

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
SCHOOLS FUNDING FORUM
CEME
7 July 2016 (8.30 - 11.25 am)**

Present:

Representative Groups

Teachers: Nigel Emes, Primary (Chair)
Emma Allen, Primary
Margy Bushell, Primary
Bill Edgar, Secondary
Chris Hobson, Primary
Tim Woodford, Academy

Governors: Sheila Clarke, Primary
Bernard Gilley, Primary
John McKernan, Academy

**Non-School
Representatives:** Maria Thompson, Post 16
Joanna Wilkinson, Early Years/PVI Sector

Trade Unions: John Giles, UNISON
Ray Waxler, NUT

Officers in attendance: Mary Phillips (MP)
David Allen (DA)
Paul Tinsley (PT)
Nick Carter (NC)
Caroline Penfold (CP)
Ian Gurman (IG)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS OR OBSERVERS

Apologies were received from Kirsten Cooper, David Denchfield, Malcolm Drakes, Julian Dutnall, Simon London, Gary Pocock, Keith Williams, Derek Smith, and Keith Passingham.

2 MEMBERSHIP

DA reported that Daren Jackson, Primary Schools Governor representative had resigned and that Wayne Chretien was no longer eligible to serve as the Maintained Special Schools representative. Maintained Special Schools and Academy Special Schools continued to be represented on the Forum.

DA would arrange for a replacement Primary Schools Governor representative to be appointed.

The report was noted.

3 TO AGREE THE NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 APRIL 2016

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendment: 'Minute 170 – Allocation of the DSG carried forward from 2015/16: para 6 to read "DA would take back that *most* (rather than *several*) schools were still writing their own EHCPs....."

4 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising which were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

5 HIGH NEEDS BUDGET OUTTURN 2015-16 AND FORECAST 2016-17

DA provided details of the outturn position for the 2015/16 expenditure from the High Needs Budget and a forecast of expenditure for 2016/17.

The provisional figures showed an overspend of £821,822 in 2015/16 and a budget of £18,891,678 for 2016/17. Given the current financial situation DA indicated expenditure would be closely monitored.

One of the main changes between financial years was the loss of the place led elements for pre-16 Special Schools following Dycorts and Ravensbourne becoming Academies.

NE raised concern at the lack of High Needs support for pupils coming into Reception classes from a PVI setting. Schools were being advised that pupils required 1 to 1 support late in the day and were struggling to find staff to cover in the time available.

JW advised that the EY sector was struggling to cope as they receive little funding to deal with High Needs children. What good work is done with 1 to 1 support is lost when the child transitions to Reception because of the delays in getting adequate support.

CP (Head of Children and Adults with Disabilities Service) stated that Early Years support for children with High Needs was a target for the service and was concerned that parts of the service appeared not to be working.

She asked whether these children had been referred for an EHCP.

JW responded by saying lots of children were referred but it could take 18/24 months for this to be finalised. As a result very few children with an EHCP would be transitioning in to Reception classes.

MB advised that the PVI sector was finding it difficult to access SENCO and reaffirmed that it could take 18/24 months to go through the process.

CP acknowledged that there were a number of children referred into the Special Education system, some would be eligible for EHC plans but some would not.

JW felt that it was difficult to challenge behaviour in the last term before transition.

CP advised that the Council did have a 0-5 team who were involved in transition meetings.

JW stressed that the EY sector needs more funding and the three area SENCO's could not cope with the existing demand.

NE felt that at the moment the Early Help system was not working, for various reasons. Even if a school had its own nursery, children were not getting plans until year 1 and therefore they were unable to provide 25 hours a week of extra support when needed.

CP stated that if there was a problem with the process we need to address that. If there is an issue with timing, outcomes and assessment where will the funding come from to address this?

MP explained that there was an increasing awareness of the High Needs Block and growing pressure. If more resources were to be allocated to EY the funding would have to come from other areas within the block.

DA acknowledged that EY was a priority but this was not the only area of pressure on the High Needs Block. There was also pressure to fund higher costs of placements, reviewing special school funding and for schools that take a disproportionate number of pupils with Special Needs.

Before we move forward we are awaiting the outcome of the High Needs review which was due for its second consultation. The Government had also promised more money for High Needs within the early years sector and that consultation was awaited.

MP advised that with the introduction of Additional Resources Provision in schools, the LA was moving to providing support in-borough rather than place children outside of the borough.

The report was noted.

6 REPORT ON EXPENDITURE OF CENTRALLY RETAINED DSG BUDGETS 2015-16

DA provided a report detailing expenditure against the budgets retained centrally in 2015/16.

Early Years

The Forum was advised that the centrally retained budget for Early Years was £506,424 of which £497,985 had been spent. However, there had been an overspend in Early Years 2, 3 and 4 year old provision of £341,611 giving a total overspend of £333,172. DA was addressing this mismatch in the DSG.

School Admissions

There was a minor overspend due to staff costs as reported at the previous meeting.

Servicing of Schools Forum

Nil variance against a budget of £43,250.

Capital Expenditure from Revenue

There was underspend of £30,665 due to a missed payment. The Forum had already agreed at the last meeting to earmark some of the overall underspend DSG carry forward to cover the additional costs that would fall in 2017-18 because of the missed payment.

Termination of employment costs

Only £6k had been spent from a budget of £39k. This budget was no longer required in 2017-18

Pupil Growth Fund

The £2.7m DSG budget had been increased to £2.8m from funding recouped from the EFA. From this total budget there was an underspend of £500k which had been included in the overall DSG underspend carried forward. The funding was allocated as follows:

	£
New permanent expansions - 2 schools	135,581
Previous year expansions (cohorts moving through) -12 schools, 11.5 forms of entry	497,129
Bulge classes -7 classes, 180 classes	380,917
Commitment to meet unfilled classes from prev. year bulges	1,031,962
Infant class size funding	78,256
Prev. yr growth in secondary	56,423
Funding for academy expansions	141,266
TOTAL	2,321,533

The report was noted.

7 PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE PROVISION FUNDING FROM SEPTEMBER 2016

PT introduced the report which dealt with the need to academise Havering's Pupil Referral Service and the funding implications of the proposed new arrangements around support for vulnerable children at risk of exclusion, or who have been excluded from school.

Initial discussion focussed on primary provision. Under the new proposals the Primary PRU (based at The James Oglethorpe School site) would be replaced by a new model, which would focus on early intervention and building behaviour confidence in all of our primary schools. The LA would continue to provide outreach support and training for primary schools to this end. The current budget for the Primary PRU would be used to support an enhanced outreach service. Three children's centres would be made available for primary schools to refer pupils for part time intervention and support work off site. The current budget could be used to redeploy existing Primary PRU staff with experience in teaching pupils with challenging behaviour. Two early help officers could also be appointed to address any parenting/family issues in relation to these pupils.

Last year there had been just two permanent exclusions from primary schools, the new provision would focus on preventing the need for permanent exclusions but funding would be held centrally to allow for up to four primary exclusions to be commissioned out-of-borough.

NE informed the Forum that the model had changed over the past year and none of his primary colleagues were happy with this model which they did not believe would work.

In response PT accepted that the model had changed and that this had been necessary due to the fact that no primary schools had been willing to implement the original proposals. MP confirmed that we are where we are today because no one was prepared to take the original proposals forward.

NE added that we were putting a lot of resources in to the secondary sector but nothing had been said about early help and there were insufficient resources to support the primary sector. This model would lead to more permanent exclusions. This is not a model wanted by the Primary Heads; the cost of failure would have to come out of the High Needs block.

PT acknowledged the concerns but wanted to remind colleagues that the LA had been prepared to invest in a new primary assessment provision at Harold Court Primary School along with funding to support nurture groups based in some mainstream primary schools. In addition PT advised the Forum that Frances Bardsley Academy had agreed to take on responsibility for hosting the Medical Needs provision including the TUPE responsibilities for appropriate staff. A new build would be provided on site in due course and 18 places had been commissioned at a cost of £16k per place. They would assume responsibility from September at the current facility, subject

to agreement to fund a new build. Primary pupils would be included in the support provided by this newly commissioned provision.

PT advised that negotiations were nearing conclusion with Olive Academies Trust and the signing of an Academies Order was imminent. Under the proposals Olive Academy would take over the KS3 and KS4 provision. They would be offered a long lease on the Birnam Wood site for a facility for up to 35 pupils who were either excluded or at risk of exclusion and a separate KS3 intervention facility at the Petersfield Depot (subject to planning and a satisfactory refurbishment of the site). The Trust were willing to take over responsibility for running the PRS from September, provided they received 'a letter of comfort' from the Council to confirm that the above facilities would be available and that the LA would pay for the agreed number of places to be commissioned for KS3 and KS4 pupils.

Following negotiations with the Trust, the cost per pupil place had been agreed at a level suggested in discussions with secondary head teachers, and represented a saving as compared with current costs of commissioning places from the Havering PRS. The proposed costs ranged from £15k per place to £18k per place. The current cost of the Havering PRS service was £19K per place.

In addition to the KS3 and KS4 places commissioned from the Olive Academy it would be necessary to retain some of the current PRS budget as there might be a need to commission some places out-of-borough where pupils are permanently excluded and cannot be accommodated in borough.

PT informed the Forum that the proposals included the closure of the Albert Road site and the movement of KS4 provision to the Birnam Wood site. The intention was to fund at the current rate from September 2016 to March 2017, after which exclusion Places would be more expensive than intervention places.

NE sought clarity as to the Capital costs and the Forum was told that works to the Petersfield site were estimated at £600K/£700k with the works at Birnam Wood being costed at £400k. Beyond that there was a commitment from the Chief Executive to expand Birnam Wood. The cost would be met from the capital programme.

The Forum:

1. Approved the retention of £300k to support an enhanced LA Behaviour Support/Outreach team for primary provision, subject to annual review;
2. Approved the retention by the Local Authority of sufficient funding to allow for the commissioning of places out of borough for permanently excluded pupils;
3. In the light of the Education Excellence Everywhere White Paper, agreed to devolving funds to secondary schools to explore models for

supporting excluded/at risk pupils, thus reducing the need to purchase additional places out of borough.

8 NEXT MEETINGS

DA would liaise with the Chair regarding future meeting dates.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no urgent business raised.

Chairman