

MINUTES OF THE OF THE SCHOOLS' FORUM
HELD ON 20 OCTOBER 2020
VIRTUAL TEAMS MEETING
(10:00am to 12:00pm)

Present:	Maintained Primary Representatives	
	Paramjit Roopra (PR)	HT, Northbury Primary School
	Scott Halliwell (SH) (Joint Chair)	HT, Southwood Primary School
	Christine James (CJ)	HT, Dorothy Barley Infants School
	Jayne Meech (JM)	HT, Village Infant School
	Julie Philips (JP)	HT, Godwin Primary School
	Martin Nicholson (MN)	HT, Grafton Primary School
	Gill Massar (GM)	HT, William Bellamy Primary School
	Richard November (RN)	HT, Valence Primary School
	Maintained Secondary Representatives	
	Ges Smith (GS)	HT, Jo Richardson Community School
	Tony Roe (TR)	HT, Barking Abbey School
	Maintained All-through (A/T)	
	Governor Representatives (1 pri & 1 sec)	
	David Dickson (DD)	HT, Eastbury Community School
	Academy & Free Primary	
	Academy & Free Secondary	
	Andy Roberts	HT, Riverside School
	Academy & Free Schools (A/T)	
	Janis Davies	HT, Sydney Russell School
	Academy Special School Representative	
	Roger Leighton (RL) (Joint Chair)	Chief Executive, Partnership Learning
	Maintained Special Schools Representative	
	Susan Ball (SB)	HT, Trinity School
	Maintained PRU Representative	
	Annie Blackmore (AB)	HT, Mayesbrook Park School
	Governor Representative	
	David Dickson	HT, Eastbury Community School
	Early Years Representative	
	John Trow Smith (JTS)	Early Years, Local Authority
	Trade Union Representatives	
	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
 Shaj Sivadasan (SS) – Principal Accountant, Schools - Local Authority Finance
 Kofi Adu (KA) – Group Accountant – Local Authority Finance
 Caroline Connolly (CC) – Finance Business Partner
 Nichola Young (NY) – Local Authority Minute Clerk

Mr Scott Halliwell chaired the meeting. Mr Roger Leighton to chair the January 2021 meeting

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Jayne Meech – HT, Village Infant School, Julie Phillips sent timed apologies.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None declared.

3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2020 were confirmed as an accurate record

4.

No.	Date of Meeting	Item No	Action	Owner
1	12/01/2020	Item 8.1	<u>Pilot for the introduction of BACS payment in schools</u> KA asked for volunteers to be part of the pilot. The finance team have communicated to the volunteers in schools. There will be training sessions arranged for school Business Managers. The proposed pilot will now commence in April 2021. On the agenda, KA to provide an update - <u>Complete</u>	Kofi Adu
2	10/06/2020	Item 5.7	<u>Provision of Financial Regulations for Schools</u> KA to contact all schools and headteachers to ask for volunteers to join a Work Group to draft a paper for discussion at the next meeting on 20 October 2020. On the agenda, KA to provide an update - <u>Complete</u>	Kofi Adu
3	10/06/2020	Item 5.9	<u>Community Music Service Delivery Model</u> A working group to be set up to consider transition to a new trading model and long term financial sustainability for CMS. A draft model to be brought to the next Schools' Forum on 20 October 2020 for discussion. On the agenda, KA to provide an update - <u>Complete</u>	Kofi Adu
4	20/10/2020	Item 3.5	<u>HNB</u>	Pat Harvey

			PH to discuss the number of children in mainstream who should be accessing special needs at the next HNB Sub-Group and report back to the January 2021 Schools' Forum	
5	20/10/2020	Item 5.1	DSG Block Allocations From 2021/22 the Teacher Pay Grant (TPG) and Teacher Pension Employer Contribution Grant (TPECG) will be rolled into the main Schools Block. The intentions for special schools are not yet clear; an update will be provided at the January 2021 meeting.	Kofi Adu
6	20/10/2020	Item 9.3	BACS Migration A request was made for a paper on the BACS migration process to be provided to schools.	Kofi Adu

REPORT FROM THE GROUP ACCOUNTANT – FINANCE

1. Revised Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding for 2020/21 including HNB

- 1.1 There is a £620k increase in the DSG allocation overall.
- 1.2 The High Needs Block has an increase of £229k which will be held in reserves due to possible further revisions related to import and export adjustments.
- 1.3 The Early Years Block has an increase of £391k. Final allocations will be published in July 2021, based on nine-twelfths of the January 2020 PTE census numbers (to cover the April 2020 to December 2020 period); and current published intention is to update the remaining three-twelfths of the year using January 2021 PTE census numbers (to cover the January 2021 to March 2021 period). Use of the January 2021 PTE census numbers for the spring term will be kept under review and published later in the year due to the Covid-19 outbreak.

Block	Pre-recoupment June 20 £'000s	Post Recoupment June 20 £'000s	Funding re- recoupment July 20 £'000s	Recoupment / Direct Funding July 20 £'000s	Post Recoupment July 20 £'000s	Variance +favourable/ unfavourable) July 20 £'000s
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)=(c)-(d)	(f)=(e)-(b)
Schools Block	226,041	171,255	226,041	54,787	171,254	0
CSSB Block	2,364	2,364	2,364	0	2,364	0
High Needs Block	37,334	33,786	37,568	3,553	34,015	229
Early Years block	22,542	22,542	22,933	0	22,933	391
Total DSG	288,281	229,947	288,906	58,340	230,566	620

- 1.4 JTS requested clarity on the approach to Spring Term funding, stating that it is more beneficial to base the allocations on the 2019 Spring Term census as this is when the figures are highest. KA will provide details when further guidance is received.
- 1.5 **Recommendation (i):** Schools' Forum are requested to note the updated DSG allocations.

Noted

2. DSG Outturn Forecast for 2020/21

	2020/21 Funding £'000	2020/21 Projected Out-turn	Deficit (surplus) at as March £'000
Schools Block – ISB	171,254	171,254	0
Central Block	2,364	2,364	0
High Needs Block	34,015	34,015	0
Early Years Block	22,933	22,993	0
Total	230,566	230,566	0
B/f DSG reserves (surplus)			(1,726)
DSG forecast			(1,726)

- 2.1 The table above demonstrates the DSG funding and projected outturns. The total DSG allocation after recoument is £230,556k.
- 2.2 The schools block at £171,254k includes £1,894k of centrally held growth fun for 7.5 primary, and 19 secondary classes. Actual growth fund requirements will be known when the current academic year admissions numbers are finalised.
- 2.3 Noted, the Central block is expected to break even.
- 2.4 The projected DSG Outturn position for 2020/21 is a surplus of £1,726m. There is a hope to increase reserves and with the leverage to pass on to schools and top-up.
- 2.5 **Recommendation (ii):** Schools' Forum are requested to note the projected 2020/21 DSG allocations.

Noted

3. High Needs Block (HNB) Outturn Forecast for 2020/21

	2019/20 Budget	2020/21 Budget	2020/21 Outturn Forecast	Variance +deficit / (surplus)
Alternative Provision	3,544,000	3,574,000	3,480,827	(93,173)
ARP Funding	6,032,800	6,102,000	5,937,386	(164,614)
DSG – High Needs Education Inclusion	1,666,000	1,618,000	1,489,114	(128,886)
Top-ups (inc. OB and NMSS)	6,662,200	7,635,000	7,185,200	(449,800)
High Needs Top Ups – Post 16	969,000	1,291,000	1,720,666	429,666
SEN Panel Top Ups	1,418,000	1,148,000	1,148,000	0
LACHES, Language Support	331,000	335,000	372,483	37,483
Initiatives	200,000	150,000	150,000	0
Special School Funding	7,493,000	10,643,000	11,027,183	384,183
Early Years & Integrated Youth Services	398,000	356,000	341,140	(14,860)
Total	28,714,000	32,852,000	32,852,000	0.00
Gatekeeping for In-year Growth/import/export		1,162,500	1,162,500	0.00
Total Budget		34,014,500	34,014,500	0.00

- 3.1 The HNB is reporting a breakeven position. A pressure around mental health in secondary children is expected around December/January time. There has been additional growth in Post 16.
- 3.2 LBBB received a maximum funding increase of 17% in 2020/21. The HNB funding for 2020/21 is £32.9m rather than £28.7m for 2019/20.
- 3.3 There are pressures in:
- High Needs Top Ups - Post 16 – due to additional growth
 - Special School Funding – due to changes in top up payments and banding levels.
- 3.4 Colleagues noted that the pressure on all settings is high at present and that the collaboration between the LA and schools has helped. Schools' Forum members expressed their thanks to schools
- 3.5 PH to discuss the number of children in mainstream who should be accessing special needs at the next HNB Sub-Group and report back to the January 2021 Schools' Forum.

Action PH

- 3.6 Noted, Andy Carr is attending the January 2021 meeting to provide an update on growth. The final census data will be published in December and the final HNB allocation will be known.

- 3.7 **Recommendation (iii):** Schools' Forum is recommended to note and comment on the 2020/21 High Needs Outturn forecast position.

Noted

4. Update on Early Years (EY) 2019/20 Funding

- 4.1 The Early Years Block have received a backdated allocation of £224k. This is the net effect of £208k increase for 3 and 4 years olds, £290k reduction for 2 year olds and other residual favourable corrections of £16k. The £224k will be added to the general DSG reserves.

- 4.2 **Recommendation (iv):** Schools' Forum are requested to note the updated Early Years funding adjustment

Noted

5. Provisional DSG Block Allocations for 2021/22

Block	2020/21 Alloc.	2021/22 Alloc.	TPG and TPECG	2021/22 Adjusted Alloc.	Movement +Fav / (Unfav.)	% Mov't
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)=(b)-(c)	(e)=(a)-(d)	(e)/(a)
Pupil No	39,376	39,376				
Schools Block	214,590	229,035	9,403	219,632	5,042	2.35%
Premises (historic)	9,053	9,992		9,992	939	10.37%
Growth Fund	2,398	1,863		1,863	(535)	(22.31%)
High Needs	37,568	42,242		42,242	4,674	12.44%
CSSB - On-going	1,438	1,472		1,472	34	2.36%
CSSB - Historic	926	740		740	(186)	(20.04%)

Early Years (Provis)	22,933	22,933		22,933	-	0.00%
Total Funding	288,906	308,277	9,403	298,874	9,968	-

5.1 Noted from 2021/22 the Teacher Pay Grant (TPG) and Teacher Pension Employer Contribution Grant (TPECG) will be rolled into the main Schools Block. The intentions for special schools are not yet clear; an update will be provided at the January 2021 meeting.

Action KA

5.2 PH confirmed that the TPG and TPECG on additional funding starts at 40 place settings and that allocations will be published in December 2020.

5.3 The Schools Block has increased by 2.35%. Colleagues predict this will be an issue as it does not reflect the true level of growth.

5.4 Premises (Historic) consists of business rates, PFI and split sites and will see an increase of £10.37% in 2021/22.

5.5 Growth Fund will see a reduction of 22.31%. Gaps between funding and budget requirements will be met by the Schools Block.

5.6 The High Needs provisional budget will see an increase of 12.44%. This increase in funding reflects the level of need in the borough. Pressures are still expected.

5.7 The CSSB - ongoing will receive an increase of 2.36%

5.8 The CSSB - Historic will see a reduction of 20.04%. Colleagues feel that there will be implications on Trewern and CMS.

5.9 There was confusion surrounding the receipt of additional funding for the Teachers pay rise this year. KA confirmed that the government are continuing to pay the teachers' pay grant with the amount allocated being the same as last year. There are different thresholds of increment but there are concerns around whether the pay grant will fully compensate for the increment this year.

5.10 JMc informed colleagues that a supplementary grant can be applied for which may cover TPG. KA confirmed that the supplementary grant is for pensions rather than pay and that not all schools qualified.

5.11 **Recommendation (v):** Schools' Forum are requested to note:

- (a) The provisional 2021/22 DGS allocations
- (b) Reduction in historic element of central block, impact on service to schools

Noted

6. Growth Funding for 2021/22

6.1 The Growth Fund has moved to funding methodology. The funding is not enough.

School	Primary Sep21 Growth	Secondary Sep21 Growth	Comments
Barking Abbey School		81	Final year permeant to expansion to Y7
Dagenham Park CofE School		30	Permanent expansion of Y7

Eastbrook School	45	90	Permanent expansions to R and Y7
Eastbury Community School	60		Permanent expansions to R
Gascoigne Primary	30		Permanent expansions to R
Goresbrook (Free School)	30		Permanent expansions to R
Greatfields (Free School)		60	Permanent expansion of Y7
Riverside Primary	60		<i>New and growing school; R growth</i>
Riverside Secondary		120	Permanent expansion of Y7
Robert Clack		180	Permanent expansion of Y7
The Sydney Russell School	60		Permanent expansions to R
Total Sept 2021 (provisional)	285	561	846
Total Sept 2020 (provisional)	375	930	1,305

6.2 SF agreed growth would be funded at minimum level. See September 2021 expansions in the table above.

	Primary PAN Growth	Second. PAN Growth	Primary AWPU	Second. AWPU	Total GF Funding for Primary	Total GF Funding for Second.	Total
<u>Explicit Growth</u>							
Primary/Second.	30	471	3,375	4,365	59,063	1,199,284	1,258,347
All-through	195	90	3,375	4,365	383,906	229,163	613,069
<u>Implicit Growth</u>							
Primary (Riverside)	60		4,725*		165,375		165,375
Contingency	30	60	3,375	4,365	59,063	152,775	211,838
Total	315	621			667,407	1,581,222	2,248,629
Estimated Growth funding							1,863,058
Shortfall							385,570
Notes: shortfall relating to centrally retained growth is (£1,258k+£613k+£211k) - £1,863 = £219k Plus Riverside £165k being met from Schools Block; * includes expected 40% uplift for pupil led factors.							

6.3 The shortfall of £386k as shown in the table above will be top sliced from the Schools Block.

6.4 Noted, a clearer picture on falling rolls will be known once the figures are finalised in December. This will be made clearer in Andy's update at the January 2021 meeting.

6.5 **Recommendation (vi):** Schools' Forum are requested to note:

- (a) The expected shortfall in growth funding allocations for 2021/22
- (b) Agree the provisional fund requirement for 2021/22

Noted and agreed

7. Falling Rolls

- 7.1 Noted, a clearer picture on falling rolls will be known once the figures are finalised in December. This will be made clearer in Andy's update at the January 2021 meeting.
- 7.2 A recommendation has been made to set aside £256k for the provisional Falling Rolls budget. This can be added into the Funding Formula for schools if no longer required once the census figures are known.
- 7.3 The criteria for allocations remain the same as the current year, qualifying schools must be good or outstanding.
- 7.4 **Recommendation (vii):** Schools' Forum are requested to note and agree the provisional falling rolls budget.

Noted and agreed

8. Proposals for the Local Funding Formula for 2021/22

Please refer to Appendix 1

- 8.1 2021/22 is the last year before the hard funding formula of 1:1.41 is implemented by the DfE.
- 8.2 The NFF will be applied to schools based on the October census at a ratio of 1:1.35. Funding is shifted towards secondary schools. The NFF has a strong transitional protection mechanism with all primaries being protected at 2% per pupil minimum uplift. This shifts funds back towards primary schools.
- 8.3 As the NFF is based on last year, if pupil numbers have reduced, the funding allocation will be reduced. Falling Rolls will be planned for carefully.
- 8.4 The NFF will have to be agreed by cabinet and will come back to SF in January 2021 for final approval. A consultation will also be going out to schools.
- 8.5 **Recommendation (viii):** Schools' Forum are requested to note and agree the following principles to be applied to the final formula:
 - (a) primary secondary ratio of 1:1.35 in the final funding model subject to no significant movement in the October 2020 pupil profile data between the two phases.
 - (b) to apply no capping and scaling unless necessary to allow the formula to operate in a reasonable, fair, and stable manner.
 - (c) to apply the maximum MFG of 2% provided the formula cash envelope is not exceeded.

Noted and agreed

9. Update on BACS Migration for Schools

- 9.1 There is ongoing work to migrate all schools to BACS payment by summer 2021.
- 9.2 17 schools volunteered to be a part of the pilot scheme, 9 of these schools have already migrated to the BACS payment system.
- 9.3 A request was made for a paper on the BACS migration process to be provided to schools.
- 9.4 **Recommendation (ix):** Schools' Forum are requested to note the update on BACS migration for schools

Action KA

10. Update on Financial Regulations for Schools

- 10.1 The panel to develop financial regulations for schools met in September with tasks assigned to members. The next meeting is on 11 November. Consultation with schools and Schools Forum is expected from January to March 2021 with approval and ratification expected in March/April 2021.
- 10.2 Schools will be asked to comment before the Financial Regulations for Schools document is finalised.
- 10.3 DD stated that it may be wise to raise with governors so that regulations are discussed before the next financial year. KH will raise this with JH
- 10.4 **Recommendation (x):** Schools' Forum are requested to note the update on introduction of Schools Financial Regulations

Noted

11. Music Service Remodelling

- 11.1 The CMS sub-group to review the re-modelling of the service met in October where a pooled funding arrangement was discussed as the preferable option. This will be based on an SLA with a minimum guarantee of service. Schools who have never used the CMS will be considered and brought into the arrangement. Academies will also be given the opportunity to participate.
- 11.2 The CMS are producing a report for HTs which will be brought to SF for ratification.
- 11.3 The new funding model will be implemented by April 2021.
- 11.4 **Recommendation (xi):** Schools' Forum are requested to note the working plan of action by the CMS working group

Noted

12. Growth Funding for Schools Facing Exceptional Circumstances

- 12.1 With growth funding having been reduced to the minimum level, AWPU only, schools in exceptional circumstances will struggle to manage.
- 12.2 Robert Clack are unable to manage the Lymington Road site, at the current level of funding, which is not classed as new and growing by the DfE. It was hoped to fund the site as a new school through growth fund rather than formula.
- 12.3 SF are requested to approve an additional allocation of £225k for this year only
- 12.4 RL looked at Greatfields as an example who would have received £500 for each new pupil as free school, economy funding, economy grant and with 4 empty year groups £120k. Altogether they would have received £185k in additional funding. Along with AWPU at average rate. Colleagues agreed that adding the comparison with a free school has added an element of fairness to the request.
- 12.5 Colleagues questioned what would happen in coming years if this is still an issue. It was agreed that this decision relates to the current year only and will have to be brought back to Schools' Forum as a new decision in the future, if necessary.

12.6 It was confirmed that the Lymington Road site is secondary only at present, primary will start in 2021 with the date still to be confirmed. Table 6.3 needs to be amended to reflect the primary start date.

12.7 **Recommendation (xii):** Schools' Forum are requested to note and approve the:

- (a) Allocation of £225k of additional growth fund allocations to Robert Clack in respect of the 4 new classes that opened in September 2020, to be funded from contingency and reserves.
- (b) Funding of future exceptional growth through the formula

Noted and approved

13. LBBB SFFS in response to the Statutory Guidance published on 5 August

13.1 The Scheme for Financing schools has been updated by the government. Additional guidance will be issued in January 2021.

13.2 From April 2021, each school must submit a three-year budget forecast each year. Schools must also submit a recovery plan when their revenue deficit rises above 5%. KH informed colleagues that the LA will set a lower deficit threshold.

13.3 Schools expressed concerns over producing three-year staffing plans and questioned the accuracy of a three-year budget forecast. HTs requested consistency and guidance for schools. KA informed colleagues that a template has been produced which will be shared with schools.

13.4 **Recommendation (xiii):** Schools' Forum are requested to note the proposed consultation on and changes to the local authority SFFS.

Noted

14. COVID-19 Exceptional Costs and Catch-up Premium Guidance for Schools

Please refer to Appendices 2 and 3

14.1 A second funding window is due to open in the Autumn term for schools to claim for costs relating to March-July 2020 where no claims were made in the first round or omitted from claims submitted.

14.2 **Recommendation (xiv):** Schools' Forum are requested to note the guidance for Covid-19 exceptional costs and catch up premium funding.

Noted

15. Financial Transparency in Schools

Please refer to Appendix 4

15.1 The government has outlined the plan to introduce changes to maintained schools to bring the financial transparency in line with academies. The proposals implemented by the DfE, will come into effect in January 2021. All schools must ensure their websites are up to date with the required information whilst paying close attention to section 19 in Appendix 4.

15.2 Noted, according to government criteria on recovery plans, LAs are asked to report on schools that have breached the 5% benchmark

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None reported

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 19 January 2021, virtual Teams meeting from 10:00am to 12:00pm.

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