

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

Thursday 11th January 2024 (8.00 – 8.41am)

Present:

Representative Groups

LA Maintained School Representatives:

Primary: Kirsten Cooper (KC) (Chair)
Georgina Delmonte (GD)
Hayley Durrant* (HD)
Hayley McClenaghan (HMcC)
Pav Sharma (PS)
Russell Abrahall (RA)

Special: Emma Allen (EA)
Andy Smith* (AS)

Academy Representatives:

Primary: Chris Hobson (CH)

Secondary Denise Broom (DB)
David Turrell (DT) (Vice Chair)

Alternative Provision: Tony Machin* (TM)

Non-School Representatives:

Early Years PVI Sector: Emma Reynolds (ER)

Trade Unions: Peter Liddle (PL) (Support staff union representative)

Non Members in attendance:

Angela Adams (AA)	Clerk, HGS
Katherine Heffernan (KH)	Head of Finance (Business Partnering)
Trevor Cook (TC)	Assistant Director of Education
Hany Moussa (HM)	Principal Education Finance Officer
Jacqueline Treacy (JT)	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.

Forum members noted that Katherine Heffernan would now be replacing Nick Carter at the Schools Funding Forum Meetings.

Apologies were received from Neil Frost, Chris Speller, David Unwin-Bailey and John Delaney. Forum colleagues noted that Pav Sharma was attending as a substitute for Chris Speller and Russell Abrahall was attending as a substitute for David Unwin-Bailey.

2. TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30th NOVEMBER 2023.

The minutes of the meeting held on 30th November 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 FORMULA 2024-25

Forum members were asked to agree that

- (i) Havering adopts the national funding formula rates for the funding of schools and academies in financial year 2024-25 with a minimum funding guarantee of 0.50% per pupil and a gains cap of 2.50%.**
- (ii) £1,188,080 (0.50%) of the DSG Schools Block is transferred to the DSG High Needs Block**
- (iii) £146,444 of the DSG Schools Block is used to support Pupil Growth and Falling rolls in addition to the £2,065,774 funding received for this**

Forum members were advised that the information previously shared had been updated following confirmation of the revised DSG block allocations from the DfE which was received in December 2023. The allocations were in line with expectations.

Following confirmation of the DSG settlement in late December 2023, the school funding allocations for 2024-25 were re-calculated using the October 2023 data released by the DfE in line with option A of the funding consultation. Following the calculation and the additional funding made available following the DfE's update, there was £102,102 remaining.

The proposal was for a revision to the cap, to increase from 2.4% to 2.5%, and a reduction to the Growth from £500k to £146k.

The proposal was as follows:

- 0.50% (£1,188,080) was transferred from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block
- The Minimum Funding Guarantee set at 0.50%
- A gains cap of 2.50% to be applied

- The reduced figure of £146,444 transferred to the Pupil Growth and Falling Rolls Fund

No questions were raised.

The Forum **agreed** that:

- (i) the Minimum Funding Guarantee is set at 0.5%, a gains cap of 2.5% is set and the continuation of following the NFF funding rates for funding schools and academies in financial year 2024-25
- (ii) £1,188,080 of the DSG Schools Block transferred to the DSG High Needs Block
- (iii) £146,444 is moved from the Schools Block to support pupil growth and falling rolls

As one primary representative was still to arrive, it was agreed to defer agenda item 5 until they arrived and moved to agenda item 6.

6. TREATMENT OF MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS ADDITIONAL GRANT 2024-25, TEACHERS PAY ADDITIONAL GRANT AND PUPIL PREMIUM 2024-25.

Forum members were asked to note

- (i) the treatment of the Mainstream Schools Additional Grant in 2024-25**
- (ii) the funding rates for the Teachers' Pay Additional Grant 2024-25**
- (iii) the funding rates for the Pupil Premium for 2024-25**

For the 2024 -25 financial year it was noted that the Mainstream Schools Additional Grant (MSAG) would be included in the National Funding Formula (NFF) and would not be paid separately to schools.

The Teachers' Pay Additional Grant would be paid separately for 2024-25 but would be included in the NFF for 2025-26.

Pupil premium funding rates will increase by around 15% for 2024-25.

There were no questions raised.

The Forum **noted** the report.

H Durrant joined the meeting at this point.

7. HIGH NEEDS FUNDING 2024-25

Forum members were asked to note the Dedicated Schools Grant – High Needs Block Formula allocation for the financial year 2024-25.

Forum members noted that the high needs funding would increase for 2024-25 but a projected cumulative deficit of £16M in the high needs block at the end of 2023-24 needed to be considered.

The Forum **noted** the report.

Forum members then returned to agenda item 5

5. DE-DELEGATION OF FUNDING FOR CENTRAL SERVICES 2024-25

LA maintained primary and special school representatives were asked to agree the de-delegation of funding for:

Core school improvement activities

Following the previous Forum, representatives were asked to consult their cluster groups. It was noted at the cluster groups that there had been a lot of discussion around the support provided and whether or not it was value for money, however one cluster advised that they felt they got value for money.

Eligible forum members voted as follows:

- 6 agreed
- 1 against
- 0 abstained

Applicable forum members **agree** the de-delegation of funding for core school improvement activities.

8. CENTRAL SCHOOLS SERVICES BLOCK 2024-25

Forum members were asked to note the funding received and agree the additional sum in the final allocation that would be held as a contingency.

Forum members were advised that the DfE published their figures in December 2023 and there had been a difference of £31,358 when compared to the provisional agreed distribution figures from September 2023.

Forum members were asked to agree that this additional sum be earmarked to pay any increases in the copyright licence fees that were still to be confirmed by the DfE, with any balance remaining after this would be held as a contingency.

Andy Smith joined the meeting at this point

Forum members **agreed** the proposed use of the additional sum.

9. DELIVERING BETTER VALUE IN HIGH NEEDS

Forum members were asked to note the update on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) management plan.

TC advised that the Local Authority had to update and agree the DSG management plan, which was then submitted the DfE Board for consideration as part of the process to apply for the £1m grant.

TC advised that the funding for the project had been agreed and the projected demand and costs established but the gap had widened. TC further advised that Havering was not the only borough in this position, it was a national issue that would need a national response from the DfE.

Initially the grant had had to have been spent by March 2025 but due to the delays in

awarding the grant, money could now be spent beyond March 2025.

There would be in school review work but a lot of mitigation had been delayed due to feedback from the DfE.

KC and HM were thanked for their work on this programme. Further updates would follow.

No questions were raised.

The Forum **noted** the report.

10. EARLY YEARS FUNDING

Forum members were asked to note

(i) the indicative funding allocations for 2024-25

(ii) the process and timeline for determining funding rates for 2024-25

Forum members noted that:

- For 2024-25, the expanded childcare offer added £9.7m to Early Years funding
- 95% of the funding would be allocated to providers
- Rates were set by central government but each of the entitlements needed to be calculated separately, including the under 2's, to ensure the appropriate level of funding was received
- Early years funding would be discussed further at the working group (EYPRG) for providers
- A consultation would be issued after discussion with the EYPRG, with the results discussed at the EYPRG meeting due to be held on 6th February. The recommendations following engagement with the EYPRG will be proposed at the Schools Funding Forum meeting on 8th February 2024, whereby representatives will review and ratify the recommended rates and budgets for 2024-25.

ER stated that the funding was not sustainable. There was an expansion in provision and capital funding was going to schools and not other provisions. In response it was noted that there was DfE capital allocation, however it was specifically for the schools' wraparound care for primary school children. There may be an additional Early Years Capital Grant in the future.

EYPRG would be meeting the following week and the draft consultation document would be shared with them but it was noted that any increases in funding needed to be sustainable.

The Teachers' pay and pension grant was to be reviewed as part of the funding cycle for 2024-25, however additional funding had been received in 2023-24. Therefore, the continuation of the quality supplement is to be included as part of the proposals in the consultation. This is line to reflect the DfE's recommendations.

The Forum **noted** the report.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Due to the High Needs Task and Finish Group completing the process of reviewing and agreeing the funding arrangements for the High Needs Block at the last meeting held on 30th November 2023, members were advised of the outcome of the working group's proposals for 2024-25.

Representatives were advised on the agreed rates that the High Needs Task and Finish Group agreed for high needs funding for schools in financial year 2024-25 as follows:

- (i) The hourly rate payable for support associated with EHCPs is increased from £16.50 to £17.00.
- (ii) The funding for EHCPs is paid to schools after the first 9.0 hours of support rather than after the first 9.3 hours.
- (iii) The Early Years overall funding rate for a child with Complex Needs/EHCP increases from £16.50 to £17.00, in line with the increase in the mainstream school rate.
- (iv) The Inclusion Supplement (Headroom) is calculated using a formula that references a school's Notional SEN budget.
- (v) The pupil top-up funding for ARPs is increased from £11,860 to £12,194.
- (vi) The pupil top-up funding rate for the Pupil Referral Unit is increased from £13,888 to £14,283.
- (vii) The pupil top-up rate for Independent provision (The Bridge) is increased from £9,152 to £9,427.
- (viii) The matrix bands for pupil top-up rate for Special schools is increased by £334 per place.

The supplementary document would be circulated after the meeting.

ACTION: HM

The Task and Finish Group were thanked for their input into this. The group had also put forward some further recommendations which had been taken to the Board.

11. NEXT MEETINGS

Forum members noted the dates of the upcoming meetings.

8 February 2024
13 June 2024

Meetings to start at 8.00 a.m. at CEME room 233 or 235.

Meeting closed at 8:41am.