# Minutes for the Schools Forum Meeting

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<th>Date/Time:</th>
<th>6 November 2019, 17.30-19.00</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members:</td>
<td>Adrian Cottrell, Alexandra McKenzie, Asarena Simon, Jane Heffernan, KT Khan, Lisa Clarke, Martin Jermyn, Mary Walker, Richard Brown, Sandra Hall and Sian Davies</td>
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<td>Additional attendees:</td>
<td>Andrew Lee, Annie Gammon, Councillor Antoinette Bramble, Councillor Christopher Kennedy, Frank O’Donoghue, Jackie Moylan, Ophelia Carter, Silvi Shrestha (Clerk) and Tim Wooldridge</td>
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<td>Apologies:</td>
<td>Caroline Tyson, Peter Hughes, Rita Krishna and Lisa Neidich</td>
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## Items

1. Richard Brown opened the meeting with an announcement about the purdah (pre-election period) from 6 November until 12 December. Ahead of the general election. During this period the Local Authority (LA) cannot publish any reports or communication which supports a political party, campaign groups or individual campaigners.

   **Welcome/Apologies for absence**
   Introductions for new members were made. Apologies were given on behalf of Caroline Tyson, Peter Hughes and Rita Krishna. Lisa Neidich’s apology for absence was noted after the meeting.

   *The Clerk (Silvi Shrestha) chaired the election of Chair item.*

   **Election of Chair** – Nomination was received from Richard Brown for the role of Chair. Members agreed that Richard Brown be appointed as Chair of the Schools’ Forum for the academic year 2019/20.

   *Richard Brown chaired the meeting from this point onwards.*

   The Chair made an announcement that this would be his last year in the role and would be looking to appoint a new Chair in the next academic year.

   The Chair reminded members that the ToR stipulates that the Chair can use a casting vote in the event of a tie. The Chair clarified his intention that he would use the casting vote to maintain the status quo if the case for change has not gained a majority.

   **Election of Vice Chair** – Nomination was received from Alexandra McKenzie for the role of Vice Chair. Alexandra McKenzie spoke to members about her experience as the Chair of Governors at Tyssen Primary. She is a fine artist and has worked with young people and youth offenders.

   Members agreed that Alexandra McKenzie be appointed as Vice Chair.

2. **Declaration of interest**
   None.

3. **Minutes of the meeting of the Schools Forum held on 19 June 2019**
   4.1. **Approval of minutes**
   Minutes from the meeting on 19 June were agreed as an accurate record.
   4.2. **Action log**
It was noted that actions from the last meeting are addressed as an agenda item for this meeting.

4.3. Matters arising

i. Early Years inclusion fund

The briefing on the Early Years Inclusion Fund, which is funding available to settings to provide suitable support for 3 and 4 year olds with emerging needs, was noted. The report clarified how schools can apply for the inclusion fund.

Lisa Clarke raised the issue of some Early Years settings having high levels of children with Additional Needs and enquired how schools are allocated money for playgroups and MAT meetings. Tim Wooldridge clarified that factors such disadvantaged pupils are taken into consideration when allocating the funds. The money going towards the playgroup is residual from previous funding.

It was noted that Schools Forum members have supported early intervention initiatives because early intervention is fundamental to success later on in the education system.

Alexandra McKenzie queried if funding could be used to support pupils with learning difficulties related to nutrition. Tim Wooldridge clarified the funding could be used to help parents to obtain a diagnosis and to contribute towards child observation costs.

ii. Local authority’s (LA’s) strategy for schools and nurseries with falling pupil roll

Annie Gammon provided the following verbal updates.

It is the LA’s responsibility to ensure sufficiency of school places in the borough. In 2016, there was a drop in pupil numbers in reception which has impacted some schools. As a result, the LA set up a School Place Planning group which carries out monthly reviews of pupil figures and checks patterns of pupil distribution in the borough.

In response to the fall in primary numbers there has been a pattern of reduced ‘planned application numbers’ (PAN) for schools. The LA will continue to examine pupil numbers. For schools facing difficulties due to low pupil roll, the LA will provide support through temporarily reducing the form entry of the school. The SIPs and Schools Finance will also support schools with concerns and pupil roll related issues.

Annie Gammon emphasised that it is not the intention of the LA to close any schools due to low pupil roll.

4. Membership and Terms of Reference Update 2019/20

Members noted the Membership of 2019/20 and Terms of Reference (ToR) report. It was noted that there were no changes to the ToR.

Members were reminded about the following stipulation in the ToR about membership and attendance;

- Membership will cease if a member no longer holds the position by virtue of which he/she became eligible for appointment. The Clerk reminded members to let her know if there are any changes to their role.

- Term of office will lapse if members do not attend two consecutive meetings and do not give reasons for absence which have been accepted by the Forum. If a member misses three
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consecutive meetings, where reasons have previously been accepted by the Forum, this will also
result in term of office lapping.

Members agreed to readopt the Terms of Reference.

5. Consultation on High Needs Funding Arrangements for 2020/21

Ophelia Carter introduced the report on High Needs Funding which recommended Forum members
note the changes affecting arrangements for pupils with High Needs in 2020-2021; note the progress
on arrangements for high needs pupils and the continuing pressure on the SEND provision budget;
and that Schools Forum express a view on the financial arrangements for high needs pupils in 2020-
21.

Andrew Lee provided the following key updates on the SEND service and its priorities.

The LA has significant cost pressures relating to SEND. This is a national picture. Whilst the
government has announced additional SEND funds for 2020/21, this does not cover the national
overspend of £1.4 billion. In the previous years the SEND cost pressure in Hackney has been offset
by savings and reserves from the education budget, however, this is no longer sustainable. Given the
scale of the cost pressure, it has been necessary to consider a transfer of funds from the Schools
Block to the High Needs Block.

HLT is drafting a new SEND Needs Analysis and Priorities (SNAP) document in order to plan
strategically for increasing demands in the borough. The document lists the priorities in the borough
based on data. This paper will be shared with schools in order to get their expression of interest in
developing any of the provision.

The relocation of Transport Assistant Service is being planned as the current site is up for
redevelopment. An alternative site has been found which will have a positive impact on future spend.

In 2017, the DfE announced the SEND Provision Capital Funding grant of £3.3m for local authorities
to support them in making capital investments in provision for pupils with special educational needs
disabilities. Hackney conducted a series of consultations with stakeholders to identify what
provisions were needed in the borough. Following the consultation, it was agreed to build capacity
within Primary ASD Alternative Resource Provision in Queensbridge and Post 16 specialist ASD
Provision at Garden School (on the old Ickburgh site). With a degree of certainty around the funding
requirement for these two new provisions the consultation responses were revisited to identify the
remaining area of priority need. Consequently, a business case is being drafted for the use of the
remaining funds from the grant to open a SEMH provision in Gainsborough.

A review (co-produced with stakeholders) is being conducted of how individual pupils with a plan
receive funding. HLT SLT and the Council will make a decision on the funding arrangement for pupils
in future once the outcome of this review has been considered, and subject to any recommendations
from the DfE review.

The LA currently has significant expenditure on out of borough provisions. The appointment of a
dedicated contract manager will ensure that the LA can make significant savings on SLAs. It was
noted that the contracts manager will be recruited this month.

Mary Walker raised the issue that there is lack of clarity on what the LA is doing to encourage
mainstream schools to provide provision for SEND pupils. Andrew Lee updated that the SEND
Partnership Board which works on a commissioning level, is looking into clarifying what services have
to offer to support the needs of SEND. There is ongoing discussion about what constitutes ‘health provision’ and rather than health needs linked to education provision – this needs to be identified to ensure costs are met by the appropriate service.

Mary Walker raised a query about how inclusive mainstream schools are as a provision. Annie Gammon noted that schools make the decision on whether they are able to provide for a pupil with specific needs or not.

KT Khan enquired whether the LA has made any savings by not placing students out of borough. Andrew Lee clarified that further research is needed on this.

KT Khan also noted that in other boroughs the education department doesn’t pay for services like therapies. Schools Forum needs to ensure education money is spent on educational provisions.

Forum members noted the progress on the arrangements for high needs pupils and the continuing pressure on the SEND provision budget.

6. Approval of Central Schools Services Block 2019/20

Ophelia Carter presented the report seeking approval from Schools Forum for planned spending on services for schools from the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB). The spending amounts to about £1.9 million on historic commitments and ongoing responsibilities listed in the report in Table 2.

Forum members resolved to accept the proposal for use of CSSB estimated at £1.9m on spend on services for schools.

7. Underperforming groups proposal 2019/20

Annie Gammon presented the report on the LA’s strategy for underperforming pupils in primary schools. It was noted that each year Schools Forum make a decision on delegation of funds to support underperforming groups in primary groups, Secondary EMAG support and provision for Traveller service.

The strategy set out the LA’s priorities when supporting under performing groups. The strategy focused on improving outcomes for Turkish Kurdish Turkish Cypriot group and Black Caribbean Boys, as well as improving outcomes for pupils not on track to reach the expected standard in mathematics at the end of KS2. The strategy also focused on increasing the proportion of Y6 pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Previously, funding has been spent on Saturday School programmes. The Saturday Schools would be replaced by weekly book clubs for focus group of pupils in Y5 and Y6. The funding will be used to continue with targeted work identified in Table 4.3. The impact of the interventions would be reported to Schools Forum. Further evaluation and regular monitoring would be done as part of the SIP programme.

The Chair reminded members that they would be required to vote again on whether de-delegated funds should be used on underperforming pupils. It was noted that previously, the money was given to school to support the underperforming pupils and accountability was monitored through SIP visits.

Mary Walker noted that the money that Jubilee Primary school received was used to run Saturday Schools effectively and enquired about when the funding would be available to schools. It was noted that the funding will be available in the next financial year.
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<td>Alexandra McKenzie enquired whether the strategy supports any initiatives focused on art. It was noted that the strategy for underachieving groups is focused on improving academic achievements.</td>
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<td>KT Khan noted that previous reports on the underperforming groups have been unclear on how the initiatives have improved outcomes for the cohort. It was suggested that reporting on outcomes for underperforming groups to be scheduled on the Forum meetings forward plan to ensure annual reporting on this matter.</td>
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**Action – Annie Gammon/Silvi Shrestha**

### 8. Schools Funding Formula and Schools Block Changes 2020/2021

Ophelia Carter presented the report on the Schools Funding Formula and School Block Changes which sought agreement from Forum members on proposals relating to the Dedicated Schools Grant, Schools Block and De-Delegation for 2020/21. Ophelia provided the following key information.

In September, Hackney schools were consulted on the following LA proposals; the transfer of 0.5% from the Schools Block to High Needs Block; a revision to the school Growth Fund criteria; the Schools Funding Formula is adjusted to incrementally transition to mirror the National Funding Formula (NFF) and maintain the current Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG); and de-delegation in 2020-21 for specific services or initiatives. Members were asked to note the consultation response from schools in Appendix B.

Martin Jermyn enquired why the consultation responses from schools were so low. It was noted that historically there has been low response rates from schools. This could be due to a lack of understanding of funding processes.

The Operational Guidance published by the DfE outlines changes to the DSG in 2020/21. It was highlighted that Hackney’s School Block allocation has always been higher than the NFF. Excluding the Growth NFF there is a baseline increase of 1.4% for Hackney. The funding floor will be set at 1.84% funding. The increase in premises costs is a reflection of the actual costs for 2018-19 and reflected in the 19-20 APT. It was noted that the Director of Education (DoE) is responsible making the decision on the final formula arrangements. The DoE will take into consideration the views of schools and Schools Forum before making the decision.

With regards to Schools Growth funding, from 2019-20, the Growth NFF was implemented which uses lagged growth in pupil numbers to allocate funds. The 2020-21 figures will be based on October 2019 census. It is anticipated that Hackney will lose funding but no more than 0.5% of the DSG Schools Budget.

A discussion took place about the funding formulae. It was noted that if Hackney schools move to the NFF, many schools would lose funding as their current basic entitlement is too high. The consultations modelled varying funding options to show the impact of any changes to individual schools as illustrated in Table B. Mary Walker noted that the NFF arrangements show that some schools would benefit from moving to the NFF. Jane Heffernan also noted that if Hackney implemented the NFF, the difference in entitlement would not be as stark if all aspects of pupils were factored in.

Frank O'Donoghue explained that Hackney has taken incremental steps to changing the funding formula to match the NFF to ensure the impact to schools is small. For example, last year Hackney’s funding formula increased the deprivation factor closer to NFF which was endorsed by the Forum. The changes to the funding formula will affect some schools more than others. Forum members requested a more explanatory report on the national funding formula and its implications at a future meeting.

**Action – Ophelia Carter**
Members noted Appendix D; a letter on behalf of members of NAHT, ASCL and NEU trade unions to the DoE, encouraging Schools Forum to vote for de-delegated funds towards trade union supply cover. In addition, the letter also sought agreement for local trade union funding arrangement to extend to academies. It was noted that HLT has previously contacted academies within the borough for contributions towards trade union facilities time expenditure, however, a low response was received. It was agreed for Schools Forum to support a further request from the LA on behalf of trade unions in seeking contributions from Academies and Free Schools towards TU facilities supply cover. It was also agreed that the Chair of the Forum would write to Academy Principals and Trustees to express Forum’s support for those.

LA Action: Jo Larkin (Head of HR)
Forum Action – Richard Brown

Members noted the various de-delegation services and activities planned by the LA, illustrated in Table 27 of the report. The Chair welcomed questions from Forum members ahead of voting.

Alexandra McKenzie enquired how schools will be affected by the 0.5% transfer from Schools Block to High Needs Block. It was clarified that the 0.5% transfer will mean collectively £1.0m of maintained schools grant will be transferred to the High Needs Block. This funding will be used to support pupils with SEND.

Jane Heffernan raised a query on the need for School Growth fund in light of falling pupil roll in Hackney. The declining pupil roll would enable schools to receive less funding and a top-slice towards growth will further reduce schools’ funding. It was clarified that all schools that have planned growth will receive money for pupils that will be on their roll, which is funded outside of the formula. In addition, previously Schools Forum have made the decision to support the opening of new schools and classes and these new places need continued funding from the growth fund to cover existing pupils as well as start-up costs and in year expenditure.

Martin Jermyn noted the proposal for treatment of unspent contingency fund and queried whether a compromise position can be reached instead of rolling forward the unspent contingency fund year on year. It was clarified the proposal has been drafted due to an under spend of the contingency fund last year. This is the first and only time there has been an under spend of this fund. Future under spend of this fund is not anticipated, however, the proposal has been drafted to formalise how it is treated in the future years.

Members noted the expenditure of de-delegated funds on SRAS raised concerns that money is being spent on the same schools repeatedly requiring support with no demonstrable improvement. Annie Gammon clarified that a relatively high number of schools require support over a number of years and that the SRAS funds also provides generic support to all schools through the SIP programme.

Voting results of recommendations – Schools Forum members voted as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Decision Item</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
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<tr>
<td>To transfer 0.5% from the schools block to the high needs block</td>
<td>For – 5 votes;</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
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<td>Against - 4 votes</td>
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<td>Abstentions – 0 vote</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agree a top-slice of £355,725 from schools Block to fund the estimated School Growth</td>
<td>For – 7 votes</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
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<td>Against – 2 votes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abstentions – 0 vote</td>
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De-delegation decision (primary school representatives voted for primary de-delegation and secondary school representatives voted for secondary de-delegation)
### Items

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| iii. | School contingencies @ £12.50 per pupil | For – 6 votes (4 primary; 2 secondary)  
Against – 0 votes  
Abstentions – 0 vote | Agreed |
| iv. | To support for UPEG & bilingual learners | For – 6 votes (4 primary; 2 secondary)  
Against – 0 vote  
Abstentions – 0 vote | Agreed |
| v. | FSM eligibility service @ £3.38 per pupil | For – 4 votes  
Against – 0 vote  
Abstentions – 0 vote | Agreed |
| vi. | Licenses / subscriptions @ £3.02 per pupil; | For – 6 votes (4 primary; 2 secondary)  
Against – 0 votes  
Abstentions – 0 vote | Agreed |
| vii. | For Trade Union supply cover; | For – 6 votes (4 primary; 2 secondary);  
Against – 0 votes;  
Abstentions – 0 vote | Agreed |
| viii | To agree that any underspend or overspend from de-delegated budgets is carried forward for use in the following year’s de-delegated budgets. | For – 5 votes (4 primary; 1 secondary);  
Against – 1 (1 secondary vote);  
Abstentions – 0 vote.  
*As the secondary votes were tied the Chair used his casting vote to agree on the matter.* | Agreed. |
| ix. | View on the proposals to vary the local Hackney schools funding formula for 2020-21, noting the consultation responses received from school; | For – 9 votes  
Against – 0 vote  
Abstentions – 0 vote | Agreed. |

Deferred

### 10. Free School Meal report
Deferred

### 11. Schools Forum evaluation
Deferred

### 12. Forthcoming meetings in 2019/20;
- 5/02/20
- 29/04/20
- 17/06/20

### 13. Confidential items
None