

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
SCHOOLS FUNDING FORUM
CEME**

24 September 2015 (8.30 - 11.15 am)

Present:

Head Teachers

Nigel Emes (Chair) (Primary)
Emma Allen (Special)
Margy Bushell (Primary)
Kirsten Cooper (Primary)
David Denchfield (Primary)
Malcolm Drakes (Primary)
Julian Dutnall (Secondary Academy)
Bill Edgar (Secondary)
Chris Hobson (Primary)
Simon London (Secondary Academy)
Gary Pocock (Special Academy)
Keith Williams (Academy)

Governors

Sheila Clarke
Daren Jackson
Derek Smith MBE

**Trade Union
Representatives**

John Giles (UNISON)
Ray Waxler (NUT)
Keith Passingham (NASUWT)

Officers in Attendance

David Allen (LBH)
Graham Smith (LBH)
Agatha Williams (LBH)

All decisions were taken with no votes against.

The Chairman reminded Members of the action to be taken in an emergency.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS OR OBSERVERS

Apologies were received from Bernard Gilley, Maria Thompson, Katrina Karwacinski and Mary Phillips.

2 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

The Forum agreed unanimously to appoint Nigel Emes as Chair and Keith Williams as Vice Chair until the first meeting of the autumn term 2016.

3 TO AGREE THE NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 JUNE 2015

The minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 18 June 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4 MATTERS ARISING

Item 108 – High Needs Funding 2015-16 refers

3rd line ... “top fund funding” should read “top up funding”.

Item 111 - Trade Union Facility Time refers

The Forum was asked to note the next Trade Union Facility Time Working Group meeting will take place on 13 October at 8:00/8:15am at Hall Mead School. Chris Hobson, Simon London and Keith Williams will be in attendance. Nigel Emes was unable to attend.

All other matters arising were agenda items.

Officers noted comments that there was inconsistency in the references to appendices and how they were labelled in the agenda papers. This made documents difficult to track in a large agenda.

5 MEMBERSHIP

The Chairman welcomed the following new members:

- (i) Derek Smith MBE (Sanders School) governor representative of maintained secondary schools;
Emma Allen (Corbets Tey School) head teacher representative of maintained special schools;
Gary Pocock (Hornbeam Academy Trust) academy representative of the special academy.

The appointment of Sheila Clarke and Daren Jackson as primary school governors was reported at the last meeting but as both had been unable to attend they were welcomed to their first meetings of the Funding Forum.

- (ii) The Forum was asked to note the vacancies for governor representatives of secondary academies and of the pupil referral service.

6 SCHOOLS FORUM OPERATIONAL AND GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE

David Allen took members through the Schools Forum Operational and Good Practice Guide issued by the DfE in March 2015, Appendices B, B.1, B.2 and B.3 referred. The Guide was in two main sections: Constitution and Procedural Issues and Effective Schools Forums. It was noted that Havering was compliant with all of the requirements of the Schools Forum Regulations.

Members considered and completed the self-assessment toolkit. 20 of the 21 questions were agreed as compliant with only induction training to be improved. The following points were noted:

No 4 – there is a website link to the Schools Forum documents but not a “dedicated” website.

No 10 – there is a place on the Funding Forum for a Diocesan Board representative which should be logged as “non attendance” rather than a vacancy.

No 11 – induction training pack – there is no formal induction programme in place, however it was agreed that new members should receive some training/induction which would assist them with their four year term of office.

No 17 – communication with sectors represented - David Allen advised that he would be attending the termly informal meetings with Chairs of Governors to feedback on Forum meetings.

No 20 – system for decision if votes are tied – Forum agreed that the Chairman would have the deciding vote.

7 SECTION 251 OUTTURN 2014-15

The Forum received and noted the section 251 outturn statement of Children’s Services expenditure for 2014-15, Appendix C referred. It was noted that the outturn figures were of limited value when budgets were not recorded. The DSG expenditure reconciled with the £1.68m balance carried forward as reported at previous meetings. The central expenditure on Social Care was £2m overspent.

The Chief Finance Officer will sign off the deployment of DSG. The CFO statement was attached for information at Appendix C.1 with explanatory notes at Appendix C.2 for members’ information. It was noted that Havering would not fall within the range of expenditure and balance carry forwards listed by the DfE for further investigation

8 ALLOCATION OF THE DSG BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD FROM 2014-15

The Forum received and re-considered the proposals from the previous meeting regarding the use of the balance from the 2014-15 centrally held DSG funds.

(i) SEND Reforms - Appendix D referred. This was a proposal for £125k from the DSG underspend from the previous meeting at which members had asked for further information. A number of members raised concerns regarding the costs and timeframes for the appointment of the additional staff requested. Current SENCO staff are capable but in some cases lacked the capacity to clear the number (or backlog) of in-house cases without additional support. Members agreed that when the additional staff were in place they should provide support to each school/academy on a regular and fair basis. The Forum approved the proposal subject to timeframes and equitable distribution of the additional resource being put into place.

(ii) Support for Vulnerable Children - Appendix E referred. This was a proposal for £70k (reduced from £100k) from the DSG underspend from the previous meeting at which members had asked for further information. The Forum was asked to note the allocation is for setting up costs, salaries and a licence fee for a professional portal for easier reference by schools to organisations that can support vulnerable children. Due to the number of questions raised, members requested that a fuller proposal should be brought to the next meeting to facilitate the decision making process.

Members stated that for future proposals a template should be produced setting out the business case and required outcomes. The proposal would then be presented to the Forum for discussion and questions before receiving approval/sign off.

(iii) Falling Rolls Fund - Appendix F referred. The following were agreed:

- the proposal to amend the calculation of 2015-16 funding;
- the £54k originally earmarked for this extension be added to the £465k uncommitted DSG to be carried forward to 2016-17;
- a further report to be received in the autumn term proposing the calculation of support to schools with falling rolls funding arrangements for 2016-17.

9 SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP FUND

The Forum was asked to consider fixed rates for the provision and receipt of support through the existing school partnerships arrangements, the following costs were agreed.

Support provided/received	Cost per day
Release of teaching staff for coaching, lesson observation, moderation, sharing of good practice etc.	£250
Release time for head teacher, deputy or senior leader for leadership development activity at other school	£450
Release for SENCO support	£250
Whole staff meetings (twilight sessions)	Pro-rata daily fee
Release of support staff	£100

10 **SCHOOLS REVENUE FUNDING 2016-17**

The DFE had issued a number of documents in July. These were noted as follows:

- (i) Ministerial statement
- (ii) School revenue funding 2016-2017 – operational guide. This was tabled by David Allen. The guidance was intended to help local authorities and schools forums to plan the implantation of the funding system for the 2016-17 financial year. It set out the formula factors permitted, the calculation of minimum funding guarantees, the permitted areas of central retention and de-delegation etc.
- (iii) School revenue funding 2016-2017 – criteria for allocating the growth fund, falling rolls fund and targeted high needs funding
- (iv) Schools block units of funding 2016 to 2017 – technical note
- (v) Efficiency guidelines

11 **CENTRAL EXPENDITURE**

The Forum was asked to note and agree the proposal for centrally retained services. The Forum approved all the following services:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early years block provision • Funding to enable all schools to meet the infant class size requirement (included in the pupil growth fund below) 	£506,424 £25,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions • Servicing of schools forum 	£499,734 £43,250
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital expenditure funded from revenue (i.e. no new projects can be charged to the central schools budget) • Contribution to combined budgets • Existing termination of employment costs 	£87,490 £236,000 £0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for significant pre-16 pupil growth, including new schools set up to meet basic need, whether maintained or academy • Funding for good or outstanding schools with falling rolls where growth in pupil numbers is expected within three years 	£2,700,000 £500,000

Members were also advised of the increase in the costs of copyright licences from £168,160 to £185,000 as advised by the DFE. This was a DFE charge to the DSG for the central management of copyright licences.

The amount of the High Needs Block had not yet been determined by the DFE. In 2015-16 it was £19.1m before academy and other recouplement.

The proposal to continue to retain £236k for the School Partnership Fund and to support Schools Causing Concern was not approved. Further information was required on the relationship between this fund and support through Teaching Schools and MATs, how the use of this funding was monitored, why secondary schools were required to contribute and the threshold of carry forward above which schools would not receive financial support. This item should be included as an agenda item for further discussion at the next meeting.

12 DE-DELEGATION

The Forum was asked to consider and endorse the proposals for de-delegated services in 2016-17 for LA schools. This was for representatives of maintained primary and secondary schools only as de-delegation was not permitted for special schools and academies. In each case the amount per pupil to be delegated was clearly stated.

The following were agreed for maintained primary schools only:

- £206,274 - Attendance and Behaviour Service - agreed unanimously. It was noted that clarification had been sought from Mary Pattinson on why the services could not be offered separately.
- £194,119 - EAL Service - agreed with 1 abstention.

It was noted that £263,717 remained delegated to schools in their budgets through the EAL factor of the funding formula

The following were agreed for maintained primary and secondary schools:

- £277,868 - Support for schools in financial difficulty – agreed unanimously.
- £321,631 - Maternity Insurance - agreed unanimously.
- £24,082 – Free School Meals Eligibility Checking Service - agreed unanimously.
- Trade Union Facility Time would be discussed at the meeting in October, once the next Facility Time Working Group meeting has taken place.
- School insurance – would be discussed at the next meeting.

It was noted that no budget was required for Licences/Subscriptions as these were now managed through a national agreement and funded from a top slice from the DSG.

13 FORMULA FUNDING 2016-17

The Forum was advised that there were no proposals to revise the current rates for the 2016-17 financial year in Appendix K. However, this was subject to DfE announcements on school funding arrangements and demands which may require a transfer of funding to the High Needs Block from the Schools Block. In 2015-16 the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) was 1.5% and a gains cap was applied to limit increases to 0.91%. The 1.5% MFG is retained for 2016-17 and the gains cap will depend on affordability.

Members were asked to volunteer for a Working Group to consider the pressures in the High Needs Block and report their findings back to the Forum. The following members volunteered: Emma Allen, Margy Bushell, Sheila Clark and Gary Pocock. David Allen will contact other members as two further representatives from secondary schools/academies would be required to complete the Working Group.

14 EXCEPTIONS

The Forum was advised of the process for requesting exceptions to the MFG and any premises related exceptions using the DfE pro-forma (Appendix L). It was agreed not to recommend any exceptions as already turned down in previous years had been requests to adjust schools funding that continued to benefit from Excellence Cluster and Behaviour Improvement Grant.

The Forum was asked to note that Drapers Maylands Primary Academy opened on 1 September 2015 and Dycorts School became a sponsored academy on 1 September 2015. The LA had four months in which to close the school's accounts and transfer any surplus to the Trusts.

15 NEXT MEETINGS

Meeting to be held at CEME at 8.30am on:

22 October 2015
10 December 2015
21 January 2016
17 March 2016
28 April 2016
23 June 2016

16 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

Chairman