

Schools Forum

Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 2nd December

Members Present:

Jolyon Roberts	Dan Bowden
Dean Brewer	Sue Lenihan
Gill Larocque	Dave Harvey
Tyrone Myton	Kate Lanning
Markie Hayden	Maryssa Dako
Chris Andrew	Jenny Aarons
Theresa Staunton	Keran Currie
Clare Cranham	

Observers Present:

Jeni Murphy	Cllr Maria Gatland
Stuart Collins	Charles Quaye
Shelley Davies	Jenny Bartlett
David Rabjohns	Abioye Asimolowo
Karen Steele	Cllr Joseph Lee
Stephen Hehir	

Apologies: Fiona Robinson, Julie Evans, Cllr Amy Foster, Dermot Mooney, Priya Perera, Sharon Hemley and Alaina Packer-Searle

Elected Chair: Jolyon Roberts
Elected Vice Chair: Gill Larocque

Clerk: Mori Bates

Item	Detail	Lead/Action
1.	Welcome & Apologies	JR
	Apologies received by MB from FR, JE, CllrAF, DM, PP, SHem & APS	
2.	Minutes & Actions – Meeting 10th June 2024	JR
	Minutes, actions, and matters arising from last meeting 7 th October 2024	
	Summary of comments made in reference to the previous minutes:	
	2.1 Feb'24 minutes: Under Q3/A3, relating to children under the category of Support for Inclusion/Home Education, PP will circulate information requested around this – ACTION PP	PP
	2.2 Jun'24 minutes: Under 4.18, SP will circulate the questionnaire feedback on SALT within authority – ACTION SHem	SHem

	<p>a) Clerk also amended other errors with formatting, phrasing and SPAG.</p> <p>2.3 Oct'24: Regarding an updated on the Maintained Nursery School Balances & Deficit Recovery, the paper has been deferred until January. When questioned about the current status of the MNSs, SD confirmed that the Executive Mayor in Cabinet approved the MNS model in order to sustain the MNS ACTION – MNS Paper added to Jan'25 agenda</p> <p>2.4 Addition #1: It was noted that the grouping of the clusters in connection to the therapies proposal have been readjusted to reflect the clusters of the CLSS.</p> <p>2.5 Addition #2: SD is in the process of arranging a meeting with health colleagues and forum members, so all interested parties should email SD directly if they would like to attend. The meeting itself will benefit from clear steering from both schools and support from the current contract.</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p>Sufficiency Paper</p>	<p>JM</p>
	<p>3.1 JM presented a Sufficiency Paper for informational purposes and points to note in connection to the distribution of the Early Years Budget Grant.</p> <p>3.2 The take up of funding is going well and the places are being provided for those children. At present, take up is higher than the DfE predictions, with the exceptions of the 3&4 YOs.</p> <p>3.3 Money from the EYBG will have been paid on the 29th November. Croydon received £167,094 for all providers and an additional £58,188 for the MNS. Table 1 showed the grant distribution using figures from the Autumn headcount. The aim is to maintain the MNS distribution showing a rate per child. JM confirmed that they are currently working on ways to support the expansion of the wards shown in Table 3.</p> <p>Q1: DH: Is the money from the EYBG likely to make a difference to the MNS?</p> <p>A1: JM: The MNS will then get two lots of funding – one from Universal and the other from the MNS supplementary grant.</p> <p>Q2: CC: What are the reasons for the differences in the figures shown in Table 3?</p> <p>A2a: JM: It could be the number of providers operating within each ward, or the DfE calculations relating to the number of children.</p> <p>A2b: SD: Croydon also has different types of Early Years providers which allows parents to select the most appropriate provision for their child.</p> <p>3.4 CC noted that there are impacts of the dataset shown in Table 3 on primary school places of which JM confirmed it is possible to overlap the data and map it out for reference in terms of place distribution across the age ranges.</p> <p>3.5 Recommendation C was noted by members of Forum and the proposed</p>	

	distribution method agreed upon as to money being distributed on a per child basis.																																				
4.	DSG 25/26 & Formula Factors	CQ																																			
	<p>4.1 CQ presented the paper on Formula Factors, adding that for the factors where it had been previously voted to move to the NFF we are then unable to move out of this as the DfE does not allow this. Therefore, votes were being taking on the non NFF decisions e.g. IDACI Band A, Lump Sum, PFI, MFG, Growth, Split Site and LAC, with the disapplication request to support the High Needs Block safety valve also to be discussed at the meeting.</p> <p>4.2 Members of Forum were asked to vote for the above and note the recommendations of both the paper and the Schools' Block Working Group.</p> <p>4.3 CQ drew the attention of Forum to 2.2 of the paper, explaining that the variation shown in column 4 may change as figures are confirmed and grants are being rolled in.</p> <p>4.4 The Chair commented that upon analysis of column C and D of Appendix C that the primary schools are not benefitting from the uplift as much as secondary schools, when any uplift should have been standard and across all educational settings. He noted that on the very small £3M uplift last year 100% went to secondary.</p> <p>Highlighted sections here indicate the recommendations from the Schools' Block Working Group.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>No.</th> <th>Formula Factor</th> <th>Approval type 24/25</th> <th>Options</th> <th>Voting Result</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>3.1</td> <td>Minimum per pupil funding</td> <td>To note</td> <td>Compulsory factor</td> <td>N/A – Forum noted</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.2</td> <td>Age weighted pupil unit (Basic Entitlement)</td> <td>To note</td> <td>Compulsory factor</td> <td>N/A – Forum noted</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.3</td> <td>Deprivation – IDACI</td> <td>BAND B-F – NFF was applied last year (NFF). No change required BAND A – Above NFF rate was applied</td> <td>A) Keeping to the IDACI "A" above the NFF rates as last year B) Move IDACI "A" to NFF</td> <td>15 votes in favour of option A. Option A is carried.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.4</td> <td>Deprivation – FSM & FSM6</td> <td>Moved to NFF last year. No change required</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.5</td> <td>Low Prior Attainment</td> <td>Moved to NFF last year. No change required.</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.6</td> <td>English as an Additional Language</td> <td>Moved to NFF last year. No change required.</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	No.	Formula Factor	Approval type 24/25	Options	Voting Result	3.1	Minimum per pupil funding	To note	Compulsory factor	N/A – Forum noted	3.2	Age weighted pupil unit (Basic Entitlement)	To note	Compulsory factor	N/A – Forum noted	3.3	Deprivation – IDACI	BAND B-F – NFF was applied last year (NFF). No change required BAND A – Above NFF rate was applied	A) Keeping to the IDACI "A" above the NFF rates as last year B) Move IDACI "A" to NFF	15 votes in favour of option A. Option A is carried.	3.4	Deprivation – FSM & FSM6	Moved to NFF last year. No change required			3.5	Low Prior Attainment	Moved to NFF last year. No change required.			3.6	English as an Additional Language	Moved to NFF last year. No change required.			
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3.7	Lump Sum	Above NFF rate was applied last year	A) Stay at above NFF rate per school B) Move to the NFF	15 votes in favour of option A. Option A is carried.
3.8	Mobility	Moved to NFF last year. No change required.		
<p>4.5 In relation to the PFI factor, it was noted by the Schools' Block Working Group that there is a slight issue whereby information relating to this factor are not being shared to ensure that all schools are being treated equally. A recommendation was given to reduce the agreed amount to £500K. In the event that the school require further funding, they would have to complete the DfE Affordability model and explain why additional money is required. This would ensure greater transparency for Forum to undertake their role with better information.</p> <p>4.6 CA expressed concern for the impact this vote will have on the children of the school. Following on from this, SD said that Forum should make a decision that would not disadvantage the children attending this school. Various members gave their opinion that we simply do not know whether this will disadvantage the school and a completed affordability modelling exercise would provide more clarity.</p> <p>4.7 It is also important to know how the money is being spent. T M added that we do not know how much is needed. If a conversation were to start up with the involved parties, then the Forum would have a clearer understanding of how much money the PFI school needs.</p>				
3.9	Private Finance Initiative – base rate increase	Last year £573K was agreed	A) Inflationary increase of 2.3% (DfE rate) to be applied to last year's rate B) Stay the same as last year's rate C) Adjust the figure in question	1 vote in favour of A 14 votes in favour of C, to adjust the figure to £500K. Option C is carried.
3.10	Minimum Funding Guarantee	To agree part of the DfE model – limits reduced to between -0.5% and 0.5%	A) -0.5% B) 0% C) 0.5%	15 votes for 0% Option B is carried.
3.11	Growth (Primary Growth Factor Value*) New DfE minimum funding level/value payable per pupil to schools	No changes in the Criteria for growth 25/26 Primary growth factor value* (£1,550 x number of pupils x ACA)	A) Agree to keep the same criteria and methodology 24/25 B) Request a meeting to review last year's criteria and methodology	15 votes to keep using the same criteria and methodology Option A is carried.
3.12	Split Site The Chair declared a pecuniary interest	Above the NFF factor was agreed last year for both the basic and distance factors	A) Moving to the NFF rate B) Stay below the NFF rate	15 votes in favour of option A Option A is carried
3.13	Sparsity & London Fringe	(Croydon is not London Fringe)	These factors are not applicable to	N/A

			Croydon	
3.14	Looked After Children	DfE has removed this factor. Schools' Forum agreed to fund these services last year – the LA distributed £167K through this factor in previous years.	Please note: Schools' Forum last year agree to fund the £167K LAC through de-delegation process from the growth budget which forms part of the Schools' Block.	Schools' Forum agreed to continue to fund virtual schools via a de-delegation amount equal to last year.
<p>4.8 <u>Disapplication Request</u>: A vote is required to carry out a £1.2m block transfer from the Schools' Block to the High Needs Block as part of the Safety Valve agreement. This transfer will enable the LA to receive the next instalment of the safety valve payments that will help to continue reducing the High Need Block overspend.</p> <p>4.9 The Schools' Block recommendation – majority of members of this working group were in favour of the transfer.</p> <p>4.10 SD explained that the £1.2m goes into the High Needs Block where it can go towards various projects and elements of High Needs support for children and young people. This budget helps to support the needs of the children across all settings, including ELPs and mainstream schools.</p> <p>4.11 The Vote: 13 members voted in favour of the transfer, with two members abstaining from the vote. Forum Agreed on the disapplication request to transfer £1.2m from the Schools' Block to the High Needs Block.</p>				
5.	Working Group Updates			TS/FR/ TM
	<p>5.1 Updates from Schools' Forum Working Groups</p> <p>a) Early Years – Actions pending from the working group due to be picked up in 2025</p> <p>b) Schools Block – Meeting centred around Formula Factors</p> <p>c) High Needs – Meeting took place with a finance paper presented by CQ</p>			
6.	Any Other Business			All
	<p>The Chair and members of Schools' Forum showed appreciation and thanks to CQ for his service, knowledge and numerous papers presented in his time with Croydon and wish his well.</p>			

Meeting Adjourned: 11:40am
Date of next meeting: Monday 27th January
F10, Town Hall