

Minutes of a meeting of the Schools' Forum held in the Crofton Room, Freeman Suite, at Kensington Town Hall at 5.00 pm on Tuesday 21 September 2017

## PRESENT

### Schools:

**Governors** – Peter Bassett (Avondale Park Primary); Simon Blanchflower (**Chairman** and Thomas Jones Primary)

**Head Teachers/Senior Staff** – Sarah Bouette (St Thomas CE Primary); Sue Hussey (St Clement & St James CE Primary); Kevin Jackson (St Thomas More Language College)

**Other Schools** – Maria Elena Arana (Chelsea Open Air Nursery & CC); Nick White (Parkwood Hall); Nathan Crawley-Lyons (Latimer AP Academy)

**Academies** – Shamsur Rahman (substitute for David Chappell, Holland Park); Lucian Boyd Harte (substitute for Matt Williams Chelsea Academy)

**PVI Forum** - Kitty Mason (Holland Park Day Nursery and PVI Forum)

**Non-Schools:** Cllr Robert Atkinson (RBKC)

**Officers in attendance:** Melissa Caslake (Bi-Borough Executive Director for Children's Services); Lize Ferreira (Accountant); Ian Heggs (Director, Schools Quality & Standards); Deborah Robinson (Governance Services); Andrew Tagg (Head of Resources).

## A1 BI-BOROUGH EDUCATION SERVICES

Melissa Caslake attended the meeting to introduce herself to the Forum as the recently appointed Bi-Borough Executive Director for Children's Services (previously Director of Family Services in Westminster). The transition from Tri- to Bi-Borough services will affect education services but should not impact unduly on schools as contact with staff posts will remain unchanged.

Mr Heggs confirmed that staff changes will mostly be to heads of service, rather than to frontline staff and school support, so that continuity of service will be maintained. Formal staff consultation was about to start with the expectation that the change from Tri- to Bi-borough will be completed by March 2018. However, SEN services will continue to be shared across the three boroughs, with Fiona Phelps in post as Tri-Borough Head of SEN (Casework & Commissioning).

## A2 UPDATE ON GRENFELL TOWER

Mr Heggs reported that the Council was providing transport to and from school for families affected by the fire at Grenfell Tower.

The Council meeting held in July had agreed funding for children affected by the fire and a Steering Group including School Governors and Councillors had been established to consider requests for the use of this funding. Mr Tagg explained that requests for funding can be made by anyone affected by the fire or direct from schools. The process for accessing funds was being kept as simple as possible and funding will be transferred to schools to support

individual cases or group requests, for example for uniforms, school meals and classroom support. Mr Heggs confirmed that the fund would be flexible for particular needs identified, including additional counselling support. Mr Bassett asked if it might be possible to fund additional holiday for staff and Mr Heggs felt this could be decided by governors if a school had this expenditure; he confirmed that overtime payments had been made to officers.

Cllr Atkinson asked about longer term enrolment for schools in the area; parents had moved their children from some schools, for understandable reasons, and this would have an impact on the schools' viability. Mr Tagg said discussions were being sought with the DfE about Kensington Aldridge and support for the re-establishments of rolls. This would also apply for PVI and nurseries. The position would become clearer on the numbers involved following the October census and schools would be provided with an update as soon as information was available.

Mr White asked if the Schools' Forum would be accountable for the special funding available and Mr Tagg said he would report to the Forum on expenditure from the fund. At the moment it was being used for ad hoc requests but a longer term fund would be established. Mr Heggs confirmed that the fund was provided from core Council funding and was not capped.

A more detailed meeting is being arranged with North Kensington Head Teachers on 6 October to discuss the fund.

Ms Caslake left the meeting at this point.

### **A3 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN**

Simon Blanchflower was nominated by Nick White, seconded by Maria Elena Arana, and

**RESOLVED:** That Simon Blanchflower be elected Chairman of the Schools' Forum. Mr Blanchflower took the Chair and sought nominations for Vice-Chairman.

Kathleen Williams was nominated by Simon Blanchflower, seconded by Sarah Bouette, and

**RESOLVED:** That Kathleen Williams be elected Vice-Chairman of the Schools' Forum.

### **A4 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from David Benson (Kensington Aldridge), David Sellens (Thomas Jones Primary), Kathleen Williams (Servite RC Primary) and Matt Williams (Chelsea Academy).

### **A5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

## **A6 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 MARCH 2017 AND MATTERS ARISING**

### **Minute A9 – School Organisation and Investment Strategy 2017:**

Ms Hussey said she had still not had a reply to her letter about Colville Primary School and Mr Sellens had submitted an amendment to the point he raised in the second paragraph, as follows:

“Mr Sellens asked why RBKC had agreed to expand some schools, including Marlborough to 2-form entry which was not oversubscribed, and also allowed a new free school to open on Kensington High Street. The wording in the report to the Forum questioned the viability of small schools in the south of the Borough in the long term, but the future viability of schools was unknown.”

Ms Bouette said head teachers were concerned about school organisation and continued expansion and requested a report to the Forum.

**AGREED:** (a) that a response be sent to Ms Hussey’s letter about Colville Primary School; and

(b) that Mr Tagg would consult with head teachers and present a report to the Forum.

**Action: Mr Tagg**

**Minute A11 – Parkwood Hall Academy:** Mr White reported that his discussions with Mr Tagg about funding issues had been overtaken by events.

**AGREED:** That Mr White and Mr Tagg would arrange to meet as soon as possible.

**Action: Mr White/Mr Tagg**

The amended minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## **A7 HIGH NEEDS FUNDING REVIEW**

Mr Tagg reported that the review of special provision across all three boroughs was moving into phase two and Peter Grey had submitted a draft report and recommendations. Mr Grey had intended to be at the meeting to go through the report but he could not attend.

Demand for High Needs funding was expected to increase across the tri-borough, with 70% of London boroughs reporting an overspend (including in Hammersmith & Fulham).

Mr White expressed his disappointment that Mr Grey was not present at the meeting to discuss his report, particularly as he had not visited Parkwood Hall and the information at paragraph 4.7/Table 7 in the report was incorrect. The top-up rate in Table 7 was given as £28,810 per pupil but this figure should be £23,294. Since he had been head teacher at Parkwood Hall, almost 11 years, the subject of High Needs funding and a specialist school in RBKC had been discussed but not achieved.

Mr Crawley-Lyons also expressed disappointment that the figures had not been checked with the Latimer AP Academy. He said it was unfortunate that the report had been widely circulated to others and that the Forum was the last group to receive it.

Mr Bassett referred to the recommendation for High Needs capacity in all mainstream schools and asked if mainstream teachers would be able to pick up on marginal high needs, such as dyslexia, without financial support.

The Chairman asked what the next stage would be, and what the process would be for accepting or rejecting the recommendations in the report. Mr Tagg said the National Funding Formula had been published the previous week and would support additional funding and the recommendations would be adopted at local level. Mr White said there had been huge changes to SEN provision in RBKC which had to be service-led at a strategic level.

**AGREED:** (a) Mr Tagg would feedback the Forum's comments to Mr Grey.

(b) Mr Grey had offered to hold sessions with head teachers to discuss the report and this would be arranged as soon as possible for Head Teachers or their nominees who wanted to attend.

(c) That a draft action plan, with timescales, be drawn up before the school half-term and an update submitted to the Forum's next meeting.

**Action: Mr Tagg**

**A8 DEDICATED SCHOOL GRANT 2016/17 OUTTURN**

Mr Tagg tabled an additional report on the DSG Outturn and School Balances as at 31 March 2017. The report was received and noted.

**A9 DEDICATED SCHOOL GRANT 2017/18**

Mr Tagg presented a report on the budgets and projected outturn for 2017/18. The report was received and noted.

**A10 DEDICATED SCHOOL GRANT MONITORING 2017/18**

Mr Tagg highlighted key points in the report, including the total DSG of £67.712 million (a £775,000 increase) with a £365,000 increase for Early Years and £389,000 for School Block funding. Ms Ferreira pointed out a correction to the figure for the High Needs Block (in the heading above paragraph 3.1.3 on page 3) - £3.134 million should read £624,000 and is the current projected overspend in 2017/18.

The report was received and noted.

**A11 SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS**

Mr Tagg presented a report setting out amendments and additions to the Scheme for Financing Schools. Mr Jackson asked for a copy of the Schools' Financial Procedures and Mr Tagg agreed to send this.

**AGREED:** The Forum approved the Scheme for Financing Schools policy for publication.

**Action: Mr Tagg**

**A12 NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA**

Mr Tagg made a verbal update at the meeting; no school will lose more than 0.5% per pupil and the lump sum had reduced from £150,000 down to £110,000. By 2019 nursery schools will have to come in line with the unified rate for all providers.

**AGREED:** The Forum would have a full discussion of this item at the next meeting.

**Action: Mr Tagg**

**A13 SCHOOLS' FORUM ASSOCIATION**

The Chairman reported receipt of a letter from Ms Niki Crookdake, Chair of the Schools' Forum Association, inviting the Forum to join the Association.

**AGREED:** The Chairman would accept the invitation to join the SFA.

**Action: Chairman**

**Next meeting: Monday 6 November 2017**

The meeting closed at 6.15 pm

Chairman