

## SCHOOLS FORUM

MONDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 2017

PRESENT: Richard Pilgrim, Martin Tinsley, Joolz Scarlett, Hugh Boulter, Chris Tomes, Nick Stevens and Alison Penny.

Also in attendance: Councillor Natasha Airey

Officers: Kevin McDaniel, James Norris and David Cook.

### APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Isabel Cooke, Mike Wallace and Jo Haswell.

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

### MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2017 were approved as a true and correct record.

### NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA CONSULTATION FEEDBACK & SCHOOLS BUDGET 2018/19

The Forum were informed that at their meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2017 it was agreed that a consultation would be undertaken on the principles relating to a number of formula factors impacting on the Schools Budget allocation, funding formula for 2018/19 and migration towards the National Funding Formula (NFF).

The consultation period was open between the 8<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2017. A total of 38 responses were received representing 64% of schools. The primary sector accounted for 25 schools (57% of primary) and middle and secondary 13 (92% of middle and secondary). No response was received from the Special School. In total 13,492 (60%) of pupils were represented by their schools.

There were also a number of briefings made available in support of the consultation.

The Forum were informed that the results of the consultation showed clear support for maintaining the Minimum Funding Guarantee and the new Minimum Per Pupil Level. There was also support for the Growth Fund, although there was a suggestion that alternative funding sources should support the expansion programme rather than funding being top-sliced from the Schools Block.

There was strong support for the retention of a formula funding rate per looked after child with a number of schools expressing their desire to continue to support some of our most vulnerable pupils.

There was also support for the implementation of the new Free School Meals factor, alongside the Ever6. However, there was a difference within the sectors with 76% of primary schools in favour of the introduction whilst this fell to 54% of secondary schools.

With regards to the transfer of Schools Block funding to the High Needs Block 55% supporting the transfer and 37% against, with 68% of primary and 31% of secondary schools supporting the transfer. Secondary schools commenting that they opposed the block transfer on the grounds that they viewed the Schools Block should be protected and they were concerned that the funding might be simply used to invest in consultants.

92% of schools responded that during the soft years the Royal Borough should take the opportunity of migrating towards the NFF.

With regards to the preferred options model 2 had 51% support and model 3 with 40%. The results were sector driven with 72% of primary schools favouring model 2; whilst 76% of secondary schools opting for model 3.

The Chairman recommended that high needs should be a standing item on future agendas so the progress of the working group and the implementation of actions can be monitored. It was important that there was accountability and that the additional funding was making a difference. The Director confirmed that the £400,000 was for one year and was ring fenced for the SEN working Group.

The Chairman also requested that the action plan be made available before the funding was spent which was agreed. It was noted that the action plan would help reduce the need to send pupils to out of borough placements and thus reduce this budget pressure.

**Resolved unanimously: that the Schools Forum:**

- **note and comment on the contents of the report**
- **approves the Schools Block budget transfer**
- **approves model 2 as set out in the consultation.**

The meeting, which began at 2.30pm, finished at 3.15pm.

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....