

PRESENT

Schools - Headteachers/Senior Staff: Sue Hussey (St Clement and St James); Kevin Jackson (St Thomas More); David Sellens (Thomas Jones); Kathleen Williams (Servite); Other Schools: Maria Elena Arana (Chelsea Open Air Nursery and Children's Centre; Nick White (Parkwood Hall); Governors – Simon Blanchflower (Thomas Jones) (*Chairman*); Gwynneth Flower (Our Lady of Victories); Academies – David Benson (Kensington Aldridge); Steven Keogh (Cardinal Vaughan Memorial); Shamsur Rahman (*substitute for David Chappell*, Holland Park); Matt Williams (Chelsea Academy); Non-Schools – Cllr Robert Atkinson; Kitty Mason (PVI Forum).

Also in attendance: Cllr Emma Will (Cabinet Member for Education and Libraries).

Officers in attendance – Mala Dadlani (Senior Finance Officer); Alison Farmer (Assistant Director, SEN); Nick Grey (Group Accountant – Schools Direct); Ian Heggs (Director of Schools); Andrew Tagg (Head of Resources); Gavin Wilson (Governance Administrator).

A1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by Mr White, seconded by Ms Mason and

RESOLVED: That Simon Blanchflower be appointed Chairman of the Forum.

At this juncture, Mr Blanchflower took the chair and sought nominations for Vice-Chairman of the Forum.

It was proposed by Mr Mr Sellens, seconded by Ms Hussey and

RESOLVED: That Ms Kathleen Williams be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Forum.

A2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mr Bassett, Ms Bouette, Mr Chappell and Cllr Rutherford.

A3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

A4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1 OCTOBER 2015

The minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 1 October 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to adding Ms Hussey to the list of those present at the meeting.

Further to Minute A3, the following discussion took place.

Managed Services Update

Mr Tagg said that the Council was continuing to work with BT to improve the offer to schools, but he was aware that a number of schools had indicated that they were likely to withdraw from the Council's payroll service as a result of the shortcomings experienced, and just retain the HR advisory service which was the

subject of a separate SLA. The Council's relevant scrutiny committees were being appraised of the present position in the current committee cycle. Mr Tagg asked that if schools wished to withdraw from the service from the start of the next financial year, they should advise of this as soon as possible.

Deprivation Analysis

Mr Tagg advised that work had commenced on the deprivation analysis, but this had been overtaken by changes announced by the government. It therefore made more sense to review the position in relation to deprivation at the time of the anticipated move to a new funding formula. Once details had been received from the government, it was the intention to set up a working group, with a wide membership, to look at relevant issues arising from the review. Mr Sellens said that he would assist by inviting expressions of interest from Primary schools in participating in the working group.

Further to Minute A8, the following discussion took place.

School Organisation Strategy

Mr Heggs reported that data was currently being analysed with a view to the latest iteration of the Strategy being presented for approval to Cabinet in April. It would therefore be appropriate in terms of timing for the document to come to the next meeting of the Forum, which was on 17 March. Mr Wharton, the Tri-Borough Head of Asset Strategy, would be asked to attend to present the report.

Action: Mr Wharton

A5 UPDATE FROM THE CHANCELLOR'S COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW ANNOUNCEMENT

Mr Tagg provided a brief overview of the key points emerging from the Chancellor's Autumn Statement, advising that no further details had been received from the government to those contained in the report under consideration. In particular, he highlighted the potentially significant funding implications if the proposals advanced by the F40 group were adopted. Further details on this were expected in February and would be advised to the proposed working group on the Funding Review. He also drew attention to the likely impact of the anticipated significant reduction in the Education Services Grant (ESG).

The Forum noted that, following the initial information contained in the Chancellor's Statement, further detail was expected in February, with the result of formal consultation held in the late Summer, being announced in September. Implementation would be in the 2017/18 financial year.

The report was received and noted.

A6 DSG 2015/16 MONITORING AND UPDATE

Mr Tagg drew attention to the key figures in the revised DSG budgets and forecast outturn set out in the report; there was an underspend of just under £2 million and a projected carry-forward of £4.2 million.

Mr Tagg said that there had been a good response so far from schools in returning their High Needs schedules, but he stressed that the aim was to achieve a 95% response rate. Mr Sellens said that he could assist by raising the matter at the forthcoming Heads Consultative Group.

Regarding the sum of around £4 million in balances at the end of the current financial year, the proposal, supported by Heads Consultative Committee, was for a one-off allocation of £500,000 to be made available to reimburse schools catering for statutory school-age children which had lost out in terms of pupil premium payments. The Forum agreed this proposal.

Mr Tagg said that it was also proposed to release £1.5 million from balances, split equally between primary and secondary schools. It was not proposed to make an allocation to nursery, special schools or alternative providers as these sectors had been well-supported financially in recent years.

Ms Mason considered that nursery and special schools should receive support from balances. Mr White referred to the fact that, over the previous three to four years, early years providers were often having to meet the cost of special educational needs provision, for which they were not reimbursed; there was a case, therefore, for them to be included in the allocation from balances. Ms Arani supported this view, commenting that early years providers had faced year-on-year cuts over a period and were struggling financially. In response, Ms Farmer reiterated the point made earlier that additional allocations had been made to early years providers in recent years.

Mr Keogh suggested that an allocation should be formula-based on need. Ms Williams believed that it would be appropriate to recognise the needs of schools which had suffered many gaps in their funding in recent years.

Mr Sellens said that he considered that money from balances should be distributed evenly on an equitable basis, rather than as a result of decisions based upon the self-interest of particular groups of providers. This view was supported by Ms Williams, although Ms Hussey commented that it might not necessarily be the view of all primary heads. Mr Benson agreed with Mr Sellens regarding an 'ethical' stance, and said that factors such as school size, levels of deprivation should be taken into account.

Cllr Will underlined the need for funding from balances to be distributed in a timely fashion. Mr Tagg said that it should be the intention for this to take place before the end of the current financial year.

The Forum agreed:

- (a) a one-off allocation from balances of £500,000 be made to reimburse schools catering for statutory school-age children which had lost out in terms of pupil premium payments;
- (b) an allocation of £1.5 million from balances be made to primary and secondary schools, split equally between the two sectors, on a pro-rata headcount basis;
- (c) the amount under (b) to be paid as an equal lump sum to all primary schools;
- (d) secondary schools to be sent possible models of allocation, in order to advise the officers of a preferred means of distribution.

Action: Mr Tagg

Mr Blanchflower said that the agreement of a preferred means of allocation to secondary schools could be ratified, if necessary, at the next meeting of the Forum.

A7 DSG 2016/17 AND LOCAL SCHOOLS FUNDING FORMULA

Ms Dadlani highlighted the key points in relation to DSG 2016/17 contained in the report.

Responding to an enquiry from Ms Hussey, Ms Dadlani said that the application of the falling rolls fund only to schools deemed to be good or outstanding was a government decision.

Referring to the previous case of Sion Manning, Mr Sellens enquired as to whether a strategic plan for longer-term development existed in the case of Park Walk. In response, Mr Heggs said that all schools had robust improvement plans, and said that it would be appropriate for relevant issues to be considered when the School Organisation Strategy was considered at the Forum's next meeting.

The Forum agreed:

- (a) the submission of the APT tool as outlined in the report;
- (b) the continuation of the falling rolls fund;
- (c) the falling rolls fund should be allocated on the basis of movement in pupil numbers above 5%, with schools presenting a forward business case to support their case.

A8 ALLOCATION OF BALANCES

This matter had been covered in earlier discussion at the meeting.

A9 EARLY YEARS PUPIL PREMIUM

The Forum agreed that, for the October 2015 census and PVI providers, payments should be based upon an IDACI proxy measure 2010.

The meeting ended at 6.13 p.m.

Chairman