

High Needs Block Committee

Draft minutes of the meeting held on 23rd April 2021 at 9.30am via Teams

Schools Forum Members

Martin Doyle: Headteacher Riverside School – Chair
+ Peter Catling: Headteacher Woodlands Park NS&CC
Melian Mansfield: Pembury House Chair of Governors
+ Mike McKenzie: Headteacher Alexandra Park School
Will Wawn: Primary Heads Rep
Gerry Robinson: Alternative Provision
+ Kurt Hintz: CoNEL

Also Invited

Mary Jarrett: Integrated Head of Service
Phil di Leo: Governor The Vale
+ Tony Hartney: Chair, Schools Forum
Kristian Bugnosen: Principal Finance Officer
+ Ngozi Anuforo: Commissioning Manager

Attending

Kate Perry – AHT and SENDCO, Alexandra Park School
Beth George – Project Manager
Sarah Hargreaves: Governance Officer + Denotes absence

1. Welcome, apologies for absence and acceptance

- 1.1 The Chair (Martin Doyle) welcomed everyone present to the meeting. He welcomed Mary Jarrett to her 1st meeting. Kate Perry is attending for Mike McKenzie.
- 1.2 Apologies for absence have been received from Peter Catling, Mike McKenzie and Ngozi Anuforo.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 12th February 2021

- 2.1 The minutes were **agreed** as a correct record of the meeting. They will be signed and returned for safe keeping when this is next possible.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

- 3.1 Pt 4.6.1 Kris has re-circulated his paper and the associated Guidance. He says that Ann Graham understands the issues around the transfer of the money to Early Help and agrees that the funding from the HNB should be reduced. She is keen to avoid a sudden reduction in funding. A re-structuring of the funding position will be looked at. It is likely that it will be 3 years before the subsidy can be reduced to zero.
- 3.2 Pt 4.9 The letter was written to Martin and Phil and presented to School Forum.
- 3.3 Pt 5 The banding descriptors and top-up funding will be looked at later. It was **agreed** that the financial values given should reflect the level of pupil's needs. The current levels of £11,000, £13,000 and £24,000 do not necessarily achieve this. Special schools may not be able to survive if pupils were put on the correct funding level. The research undertaken on 7 or 8 other LA's banding levels showed infinite models.
 - 3.3.1 It was clarified that this issue only relates to pupils in special schools and not those with EHCPs in mainstream schools.

3.3.2 Mary suggested that it should be up to the school to decide how the money is spent, as is the case in other boroughs. Now that it is clearer what the funding is being spent on Kris and Mary will work on some modelling for the next meeting. **Action KB, MJ**

3.3.3 Kris said that it was taken two years to work out exactly what every line in the budget is being spent on.

3.3.4 Martin said it would be useful to see how other boroughs allocate the funding.

3.4 Pt 5.3 Members said that it would be worth considering how schools which appeared to be hostile to accepting pupils with SEND could be encouraged to be more accommodating and asked what support could be offered to them to both take and keep pupils.

3.4.1 It was noted that the “carrot and stick” approach used with secondary schools of a lump sum funding model had brought some benefits.

4. Early Years Forum minutes of 1st February 2021 – for information

4.1 Melian explained that the situation has changed since this meeting as there has been new Guidance from the DfE and they are changing the funding regime. They had been proposing to only fund children attending during the pandemic, but have reverted to funding those on Roll. There will now be another Census in the summer term.

4.2 *Members asked what the situation was with the Finance Manager post, listed at 4.3 as being recruited to.* Kris said he believed the post had been offered around Christmas time but was not currently filled.

5. Paper in relation to the current HNB position – Mary Jarrett

5.1 The paper shows that the Haringey situation is not as dire as in other areas, although it was noted that the borough is creeping up the London table of deficit levels. Kris will circulate further comparison details. **Action KB**

5.1.1 It was noted that if the £1m to Early Help was discounted the situation would be more positive. There is a need to know if the expenditure is on services or on teaching staff.

5.2 There is a large number of EHCPs for those over the age of 20 compared to other boroughs. It is possible that Haringey is not ceasing Plans early enough. Mary will be looking into the over 20's statutory reviews. It is important that they are getting the best support possible to prepare them for adulthood. It is possible that there is a different demographic profile to that in other boroughs.

5.2.1 Some parents see the removal of a Plan as removing support and so some settings leave things as they are for ease of relationships with families. It was **agreed** that case studies of the situation in other boroughs would be useful. **Action MJ**

5.2.2 Mary said that Beth George will be working as a Project Manager looking at the above issues.

5.2.3 Martin reminded the meeting that special school places in-borough had been increased so that expensive external/residential places did not need to be relied on as much. Some external places can cost £100,000 a year.

6. Terms of Reference (ToR) and Forward Plan

6.1 It was **agreed** that Terms of Reference would be useful. The role of the meeting is to provide scrutiny and to consider the overarching issues for special and mainstream schools with SEND pupils. The current main issue is over 16's provision but it is also necessary to know what the overall strategy for this Committee is.

6.2 It should be schools led and not another LA meeting. It was suggested that Headteacher and Governor representation should be listed. Members do not necessarily need to be SF members.

6.3 It should be task focused and aim to get work completed.

6.4 Martin said that the Committee had been focused on finances for so long that it would be beneficial to be able to look at other issues more.

- 6.5 Knowing which age groups have the most EHCPs would be useful.
- 6.6 Mary will ask her previous LA if she can have a copy of their ToR to base a new version on. **Action MJ**
- 6.7 Martin clarified that the group had started off as a Working Party and then had morphed into a Committee. Early Years, in comparison, stayed as a Working Party (it was confirmed that they don't have ToR either). **Action MJ**
- 6.8 Martin and Phil agreed to draw up draft ToR and circulate them for comment before the next meeting. **Action MD, PdiL**
- 7. AOB**
- 7.1 Kris said he would circulate information on the cost drivers and reporting functions as it is information which is already shared with the LA. It was **agreed** that it is important to understand the financial implications of any strategy introduced. **Action KB**
- 7.2 A Deficit Recovery Plan needs to be with the DfE by June/July. This is a LA responsibility, and does not just sit with the HNB. Mary and Kris will work on this and speak to the ESFA. The rationale for moving money between schools blocks needs to be looked at. **Action MJ, KB**
- 7.3 Mary asked what the relationship between this group and the SEND Executive Group was and whether their minutes should also come here for information. Mary and Martin to discuss. **Action MJ, MD**
- 7.3.1 Ofsted will be visiting shortly and so a position paper will be needed on the overall SEND function within the borough. This includes how it is communicated to families and the wider community.
- 10.37am Kate Perry and Gerry Robinson left the meeting.**

- 7.4 The next meeting will be held on **May 28th 2021 at 9.30am. Teams** invite to follow.
- 7.4.1 The main agenda items will be:
 SEND Strategy
 Recovery Strategy
 Terms of Reference
 Any other proposed agenda items to be sent to Mary by **21st May**.
- 7.4.2 The EYF minutes will remain as a standing item.

There being no further business the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at **11am**.

Signed

Date