

High Needs Block Committee

Draft minutes of the meeting held on 21st June 2023 at 1.30pm via Zoom

Schools Forum Members

Martin Doyle: Headteacher Riverside School – Chair

Sian McDermott: Headteacher Rowland Hill Nursery School and Children Centre

+ Melian Mansfield: Pembury House Chair of Governors

Mike McKenzie: Secondary Heads Rep. Headteacher Alexandra Park School

+ Will Wawn: Primary Heads Rep. Headteacher Bounds Green School, Chair, Schools Forum

+ Gerry Robinson: Alternative Provision

+ Kurt Hintz: CoNEL

Also Invited

Mary Jarrett: Integrated Head of Service

Phil di Leo: Chair of Governors, The Vale

+ Patricia Harvey: Schools Finance Manager

Attending

Robin Hindley: CoNEL

Sarah Hargreaves: Senior Governance Officer

+ Denotes absence

1. Welcome, introductions, apologies for absence and acceptance

1.1 Mary Jarrett Chaired until Martin Doyle arrived. She welcomed everyone present to the meeting.

1.2 Apologies for absence have been received from Gerry Robinson and for having to leave early from Mike McKenzie and Robin Hindley.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 4th May 2023

2.1 The minutes were **agreed** as a correct record of the meeting.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

3.1 The revised Terms of Reference and how this group links into the SEND Executive are still in draft. Members asked for clarity as to the purpose of this meeting now that the Safety Value programme has been introduced. There needs to be more analysis and scrutiny of the information given, rather than just being informed of what is happening/has happened.

3.1.1 Concern was expressed that without this group papers could go to School Forum without being considered beforehand.

3.1.2 It was suggested that reports and information could be provided by other Members, not just coming from Mary.

3.1.3 Terms of Reference for other HNB groups, in areas which have a SV programme, would be useful to look at. The version circulated from LB Westminster was very similar to the current ones of this group. Phil to have a look around for suggestions

Action PdL

3.1.4 It is hoped to be able to finalise the new ToR at the next meeting. The current view is that both the SV steering group and the HNB working party are needed.

Action Chair

4. Minutes of the Early Years Forum meeting of 14th June 2023

4.1 Noted.

5. Safety Value, Programme Update. Mary Jarrett

5.1 Mary spoke to her Safety Value slides.

5.2 She said that there is an issue of capacity throughout the system and the costs of various interventions have to be considered against Value for Money criteria.

1.45pm Martin Doyle joined the meeting

5.3 Whilst there is a need to cost the provision for every child, members were unsure as to whether banding of the provision was the only way forward. It was noted that some other boroughs do not use this system as it may not relate to the needs of the child.

5.3.1 All pupils across all phases and types of school who have SENCO support will be included. The intention is that if their needs are accurately assessed then the number of necessary places and types of support provision to meet their needs can be provided in the most cost effective way.

5.3.2 An important part of this will be to conduct timely reviews for all pupils.

5.4 Mary was thanked for her update.

2pm Mike McKenzie and Robin Hindley left the meeting.

6. Finance Update. Dis-application Request Mary Jarrett

6.1 Mary explained that this paper concerns the proposal to not give the special schools a 3% top-up to their funding due to the money not being available. In-year savings need to be made for the Safety Value programme in addition to the other savings needed.

6.1.1 *Members felt that it should be highlighted to SF that the service has already saved £500,000 in the last year.*

6.1.2 It is believed to be better to not give the money to settings rather than to passport it to them and then have to reclaim it.

6.1.3 The settings affected are: Riverside School, The Vale, The Brook, Blanche Nevile School, Haringey Learning Partnership and The Grove.

6.2 At pt 2.6 it states that 3.4% has been added to the place value funding; which makes this proposal look more punishing to settings than it in fact is. Mary to check. **Action MJ**

6.3 It is accepted that this proposal will have implications for special schools this year and next year. Support staff salary increases will affect special schools as they have a higher number of them than in mainstream schools.

6.4 *Members asked that the paper acknowledges that some schools are unsure as to their funding allocations.* The finance team believe that they should know the figures, but will inform the schools again. **Action Finance Team**

6.5 £340 will be added to the place funding for each pupil.

6.6 The re-banding exercise will result in two different payments to settings. *Members asked if the banding exercise would be undertaken again in two years?* This is unlikely, but the figures attached to each banding may need to be re-considered as time progresses. The funding rates will be published every April for the following September.

6.6.1 There will be a public consultation exercise on the new bandings starting in **September** for 8 weeks.

6.7 It was confirmed that the top-ups are the same across all settings, even if the pupil's needs are different. The aim is to give a transparent financial system, wherever the pupil attends. They will be able to access the same level of funding dependent on their needs. It will be important to have common language in the banding descriptors. The intention is to get this exercise completed in autumn term 2023. It is important to know where pupils are attending so that VfM can be established; knowing the PAN and occupancy figures would be useful. **Action MJ**

6.7.1 *Members asked if there was going to be a contingency fund as an interim measure?* This is to be decided. Longer term budget planning is on-going.

6.8 The 2015 reforms enabled pupils to stay in the system until they were 25, but no more money was provided, so it isn't a surprise that councils have overspent.

6.9 The council is supporting 16 internships. This has been a positive development.

7. AOB

7.1 The next meeting will be held on **13th September at 3.30pm at Riverside School**. Clerk to Inform the group. **Action SH**

There being no further business the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at **3pm**.