

1.

Attended	Name	Type of Member	Representing
Members:	Alexander Banks	Primary Maintained HT	Primary Maintained
	John Bowra	Secondary Academy - Governor	Secondary Academy
	Ziz Chater	Primary Maintained HT	Primary Maintained
	Jo Djora	Primary Academy HT	Primary Academy
	Simon Horne	Secondary Maintained HT	Secondary Maintained
	Ian Kingham	Special Academy- Deputy Head	Special Schools
	Gilbert Knight	Special School Governor	Special Schools
	Anette Long	Maintained Nursery HT	EY
	Keith Nason	Stakeholder - Trade Union	Trade Unions
	Sarah Sands	Primary Maintained HT	Primary Maintained
	Matthew Stevens	Secondary Academy HT	Secondary Academy
	Anthony Vorou	Primary Maintained Governor	Primary Maintained
	Marc Lewis	Secondary Academy - Substitute	Secondary Academy
Councillors:	David Longstaff	Chair of the Children, Education & Safeguarding Committee	
LA Officers:	Ian Harrison	Chief Executive and Director of Education and Learning, BELS	
	Ben Thomas	Assistant Director Education, Strategy & Partnerships	
	Jonathan Castle	Head of Finance Children and Family Services	
	Gareth Evans	Finance Manager (Schools)	
	Caludette James	Assistant Finance Manager (Schools)	
	Ethan Jacobson	CIPFA Graduate Trainee (Finance)	

Apologies were received by Lucy Rodgers

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Non-pecuniary interest as a member of the BELS Board was declared by Sarah Sands.

Keith Nason declared interest for item 10, in respect of de-delegation for union duties.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes were unanimously agreed to be a true and accurate record of the last meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING

None

5. 2019-20 SCHOOL BALANCES

Jonathan Castle presented a report on the breakdown of individual school balances. Overall revenue balances have decreased from £12.6m to £9.0m.

70% of schools had a decrease in revenue balances.

17 schools have revenue deficits. The LA has contacted the schools and is working with them to agree recovery plans.

Recommendation from the paper:- Members noted the balances of individual schools and of schools overall.

6. HIGH NEEDS BLOCK COMMISSIONING ARRANGEMENTS

Ian Harrison presented the report to the Schools Forum providing an update on commissioned places in specialist provision for children and young people with SEND for 2020-21. This was based on the needs analysis and sufficiency review that took place in the summer of 2019, and findings from the placement panels that have taken place in November 2019, February and May 2020.

The provision for 60 extra places within borough this September was outlined. Ian Harrison explained that there may still be some growth in placements in the independent schools' sector because numbers of pupils with EHCPs were growing faster than the expansion of places.

Ian Kingham reported that a site had been identified in the north of the borough for the new Windmill Special Free School and that a meeting with Barnet planners would take place next week.

Simon Horne expressed that it would be useful if the Forum was given an idea of the amount the borough saved by placed pupils in Barnet schools rather than out of borough.

Ian Harrison would come back with figures at the next meeting. Gilbert Knight highlighted the stress placed on additional services e.g. physiotherapy and occupational therapy. If the borough was unable to provide within the borough the services parents perceive are available in schools out of borough, there would likely to be an increase in tribunals by parents.

Ian Harrison also reported that the service providing therapists had improved as vacancies were being filled. Social Care and Education were monitoring the contract.

Gilbert Knight asked if the cost of the contract had increased. Ian Harrison reported that there was an increase in the delivery of the contract, therefore there was an extra cost involved, but the Council would be receiving more therapy time for the same cost.

7. 2020-21 DSG MONITORING

Jonathan Castle reported on the revised DSG allocations following the DfE's revision in July 2020 to account for the import/export adjustments in the High Needs Block and the January 2020 pupil numbers in the Early Years Block. He highlighted an error in the heading of the paper, which should read 2020-21 DSG and Budget Monitoring.

The High Needs Block is forecast to overspend due to an increase in EHCPs. The Growth Fund within the Schools Block will be significantly underspent. There would be a need to draw down from the DSG reserve in 2020-21 to cover the High Needs overspend.

Annette Long asked why there was a forecasted underspend in the Early Years Block. Gareth Evans reported that the cost centre budget was incorrect, but will still underspend.

Annette Long queried if the underspend for the Early Years Block is kept in the DSG or stays in early years. Jonathan Castle confirmed that it would stay in early years, if needed to fund existing places.

Marc Lewis asked what was the amount in the DSG reserve. Jonathan Castle confirmed £1.8m was carried forward and that the High Needs underspend would be set against this

8. 2021-22 NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA

The Government has announced changes and provided indicative values for the Schools Block, High Needs Block and the Central Services Block.

Jonathan Castle outlined the main changes and the impact on Barnet Schools, namely:

- **Schools Block Funding**

The Government announced a new minimum funding levels for primary and secondary pupils. However, Barnet schools all receive rates above these figures and so will not benefit from this announcement.

The Government also confirmed that schools will attract a year on year per-pupil amount increase of 2%, regardless of the current amount of funding. Although Barnet schools will receive this it is below the level of inflation for staffing costs (2.75%).

The Teachers' Pay Grant (TPG) and Teachers' Pension Employer Contribution Grant (TPECG) will now be included in the Schools Block part of the DSG and not paid to schools separately.

- **High Needs Funding**

Similar to the Schools Block, the TPG and TPECG for special schools have now been amalgamated into the High Needs Block funding.

Ian Kingham asked if the TPG and TPECG would be passported to the special schools.

Gareth Evans reported that it is yet to be finalised how it will work.

9. 2021-22 CENTRAL SCHOOLS SERVICES BLOCK

The Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) is formulated to cover both historic commitments and ongoing responsibilities. The former are fixed amounts committed in 2012-13 and cannot be increased under the NFF. The DfE expects that historical commitments will reduce over time and therefore have reduced allocations by 20% for 2021-22.

Ongoing responsibilities includes funding for duties for all pupils within the LA boundary, admissions and appeals, Schools Forum administration and copyright licensing.

Schools Forum is required to approve Central Services Block amounts, except for Copyright Licensing, which is negotiated on behalf of all LAs by the DfE. The DfE published indicative allocations in July 2020 and final amounts for this block will be confirmed in December 2020.

Schools Forum will be updated in January 2021 on final allocations for its approval.

10. 2021-22 DE-DELEGATION

The LA is required to consult the primary and secondary maintained school representatives on the Schools Forum every year about de-delegation of many centrally held budgets. De-delegation funds are a deduction from maintained schools' budget shares after the calculation of Schools Block allocations. De-delegation can only apply to maintained primary and secondary school budgets.

Decisions on de-delegation requires the agreement of a simple majority of the maintained representatives for the relevant phase on the Schools Forum on a recommended per pupil basis.

Jonathan Castle reported that for the 2021-22 financial year, the LA is requesting the same de-delegation items as 2020-21, with indicative rates matching those of last year:

- 1 Behaviour Support Services (de-delegated by primaries but not secondary schools)
- 2 Support to UPEG (underperforming ethnic groups) and bilingual learners ("Narrowing the Gap")
- 3 Staff costs – supply cover for trade union facility time
- 4 Schools Contingency
- 5 Additional School Improvement Service.

Jonathan Castle highlighted the uncertainty around the School Improvement Service grant. In 2019-20 an extra £200k was requested from schools to guard against the possibility that this grant would be discontinued. Currently the £200k requested is now part of the DSG reserve.

The LA normally receives the grant between April and August and it can be discontinued at any time. If it is discontinued the LA will use the £200k reserve and ask the Schools Forum for approval going forward.

Ziz Chater queried if schools were asked to contribute more to the de-delegation funds would all schools be consulted.

Ian Harrison clarified that this only happened once, which was two years ago as it coincided with proposals to move 0.5% from the schools block to the High Needs block and holding back funds for services previously funded from the ESG, which required consultation.

Recommendation – The Schools Forum is asked to approve the continuation of de-delegation of the individual items above on the same basis as 2020-21 for 2021-22.

Ian Harrison asked the maintained primary and secondary representatives to vote separately on the individual de-delegation items.

All items were unanimously approved.

11. 2021-22 FORMER ESG SERVICES

Jonathan Castle outlined the proposal for 2021-22 (as in the previous two years) to charge the cost of services formerly funded from the Education Services Grant (ESG) to the budget of maintained schools. The level requested is £700k, which matches the level requested in 2020-21.

The services and the total amount to be funded under this proposal were presented in a table. In summary, these are:

- Statutory and regulatory duties
- Asset management
- Monitoring national curriculum assessments.

Government guidance made clear that councils may request retention of a share of maintained school budgets to cover the loss of ESG income.

The proposal will mean that the council can continue to provide the statutory services to maintained schools without having to make further cuts to other front-line services that

have already faced significant budget reductions and to maintain a central education function.

Recommendation- Schools Forum is requested to approve the proposal for 2021-22 to charge the cost of services formerly funded from the ESG to the budgets of maintained schools, maintaining the level of £700,000.

Gilbert Knight recommended to approve the proposal for 2021-22.

All the maintained primary and secondary school representatives agreed.

12. 2021-22 FORMULA FACTORS - CRITERIA FOR AGREEMENT - SPLIT SITES & GROWTH

Split Sites is an optional factor under the National Funding Formula. Its purpose is to compensate schools for unavoidable additional costs where schools operate on more than one site. For example, extra costs may arise where sites are physically separated by roads or there are remote playing fields or students and teachers must move from site to site daily.

Allocations must be based on objective criteria for the definition of a split site and for how much is paid. Schools sharing facilities, federated schools and schools with remote sixth forms or remote early years provision are not eligible for split site funding. Regulations require that split site criteria be agreed by Schools Forum for each financial year.

Jonathan Castle outlined the split site criteria for LB Barnet. No changes to this, or the rates, are proposed for 2021-22.

The Growth Fund can only be used to:

- Support growth in pre-16 pupil numbers to meet basic need
- Support additional classes to meet infant class size regulation
- Meet the costs of new schools.

LAs are responsible for funding the growth needs of all their schools in their area, including new and existing maintained schools and academies. LAs must fund growth needs to all schools on the same criteria. Schools Forum is required to approve the Growth Fund criteria for each financial year.

Schools Forum is also required to approve the size of the Growth Fund. However, this will not be finalised until the DSG has been announced in December 2020. The final Growth Fund will be presented for approval at Schools Forum in January 2021.

It is proposed to retain current criteria for 2021-22, and to adjust rates in line with the Government's increase in the minimum funding levels. Jonathan Castle presented the minimum funding levels for LB Barnet.

Gilbert Knight asked if the definition on split sites includes units elsewhere in another school, e.g. Oakleigh Special and Queenswell Infant schools.

Ian Harrison confirmed that split sites criteria only applies to primary and secondary schools not special schools.

Recommendation

- i) Action – Schools Forum is asked to agree the existing split-site criteria and
- ii) Action – To approve the existing Growth Fund criteria for 2021-22.

Vote: any objections were asked for. No objections therefore recommendation approved.

13. 2021-22 MINIMUM FUNDING GUARANTEE & DISAPPLICATIONS

Jonathan Castle reporting the following.

The DfE have confirmed that LAs will still be able to set a pre-16 MFG in their local funding formula. This provides protection from excessive year on year changes and significant variations in pupil characteristics.

LAs need to consult with their Schools Forum on setting the MFG percentage. For 2021-22, the DfE have stipulated that LAs can only set MFG in the range of +0.5% to +2.00% per pupil funding. As in previous years, the MFG calculation is based on a comparison of per pupil funding between 2021-22 and 2020-21.

LAs may request to disapply the calculation of MFG protection in certain circumstances. In 2020-21, the Council requested MFG disapplication for three schools: St Mary's and St John's, London Academy and Wren Academy. These are all expanding schools, however they would unfairly benefit from MFG protection calculations as funding per pupil artificially falls. It is proposed to request disapplication again in 2021-22. The deadline for submission of such requests is 11th October 2020 to allow for decisions by the DfE before the release of the Authority Proforma Tool in December 2020.

Recommendation – Schools Forum is asked to note the MFG range for 2021-22 and the disapplication request.

Gilbert Knight asked for any objections. Marc Lewis abstained.

No objections. Approved subject to one abstention.

14. **APT TIMELINE**

Jonathan Castle went over the APT timeline, 8th October to 28th February, highlighting that mid-January is when the Schools Forum consultation and approval for final figures relating to the 2021-22 formula funding should be made. The deadline for submission of final 2021-22 APT to the DfE is 21st January 2021.

Recommendation – Schools Forum is asked to note the timeline and the need for a Schools Forum meeting in January.

This was noted.

15. **PAYMENT SYSTEM UPDATE**

Jonathan Castle presented a report to update Schools Forum on the progress of the payment changes made as discussed at Schools Forum in July.

A table detailing the impact on schools and the impact of the first month was presented.

Overall 62% of schools will receive 90%+ of their equivalent payment on the old system. Emails have been sent to those schools who received below 90% advising that if they are negatively impacted by the reduction in month, the LA would work with them to mitigate any impact.

The 23 schools with net credits have been paid as per old system so as to avoid any issues at a time when returning from the imposed lockdown in March and dealing with making their schools COVID safe.

The major benefit of this change is that it has moved LBB and schools towards a cleaner way of operating that is in line with the scheme of delegation. This will avoid large balances either owed from or owed to schools accumulating across a year.

Feedback received from schools following the first month has been largely positive.

A briefing session will be arranged in October to further explain the changes to schools.

Gilbert Knight asked Ian Harrison if the Government has given schools more funding for the cost of COVID. Ian Harrison reported claims were received last term and the DfE is expecting new claims.

Marc Lewis reported his school had received its claim and catch-up funding. The amount was helpful but doesn't meet all the extra costs.

Sarah Sands reported that the amount of funding doesn't meet the cost of supply staff to cover staff who are isolating.

Jonathan Castle confirmed COVID catch-up premium would be paid this month.

Gilbert Knight ended the meeting.

Next Schools Forum meeting in January 2021.

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