closed at 18:26 pm.

### Dates for future meetings

10 May 2011	4.30pm (with briefing at 4pm)
12 July 2011	4.30pm (with briefing at 4pm)