



## **EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LEISURE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of the Education, Children's Services and Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on Wednesday 23 October 2013 at 7.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room G01A - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

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**PRESENT:** Councillor David Hubber (Chair)  
Councillor The Right Revd Emmanuel Oyewole (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Chris Brown  
Councillor Althea Smith  
Councillor Cleo Soanes  
Councillor Graham Neale

**OTHER MEMBERS  
PRESENT:**

**OFFICER  
SUPPORT:** Kerry Crichlow, Director Strategy & Commissioning  
Colin Gale, Free Healthy School Meals project lead  
Fay Hammond, Departmental Finance Manager  
Julie Timbrell, Scrutiny Project Manager

### **1. APOLOGIES**

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Shimell and Rajan. Councillor Neale attended as a substitute.

### **2. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT**

- 2.1 The chair agreed to accept item 10, which contained a comment from a parent governor on the review into the council's role with maintained , academy and free schools.

### **3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS**

3.1 There were no disclosures of interests or dispensations.

### **4. MINUTES**

4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2013 were agreed as an accurate record.

### **5. REVIEW : FREE HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS**

5.1 Colin Gale, Free Healthy Schools Meals (FHSM) project manager, briefly presented the update report and the chair invited members to ask questions.

5.2 A member referred to paragraph 6 in the report that indicated that the results of the additional measuring and weighing programme are still being analyzed. He asked when the results will be ready and Colin Gale apologized for the delay and said that Public Health is working on this and he will make the results available as soon as possible.

5.3 Colin Gale was then asked about the recent government announcement that free school meals will be rolled out nationally. He reported that Southwark Council has been in discussions with the Department for Education and the council is helping neighbouring boroughs to prepare.

5.4 A member asked if officers were confident that schools were receiving adequate payment and that there was no shortfall. Colin Gale explained that the council recognises that some schools have to make a large cash outlay and intend to take a more sympathetic approach, by giving some money in advance; however he was confident there was no shortfall. The council pay £1.90 per meal, in addition the schools receive 0.50p through the DSG which is the Direct Schools Grant administered by the council's finance department. He added that some schools have been able to negotiate a better financial deal with providers because the volume of meals had gone up.

5.5 Colin Gale was asked how the views of parents were sought and he explained that groups of parents were approached and focus groups arranged.

## ACTION

Provide the results of the additional weighing and measuring programme.

### 6. PUPIL PREMIUM

- 6.1 Fay Hammond, Departmental Finance Manager, briefly presented the report. She explained that schools receive over £15 million through Pupil Premium. The method of calculation has changed so that if a child has ever been eligible for the last 6 years for free school meals then they will continue to attract the Pupil Premium throughout their school attendance even if their family's circumstances change – this is referred to as the Ever6 programme. The department is not required to ask schools for details on their spending but the council does because it considers this a very important area. Officers also ask schools for their education plans for Looked After Children.
- 6.2 The chair asked if schools all provide the requested information and the officer confirmed that 100 % did. Another member asked why over £2million was carried forward by schools and officers responded that this might be to do with the timing of the calculation. Members asked if this money might be lost if it went unspent or the risk that money could be hoarded. Officers commented that the culture has changed and it is now unusual for funding streams to stipulate that money is spent within a financial year. Members requested more clarification on the reasons for the carry over and commented that they would like reassurance that this money continues to be used for the purpose it has been allocated for.
- 6.3 Members asked why the some schools receive so much more money and the officer explained there are significant variations in school size, which is the major reason.
- 6.4 A member asked how the percentage of 72% spending on staffing was calculated and officers referred to the calculation in paragraph 16.

6.5 Officers were asked about the percentage of parents who do not claim free school meals and thus do not attract Pupil Premium and the risk that Southwark Free Healthy School Meal programme could increase the amount of parents who do not make a claim. Officers said that the council does look at census data and uses this to provide a challenge to schools where there looks to be a discrepancy. Officers explained that that is a national problem with under claiming. The chair commented that the Ever6 programme should help and officers agreed. Officers explained that they had worked with Southwark schools to simplify the forms with the local roll out of FHSM and added that with the national roll out of free school meals this will be a national challenge. Colin Gale said that some schools provide an incentive – such as a voucher for a sweatshirt for every registration form filled out.

## **ACTION**

Officer will provide more information on the £2,460,989 carried forward by schools.

## **7. REGULAR UPDATE ON SOUTHWARK FREE SCHOOLS**

7.1 The report was noted.

## **8. APPRENTICESHIPS SCHEME PARTICIPANT NUMBERS AND GENDER RATIOS**

8.1 The chair commented that he had recently visited the call centre where a number of apprentices are based and was very impressed with their work.

## **9. WORKPLAN**

9.1 The committee was invited to consider themes and topics for the cabinet member interview and a member suggested the Olympic legacy.

9.2 The chair indicated that secondary schools will be invited to attend the next meeting. A member commented that there was a wide variation in the number of exclusions, with a report to Council Assembly indicating the Globe Academy had particularly high levels. Members requested that

admissions policies also be raised with schools.

**10. REVIEW - THE COUNCIL'S ROLE WITH MAINTAINED, ACADEMY  
AND FREE SCHOOLS**

10.1 The parent governor's comments were noted.