

**Minutes of the Schools Forum Meeting
1st February 2018
(4:00 pm, Training Room 2, BEST hub, Colindale)**

Attended	Name	Representing	Type of Member	Member until end
Members	Alayah Hirst	Independent Jewish Day School	School Governor	July 2020
	Beata Felmer	London Academy	Substitute for Angela Trigg (Academy Principal)	Sept 2019
	Gilbert Knight	Oakleigh	Special School Governor	Sept 2019
	Ian Kingham	Oak Lodge	Special School DHT	Jan 2021
	Joanne Kelly	Pavilion PRU	Pupil Referral Unit	Sept 2019
	Jo Djora	The Hyde Academy	Academy School Principal	Sept 2020
	John Bowra	Christ's College Finchley	Secondary School Governor	July 2020
	Jude Stone	Cromer Road	Primary Community HT	Mar 2018
	Keith Nason	National Education Union	Stakeholders - Unions	Sept 2019
	Lesley Ludlow	Moss Hall Infants	Primary Community Governor	Sept 2020
	Marc Lewis	Wren Academy	Substitute for Gavin Smith Wren Academy	Apr 2018
	Nigel Taylor	Childs Hill	Primary Community Governor	May 2018
	Simon Horne	Friern Barnet	Secondary School HT	Sept 2020
LA Officers	Ian Harrison	Education & Skills Director (Cambridge Education)	LBB Officer	n/a
	Claire Gray	School Funding Manager	LBB Officer	n/a
	Gaspere Nicolini	Senior Business Partner	LBB Officer	n/a
	Simon James	AD Send & Inclusion	LBB Officer	n/a
	Tamara Kulatunga	CSG – School Funding	LBB Officer – Clerk to Schools Forum	n/a

	Did not attend			
Members	Andrew McClusky	Hasmonean High School	Academy School Principal	Oct 2018
	Angela Trigg	London Academy	Academy Representative	Sept 2019
	Annette Long	Barnet Early Years Alliance (BEYA)	Nursery Community	Sept 2020
	Anthony Vourou	St John's N11	Primary VA/Found. Governor	Sept 2019
	David Byrne	Barnet & Southgate Col	14-19 Provider Rep.	Sept 2019
	Gavin Smith	Wren Academy	Academy School Principal	Sept 2020
	Jeanette Adak	Monkfrith Primary	Primary Community HT	Sept 2019
	Robin Archibald	Broadfields Primary Academy	Academy School Representative	July 2019
	Ruth Taylor	Trent	VA governor	July 2020
	Sarah Vipond	Middlesex Uni. Nursery	Early Years Private Provider Representative	Sept 2019
Non Members	Cllr Reuben Thompstone	Lead member for Children's Services		

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Ben Thomas, the new Strategic lead, who has replaced Val White. Standing apologies from Cllr Reuben Thompstone. Post meeting apologies received from Jeanette Adak.

2. WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

GK greeted the Schools Forum and welcomed new member Ian Kingham, deputy headteacher at Oak Lodge School, now representing Special Schools.

GK bid farewell to Lesley Burgess, headteacher at Northway Special school.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Agreed as a true and accurate record of the last meeting.

5. MATTERS ARISING

TK circulated a paper showing historic spend on growth. The table included the actual spend on growth over the years 15/16 to 17/18 as well as 18/19 projected growth. The table presented the breakdown between APT growth and the specific growth funding block which covers temporary bulge classes, bulge class protection and diseconomy funding.

Beata Felmer (BF) asked if 17/18 is on a forecast basis. CG confirmed that as we are about to close the financial year, it is likely to be the final position.

BF queried if the breakdown is as per academic or financial year and CG replied all LA budget figures are by financial year.

6. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

6a 2017/18 BUDGET MONITORING AND REVISED BUDGET

Gaspare Nicolini (GN) presented the Quarter 3 budget monitoring position on the DSG. The main change to the bottom line is to do with High Needs pressures (£1.063m). This was flagged up at the previous Schools Forum. There is also an overspend position in the Early Years Block (£0.995m) due to the clawback of DSG funding for 2016/17 as a result of reduced EY pupil numbers in the January census. GN advised that the Early Years budget reflects a true in year position. Any reduction in pupil numbers in the January 2017 EY census will be reflected in the outturn at year end, and would be a clawback from the Early Years block by the DfE in 2018/19.

The current 2017/18 overspend will be funded from reserves. The forecast balance in reserves of £132k will be carried forward into next year, excluding any EY adjustment.

Ian Kingham (IK) wanted to know the main areas of pressure within High Needs. Simon James (SJ) replied that there are two primary drivers. Significant pressures in terms of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) for students aged 16-25 to be funded without any additional budget as well as additional numbers within special schools.

Simon Horne (SH) commented that funding for future pressures in the High Needs Block is no longer available as the balance in reserves is very low.

Ian Harrison (IH) explained that each block would have to be managed carefully.

IK requested clarification on what the recoupment in the High Needs Block relates to. CG advised that it's the direct funding of High Needs places in academies, taken off as the schools are funded directly by the ESFA.

GK asked the Schools Forum to vote on recommendation: (i) To comment and agree the DSG position for 2017/18.

Result of the vote: Agreed unanimously.

7. TOWARDS A NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA

7a 2018/19 DRAFT BUDGET

IH presented an update on the 2018/19 draft budget. The main change from the December report is the actual allocation of the DSG Block. The Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding committee (CELS) met in January to consider recommendations on the Schools Formula and Barnet's submission to the DfE.

IH stated that the revised allocation of the Schools Block based on October 2017 census data and a review of the 2018/19 growth funding requirements has made it possible to ensure that no school would receive less funding per pupil than received in 2017/18. This is an improvement from the -0.5% Minimum Funding Guarantee proposed previously. However, in order to implement this, the cap on gains is to be set at +0.24% per pupil.

IH mentioned that Barnet has not requested the movement of any funding from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block, unlike many other local authorities. But IH explained that the High Needs budget will require careful management to prevent it overspending.

IH wanted the School Forum to note that the 3p increase per hour per child in Early Years income would not be passed onto providers but would be placed in contingency to cover pupil growth, new providers, discrepancies in census data and any possible ESFA clawback of funding. If this contingency is not sufficient in 2018/19 rates for the following year will need to be reviewed. The hourly rates to providers will remain the same as in 2017/18.

Action:

Jo Djora (JD) requested a breakdown of Section 251 line 1.3.1, Central expenditure on children under 5 for the next meeting.

GK asked the Schools Forum to vote on recommendations (ii to vii)

Recommendations:

- (ii) Notes the decision to implement the school funding formula contained in this report, in line with option 2 from the consultation on the Barnet School Funding formula – the National Funding Formula with additional protection.
- (iii) Approves the proposal for a Minimum Funding Guarantee of 0% and a gap on gains of +0.24% in per pupil funding.
- (iv) Approves the proposed allocations of High Needs budgets as set out in Appendix B and the SEN and PRU funding arrangements set out in more detail in the separate paper on High Needs funding.
- (v) Approves the proposed central expenditure on early years as set out in Appendix B (S251 line 1.3.1) subject to a further report on early years funding arrangements, once the DSG allocation is confirmed (based on the January 2018) census.
- (vi) Approves the proposed other central expenditure allocations as set out in Appendix, including the contributions to combined budgets, school admissions, servicing of Schools Forum, pupil growth, other items (£2.108m) and former ESG retained duties.
- (vii) Notes that the council's Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 13 February will be asked to approve the draft (gross) Schools budget (DSG) of £327.313m, to note the draft Post-16 budget of £5.417m and to agree that any changes to the budget reasonably required as a result of the final 2018/19 DSG and Post-16 settlement are delegated for decision to the Strategic Director - Children & Young People in consultation with the Director of Resources

Schools Forum decision: Recommendations (ii) to (vii); agreed unanimously.

JD thanked LB Barnet for sharing the school budget information with schools so swiftly.

Nigel Taylor (NT) asked if Barnet is in a better position than other local authorities. IH explained that Barnet has managed High Needs budgets carefully over recent years to avoid an overspend, but several other authorities had not managed to avoid overspending.

7b HIGH NEEDS REVIEW

SJ presented a report on High Needs funding, particularly highlighting the fact that there are increased pressures on the High Needs Block. The report identifies where those pressures are.

The 2017/18 variance of £1.063m is as a result of local authorities being required to fund 19-25 High Needs pupils without additional income and additional place and top-up costs in special schools.

Special Schools - SJ highlighted the bandings in Special Schools and that there is no proposal to change these bands in 2018/19. However, there is a plan to increase places in some special schools. This will reduce the requirement to commission fewer as many places out of borough, thus providing better outcomes and value for money.

Additional Resourced Provision (ARP) - SJ stated that there will be some changes for 2018/19 relating to ARP funding. Autism in Barnet is the main presenting need with approximately 50% of children with SENDs having a diagnosis of autism. Additional ARP provision is likely to be needed to support these children.

SJ highlighted that the Special Needs Panel will be required to apply the criteria more stringently when deciding how funding is awarded across the bands.

ARP pupils will be funded through the National Funding Formula in 2018/19; meaning the AWPU and formula funding are increasing to ARPs. As a result of this change, without an adjustment the total place and top-up funding to ARPs would rise to a higher level than in 17-18, which is unaffordable going forward. The proposal is to reduce the value of the top-up to take account of the increase in core funding. The total place plus top-up allocation per pupil for the ARPs will remain the same as in 2017/18

SH queried if this is per child or per place. SJ confirmed that it is per child in place and that top-up funding follows the child.

SJ stated that the proposals on how to harmonise the top-up values by specialism will go to consultation between April and September.

Post 16 - SJ highlighted that a lot of scrutiny on Post 16 places has been carried out. He also advised that the authority is working closely with Barnet and Southgate College to include the implementation of a banding system, similar to the top-up bands currently applied to ARPs, Special Schools and Maintained Schools. Barnet has a significant number of placements at Barnet and Southgate College.

Barnet is applying scrutiny and value for money activity in all areas, including independent specialist providers. Any savings will be recycled into the High Needs budget in order to balance the 2018/19 High Needs block.

BF questioned if Barnet and Southgate College specialises in special needs provision only. SJ advised that it is a mainstream college as well as having a large Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD) provision.

NT queried if there is a process to bring out of borough pupils back into Barnet provision. SJ confirmed that there is an annual review carried out for every child and family. With the new provision coming on stream, Barnet is hoping to provide families with a local option. Families are also encouraged to stay in-borough by providing them with an informed choice. On many occasions families go out of the borough because there is no local option.

GK explained that there is a particular problem with this age group due to lack of choice. SJ stated that there are going to be situations where Barnet cannot provide for all young people within the borough and would have to provide options outside.

SH questioned if independent providers set their own rates and local authorities have to pay them. SJ confirmed that it has often been like that across the country but that the scrutiny of their prices, whilst challenging, is something his team will do.

Places in Barnet Mainstream Schools - SJ highlighted some changes in 2018/19. Barnet would not have a separate budget for Exceptional Needs (new in-year High Needs pupils) and Medical Pathway funding. However, funding will be available within EHC plans with cases evaluated through the established assessment process.

Joanne Kelly (JK) wanted to know what happens in a situation where a young person has not yet been assessed through the EHCP but is finding it unable to cope. Schools will be unable to fund this as the EHCP process takes too long. SJ confirmed that if the request for assessment goes through to the SEN panel and if there is a significant risk to that young person during the assessment period, Barnet would consider an interim funding allocation.

Alayah Hirst (AH) asked if these would be looked at on a case by case basis. SJ confirmed that this would be the case.

Placements in Other Local Authorities - SJ mentioned that young people placed in Other Local Authorities tend to remain fairly static.

Independent and non-Maintained Schools sector top up funding - Barnet is expecting fewer placements in the Independent and non-Maintained sector. This is due to parents being given more choice in-borough and older pupils leaving the system.

Pupil Referral Units (PRU) - SJ reported on the PRUs providing a breakdown of numbers. The rates are currently being reviewed to ensure greater consistency in the top-up funding applied to PRU provision.

SEND Review - SJ reminded members of the review of Barnet's SEND provision the purpose of which is to ensure sufficient places for children with SEND in future. A summary of the review is available to view online.

GK wanted to know how many children there are in Hospital Schools and if there is any recoupment from other Local Authorities where Children are placed in Barnet. CG advised that Hospital funding and recoupment from other authorities is managed by the DfE.

JD wanted to know what falls within the category SEN therapies. SJ clarified that most of it is jointly commissioned with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to deliver speech and language, occupational therapy and physiotherapy. JD also queried how the cuts in this budget impact on services provided and the position with the service contracts. SJ confirmed that the current contract and providers remain the same. The providers may have made decisions to change the way therapies are allocated. SJ confirmed that the reductions are to do with the community element and that Barnet does not have a statutory requirement to provide this. The responsibility for this element lies with the NHS.

GK asked the Schools Forum to vote on recommendations (viii to x)

Recommendations:

- (ii) To approve the proposed place numbers to be commissioned for 2018-19;
- (iii) To agree to the proposed approach towards ARP top up values;
- (iv) To note and approve the draft HN budget as shown in Appendix I.

Schools Forum decision: Recommendations (viii) to (x); agreed unanimously.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

9. DRAFT AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

7a. 2017/18 Budget monitoring and revised budget

Towards a National Funding Formula

8a. 2018/19 budget

8c. Update on High Needs

10. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

15 May 2018 – 4pm, Friern Barnet School.

SH wanted to know by a show of hands how many individuals would be driving to the next meeting in order to determine the number of parking spaces required.

GK closed the meeting by thanking everyone for attending. The meeting closed at 5.00pm.