LONDON BOROUGH OF SUTTON

SUTTON SCHOOLS FORUM:
THE FUNDING CONSULTATIVE GROUP

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 4 December 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
✓ (substitute Alex Clarke) (AC)
✓ 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
✓ (substitute Bev Williamson) (BW)
✓ Muriel McIntosh (MM) Early Years Provider

(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

(Observers)
✓ 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)
✓ Laura Noulton (LN) Integrated Youth Service Team Manager
✓ Corinne Redonnet (CR) Independent Minute Writer

Present in the public gallery:
Cllr Lily Bande
1. **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
   a) Everyone was welcomed to the meeting.

   The Chair reported that Mavis Peart wanted it noted that although this would have been her last attendance at the Schools Forum, her absence today was due to a prior engagement.

   The Chair reported MP had first attended the Schools Forum on 1 May 2003, which was only the second meeting of this forum. Over the years, the Forum benefited from the wealth of expertise MP brought to the Forum and the Chair thanked her for her commitment over that time.

   b) Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Peart, Mrs Hart Dyke, Mr Watkins, Mrs Cook, Mr Spring, Mrs Walford and Mrs Bradshaw.

   **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 OF MEETING OF 6 OCTOBER 2018**

   The minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2018 were agreed as a correct record with the following correction:

   - Page 3, Item 6 c) ii) should read ‘…dropping the allocation to £8k instead of £5k thus leaving...’.

   **RESOLUTION:** Agreed

4. **MATTERS ARISING**


   KH explained that at the June meeting, it had been agreed that the definition for split sites would be tightened. He noted in particular that the distance between sites was removed as it was arbitrary, the following revision was agreed:

   - The school has a single DfE number.
   - The school has two or more distinct campuses that do not share a common boundary and where travel between the sites requires access via a public highway.
   - Teaching and learning unavoidably occurs on both sites and involves a significant number of pupils and where it is necessary to maintain permanent staffing on both sites.
   - Funding is not already provided for additional costs through a separate mechanism.

   **RESOLUTION:** a) were agreed

5. **TARGETED YOUTH SERVICE (TYS)**
a. LN summarised her report explaining that this is the second year that Targeted Youth Support have been commissioned to work with students to prevent permanent exclusion from mainstream education.

b. 34 students were referred to the TYS, of which 26 have remained in mainstream education, bringing an estimated cost avoidance of c£390,000. LN drew attention that insufficient time was available to engage for those excluded young persons.

c. Year 6 Transition Project is another focus for TYS. The 2 main indicators are those who have older siblings already in a PRU and those who have intensive social care involvement and have been subject to Child Protection Plans in the past 2 years. 24 pupils were referred from Primary schools, of those 3 were not appropriate and 5 did not engage, the remaining 16 young people are still in mainstream education. LN noted that having 1 child avoid permanent exclusion in Year 7 could save £75,000 or more over 5 years.

d. Case studies highlight the significant changes the TYS intervention has made.

e. LN requested the same amount of £110,000 for next year, this will include the one to one support via VPP and the Year 6-7 Transition project. LN highlighted the need to acknowledge the importance for children to remain in mainstream education, the importance to normalise life for youngster who have had significant trauma. This funding will fund an additional post to support those young people.

Although the cost avoidance was significant, it was noted that £390,000 may be an over estimation.

f. It was noted that this group’s role was advisory as the high needs block was the Local Authority’s responsibility. It was agreed to support the request for funding.

RESOLUTION: f) was noted

LN left the meeting at 7:02pm

6. REVENUE REPORT

a) Concerns were raised that the main priority should be the accuracy of the high needs forecasting. SH agreed and explained that they are currently working on the financial position with Cognus, although they remain cautious about the forecast underspend shown in the report.

b) To note that ‘Other costs’ (£81,600) refers to the costs of additional support contracts where children have additional needs but do not have an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP).

c) The decision to knowingly budget insufficient funds for therapy (£300,000 over budget) was queried. SH and KH explained that last year showed a significant increase and the maximum budget available was provided.

d) Following a query, it was noted that the wording in the report (page 2) ‘Cognus are… committing to reduce the level of therapy provision’, should read that Cognus are working to better match therapy provision with needs in a most cost effective way. FP explained that Cognus will need to review how they can deliver an effective service at reduced costs.

e) Concerns were raised that the perception in schools is that EHCPs are not funded adequately.

FP noted that the main issue is about reviewing EHCPs to target the right type of support required for individual children. FP explained that they have to review
how Speech and Language therapy is delivered and link it to outcomes. She acknowledged that more work was required necessitating a more holistic approach to children’s needs.

It was noted that costs increase (between 8 and 16%) of services should be addressed by the LA as schools’ budget will not be able to continue funding the first £6,000 effectively if in reality the costs are £8,000.

f) The latest position on the DSG for 2018/19 and the SEN funding position for 2018/19, as at month 7 were noted.

RESOLUTION: Noted

g) NNDR Adjustment 2018/19 - SH summarised that not charging academies for early retirement costs in 2018/19 will result in reduced income and create an overspend of circa £120k in the historic element of the CSSB in 2018/19.

SH recommended that the £285k be made available from NNDR refunds to fund the overspend on early retirements in 2018/19 and be earmarked in the balances to support the CSSB in 2019/20 and 2020/21.

A lengthy discussion took place where the long-term viability of covering the overspend was questioned and BA proposed retaining the £285k in the schools’ block.

KH suggested compromising by making £120k available to the CSSB this year but not next year.

A vote took place on the following options:

i. retaining the £285k in the schools’ block in its entirety.

ii. making £120k available to the CSSB this year but not next year

The outcome of the vote was a 8 for option i. with 2 abstentions.

The agreement was therefore that the NNDR rebate will remain in the schools’ block in its entirety.

h) SH recommended to continue the de-delegation of the Schools in Financial Difficulty service in 2019/20. This was agreed.

RESOLUTION: g) and h) were agreed

7. NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA

a) To consider the response from the consultation on the formula factors that could be used in Sutton as part of the implementation of the National Funding Formula.

It was noted that the submitted report was a well-balanced summary by KH.

In view of schools’ tightening budgets, reassurance was sought that it might be the last time the 0.5% request for high needs funding is made.

FP explained that the high needs review’s priority is to identify and implement cost savings. However, she could not guarantee that further funding requests will not be made next year in view of the large legacy this block has to address.

KH explained that a dis-application had been submitted to the DfE on 30th November ‘in any case’ and that if Forum agreed the request for 0.5% to be transferred the disapplication would be withdrawn.

The Forum agreed the Local Authority's request to transfer 0.5% from the schools’ block to the high needs block of the DSG for 2019/20.
b) **To consider and determine the preferred option for growth for 2019/20**

KH recommended option a, on the grounds that this is the option that was previously put to the Schools Forum and still allows for some redistribution of funding to all schools.

This was agreed.

GI left the meeting at 8:06pm

c) **To consider and determine the preferred option for split site funding for 2019/20**

See Item 4.

d) **To set out the preferred option and to determine the funding factors to be used for the 2019/20 financial year**

Following the NFF consultation, option 3 was the respondents' preferred option, this was agreed by the Forum.

**RESOLUTION: a) b) and d) were agreed**

8. **PAYMENTS FOR EARLY YEARS PROVIDERS**

**To consider the results of a consultation on a proposal to introduce monthly payments for Early Years providers from January 2019**

a) The Forum noted that 71% of respondents were in favour of the proposed change to monthly payments.

MM thanked KH for a well-presented report.

MM explained that the change to the funding allocations will improve budgeting issues faced by small providers. She was however concerned that a small number of pre-school organisations participated in the consultation and proposed to follow up on the reasons behind their lack of engagement.

**RESOLUTION: noted**

9. **CAPITAL REPORT**

**To consider the report Capital Funding Arrangements for Schools**

a) KH noted that there was no significant change from his last report. The majority of projects within the 2018-19 programme have been completed or nearing completion. He noted that the Harris Academy build is on track; the completion of Hackbridge Primary’s building work will be close to Easter and the successful bids for Healthy Pupils Capital fund have now been allocated.

**RESOLUTION: noted**

10. **COGNUS LTD**

a) Mr Harrison was unable to attend and TB was also unavailable.

Concerns were expressed that no senior representatives were available to attend. KH acknowledged and apologised that he had been notified a few weeks ago but had not advised them to propose an alternate attendee.

KH noted that there is no legal requirement for Cognus to attend the Schools Forum. It was agreed that KH will prepare a report summarising the shareholders agreement and the lines of accountability with respect to Cognus in relation to Shareholders, the LA and Schools Forum.
b) A further discussion took place concerning the content of the report expected from Cognus. It was agreed that AT will liaise with KH to articulate the Forum’s expectations for future reports.

RESOLUTION: a) and b) were agreed

11. SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP

a) To note amendments to the report, Page 1, item 4.:
   - ‘…the proposal to re-designate Carole Cooke’s position on the Schools Forum from Primary Maintained to Academy was agreed at the FSG AGM…’
   - ‘The Chairs of the Partnership of Sutton Secondary Schools confirmed on 14 November 2018…’

RESOLUTION: Noted

b) The recommended membership amendments are:
   i. To re-designate Carole Cooke’s position to Academy Primary Governor.
   ii. To note that Nathan Cole will become the additional Secondary Academy Representative.
   iii. The Headteachers of the Limes College and Sutton Tuition and Reintegration Service (STARs) have confirmed that they will share the representative role (one vote only).

The Chair confirmed that the new members term will start from 5 December 2018 and will be invited to attend the next meeting in February 2019.

c) Concerns were raised that with MP leaving the Schools Forum, her knowledge, capability and effective contribution will be lost to this group.

The Chair acknowledged this concern and added that she understood that MP liaises with RW who attends this Forum.

RESOLUTION: b) was agreed

12. CONFIDENTIALITY

It was agreed that the Cognus report and the Targeted Youth Service report should remain confidential.

To note the TYS report to be removed from the website with immediate effect.

RESOLUTION: agreed

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

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

a) MH raised the financial concerns maintained schools have due to the increase in pensions contributions. SH noted that the increase impacts schools that have had significant staffing increases more severely than other schools.

RESOLUTION: noted

14. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

a) Schools Forum, all meetings held at 6.30 pm at Cheam High School:
   Tuesday 4 December 2018
Tuesday 12 February 2019  
Tuesday 18 June 2019  
Tuesday 15 October 2019  
Tuesday 3 December 2019 

b) **Formula Review Group**  
Dates to be agreed.

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

The meeting ended at 8.48 pm