

EXTRAORDINARY SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING

12th February 2019

17.00 to 18.30 Civic Centre Committee Room 3a

Membership: Jim Edgecombe (Chair), Phil Haigh (Chair of Sub Groups), Ludmila Morris, Duncan Greig, Kris O’Sullivan, Bernie Lloyd, Lisa Corrigan, Tony Eginton, Jo Palmer, Liz Horrigan, Ross Macdonald, Bob Charlton, Joan Greening, Tracey Hemming, Robert Jones, Jacqueline Lack, Peter Ryerson, Sudhi Pathak, Laurie Cornwell, Elaine Caffary, Lesley Knee, Alison Moore, Helen Manwaring.

Shadow Reps/Observers: Debbie Gilder, Darrell Butler, Julia Moss, Sophia Shaikh, Sandra Voisey, Graham Wells.

Officers: Peter Malewicz, Graham Young, Dan Kennedy, Tom Murphy, Kate Boulter (Clerk)

AGENDA

	Item	Time	Lead	Update
1.	Apologies	17.00 – 17.05		
2.	Outcome of Disapplication Request	17.05 – 18.30	PM	Report
3.	AOB			

Schools Forum and Sub Group Planned Meetings 2018/2019

	School's Forum Meetings 2018-19	
Meeting	Date & Time	Venue
Schools' Forum	Wednesday 13th March 2019 at 14:00	Civic- Committee Room 4
Schools' Forum	Wednesday 16th May 2019 at 14:00	Civic- Committee Room 6
Schools' Forum	Wednesday 26th June 2019 at 14:00	Civic- Committee Room 6
Schools' Forum	Thursday 26th September 2019 at 14:00	Civic- Committee Room 6
Schools' Forum	Thursday 31st October 2019 at 14:00	Civic- Committee Room 6
Schools' Forum	Thursday 12th December 2019 at 14:00	Civic- Committee Room 6

1. Introduction

The Secretary of State for Education notified the Council on the 7 February 2019, that Hillingdon's disapplication request to transfer £3,499k from the Schools Block has been agreed. The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council were briefed on this notification and updated on the impact that this would have on the Individual Schools Budgets for 2019/20. As a result, the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council asked that Schools Forum convene an emergency meeting to discuss the implications of this decision and provide feedback to the Council prior to the Council agreeing the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Budget for 2019/20 at the Cabinet meeting on 14 February 2019.

2. Recommendation

Schools Forum are asked to provide the Council with comments on the implications of the agreement by the Secretary of State that allows Hillingdon to transfer £3,499k from the Schools Block to set an in year balanced DSG budget for 2019/20, prior to the Cabinet meeting on 14 February 2019, where the DSG Budget for 2019/20 will be approved.

3. Background

The Council and Schools Forum have undertaken a major and in depth review of the DSG Budget over the last few years, recognising the significant growth in the cost of high needs and the limited options available to fund this through reducing other budgets.

For 2018/19, Schools Forum were eventually persuaded to agree a one year only transfer of 0.5% from the Schools Block, to enable the Council to set a balanced budget for that year.

For 2019/20, the Council and Schools Forum identified early on, that there would be a significant funding shortfall and it was evident that no further savings could be made from the Centrally Retained budgets, which left the Council and Schools Forum with only two options:

- i) to consult on a reduction in the level of early years funding provided and
- ii) to consult on a transfer of funding from the Schools Block.

This consultation took place in December 2018 and the results discussed at the Schools Forum meeting on 16 January 2019, where the following decisions were agreed:

- i) Schools Forum did not wish to reduce the level of funding provided to early years settings, as they felt that this would have a disproportionate impact on the education of children aged under 5 as well as the school readiness of these children, thus creating a greater challenge for primary schools.
- ii) Schools were consulted on two proposals;
 - a) To transfer 0.5%, where 89.2% were against this
 - b) To transfer an additional 1.074%, where 92.3% were against this

Schools Forum took the views of schools into account when deciding on this proposal and agreed that they would not support a transfer of any funds from the Schools Block, which were captured in the minutes as follows:

“The consultation responses on proposed transfer of funds from the Schools Block to the

High Needs Block had shown a high majority of stakeholders opposed any transfer.

Any transfer would only serve to reduce the High Needs deficit. It would not make more funding available to support children and young people with High Needs. Schools would have less money to spend on educating children, and no child would gain from additional funding in the High Needs block.

The High Needs deficit was due to funding not keeping pace with growing demand. The age group LA's were required to support from the High Needs budget had stretched from 0-18 to 0-25, with no corresponding increase in financial support from Government. Transferring money from the Schools Block masked the reason for the deficit, at the expense of funding for mainstream education. It was important to be transparent about the severity of the funding position, so need could be properly assessed and adequate funding provided."

Having made this decision, the DSG Budget for 2019/20 was left with a deficit of £3,499k. It is this position that has been published as part of the Cabinet papers for its meeting on 14 February 2019.

As the Council was aware that schools would be unlikely to support a transfer of funds from the Schools Block, the Council submitted a disapplication request on the 30 November 2018, which was revised on 15 January 2019, seeking Secretary of State approval to transfer £3,499k from the Schools Block to prevent the Council having to set a deficit DSG Budget for 2019/20. On the 7 February 2019, the Secretary of State notified the Council that its disapplication request had been approved. Although this enables the Council to set an in year balanced DSG Budget for 2019/20, this would be against the wishes of schools, will reduce the amount of funds available for schools and potentially could lead to more schools falling into deficit.

It should be noted that the decision made by the Secretary of State for Education is for 2019/20 only, with the funds reverting back to the Schools Block in 2020/21.

4. Next Steps

The Council is required to submit a revised Individual Schools Funding Formula model to the DfE, in order for them to be able to publish school budget shares by the 28 February 2019.

It is Officers understanding that the Secretary of State decision is final and not subject to appeal. However, before the Council sets the DSG Budget for 2019/20 it has asked Schools Forum to convene an emergency meeting, to provide an opportunity for it to feed any comments into the Cabinet meeting on 14 February 2019.

Included with this paper are three spreadsheets, which reminds schools of the level of schools balances, so as to assess schools resilience, identifies the impact on the 2019/20 actual position, which also includes the impact of pupil number movements and demonstrates the impact of the disapplication request on School Budgets using 2018/19 data as the baseline.

Appendix 1 – School Balances

Appendix 2 – 2019/20 School Budgets Summary 8.2.19

Appendix 3 – 18/19 Pupil Number Comparison