

## Slough Schools Forum- Meeting held on Thursday, 9th November, 2017

**Present:** Maggie Waller, Holy Family Primary School (Chair)  
John Constable, Langley Grammar School (Vice-Chair)  
Sally Eaton, Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) providers - Early Years  
Philip Gregory, Baylis Court Nursery School  
Valerie Harffey, Ryvers Primary School  
Kathleen Higgins, Beechwood Secondary School  
Helen Huntley, Haybrook College / PRU  
Jo Matthews, Littledown School / PRU  
Navroop Mehat, Wexham Court Primary School  
Angela Mellish, St Bernard's Grammar School  
Eddie Neighbour, Upton Court Grammar School  
Carol Pearce, Penn Wood Primary School  
Jon Reekie, Baylis Court Trust MAT / Godolphin Infant School  
Jo Rockall, Herschel Grammar School  
Nicky Willis, Cippenham Primary School

**Observers:** None

**Officers:** Catherine Cochran, Domenico Barani, Cate Duffy, George Grant, Michael Jarrett, Johnny Kyriacou, John Voytal and Susan Woodland

**Apologies:** Tracey Bradshaw, Gillian Coffey, Linda Calverley and Vikram Hansrani

### PART I

#### 590. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Tracey Bradshaw, Linda Calverley, Gillian Coffey and Vikram Hansrani.

No apologies had been received from Richard Kirkham.

#### 591. Declarations of Interest

Sally Eaton declared an interest in item number 4 on the agenda.

#### 592. Minutes of Previous Meeting on 10 October 2017

The minutes of the meeting of the Slough Schools Forum held on 10 October 2017 were approved as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:

**Minute 575:** please note that John Constable had agreed to take the position of Vice Chair until June 2018.

**Minute 580:** please delete the sentence: It was noted that part time places at KS4 were of concern.

## **Matters Arising from the minutes of 10 October 2017:**

**Minute 575:** it was reported that one nomination had been received for the remaining academy representative vacancy on the Forum by the closing date of 20 October, 2017. John Constable would write to academy proprietors requesting approval of the appointment of Peter Collins, Headteacher of Slough & Eton. Nil returns would be deemed to indicate approval.

It was agreed there was a lot of commitment from attendees. The Clerk would draft a model letter to enable the Chair to follow up with those members who did not attend Schools Forum meetings regularly.

An accurate contact list of Headteachers and Chairs of Governors within SBC was being compiled.

**Minute 578:** Cate Duffy had written to the ESFA and spoken to the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) with regards to the Langley Hall issue. Further contact was to be made with the ESFA.

**Minute 581:** George Grant confirmed that he had received and finalised a response to Helen Huntley's queries regarding the High Needs Block (HNB) income discrepancy.

Kathleen Higgins pointed out that schools adversely affected by the HNB the previous year would find it difficult to manage a similar loss in the current year. Forum was asked to be mindful of this when making a decision.

**Minute 585 (scheme for financing schools):** John Voytal would circulate the table to members following this meeting. In answer to a query, it was confirmed that a consultation had been sent to schools, with a closing date at the end of the current month. A copy of the consultation would be shared with Schools Forum members, with an assurance that members should receive a copy of such documents in future.

### **593. Langley Hall Primary Academy Trust (LHPAT):**

George Grant confirmed this issue had been discussed at the previous meeting of the Schools Forum. It had been agreed there should be a consultation with schools, which had taken place between Schools Forum meetings. The outcome of the consultation was included in the report: of the 44 eligible schools, 61% (27 schools) had replied and all had given a negative response. It was now for Schools Forum to decide whether the recommendation should be accepted or not. Questions were invited.

Sally Eaton explained that her Chair of Governors was unable to attend this meeting but on his behalf she wished to thank the Forum for undertaking the process and Cate Duffy for contacting the ESFA and RSC.

It was felt that the strength of responses gave Schools Forum a clear indication of mood. The Chair asked Forum members if they wished to make a recommendation that an exception circumstances factor (premises) should be included with effect from 2018/19 on behalf of Langley Hall Primary Academy. The Forum was unanimously against such a move.

Cate Duffy informed the meeting that Cabinet, due to meet on Monday 20 November, would be approving the delegation of functions to her in order to take decisions on the Funding Formula. The Council would support the recommendation of Schools Forum.

A member asked if the delegated authority would apply to the next agenda item to which Cate Duffy explained it would be for any changes to the formula, given the short time scales involved. Schools Forum supported this.

#### **594. Schools National Funding Formula 2018-19 Preparation**

George Grant explained that the supporting report outlined the proposed process which entailed a great deal of work to be completed within a short time scale. There was a need to review possible models, to consult with schools and to work with the 5-16 Task Group of Schools Forum to discuss that modelling. The final version would need to be approved by the Schools Forum. There was a need to consider the impact of change and a need to consult upon what the formula would look like for schools. The formula had to fit, with a need to carefully consider the implementation and adaption of change.

It was acknowledged the time scale in which to model and consult was tight, particularly given the Christmas period. It was agreed that schools were responsive to issues concerning funding.

It was queried why there would be a consultation with schools before the Task Group and it was explained this was to get an indication of 50% model or no change, to give an indication of what NFF could look like. John Constable pointed out there was a need to come back to the Task Group, citing the case of previous Task Group discussions about schools which were outliers in the model.

Cate Duffy suggested models should be presented to the Task Group before going out to schools, with a shorter consultation period. It was agreed that the Task Group would meet before the consultation was sent out to schools. In answer to a question, it was felt the LA would be in a position to have models ready by Thursday 16 November: as a result, it was suggested the Task Group should meet on Friday 17 November, with the consultation to go out on Monday 20 November. Confirmation of the Task Group meeting would be agreed at the end of this meeting. John Voytal would circulate the pupil led figures. LA Finance Officers would draw up three models, showing the effects per school. It was pointed out that the DfE model indicated all schools would gain financially.

A member asked what had made the difference, as losses had been expected and it was thought this could be masked by the MFG. It was pointed out that definitive figures could not be given until the top slice was known. It was agreed caution was required concerning the figures. It was also noted that the DfE had increased the total funding pot following Phase 2 of the NFF consultation.

It was further questioned whether there would be any other requests for transfer from the Schools Block, as HNB was not sufficient to meet need. Cate Duffy added that she was comfortable for the HNB to carry an overspend into the following year.

#### **595. Update from Task Groups: 5-16, HNB and Early Years**

**5-16 Task Group:** had not met but was scheduled to meet.

**High Needs Block:** had met on Tuesday 17 October. It was reported that a great deal of work was being undertaken in this area, with a dedicated person leading. The group had discussed bandings and centrally retained funding. Further clarity was required and it was queried whether decisions were being made using insecure data. Helen Huntley and Jo Matthews had both experienced significant financial losses in bandings without any indication or consultation as to why such changes had been made.

Cate Duffy confirmed there would be further discussions about bandings and the need to establish whether the bandings allocated two years previously had been correct. There was an aim to be consistent across panels. Jo Matthews confirmed she had attended a panel meeting and expressed concern about the descriptors used and whether those on the panel fully understood the implications.

Cate Duffy had discussed this matter with service leads and offered to scrutinise the figures before the next meeting. It was agreed that clarity was required particularly as the most vulnerable children were involved.

A member requested clarity regarding PFI. The Chair confirmed she had met with John Voytal and Susan Woodland and it was planned for an update to be given at the Schools Forum meeting scheduled for Wednesday 17 January. Work was ongoing.

It was noted that special schools and PRUs had not yet received details of their commissioning arrangements for 2017/18. Cate Duffy would arrange for Vikram Hansrani to follow this up. In addition, it was noted that Haybrook College had not yet received an indicative budget for the current year.

A member asked if there would be a consultation about moving top-up allocations from termly arrangements although this was being actioned already. Cate Duffy explained this was under constant discussion and the Chair suggested the query should be taken back to the next meeting of the HNB Task Group.

As the submission had to be made to the DfE before the end of the current month, it was queried whether Schools Forum would need to meet before that date. The Chair confirmed agreement could be sought by email and requested that officers ensure reports were clear and responded to within a given time.

**Early Years Task Group:** had met on 2 November. Michael Jarrett reported that three key possibilities had been put forward:

1. Three options had been given under the migration of the universal base rate for primary schools by 2020
2. Two options under the maintained nursery schools supplementary funding and,
3. Review of funding for EHCP children in Early Years settings with a focus on consistency with schools' sector

Block allocations were due Monday 18 December and options would be emailed to members.

The Chair explained that new Guidance had come into effect September 2017 and the Slough Schools Forum Constitution had been updated in line with that guidance.

One member asked if there was any indication about the future of Schools Forums' based on the NFF. The Chair responded that nothing definitive had yet been published but a focus on High Needs funding was likely given that High Needs would remain with the LA to administer.

The Schools Forum **ENDORSED** the revised Guidance. The Chair pointed out that the document should now be approved by the Council and asked Cate Duffy to raise it at the next available opportunity.

**597. Academies Update**

There were no updates to report at this meeting.

**598. Updated Key Decisions Log**

The Chair and Clerk would draw up a new Key Decisions Log.

**599. Schools Forum 2017/18 Forward Agenda Plan and Dates and Venues of Future Meetings**

The Schools Forum received the draft Forward Agenda Plan.

The dates of the meetings of the Schools Forum, having previously been agreed, were noted:

Wednesday 6 December 2017

Wednesday 17 January 2018 (*please note date change*)

Tuesday 6 March 2018

Wednesday 16 May 2018

Thursday 5 July 2018.

All meetings to be held at 8.00am for 8.15am start at Beechwood School.

**600. Any Other Business**

Nothing had been tabled for discussion under Any Other Business.

(Note: The Meeting opened at 8.15 am and closed at 9.35 am)