

**MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING
THURSDAY 25 JUNE 2020 AT 4pm**

School Members		
Headteachers		
Special (1)	*Martin Doyle (Riverside)	
Nursery Schools (1)	Peter Catling (Woodlands Park)	
Primary (7)	Mary Gardiner (West Green)	Michelle Randles
	Stephen McNicholas (St John Vianney)	*Paul Murphy (Lancasterian)
	Emma Murray (Seven Sisters)	Linda Sarr (Risley Avenue)
	Will Wawn (Bounds Green)	
Secondary (2)	Andy Webster (Park View)	Tony Hartney (Gladesmore)
Primary Academy (1)	Sharon Easton (St Pauls & All Hallows)	
Secondary Academies (2)	Vacancy	Michael McKenzie (Alexandra Park)
Alternative Provision (1)	Patricia Davies	
Governors		
Special (1)	*Jean Brown (The Vale)	
Nursery Centres (1)	Melian Mansfield (Pembury)	
Primary (7)	Laura Butterfield (Coldfall)	
	Hannah D'Aguiar (Chestnuts Primary)	John Keever (Seven Sisters)
	Jenny Thomas (Lordship Lane)	*Julie Davies (Tiverton)
	Vacancy	
Secondary (2)	Vacancy	Vacancy
	(A) Sylvia Dobie (Park View)	
Primary Academy (1)	Vacancy	
Secondary Academies (3)	*Noreen Graham (Woodside)	Vacancy
Non-School Members		
Non-Executive Councillor	ClIr Daniel Stone	
Trade Union Representative	Paul Renny	
Professional Association Representative	Sabina Cole	
Faith Schools	*Geraldine Gallagher	
14-19 Partnership	Kurt Hintz	
Early Years Providers	Susan Tudor-Hart	
Observers		
Cabinet Member for CYPS	ClIr Amin	
Also Attending		
LBH Director of Children's Services		Ann Graham
Chief Executive of Haringey Education Partnership (HEP)		James Page
LBH Assistant Director, Schools & Learning		Eveleen Riordan
Interim LBH Head of SEN & Disability		Nathan Jones
LBH Head of Strategic Commissioning, Early Help & Culture		Ngozi Anuforo
LBH Assistant Director Commissioning		Charlotte Pomery
LBH Head of Early Help & Prevention		Martin Clement
LBH Head of Finance & Business Partners		Brian Smith
LBH Finance Business Partner (Schools & Learning)		Muhammad Ali
LBH Service Improvement & Children's Services		Karen Oellermann
LBH Principal Accountant DSG		Kristian Bugnosen
Lead for Governor Services (HEP)		
HEP Clerk (Minutes)		Maria Gabrielczyk

(A) = Apologies given

* = Asterisk denotes absence

ITEM NO.	SUBJECT / DECISION	ACTION ASSIGNED TO
1.	CHAIR'S WELCOME	
1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone present to the meeting. A warm welcome was extended to Cllr Amin, Paul Renny and Sabina Cole – the Unison Reps.	
2.	APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS	
2.1	Apologies were received from: Sylvia Dobie, Paul Sutton and Vanessa Bateman	
3.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
3.1	None were made.	
4.	MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 27 FEBRUARY 2020	
4.1	The Minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.	
5.	MATTERS ARISING Correction on attendance – Susan Tudor-Hart attended the last meeting, but was shown as absent. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P6. Item 11 HNB – This needs to be clarified to the new lead member. Eveleen will take this away and bring the item back at a later date. • Item 13 Wood Green youth hub development update. Martin Clement reported that monthly meetings have started on the building of a new youth centre in Wood Green. It will replicate the youth centre in Bruce Grove. Pupils will be involved in the development and design of the centre. There will be a focus group made up from pupils in the Youth Justice and Social Care and will also engage parents. The centre will be ready within 2 years. 	
6.	FORUM MEMBERSHIP	
6.1	A paper was sent out with the number of pupils in schools. New members have been selected and the proportional representation remains as it was.	
7.	OUTCOME OF INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRAMME	
7.1	<p>Minesh provided a summary of the audit work completed for the schools cohort for the last financial year.</p> <p>74 schools were audited. The number of recommendations received were 190. Of those 102 were a significant level of risk and a priority, 79 were minor and 3 a low risk.</p> <p>The Appendices showed the audit areas to focus on, outcomes and recommendations. The recommendations remain open risks which schools are exposed to and the department is trying to mitigate.</p> <p>The final part of Minesh's paper outlined what the programme will look like. The programme has not been refreshed and the Covid-19 situation has paused the internal work of schools.</p>	

7.2	<p>The finance department are carrying out audits in a safe way. The schools and LA's records have been received. School visit will start early July and the audits will start by early September and will all be completed by March 2021.</p> <p>Q. There is a flaw in the audit and finance team as the quarterly forecasts are not routinely checked.</p> <p>A. The Haringey system is in control of what gets fed back to schools finance. The audit team try to look at the controls in place. The auditors are unable to check every single element of the prime documents and accept at face value what has been presented as genuine.</p> <p>Q. This is a paper based exercise that does not check the validity of the paperwork and is a real risk.</p> <p>A. This issue is part of the current discussions. There are gaps in the quarterly returns from schools. This year the finance team is looking at audit reports and profiling schools that may be in financial difficulties. Cash flow issues are also being looked at. This issue is not complete and not particularly embedded. They are areas for the finance team for improvement and to pick these up before it becomes a big issue.</p> <p>The Schools Forum noted the feedback on the audit work completed in 2019/20.</p>	
8.	DEDICATED SCHOOLS BUDGET	
8.1	<p>The key points covered were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing Schools Forum members on the final DSG position 2019-20 overall and in Early Years Block, Schools Block, High Needs Block and Central School Services Block. • Schools Forum members were asked to note the schools closing balance as at 31st March 2020. • Schools Forum members to note the financial review of DSG for 2019-20 and 2020-21 forecast. • Updating Schools Forum members on the proposed use of the Business Rates refund allocation. • Informing Schools Forum members of the need for a DSG recovery plan. • DSG deficit recovery plan • DSG budget analytical review 2020-21 and 2021-22 <p>Kristian explained the papers and funding available and the total spend. The final results show a cumulative deficit of £8.1m in Haringey schools.</p>	

8.2	<p>The closing DSG reserve balances are a deficit of £10.1m. This has resulted in schools in financial difficulty going further into difficulty.</p> <p>There has been a delay from the ESFA on the SEN review and financial help.</p> <p>The outturn reporting is linked to Item 10 on the Agenda, where £788K is to be used as a Covid-19 fund. The recommendation is to agree and create this fund.</p> <p>Q. In 1.1 it states the school funding is maintained. This cannot be true as in real terms funding has been reduced, even if its cash has increased.</p> <p>A. The recommendation is that the Schools Forum members agree for a Working Group to go ahead and create a pot for schools in financial difficulty due to the pandemic. This would be a Covid-19 fund.</p> <p>Q. Who would be eligible? Would it include AP?</p> <p>A. Details will be clarified are reported at the next Schools Forum meeting. The Group would be consulting on the criteria on how to distribute the fund.</p> <p>A Schools Forum member informed that this would only apply to those settings to get transitional relief. Settings outside of the 5-16 would not be eligible for the rates refund.</p> <p>Schools Forum agreed to the proposal of having a Working Group to create a draft a criteria and procedures for considering funding awards from a contingency Covid-19 fund. ACTION</p>	ALL
9.	<p>UPDATE ON SCHOOLS IN FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY</p>	
9.1	<p>The DfE have advised that if schools have a deficit of more than 1% they can produce a deficit recovery plan. Schools will be required to report deficits to the DfE through statutory accounts and in addition prepare an internal 3 year recovery plan. Further guidance is awaited from the DfE.</p> <p>It was agreed that an update on schools in financial difficulty will be produced. ACTION.</p> <p>The team are working on the programme to help support schools experiencing financial difficulties that include cash flow problems or operational issues. Internal audit have identified that bank reconciliations are not operating on a standard system. Schools cannot create a cash flow forecast as there are no balance sheets. In addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 60% of schools use external advisors. The current arrangements are not fit for purpose. • The business rates refund money will be used for more resources. • The programme has been designed. • The end of year accounts are not balanced. Funding was agreed in the February Schools Forum to use and add capacity. So far the schools 	KG/MA/BS

<p>finance website has been developed, listing statutory and non-statutory services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding levels are currently low with 9 schools contacting the team with cash flow needs. A cash flow advance was given, but the team are unsure how it was used. • Part of the Risk Management was for schools to submit quarterly forecasts. • New systems have been put in place and SBM are being training. • Two posts were funded for schools in financial difficulties. <p>Q. Is there still a vacancy? A. Yes, as no recruitment took place due to Covid19.</p> <p>Q. Is direct support provided to schools? A. Yes, so gaps need to be filled. Blue are the start-up roles and white are the new roles</p> <p>Q. How are the roles split? A. There are 3 in a team and changes have been made to the structure from the funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The opening reserves balances show a £1.8m in year movement • The in-year deficit has gone from a lot of primary schools. There were some quick fixes for some schools, but others need robust financial plans • Schools in financial difficulties have been identified. Financial benchmarking is being carried out and the procurement contracts are being reviewed. Packages have been developed for schools and Point 6 of the paper covers the scope of work covered. Money is being used to up-skill the SBM • The approval has been given to recruit for the Assistant Accountant role and it is now live on the council website • Additionally, interim cover has been provided in the short term for the accountant role <p>A. There is an embargo on recruitment during Covid-19 for the Assistant Accountant post and the interim post.</p> <p>Q. Rather than centralising invoice payments, have you look at finance software that reduces paper processing from PO to BACs? A. We have been promoting software that supports this. Some of the Business Managers we have encountered we have introduced them to the Xero system as a starting point</p> <p>Q. Is there an upsurge in schools in financial difficulties asking for advances and deficit budgets? A. Yes, there have been 9 applications, but we will have a better view in the Autumn.</p> <p>A member informed that the schools in financial difficulty post £120K was funded solely from the de-delegation fund and come from maintained schools.</p>	
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	<p>The team responded that the money used for backfilling come from maintained primary and secondary schools.</p> <p>A member brought up the income from SLA from schools in Table 8 and that the figures do not add up. It was agreed this would not be discussed as it referred to two people's salaries.</p> <p>A member raised the concern that there were less applications for secondary schools in Haringey this year compared to last year. It was agreed to report back to the Schools Forum in the October meeting. ACTION</p> <p>ER is looking at this issue, as the Reception level has also come down. The July projection figures are from the GLA. ER offered to bring back a paper on place planning for the October meeting. ACTION</p> <p>A member stated that more clarification is needed on pt3.4 and para 8. He informed that there needs to be some sort of a consulting group and place planning federation options needs to be looked at. This issue needs to be at a high strategic level with unions and academies involved.</p> <p>ER informed that high level work is being done with difficult decisions needing to be made. ER is happy to revisit this issue. ACTION</p> <p>Schools Forum members noted the contents of the paper.</p>	<p>ER</p> <p>ER</p> <p>ER</p>
10.	BUSINESS RATES REBATE	
10.1	This item was covered under Item 8.	
11.	KS2 BULGE PROTECTION FOR TIVERTON PRIMARY SCHOOL	
11.1	<p>Carlo Kodsi informed that a lot of work had been done on school place planning and all NLC groups were visited. Stamford Hill Primary School will be closing on 31st August 2020 and all displaced pupils will be moving to Tiverton Primary School. Reception and Yr1 will be hosting an extra class. The Headteacher and Governors of Tiverton Primary School have stated that the demand for school places will not pick up. There is high mobility in the area and a risk that places will remain vacant. Schools Forum members are asked for a special consideration for bulge protection for Tiverton Primary School when the school stops being subsidised as a consequence of the amalgamation. Tiverton Primary School should not be financially disadvantaged.</p> <p>The Recommendation is that the Schools Forum members are asked to agree to bulge protection funding for Tiverton Primary School at KS2 in the event that the total numbers on roll in the affected bulge classes fall below 24. This funding would be available from the Growth Fund element of the DSG at the</p>	

11.2	<p>point when the school ceases to be subsidised as a consequence of amalgamation (from September 2022 and beyond).</p> <p>Q. If it is recommended then what is the view on the declining casual admissions? A. Carlo Kodsi will discuss this with the school</p> <p>Schools Forum members agreed to the recommendation of bulge protection funding for Tiverton Primary School at KS2 in the event that the total numbers on roll in the affected bulge classes fall below 24.</p>	
12.	UPDATE FROM WORKING PARTIES	
12.1	<p>Early Years Block working group and High Needs Block working group Ngozi has shared a paper with the Early Years Block Working Group. It details the impact of closures as a consequence of Covid-19. The paper was circulated to the Schools Forum.</p> <p>The key points were that the DfE is funding schools and providers when they are closed. There is an issue with duplicating funding and a shift in Government policy in September. The funding cannot be sustained.</p> <p>Q. Will the October headcount be delayed? A. There is a webinar with the DfE next week and part of the reporting back will be on numbers as this has been raised with the DfE. Q. There is a conflict with PVI and settings. There must not be a loss of funding for headcounts in October and January. A. This comment was logged and will be raised at the next meeting.</p>	
13.	INFORMATION ITEMS	
13.1	<p>Alternative provision finance report The Alternative Provision Hub, to be based on the former Stamford Hill School site, will meet the educational, social and therapeutic needs of children and young people under the governance of the Haringey Tuition Centre from 1st September 2020.</p> <p>Charlotte informed that a lot of detailed work is being done and there are issues to resolve around underpinning the bubble involved.</p> <p>Laura informed that due to site issues this will not happen. The Music Tuition Service is instead moving to Crawford Road to a suitable building. Arrangements are ongoing with HR and the Unions about TUPE.</p> <p>Charlotte asked for Schools Forum members to form a Working Group.</p>	
13.2	<p>Charlotte will email out information about the Working Group to all Schools Forum members. ACTION</p>	CP

	Schools Forum members noted the content of the paper.	
13.3	Schools Forum members Melian and Will offered to join the Working Group. Other Schools Forum members interested in joining to email Charlotte.	
14.	ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS	
16.	DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 October 2020 • 3 December 2020 • 14 January 2021 • 25 February 2021 • 24 June 2021 	

Meeting closed 5:47pm

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

ITEM	ACTION	FOLLOW UP
8.2	Set up a Working Group to create a draft a criteria and procedures for considering funding awards from a contingency Covid-19 fund	ALL
9.1	Produce an update on schools in financial difficulty	KG/MA/BS
9.1	Report on the reduction of reception school places	ER
9.1	Report on place planning for the October meeting	ER
9.1	Consider review of place planning federation options at a strategic level with unions and academies involved	ER
13.2	Email information about the Working Group to all Schools Forum members	CP