

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
SCHOOLS FUNDING FORUM**

**Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023 (8:00 – 9:10am)**

**Present:**

**Representative Groups**

**LA Maintained School Representatives:**

**Primary:** Kirsten Cooper (Chair)  
Georgina Delmonte  
Hayley Durrant  
Hayley McClenaghan  
Pav Sharma  
David Unwin Bailey

**Special:** Emma Allen

**Academy Representatives:**

**Primary:** Chris Hobson

**Secondary** Neil Frost  
David Turrell (Vice Chair)

**Alternative Provision:** Tony Machin\*

**Non-School Representatives:**

**Early Years PVI Sector:** Emma Reynolds

**Trade Unions:** John McGill (Teaching staff union representative)  
Peter Liddle (Support staff union representative)

**Non Members in attendance:**

Angela Adams	Clerk, HGS
Nick Carter	Strategic Finance Manager
Trevor Cook	Assistant Director of Education
Marcus Bennett	Head of SEND
Katherine Heffernan	Head of Finance (Business Partnering)
Hany Moussa	Principal Education Finance Officer
Jacqueline Treacy	Senior Inspector (Schools Causing Concern)

\*for part of the meeting

## **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS OR OBSERVERS**

All were welcomed to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Denise Broom, Andy Smith and Chris Speller. Forum colleagues noted that Pav Sharma was attending as a substitute for Chris Speller.

Katherine Heffernan and Marcus Bennett from Havering were observing the meeting.

## **2. TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2023**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023 were agreed as a correct and accurate record.

## **3. MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising that were not included elsewhere on the agenda.

## **4. SCHOOLS FUNDING CONSULTATION**

Forum members were asked to

- (i) Consider the responses to the Consultation on Schools and High Needs Funding 2024-25 submitted by schools and academies**
- (ii) Agree that Option A, which included a transfer of 0.5% from the School Block to the High Needs Block, be used in the calculation of funding for 2024-25**
- (iii) Consider whether any action was required following the results of the consultation and prior to the Local Authority receiving final funding allocations from the Department for Education later this month**

Forum members noted that following the last meeting, the Local Authority (LA) had consulted on the two options proposed. 29 responses had been received which equated to 38% of the total eligible to vote, 72.4% or 21 voted for Option A and 27.6% or 8 voted for Option B. It was noted that Option A was the Local Authority's preference as this allowed for greater flexibility. A breakdown of the responses were listed in Appendix B and feedback was listed under Appendix D.

H McClenaghan stated that she was surprised that more schools didn't respond. It was questioned what could be done to increase responses, there had been a short turnaround time but if you left it for too long people tended to forget to reply. It was suggested that a reminder could be sent and reminders could be given at cluster meetings. A calendar notification could also be sent.

However, it was agreed that for some schools either option would not have made much difference.

The final DSG allocation for 2024-25 would be available from the DfE around 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

The Schools Funding Forum:

- **Noted** the consultation responses
- **Agreed unanimously** to move forward with Option A

The next steps were noted and final proposals, based on Option A, for 2024-25 allocations would be brought to the meeting of the Forum on 11th January 2024.

## 5. NOTIONAL SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) FUNDING 2024-25

### Forum members were asked to agree the revised calculation on notional SEN budgets for 2024-25

Forum members were advised that the proportion of the notional budget for SEN was calculated by a formula. The current formula used by the LA was based on the initial concept roll-out of the National Funding Formula. As part of the movement towards greater uniformity for notional SEN, the DfE are adopting prescriptive minimum funding levels for notional SEN within LA's funding formula.

Havering LA's notional SEN in the funding formula was low, when compared to the national average. The LA had also looked at other LAs for comparison and found that they had used 100% of Low Prior Attainment funding for notional SEN. However, Forum members had commented at the previous Forum meeting, that the factor should not be exclusively attributed for SEN, and did not agree to the proposal.

Following the comments from Forum members, the LA was now proposing that notional SEN funding for 2024-25 was calculated as follows. This revised proposal still met the DfE expectation that '*the majority or whole*' of the low prior attainment factor was attributed to notional SEN.

- 1.5% of basic entitlement funding
- 35.0% of deprivation funding (excluding current FSM)
- 35.0% of funding for English as an Additional Language
- 35.0% of funding for mobility
- 70.0% of low prior attainment for primary schools
- 70.0% of low prior attainment for secondary schools

It was questioned if there would be more pressure on Headteachers to demonstrate the spend by the DfE of Ofsted. In response, it was noted that the funding was not ring-fenced. However, the notional SEN funding would be higher than before which would be shown on the APT return. There was a potential risk that eventually this funding could be transferred to High Needs or ring-fenced, but there would probably be a national consultation before this happened. It was noted that there was a growth in High Needs across the country but once the SEN review had been completed, more information would be shared.

Forum members **agreed** the proposed formula for calculation of notional SEN funding.

## 6. DE-DELEGATION OF CENTRAL SERVICES FOR 2024-25

### (1) LA maintained primary school forum members were asked to agree the de-delegation of funding for the following services to schools:

- (i) Insurance
- (ii) Free School Meals Eligibility checking
- (iii) Maternity Leave insurance
- (iv) Trade Union Facility Time
- (v) EAL Service
- (vi) Behaviour Support Service

There was brief discussion of these services. Forum members commented that it would have been useful to see the equivalent Academy SLA for the requested de-delegated services.

It was queried on whether Behaviour Support should be included in the Early Help offer as Headteachers felt that school staff were sometimes undertaking tasks that should be provided by the Early Help service. There was also discussion of how the Early Help service could be accessed to support schools.

Members commented that for the Behaviour Support Service, over the course of the next financial year, feedback will be provided on whether the service has had the necessary impact required to support schools, otherwise the de-delegation for the Behaviour Support Service may not continue in future years.

LA maintained primary school forum members voted as follows:

- (i) Insurance – **De-delegation agreed**
- (ii) Free school meals eligibility checking – **De-delegation agreed**
- (iii) Maternity leave insurance – **De-delegation agreed**
- (iv) Trade Union Facility Time – **De-delegation agreed**
- (v) EAL service – **De-delegation agreed**
- (vi) Behaviour support service – **De-delegation agreed**

### (2) LA maintained primary and special school representatives were asked to agree the de-delegation of funding for the following Central Education Services:

- (i) Statutory and regulatory duties
- (ii) Core school improvement activities

*Tony Machin joined the meeting at this point*

LA maintained primary and special school representatives voted as follows:

- (i) Statutory and regulatory duties – **De-delegation agreed**
- (ii) Core school improvement activities – **Deferred to meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024**. See notes below for further details on deferral.

Eligible forum members voted as follows:

- 3 agreed
- 3 against
- 1 abstained – this cluster had not discussed this in full

It was noted that this element of the de-delegation had been discussed in cluster A and it was felt that there was some confusion. It was clarified that this funding was distinct from the funding offered to specific schools in difficulty. This delegation was needed to fund the new quality assurance programme providing monitoring and support, formerly funded by the discontinued SIMB Grant.

It was noted that cluster F had discussed this and the general consensus had been that a buy in service would be preferable.

The service provided from de-delegated funds would remain unchanged from the current year as laid out in Item 9 Appendix D of the School Forum agenda for 21st September 2023.

It was agreed to go back to the cluster groups to review this due to the confusion and the one abstention.

A decision would be needed by 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024 (the next funding forum meeting).

It was agreed that forum members would go back to their cluster to clarify the position and then feedback to the Chair and K Heffernan ([Katherine.Heffernan@havering.gov.uk](mailto:Katherine.Heffernan@havering.gov.uk)).

A final vote for de-delegation of Core school improvement activities would take place at the next meeting.

**ACTION: Applicable forum members / K Heffernan / Chair**

## **7. KEY STAGE 2 ADMISSIONS**

**Forum members were asked to note the report.**

It was noted that the report outlined the funding for Key Stage 1 admissions that took the school over their Published Admission Number (PAN) and explained why similar arrangements could not be applied in Key Stage 2 as it does not meet the criteria set out in regulations.

During the discussion a few Forum members stated that they had had problems accessing this funding. In response they were advised to follow the process for funding and email the dedicated officer in Education Finance in Havering. Once the request has been received by the LA, the funding was normally released once a term.

It was noted that in the upcoming academic year of 2024-25, the Year 3 and 4 cohorts would be an issue with regards to the number of places needed.

Forum members **noted** the report.

## **8. NEXT MEETINGS**

Future meetings have been arranged as follows:

11 January 2024  
8 February 2024  
13 June 2024

Meetings to start at 8:00 a.m. at CEME room 233 or 235.

## **9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 9.1. EYFS funding rates at national and LA level had been announced the previous day for 2024 -25 and although there had been an increase in the funding for 2, 3 and 4 year olds, the level of funding was still a concern especially with the impact the pay increments would have.
- 9.2. Further work and modelling by Havering LA's Education Finance team was required before the options for Havering providers could be agreed. The figures would be available in January 2024.
- 9.3. An announcement with regards to funding for capital works would be made later in the week.
- 9.4. Forum members noted that this would be N Carter's last meeting and day working for Havering Local Authority. Nick was thanked for all his support to the schools over the years. His expertise and knowledge made him valuable to all. Nick always responded to emails quickly and supported Headteachers and Governing Bodies with kindness and acknowledgement.

All agreed Nick would be missed but all wished him a long and happy retirement.

Nick thanked all and stated that he had enjoyed working with the schools and the Schools Forum, everyone worked collaboratively and supported each other. Views were always expressed in a positive way.

Meeting closed at 9:10am.