

SOUTHWARK CHILDREN'S SERVICES - SCHOOLS FORUM

THURSDAY 14th MARCH 2023

14.00 to 15.30

Via Teams

DRAFT MINUTES

1. Attendance and Apologies: - See Annex A

The Clerk confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

2. Declaration of Interests

Members were asked to declare any pecuniary or other interests they might have that were greater than the interests of other members of the Schools Forum in any matter on the agenda for discussion. None were declared.

3. Minutes of the Meeting of 8th December 2022

3.1 These were agreed for accuracy with the following amendments and clarifications (which had been circulated ahead of the meeting).

Jenny Brennan is not a voting member of the forum.

The de-delegated services individually detailed in Table 3 in section 4.5 of the papers circulated by phase (mainstream representatives only) was agreed by the primary phase and not the secondary phase.

4. Schools Forum Membership

Vacancies for two governor representatives applications have been circulated. Vacancies for a Primary Headteacher community, Primary Headteacher (VA) and Diocesan Board representative. A request for an additional Trade Union Representative was made, it does not allow for an additional Trade Union member in the constitution.

5. Southwark Scheme for Financing Schools 2023-24

5.1 The Scheme for Financing Schools is the basis on which local devolved financial management of maintained schools operates. It applies to all maintained schools and to the local authority (LA) and it is for the LA to maintain the Scheme, but is for Schools Forum to agree it, following consultation with all maintained schools. Following a comprehensive review of the 2021-22 Scheme, a number of amendments were made to the Scheme to more closely reflect the statutory guidance, to simplify some clauses and to strengthen the arrangements to provide a clear, consistent and meaningful framework for the financial management of schools. After 12 months of operation of the revised Scheme, the LA is now proposing further amendments to correct drafting errors and to provide additional clarification of the operation of the Scheme.

Schools Forum Actions

That the Schools Forum

Note and comment on the proposed and draft amendments to Southwark's Scheme for Financing Schools 2023-24; and

Note and comment on the proposed timeline for consultation with all maintained schools; and

- In the event of no significant objections to the proposed amendments to the Scheme following consultation with all maintained schools, agree to delegate approval of the 2023-24 Scheme to Chair's action. The proposed and draft amendments to Southwark's Scheme for Financing Schools 2023-24 were circulated in Appendix A of the report. **AGREED.**

6. School Financial Support Panel – Terms of Reference

6.1 The Terms of Reference for the School Financial Support Panel were last reviewed in April 2019. This review, along with the amendments to the 2022-23 Scheme for Financing Schools and launch of the Licenced Deficit Framework, is one element of the overarching reassessment of the support and guidance available to maintained schools experiencing financial difficulties in Southwark.

The proposed updates to the Terms of Reference include:

- Reference to delegated responsibility for allocation of the Growth and Falling Rolls Fund (for which the eligibility criteria was approved by the School Forum 06/07/2018);
- Specific reference to submission deadlines and meeting schedule (as agreed at Schools' Forum December 2021);
- Amendments following consultation with the Panel members (April 2022); and
- Panel membership details.

Agree the revised Terms of Reference for the School Financial Support Panel, as attached at **Appendix A**. The proposed updates were **APPROVED**.

The panel have discussed and included in the Terms of Reference the responsibility of Headteachers to avoid redundancies as far as possible, the panel members will need to be satisfied that action has been taken to attempt to redeploy staff members.

There is a £500,000 underspend in the School Financial Support Panel budget. The panel members are expecting an increase in applications in the coming months. It was proposed that any uncommitted funding should be carried forward to the next financial year. The proposal was **APPROVED**.

7. Dedicated Schools Grant 2022-23 Budget Monitor and Financial Update

7.1 The report sets out the budget monitoring information and projected year end position for the budget areas funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) as at the end of January 2023 (Month 10). There are still some areas that are subject to change between now and the year end.

Changes to note

- Since December two schools have joined academy trust, the net schools block allocation has been reduced accordingly for those two schools.
- Underspend on Schools Block which includes the falling rolls fund.
- Overspend on the High Needs Block. There are children awaiting EHCPs which will impact the forecast. Non maintained and independent providers of special needs have increased their costs which are currently under negotiation.

The High Needs Sub Group met on the 23rd of February and discussed the following matters:

- The role of the sub-group and their terms of reference
- An update on the DSG High Needs Block position and on the DSG management plan
- An update on the Safety Valve Programme

The final agreement with the DfE has been signed, there will be additional funding from the DfE subject to achievement of the DSG Management Plan.

The Mayor announced additional funding for School Meals, there will be an additional grant from the GLA.

8. Forward Plan (to be tabled)

The following proposal was discussed

- Meeting in October
- Feedback at each meeting on the DSG and High Needs Sub Group
- Five meetings each academic year
 - October
 - December
 - January
 - March
 - June

9. A.O.B.

There was no other business.

10. Dates of Further Meetings for 2022/23

15 June 2023

Annex A

SCHOOLS FORUM ATTENDANCE SHEET

14 March 2023

VOTING MEMBERS

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PRESENT
Janice Babb	Primary School Headteacher (RC)	Yes
Susannah Bellingham	Primary School Headteacher (Com)	Yes
Pia Longman	Primary School Headteacher CofE	Yes
Vacant	Primary School Headteacher (Com)	
Vacant	Primary School Governor (Com)	
Vacant	Primary School Governor (VA)	
Rebecca Sherwood Had a representative Helen Rowe	Nursery School Headteacher	Apologies
Heidy Tully	Special School Headteacher	Apologies
Nicola Howard	Early Years – Private/Voluntary and Independent Settings	Yes
Steve Morrison	Academy	Yes
Nick Tildesley	Academy (Primary)	Yes
Declan Jones	Academy	No
James Wilson	Academy	No
Steph Lea	Special School Academy	Yes
Yomi Adewoye	Pupil Referral Units	
Catherine May	Secondary School Headteacher	Apologies
Vacant	FE SEN	Awaiting nomination from LA
Vacant	Diocesan Boards	
Betty Joseph Freddy Vanson representing	Trade Unions	Apologies

Senior Officers in Attendance

Nina Dohel	Yes
Yvonne Ely	Apologies
Tim Gibson	Yes
Kate Bingham	Yes
Nikki Tilson	Yes
Richard Hunter	Yes
Neil Gordon-Orr	No
Hayden Judd	Yes
Andrea Dennis	No
Eniko Nolan	Yes
Jenny Brennan, Family Early Help & Youth Justice	Apologies
Sarah Cooper	Clerk