

MINUTES OF THE HIGH NEEDS BLOCK MEETING – 27TH JUNE 2018

Attendees:

Vikki Monk-Meyer – Head of Integrated Service SEN and Disabilities

Martin Doyle – HT, Riverside School (Chair)

Michael McKenzie – HT, Alexandra Park School

Phil Dileo- Governor, The Vale School

Gill Gibson – AD, EH, SEND and YT

Dawn Ferdinand – HT, The Willow Primary School

Melian Mansfield – Governor, Pembury House

Emma Murray – Seven Sisters Primary School

Peter Catling – Woodlands Park NS & CC

Shamila Ganeshanlingham – SSC Finance

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1. VMM opened the meeting by thanking everyone for coming at short notice. She advised this was a single item meeting to consider the presentation and to have a discussion around what was being presented today.
 - 1.1 The attendees congratulated Melian Mansfield on recently being awarded an MBE
 - 1.2 VMM advised they need to discuss the High Needs Block budget due to the difficulties with the budget.
 - 1.3 It was noted that the meeting was quorate
 - 1.4 VMM referred to her presentation sent out ahead of the meeting.
 - 1.5 Key Issues – the high needs block set for 2018 no longer balances. VMM reported that period 9 set the high needs block budget at £34m.
 - At the time of setting the High Needs Block budget in period 9 in 2017, the budget for 2018 could be set to balance as a result of uplift of 0.25% from school block (480K)
 - The budget closed at 1.5 million overspend on school places and school top up for children with SEND, which was greater than anticipated
 - The over spend was to be balanced against under spends in the growth fund, however the growth fund was also spent
 - The budget for 2018-2019 is 1.0 million less than that for 2017-2018 also due to top slicing of college places from Conel, which has now moved to Camden budget.
 - 1.6 MD commented that the underspend of the growth fund was agreed at the schools forum.
 - 1.7 DF advised that if there was nothing left over from the growth fund there was nothing left to offset.

- 1.8 VMM reported that it was agreed that £480k would come from the schools block and also for the growth fund to offset the high needs block. At that time there was £980k into the growth fund. In the meantime what has happened is there were more year 6's asking for places in secondary and those schools are being funded to the tune of around £946k which wipes out the growth fund. Some of that money will be accrued back so there is £370k in the growth fund and that hasn't been allocated. MM suggested speaking to schools forum to see if they could claw back any of that money and suggested they ask for £350k to come back.
- 1.9 Reasons for the Overspend. VMM advised this is the first year that the high needs block is formula funded. Due to a variety of ongoing factors and reduced budget, the HNB could be circa £3m overspent by the end of next year. Haringey have lost money as Conel have moved over to Camden. Their budget is lower than they thought by £1m and the reasons are unclear if it's Conel or the funding formula being applied incorrectly as we see it. They use 12 Conel places so lose a lot of money from a very little return.
- 1.10 MD asked if the Conel decision is challengeable. VMM advised that it was and that Kamiljit Kaur (Finance) is drilling to down to find out what can be done.
- 1.11 MD asked if the 12 students are all paid through the top up. VMM replied yes. She went on to advise that all college places are top sliced and when Conel went to another borough they took their top slice with them. The Base funding is in addition to the top up.
- 1.12 PD would like to see Conel's budget breakdown. VMM felt this was a good point and will ask them again to provide this breakdown for all post 16 places.
- 1.13 MM advised that Kamaljit will talk to the EFA but assumed Camden would put up an argument.
- 1.14 VMM will write to Conel and ask them for a breakdown of places. Provision map for last year and this year and the names of our students as well.
- Action: VMM
- 1.15 MM commented that it is detrimental to students in Haringey to not have the money.
- 1.16 Discussion followed around base funding in other Boroughs'.
- 1.17 It was noted Haringey have always carried an overspend for post 16 (as it is a growing population with the increased age range) VMM comment
- 1.18 Summary of budget table. VMM noted the impact and added that all budgets were uplifted.
- 1.19 Budget Revisions 17/18. VMM reported.
- The mainstream schools budget was increased by £408,000 in April 2017
 - The Special Schools budget was increased by £702,000 mid-year 2017-2018
 - The out borough schools budget was increased by £497,500 mid-year 2017-2018
- 1.20 She noted that despite those uplifts they are still not at their year-end position. There has been a really significant shift towards the use of specialist provision.

- 1.21 She added that all of the investments give a better quality offer but they all take an increased demand on the budget. Average costs have increased per child by approx £2.7k per child.
- 1.22 In all cases there is additional expenditure and an increased number of places in each school. The increase of 23 places in special schools comes to roughly the overspend.
- 1.23 Independent and Out of Borough. VMM reported:
- Places are used for SEMH and ASD in the main due to lack of local capacity
 - Residential therapeutic places are increasing, linked to rise in requests for those with mental health needs associated with SEMH/Autism
 - Hospital spend has increased
 - Increased use of private alternative provision out reach providers (e.g. Fresh Steps) particularly in LAC and post adoption population.
- 1.24 There is a lot of pressure to apply an EHCP and interventions from other partner agencies and not just education.
- 1.25 Independent Places grew from 89 to 107 and they are all children with SEMH.
- 1.26 GG asked if they get a grant for hospital admissions. VMM replied yes but it's insufficient to meet the demand.
- 1.27 Colleges. VMM reported:
- Higher numbers than average of young people over 19 years in college
 - Wide range of colleges and providers used
 - Top ups are variable and are higher cost than schools (average top up £8,000)
 - Residential requests are increasing at 18 years. 2 tribunals have been lost at this age range which is an average cost of £139,000.
 - We have increased places in local provision for 2018 – e.g. Harrington's, Haringey 6th form to keep children local, but this offer needs to be attractive
 - There are local providers such as Area 51 who could be developed further but a new site is needed
- 1.28 To summarise, locally they have a higher than average number of children in education. Part of the problem is they don't have a very well signposted out of education pathway and that needs to be developed.
- 1.29 They have tried to increase provision locally.
- 1.30 Proposed Cost Saving Measures 2018/2019. VMM reported the long term action and short term actions.
- Hold uplift of TA rates, agreed as part of schools block transfer, until 2020 as not currently sustainable – £275K
 - Cease SEN contingency payments – £400K

- Establish invest to save case for transport and capitalise costs – £225K
 - Establish an active pathway for moving young people into employment to prevent repetition and of courses and wasted spend
 - Audit out borough places for value for money alongside post commissioned through HEP using one off grant
 - Band top ups for colleges – requires post/extensive work across boroughs
- 1.31 She invited opinions on the options presented.
- 1.32 MD asked if VMM was talking about all TA's across mainstream. VM replied yes, it had been proposed to put 50p on the hourly rate.
- 1.33 DF commented that in the past schools had the staff to support but they have all reduced their staff, so are having to use every bit of money they have to support the children in the school.
- 1.34 PD felt the point behind it was that most schools have more than 1 TA for the groups of children. She didn't feel there was a need for the great number of TA's that they currently have. They are in different times now.
- 1.35 VMM talked through all proposed options.
- 1.36 MD talked through his year 8 students and the top up. Noting costs are at £199k as a result there was a shortfall. Across the whole of the school his SEN department is running at a significant loss.
- 1.37 VMM noted the uplift of the TA rates hasn't gone out to schools yet.
- 1.37 Committee members discussed the contingency payment at £400k. This has gone out to schools.
- 1.38 MM noted that on the balance of discussion this one has already been factored into schools budget setting. It is not statutory but it would be taken out of school budgets who have already set their budgetes.
- 1.39 DF understood that the money has to come from somewhere but felt the issue was that schools who are being more inclusive are being penalised again in year.
- 1.40 MM noted that the cheapest place to have a SEN child is in mainstream school but the places have dropped.
- 1.41 MM felt the first option was more palatable as most heads wont have factored it into their budgets and with the second option you are hitting the schools that are already saving you the most money.
- 1.42 VMM noted it will be an ongoing conversation.
- 1.43 MM noted they were putting enormous energy into looking at these sums of money that don't add up to the Conel number.
- 1.44 MD asked if they could do anything about schools not meeting their pan and then being funded for bulge classes.

- 1.45 The committee discussed the correlation between schools with deficit budgets and those who have a high proportion of SEN children.
- 1.44 VMM asked that of the two options the committee felt the in-year option is not sensible but as the other option hasn't been allocated it's still on the table.
- 1.45 MD advised they have less students on Haringey transport than ever before.
- 1.46 VMM reported she is going to do an invest to save on transport.
- 1.47 MM noticed the £800k put towards overheads in the budget. He suggested asking for a £400k saving.
- 1.48 GG noted they have this consistency across all of their budgets. It's right that they should ask and put a case together and get evidence to put forward.
- 1.49 MD suggested asking for 25% of that budget and noted that schools have taken a 20% cut on their contingency.
- 1.50 VMM asked who would that question go to.
- 1.51 SS advised Paul Durrant.
- 1.52 VM will ask Paul Durrant how the on costs are derived for this particular project.
- 1.53 GG felt it was a corporate issue and she would find out would overturn such a decision.
- 1.54 MD felt if there is an actual cost of maintaining the building that's what they should be paying.
- 1.55 VMM suggested the other things are around looking at out of borough places and then potentially trying to band the top up for colleges. .
- 1.56 MD reported that the high needs block is paying £800k into early help. They have had a 13% cut.
- 1.57 PD commented it was whether early help should be funded from the high needs block.
- 1.58 MM suggested that was an area that could look at for savings as it does not directly effect the EHCP children.
- 1.59 MM felt the discussion around high needs funding is critical now, they need to focus the funding where it is most needed and that is on individual children in schools.
- 1.60 GG suggested producing a report on the types of needs they are supporting.
- 1.61 The Committee discussed the funding and now they will support the 1.8k children.
- 1.62 The Committee agreed they needed to look at the overall budget and the proportion of expenditure of each of the headings.
- 1.63 VMM commented they are spending too much proportionately through out of borough.
- 1.64 Potential mitigating factors against overspend in future years. VMM_reported the following:

- In 2020-2021 there are schools opening, and changes in funding formula, which will help to reduce the pressure on the high needs block and allow future development of services again:
 - The Grove Special School will have been open 1 year
 - Riverside 6th form will be at capacity
 - The growth of the EHCP cohort will stabilise and employment pathways will be established
 - The SEMH and therapeutic provision will be established, including the commissioning of overnight provision – skill set needs to be strong
 - The high needs block will be uplifted by £900K
- 1.65 It was agreed at the meeting that VMM would talk to Paul and look at savings from overheads and early help.
- 1.66 MM proposed the LA cut overheads by £400k if it means early help only get a £50k cut. Suggest we find from overheads and early help. They would maintain that funding for 2 years.
- 1.67 MD asked the committee to vote or agree MM's proposal. The committee agreed to move forward with the proposal above.
- 1.68 VMM felt they needed to help the wider organisation to understand it is important to them as well as the schools for this budget to work.
- 1.69 VMM noted schools that are going to be opening will provide them with additional capacity and then gradually the shift will come back to Borough. They should see the difference in 2020.
- 1.70 MM reported there is a national issue around the lack of funding for SEN. There is an increase in statutory responsibilities and no increase in funding.
- 1.71 Recommendations
- 1.72 The committee collectively agreed the following in year cuts as a package:
- Maintain the TA uplift at current uplift until 2020
 - To investigate and challenge Conel
 - To request the transfer of the remaining underspend on the growth fund
 - Capitalising transport through invest to save
 - A combined saving of £450k between reduced overhead costs for early help contribution to be investigated
 - Total savings of £950 + release the agreed uncommitted growth fund of £370k.
- 1.73 It was noted that this proposal would go to schools forum
- 1.74 There were no other items to discuss. The meeting came to a close at 13.47

Signed.....Date

Chair