LONDON BOROUGH OF SUTTON

SUTTON SCHOOLS FORUM:
THE FUNDING CONSULTATIVE GROUP

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 9 October 2018
at Cheam High School at 6.30pm

Members:
* denotes absence

(Voting)
 Brenda Morley (Chair) (BM) Academy Secondary Governor
 Bec Allott (BA) Academy Secondary Headteacher
 Gordon Ironside (GI) Academy Secondary Headteacher
* Viv Jones (VJ) Academy Secondary Headteacher
 Emma Hart-Dyke (EHD) Academy Primary Headteacher
 Phillip Hedger (PH) Academy Primary Headteacher
 Rob Watkins (RM)) Academy Special School Headteacher
 Dr Mary Howard (MH) Maintained Secondary Governor
 Carole Cook (CC) Maintained Primary Governor
 Jenny Sims (JS) Maintained Primary Governor
 Havard Spring (HS) Maintained Primary Headteacher
 Emma Walford (EW) Maintained Nursery Headteacher
 Mavis Peart (MP) Maintained Special School Governor
 Emma Bradshaw (EB) Alternative Education Provider
 Muriel McIntosh (MM) Early Years Provider
* (substitute: Rosemarie Evison (RE)

(Non-Voting)
 Jason Pemberton-Billing (JPB) 14-19 Provider
 Andrew Theobald (AT) Archdiocese of Southwark
 Brian Stevens (Vice Chair) (BS) Diocese of Southwark
 Sue Smith (SS) Sutton Teachers Committee
(substitute: Alison Morgan (AM)

(Observers)
* Cllr Marian James (MJ) Chair of the People Committee
 Cllr Jenny Batt (JB) Vice-Chair of the People Committee
 Cllr Jane Pascoe (JP) Opposition Spokesperson for the People Committee

Also Present:
 Fiona Phelps (FP) Assistant Director, Education and SEND (LBS)
 Kieran Holliday (KH) Head of Pupil Based Commissioning (LBS)
 Sue Holmes (SH) Senior Finance Business Partner (LBS)
 Tracey Burley (TB) Managing Director (Cognus Ltd)
 Corinne Redonnet (CR) Independent Minutewriter

3 members of the public
1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
   a) Everyone was welcomed to the meeting. The Chair thanked Mrs Moira Alexander for the excellent work she provided for the Schools Forum over the previous 3 years. The Chair introduced and welcomed Mrs Corinne Redonnet as the new clerk to the Schools Forum. Introductions were made.

   b) Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Jones.

   RESOLUTION: a) and b) were noted

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS
   The Chair reminded those present to declare any business interests, pecuniary or otherwise, as and when they occurred.

   RESOLUTION: Agreed

3. MINUTES
   The minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

   RESOLUTION: Agreed

4. MATTERS ARISING
   a) 28 June 2018, Item 4 d) refer, KH had circulated papers on 11 July explaining that the balance of membership of the Schools Forum needed to be reviewed in the light of the changing number of academies as the membership of the Schools Forum need to contain proportional numbers of representatives from the different sectors. No feedback had been received. The proposal was to move from the current representation of 7/7 to 5/9 (maintained/academy):

      i) In order to address one aspect of the primary membership, KH proposed to convert CC’s membership from a representative of a maintained school to academy school representative as she is a governor at schools in both those sectors.

      AT will raise the matter at the Forum of School Governors’ AGM on 16 October 2018.

      ii) The secondary membership will be considered and an up-date will be given at the next meeting.

   b) 28 June 2018, Item 6 e) refer, KH will prepare a draft for the next meeting.

   RESOLUTION: a) and b) were noted

5. REVENUE REPORT
   a) The Revenue Report, which had been circulated with the agenda in advance of the meeting, was taken as read. SH highlighted the main points to note:

      Budget 2018/19 - Although the DSG budget shows an overall in-year underspend of £177,811 (Appendix A), officers are treating this with caution due to the volatility and difficulty associated with high needs forecasts.
RESOLUTION: noted

b) SEN Funding position 2018-19 (Appendix B). It was queried whether the Special Schools underspend of £299,600 would be available to be distributed to schools. SH advised that it would mean changing the rates. KH also noted an increase in the number of Education Health and Care (EHC) Plans which could affect the underspend. He therefore advised caution as experience of previous years has shown that things can change.
RESOLUTION: noted

c) Early Retirement Costs – Following the introduction of the CSSB and the cessation of the Education Services Grant (ESG), the LA has sought advice from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) regarding the validity of the direct charges to academies. The ESFA has confirmed that the costs should be charged to the CSSB rather than individual academies. This will lead to reduced income.
RESOLUTION: noted

d) NNDR Adjustments 2018/19 – A recent revaluation of the NNDR charges to the nine schools within the Sutton Education Trust (SET) has resulted in backdated refunds of about £500k, these will be credited back to the central DSG.
RESOLUTION: noted

6. NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA (NFF)

a) The National Funding Formula 2019/20 report which had been circulated with the agenda in advance of the meeting was taken as read. KH summarised the main points of the report. The Schools Forum were asked to:

b) Consider and agree the consultation paper and the funding options therein (appendix B)

KH noted that the draft consultation papers discussed at the Formula Review Group (FRG) on 11 September 2018, adheres to the same overarching principles that were used in 2018/19 to develop the options for the implementation of the NFF. Options were modelled in the same way as last year and KH reported that, based on the expected total allocation which will be confirmed in December, that it appears the NFF can be delivered fully without capping and scaling whilst still allowing for 0.5% to be moved from the schools’ block to the high needs block and for additional growth allocations. KH explained the proposed options as detailed in Appendix B:

i) Control option: as per current formula.
ii) Option 1: applying NFF factors.
iii) Option 2: increase the lump sum for Primary schools.
iv) Option 3: increase the lump sum for all schools.
v) Option 4: reduce the minimum funding guarantee to 0%.

To suggest any changes/amends where necessary to the documentation:

i) Appendix B: KH took note of a number of amendments.  

ii) In particular, the allocation in Option 3 was queried and it was suggested dropping the allocation to £5k instead of £8k thus leaving more funds for growth. KH and SH to consider.  

KH/SH
iii) Appendix 3a: KH reviewed the *National Funding Formula 2019/20 Consultation Document* and explained the main points. KH took note of a number of amendments.

d) To agree if Schools Forum should express a preferred option as part of the consultation and if so what that option is

i) It was suggested that the cover email to schools could draw attention to a preferred option from the Schools Forum. Following a discussion, it was acknowledged that the FRG had considered this and had made recommendations in the *National Funding Formula 2019/20 Consultation Document*. It was therefore agreed that the cover email to schools should highlight the FRG’s recommendation only.

KH

e) To agree the questions that the Local Authority should ask of schools as part of this consultation on the 2019/20 round.

i) Appendix 3D: The Chair proposed that schools are requested to submit one response from either the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors, on behalf of their respective establishment, so a manageable number of documents are received. This was agreed and amendments were noted to reflect this decision.

KH

ii) Further amendments were suggested and noted to Appendix 3 D including numbering the questions.

KH

f) To agree that the paper should be published to all schools in the Borough and consulted upon according to the timescales set out in the document.

This was agreed.

RESOLUTION: b) to f) agreed

7. HIGH NEEDS REVIEW

a) The *Consultancy Proposal High Needs Funding Review report* which had been circulated with the agenda in advance of the meeting was taken as read.

b) FP confirmed they are proceeding with the High Needs review and that the findings of the review will lead to actions which will be carried out.

FP

c) FP noted that Sutton’s High Needs spend is £842 per pupil, compared to outer London boroughs spending on average £632 with the lowest £442. It is not felt Sutton spends the funds as well as they can in order to meet the needs of their residents. 24% of the children with an EHC Plan receive education outside the borough so part of the review will be to consider if the funds are spent correctly and look at how this could be improved.

FP/PG

d) FP explained how the review will be conducted and the points of focus.

e) In Phase 1, Peter Gray (PG) will meet with Cognus and LBS, will look at the data and visit schools and meeting with Headteachers, SENCOs, 0 to 25 special schools, parents and carers, various provisions, etc… The first findings will be completed by December.

PG/FP

f) It was queried if the review will look in detail at what other boroughs spend. FP confirmed that PG has access to data enabling him to benchmark with other similar settings so the review will go into such detail.

PG/FP

g) It was suggested that governors should be included in the review. Following a discussion, FP will emphasise this with PG.

FP/PD
h) It was commented that the timescale of the review is ambitious. FP agreed this is a complex process but noted she trusted PG who has experience in reviewing more complex boroughs than Sutton.

i) It was suggested that in view of the tight timescale, meetings are arranged with stakeholders as soon as possible to ensure their availability. PG/FP

RESOLUTION: Noted

8. CAPITAL REPORT

The Capital Funding Arrangements for Schools report which had been circulated with the agenda in advance of the meeting was taken as read.

a) KH noted that there are no significant changes to the funding. He noted the small balance of funding of £4.55m which he commented should remain uncommitted in order to retain flexibility for possible future capital programmes. KH

b) KH also noted the unallocated £400K to cover any identified roofing work at Bandon Hill.

c) The Chair queried when KH will report on the next Secondary school. KH noted that he cannot update on Free Schools managed by the Education Skills and Funding Agency in the same way as with Harris Academy Sutton. The ESFA have concluded the land management and are now preparing a planning application which will be ready by late Spring in February/March 2019, so the land and funding are now in place. He is meeting with the Secondary Headteachers to work on place planning, so will have more information at the December meeting.

d) Only one Primary school expansion project is still in the delivery phase, Hackbridge Primary. The building work is approaching completion but it was noted that there had been delays so the delivery will be January 2019.

e) It was noted that the Primary applications received for 2018 showed a reduction on last year against the current forecast. KH noted that this situation will need to be monitored carefully. KH

f) Funding issues were queried in the current situation with some schools experiencing vacancies. KH noted that Primary school places are harder to forecast and so far, they have been relatively accurate, and that numbers were capped where needed in 2018/19 to protect schools. KH is meeting with Primary heads in November where these issues will be considered. There has been a large difference to the number of applications versus births, so the situation will need to be monitored carefully. He noted that Sutton has had very few unfilled places, but if numbers are going down this could change.

g) There are no further special provision projects other than the ones listed in the report.

h) KH reminded maintained schools that they are invited to submit bids through Kate Miller for a one-off capital grant between £2K and £15K from the Healthy Pupils Capital Fund. The bid criteria are broad so he encouraged schools to bid by the deadline of 18 October.

RESOLUTION: Noted

9. COGNUS LTD
a) TB reported that her verbal report would cover:
   - Early Years survey
   - Intervention outreach
   - CPD and Improving skills
   - Quality Framework
   - Measuring impact
   - Staff changes

b) A Primary Governor queried why a written report had not been circulated in advance of the meeting. KH advised that this issue had been discussed and his recollection was that Cognus would attend Schools Forum regularly but would only prepare a written report where a specific issue/decision was required with verbal updates thereafter. Following a discussion, it was agreed that Schools Forum would prefer in future for Cognus to present a written report.

c) TB agreed that on this occasion she will proceed with a verbal up-date but will provide a follow up report for distribution with the minutes.

**RESOLUTION: b) and c) agreed**

TB
d) Early Years survey: 26 out of 100 (25%) respondents participated in June/July. The feedback was good. 92% rated the quality of staff as ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ and 88% rated the services quality as ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’, 3 rated ‘satisfactory’, those were followed up. Overall the feedback was that respondents are happy with the service and the narrative. No negative comments were received.

e) Intervention outreach: TB noted that HG had attended the last meeting. On 28 June 35 referrals had been received, 109 referrals have now been received. TB noted that the service still has capacity. All assessments are processed within 2 weeks and the feedback is positive. She noted that they have received requests to put papers on website.

f) CPD offer: TB explained that their aim is to help support schools to help children remain in mainstream settings. They have sourced a provider to train school staff to develop their skills. They will liaise with schools about pilot schemes.

g) Quality framework: Over recent months they have focussed on output so they will now focus on quality to ensure it is at the level it should.

h) Measuring impact: They are trialling 3 tools (including Toms, Outcome Stars). They are trialling different tools as different services require different measuring tools. They will be able to provide data by Easter 2019 and data is already available with Toms.

i) Staffing changes:
   i) Peter Gasparelli (PG) was recruited to replace Nicolas English as Head of Service in Cognus.
   ii) Head of Music has been recruited.
   iii) Business Systems and Intelligence Manager – moving forward with recruitment.
   iv) SEN Caseworkers are all undertaking qualifications.

j) A question was raised about the SEN team’s capacity and if contingency plans were in place as staff are in the process of studying for qualifications and a member of staff is on maternity leave. TB replied that they are in the process of recruiting to replace the member of staff on maternity leave. She explained that their issue is how to deal with increased tribunal cases and how to balance this
with other work. She acknowledged that it would be useful to have a caseworker to help with tribunal cases and staff’s professional development.

k) A Primary Headteacher advised that some schools are struggling as they are unable to make contact with a caseworker and are in desperate situations. TB took note and will feedback to the team. She added that they should contact her directly if they are unable to get through to a caseworker.

**RESOLUTION: noted**

l) It was queried why staff were recruited without qualifications and how many are in the team. FP replied that currently there are 9 caseworkers. There are no qualifications for SEN caseworkers, and training is not compulsory. There is only one BTECH course which is a one year-long good, but complex training. TB explained that they are all undergoing the training which is being staggered.

m) FP also noted that the new Head of SEN, Amalia Banon will start next week.

n) The Chair thanked TB for the report.

**RESOLUTION: noted**

10. **CONFIDENTIALITY**

   It was agreed that any schools mentioned during the meeting should remain confidential.

   **RESOLUTION: agreed**

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

   The Chair asked if there were any other items of business.

   There were none.

   **RESOLUTION: agreed**

12. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

   a) **Schools Forum:**

      Tuesday 4 December 2018 at 6.30 pm at Cheam High School
      Tuesday 12 February 2019 at 6.30 pm at Cheam High School

   b) **Formula Review Group**

      No dates were agreed.

   c) To note the next meeting of the People Committee on 6 December 2018 and 14 March 2019.

   The meeting ended at 8.15 pm