

Slough Schools Forum- Meeting held on Wednesday, 17th January, 2018

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
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

Observers: Chris Thomas, Langley Grammar School

Officers: Catherine Cochran, Domenico Barani, Cate Duffy, George Grant, Michael Jarrett, Johnny Kyriacou, Tony Madden and John Voytal

Apologies: Tracey Bradshaw, Gillian Coffey, Philip Gregory and Nicky Willis

615. Apologies

The Chair welcomed Chris Thomas, Deputy Headteacher at Langley Grammar School, as an Observer to the meeting.

Apologies for absence had been received from Tracey Bradshaw, Gillian Coffey, Peter Collins and Nicky Willis. It was noted that Cate Duffy would need to leave at 9.00am.

There were no apologies from Richard Kirkham.

Members were informed that the running order of the agenda would change during the meeting.

616. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

617. Minutes of Previous Meeting held on Wednesday 6 December 2017

The minutes of the Schools Forum meeting held on 6 December 2017 were approved as a correct record.

Matters Arising from those Minutes:

Minute 601 refers: Following the deadline for responses from academy proprietors, Peter Collins was confirmed as a member of Schools Forum, representing academy schools with effect from the date of this meeting.

Minute 603 refers: the revised Schools Forum Constitution was to be approved by Council. It was understood Cate Duffy could do this, with her delegated powers, which would enable the document to be posted on the SBC website. Cate Duffy to follow this up.

Minute 608 refers: For clarity it was confirmed that the increased places available at Marish and Littledown would take effect from September 2018.

Meetings of the Resources Base Group had commenced.

The definitive list of Resource bases in Slough remained outstanding.

618. 2017/18 DSG Budget Monitoring report (Schools Block, High Needs Block, Early Years Block & Centrally Retained)

It was noted there was an anticipated £32,000 underspend in Schools Block (centrally retained) due to staff vacancies within the Admissions service.

George Grant confirmed the anticipated DSG projections for 2017-18 was a total overspend of £3.4M across the Schools, Early Years and High Needs blocks.

8.20am: Angela Mellish and Vikram Hansrani arrived at the meeting

Early Years was currently forecasting an underspend of £720,000, which was due to a lower than expected uptake of 30-hour provision. The underspend would be carried into the next academic year. Members noted these figures were best estimate as not all factors were yet known and, for example, would depend on level of uptake of child care entitlement for working parents.

8.25pm: Johnny Kyriacou arrived at the meeting

It was noted that the main area of concern was the High Needs Block (HNB) which had a reported overspend of £4.14M plus and included £1.5M carried forward from 2016/17. The overspend from the previous year reflected that of the current year and commitments were more than budgeted. Further to these pressures, unaccrued invoices from 2016/17, totalling approximately £400,000 had been discovered. It was understood this was in part due to budget management issues and the move in returning the service to the Local Authority (LA). Assurance was given that this would not reoccur and that the SBC team continued to work towards achieving accurate costings. A list of measures to bring the budget back in line had been compiled but there had been an assurance not to transfer monies from the Schools Block. Members were informed that the overspend could not be rectified in the short term.

The Task Group were in discussion about possible methods of saving money, in consultation with schools.

There continued to be concern about bandings and the number of out of borough placements. It was suggested the three special school Headteachers should meet to discuss the latter. A number of long term issues around administration and resources were now becoming evident. It was confirmed there was a strategic plan which it was suggested should be presented to Schools Forum.

Cate Duffy indicated that there were three main issues behind the overspend: underlying pressures with more children with higher needs, administrative issues which were being uncovered and the lack of funding for the residential places at Arbour Vale which should have been made from Social Care and not DSG.

A great deal of work was being applied to make better use of the budget and to support outcomes for children. There was a suggestion that there was sufficient evidence to apply to the ESFA for additional HNB funding. Any actions would be made in full consultation with schools and outcomes would be shared with Schools Forum for discussion.

It was suggested there was a need for a projection of the potential need for places and an understanding of that need. It was queried whether any monies could be recouped if Health and Social Care should have been funding. It was felt it would be difficult to now go back but there was awareness for the future and Health and Social Care were engaging with the process.

As noted, the deficit would be carried forward; although there remained the aim to reduce it in 2018/19. It was pointed out that funding up to the age of 25 would also impact. All background evidence could be provided if required.

It was noted that the Borough's situation reflected that nationally, with 78% of LAs reporting an overspend on their HNBs (an average of £2M).

The meeting moved to item number 6 on the agenda:

619. Funding Formula changes for 2018/19

Further to the previous Schools Forum meeting, a consultation had been conducted with schools, putting forward three funding options. This had now closed, with a 41% return, the majority of which were in favour of 'Option 2', moving halfway towards implementation of the NFF funding rates. A revised set of modelling of schools' budgets had been drawn up as per the final DfE budget allocation which was based on the October 2017 census figures. This had resulted in approximately £342,000 additional funding to share amongst schools. The Task Group had met on Monday 15 January and decided to put forward two options for the sharing of these monies:

1. Based on total balance available;
2. Based on the presumption that Schools Forum would agree to transfer funding to CSSB of £176,000 (as discussed previously); a remainder of £165,000 was left to be allocated equitably across schools. Schools Forum approved the recommendation of the Task Group to allocate this funding in proportion across the factors in the formula.

A question was raised about the income from fining parents in relation to attendance. It was agreed that the response would be shared with Schools Forum.

It was noted that the final Schools Block APT return had to be submitted to the DfE on Friday 19 January.

The meeting moved to agenda item number 8:

620. Central Services Schools Block

The report was discussed and it was explained that the DfE had introduced a fourth block to the DSG for 2018/19, the Central Services Schools Block (CSSB) which comprised historical and ongoing commitments to support LA functions including the retained elements of the ESG. It was explained that due to inaccuracies in the 2017/18 baseline return, the DfE allocation was short by £276,370. The report recommended the following actions as a way to remedy the allocation between blocks:

- Transfer £124,325 for licences from the SB into the CSSB.
- Transfer £52,000 for the variance on historical items from the SB to the CSSB
- Reduce remaining budgets within the CSSB by £100,045

Cate Duffy made an alternative proposal that the full balance of £276,370 be transferred to the CSSB.

After lengthy discussion Schools Forum agreed the following:

- that £124,325 for copyright licences and £52,000 for historical items (£176,325 total), should be transferred from SB to CSSB for 2018/19 (a one-year commitment);
- although sympathetic to SBC's position, Schools Forum agreed there was insufficient evidence to justify the transfer of a further £100,045, in particular, no modelling had been provided to illustrate the impact of this on schools' budgets, as had been done for the £176,325;
- that the shortfall of budget in the CSSB, £100,045 would be reviewed taken from areas within the ongoing commitments budgets. Details of the proposed budget reductions would be presented to Schools Forum at their next meeting.

It was requested that a report should be made to Schools Forum the following year, giving more detail for clarity.

It was requested that the references to the Virtual Head be amended to read 'Virtual School'. It was noted that this was a statutory duty.

9.05am: Cate Duffy left the meeting

The meeting returned to the running order of the agenda:

621. Early Years Formula 2018/19

Michael Jarrett informed the meeting that the Early Years Task Group had met on 16 January. Forum noted the Task Group's recommendations regarding the implementation of EYNFF for 2018-19. The Group favoured the third proposed option with the Universal Base Rate of £5.20 with inflation uplift of 2.8%, bringing the rate to £5.35 an hour. The model had been tested for sustainability and all

providers would see an increase. The deprivation supplementary allowance would be increased to £0.75 per hour. The centrally retained element of the Early Years Block would be 5%, a reduction from 7%. Current calculations indicated a surplus for contingency. Nationally there had been a low take up of the 30 hour provision and there was a need to build contingency in order to mitigate that. It was noted that the allocation from the DfE to SBC was £15.3M.

A marketing campaign was to be arranged across Slough promoting 2-year old places, in order to generate interest.

Across the five maintained nurseries the DfE supplementary funding allocation of £1.1M had been reduced to £840,000. Michael Jarrett explained he had met with Headteachers, who had all agreed this should be paid as a lump sum.

There had been positive feedback from the Task Group at their meeting held the day before this meeting and the slides of that meeting would be circulated to all Schools Forum members.

It was pointed out that deprivation funding, currently based on FSM, would need to be considered in the future, possibly modelling the use of IDACI. This would be a piece of work to be carried out during the next academic year.

An updated report would be provided at the next Schools Forum meeting.

622. Growth Fund 2018/19

It was explained this was an annual review of criteria and that two additional items were being proposed.

Tony Madden reported that more secondary schools were now part of Growth Fund as pressure on places worked through. Bulge classes had been budgeted for but it was noted that some might be deferred.

Over the past year there had been consideration of funding of bulge classes for the second year, noting that academies were funded differently. This applied where children joined after the October census and therefore there was a further funding lag. Schools Forum acknowledged it was not setting a precedent but it was agreed to fund for those children joining a school between the two censuses.

The criteria for numbers in excess of PAN was agreed.

Schools Forum noted the forecast out turn for 2017/18.

The DSG top-slice for 2018/19 was confirmed at £900,000 (with a carry forward of £175,000) with more secondary schools included and fewer primaries as expansions rolled through. There was a forecasted expenditure of approximately £920,000 with contingency for unexpected growth and projects.

Overall, the Growth Fund was in a healthy position and the criteria as set out in section 2.1 of the report were agreed.

It was explained that SBC had agreed to underwrite a number of places at Grove Academy in order to enable the school to open. This was a requirement of opening the school and there had not been sufficient time to consult with Schools Forum. A

request for £180,000 had been made to fund 'ghost places' and Schools Forum was asked to consider funding 50% from the underspend on Growth Fund. Schools Forum agreed an element of underspend (approximately £90,000) should be used to part-fund (50%) of 'ghost places' at Grove Academy for 2017-18 only. This would result in a carry forward of £85,000.

Schools Forum agreed the Growth Fund criteria as above, with primary and secondary AWPU rates agreed based on 2018/19 formula.

9.40pm: Tony Madden left the meeting

George Grant thanked John Voytal for all the work he had done, as this would be his last Schools Forum meeting. Members endorsed George Grant's sentiments.

The meeting returned to the running order of the agenda:

623. De-Delegation Report 2018-19

It was noted this was an annual report seeking approval from the maintained schools' Schools Forum members to de-delegate the funding for the SEBDOS Behaviour Support Service.

Unit costs for primary and secondary schools were queried, as Schools Forum maintained schools' members had agreed the same rates for both the primary and secondary phases in December 2015. It was noted that, although the overall amount was not affected it did affect the hours to schools. It was understood this information had been incorrect the previous year.

Maintained school representatives at the meeting agreed to de-delegate the funding for the SEBDOS Behaviour Support Service, requesting a revised report be circulated to them for evidence and clarity about the final de-delegation amounts per school, based on the correct rates.

It was noted that the overall amount allocated would decrease as more schools became academies.

The Clerk would arrange for the revised report to be published on the SBC website.

624. Update from Task Groups: 5-16, High Needs Block and Early Years (verbal)

5-16: Already noted.

High Needs: an email was to be sent out arranging a further meeting prior to the next Schools Forum meeting. The banding and Resource Base reviews were going ahead, with the two Task Groups being established.

Early Years: Already noted.

625. Academies Update

There was nothing to report.

626. 2017/18 Forward Agenda Plan and Key Decisions Log

The 2017/18 Forward Agenda Plan and Key Decisions Log were noted and would be updated by the Chair and Clerk.

The Chair pointed out that the appointment of Chair and Vice Chair had been moved to July, prior to the September meeting.

(Note: The Meeting opened at 8.15 am and closed at 10.00 am)