

**MINUTES OF THE OF THE SCHOOLS' FORUM  
HELD ON 19 MARCH 2019  
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, BARKING  
(10:00am – 12:00pm)**

**Present: School Representatives**

**Primary School Representatives**

Brian Fox (BF)	HT, Roding Primary School
Scott Halliwell (SH) (Joint Chair)	HT, Southwood Primary School
Christine James (CJ)	HT, Dorothy Barley Infants School
Jayne Meech (JM)	HT, Village Infants School
Richard November (RN)	HT, Valence Primary School
Julie Philips (JP)	HT, Godwin Primary School

**Secondary School Representative**

Ges Smith (GS)	HT, Jo Richardson Community School
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**Governor Representatives**

David Dickson (DD)	HT, Eastbury Community School
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**Academy / Free Schools**

**Academy Special School Representative**

Roger Leighton (RL) (Joint Chair)	Chief Executive, Partnership Learning
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**Special Needs Representative**

Susan Ball (SB)	HT, Trinity School
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**Non-School Representatives**

John Trow Smith (JTS)	Early Years Representative
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**Head of Specialist Alternative Provision**

Annie Blackmore (AB)	HT, Mayesbrook Park School
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**Trade Union Representative**

Dominic Byrne (DB)	NUT
John McGill (JMc)	NASUWT

**Also present:** Jane Hargreaves (JH), Commissioning Director – Education  
Councillor Evelyn Carpenter (CC) – Cabinet Member for Education and Schools  
Patricia Harvey (PH) – Senior Professional, High Needs Block  
Katherine Heffernan (KH) – Group Manager – Local Authority Finance and Investment

## **MINUTES**

Mr Scott Halliwell chaired the meeting. Mr Roger Leighton to chair the June 2019 meeting

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Ronan Fox – Joint Children’s Commissioner for Barking and Dagenham  
Martin Nicholson – HT, Grafton Primary School  
Paramjit Roopra – HT, Northbury Primary School  
Janis Davis – HT, Sydney Russel School  
Andrew Roberts – HT, Riverside School

### **2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

None

### **3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2019 were confirmed as an accurate record

#### **3.2 Actions from 18 October 2018**

2.2 It was noted that Andrew Carr (AC) will send the paper on the sugar tax levy to all maintained schools and include the time scale for responses.

**Action AC & NY**

3.2 NY to act as the clerk for the Place Planning Sub Group and to liaise with Chris James (chair) and Lisa O’Dwyer and Andrew Carr from Admissions and to send information to SF members.

**Complete**

3.3 NY to book SF dates for the next financial year send invites to SF members

**Complete**

3.2.1 Forum members noted that the new constitution will come into effect from September 2019.

3.2.2 KH informed School’ Forum members that the Scheme for Financing Schools has been published on the LBBD website, under Schools’ Forum.

#### 4. REPORT FROM THE GROUP ACCOUNTANT - FINANCE

##### 2. DSG Forecast outturn 2018/19

2.1 Noted, the forecasted DSG outturn for 2018/19 is £218,341m, including the transfer of £750k from the schools' block and the additional allocation of £672k.

	Revised funding forecast £'000	Expenditure forecast £'000	Variance over/(under) £'000	Jan Position
Schools block	167,174	167,033	(141)	108
Early years block	21,319	21,319	0	0
High needs block	27,289	28,944	1,655	1,998
Central block	2,559	2,559	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>218,341</b>	<b>219,855</b>	<b>1,514</b>	<b>2,106</b>
Brought forward DSG balance (excl. growth fund)			(3,048)	(3,048)
Growth fund			(500)	(500)
<b>DSG balance forecast for 31st March 2019</b>			<b>(2,034)</b>	<b>(1,442)</b>

2.2 Noted, there is an overspend in the High Needs Block which leaves a pressure of just over £2m, this presents a slightly better picture.

2.3 **Recommendation (i):** Schools' Forum are requested to note 2018/19 DSG forecast outturn.

**Noted**

##### 3. High Needs projected outturn 2018/19

See Appendix 1, distributed in advance of the meeting

3.1 A question was asked about the £422k increase in the forecasted budget for Special Educational Needs – Non-Maintained Fees. It was asked whether there was any feedback on the increase. PH responded saying that the increase is due to increasing demand and the lack of sufficient settings in the borough that meet the high-level needs of the children being identified.

3.2 Noted, PH informed the panel that the DfE consider LBBD to be a net importer of young people.

3.3 Clarification was requested on the reduction of the Primary AP budget, PH stated that the reduction is due to the full impact of the SEMH provision next year.

3.4 A question was asked why ARP funding has reduced when new ARPs are opening. PH stated that this is due to the Gascoigne ARP being pre-designated which will present small savings and looking at vacant places in Primary.

3.5 PH will send a mapping of places with the minutes

**Action PH**

3.6 PH informed the group that the budget is in draft format and will be reassigned after September based upon outturn.

3.7 **Recommendation (ii):** Schools' Forum are requested to note the projected High Needs outturn and pressures.

**Noted**

#### 4. High Needs Working Group

4.1 Overspend on HNB. The table on page 4 set out the available money for next year (first part of table). It is noted that the 2019/20 budget is nearly equal to the 2018/19 outturn. The 2019/20 budget could be subject to change due to demand, pressures may arise.

4.2 Noted, at the Primary Heads meeting, representatives were requested for the SEND Strategy Group.

4.3 Noted, KH informed the group that finance is proposing a £200k initiatives budget (2/3 of the way down on Appendix A) to fund specific project, to alleviate areas of high demand or problems within the borough.

4.4 **Recommendation (iii):** Schools' Forum are requested to note and comment on 2019/20 high needs budget.

**Noted**

4.5 KA informed the group that he is aware of the pressures that other London boroughs are experiencing within the HNB. Barking and Dagenham have an overspend of approximately 5 / 6% in comparison to some London boroughs that have an overspend of approximately 20%. KA commended PH, the Local Authority and School Headteachers for their work on keeping the overspend to 5%.

#### 5. Growth Fund

5.1 Noted, the Growth Fund for 2019/20 is £1.5m. This is funding 9 Primary and 14 Secondary classes at the AWPU rates. In addition, 4 new primary and 12 new secondary classes are being funded through the formula.

5.2 Noted, the bulk of the growth is affecting secondary schools, additional secondary classes may be required.

5.3 Noted, there is a projected underspend of £549k in the Growth Fund. This underspend is being used to fund Falling Rolls. It was noted that this may not be available for next year.

5.4 **Recommendation (iv):** Schools' Forum are requested to note the projected growth fund outturn

5.5 JTS asked whether primaries are still struggling to fill classes and whether classes had closed. SH stated that Primary classes are closing and that 8/9

schools dropped a class last year. This is likely to happen again in 2019 and 2020. Numbers are expected to increase from then.

- 5.6 Schools' Forum noted that the Financial Monitoring Group (FMG) are meeting this week and will look at the drop in pupil numbers and reserve balances and report back to SF.

**6. Pension – information only**

- 6.1 There has been an evaluation of pension scheme. A consultation took place in February. Results are expected to be published in April.
- 6.2 The formula is similar to the pay award and is based on pupil numbers. It was noted that the pay award was based on the October census
- 6.3 Noted, SF members raised concerns that issues may arise for schools with falling rolls if this is based on pupil numbers.
- 6.3 **Recommendation (iv):** Schools' Forum are requested to note pension information

**Noted**

**7. Supplementary Free School Meals Grant (SFSMG)**

- 7.1 **Recommendation (vi):** Schools' Forum are requested to note SFSMG information
- 7.2 SF members requested an update on the FSM project currently being undertaken by Natasha Cock. Members requested to view the FSM report at the June forum.
- 7.3 Noted, this could potentially be an additional funding pressure to schools around pupil premium and drop in numbers.

**Noted**

**Action NY**

**8. Devolved Formula Capital (DFC)**

- 8.1 Noted, DFC is capital funding provided to schools which can be used for improvements to building and other facilities. This fund is usually paid to the Local Authority and schools typically claim retrospectively.
- 8.2 Noted, from the next financial year, schools will be paid their full DFC allocation for the year upfront. Finance will have to keep a check on funding as it should be clawed back if not used within three years. KH is going to write to all schools.
- 8.3 **Recommendation (vi):** Schools' Forum are requested to note the new payment process for DFC

**Action KH**

Noted

**9. Any Other Business**

9.1 Schools who are requested to attend the Falling Rolls Sub Group on Wednesday 27 March need to be contacted and given plenty of notice so that they are able to attend.

**Action** NY/CJ

9.2 HTs asked whether schools or the local authority are liable in the event of a redundancy. KH will seek clarification from Gail Clarke (HR) around who is liable for redundancy costs, and report back to schools

**Action** KH

9.3 Noted, schools reported tight deadlines when producing statements of accounts for 2018/19. Those who use financial consultants are struggling to obtain information before year end. KH clarified that Finance close on Q3 estimates, final closure information is needed by the end of July. It was acknowledged that these deadlines are tight.

9.4 BF informed Schools' Forum that from January 2020, Coventry University will be welcoming PGCE students. This could result in a significant number of teachers being recruited back into the borough. School Forum members welcomed this good news.

**Noted**

**5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next Schools' Forum meeting will take place on Tuesday 18 June 2019 in the Chamber, Town Hall, 1 Town Square, Barking, IG11 7LU from 10:00am to 12:00pm.

Head teachers' pre-meeting will commence at **9.30am.**