School forum October 2022

Date of Meeting: 12 October 2022

Venue: PDC Room G04

Chair: Brenda Landers

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| **TYPE** | **MEMBERSHIP** |
| GOVERNORS | Alan Morton (AM)\*; Jo Faulkner (JF); Pip Pinhorn (PP); Abdul Chowdhury (AC)\*. Tracy Edwards (TE)\* |
| HEADTEACHERS | Fanoula Smith (FS)\*, Brenda Landers (Chair)\*, Paul Woods (PW)\*, Maria Lewington (ML)\*, Astrid Schon (AS), Kevin Jones (KJ)\*, Becky Dolamore (BD)\*, Veronica Armson (VA)\*, Danny Lye (DL)\* and Graham Clifford (GC)\*; Jemima Reilly (JR)\*; Terry Bennet (TB)\*, Dee Bleach (DB)\* |
| Non-School Members | Tracy Smith -THEP\* , Alex Kenny – NEU, and Kerri Marriner (present for item 7) |
| OBSERVERS |  |
| Officers in Attendance | James Thomas (JT)\*; Kay Goodacre (KG)\*; Farhad Ahmed (FA)\*; Nikki Parsons (NP)\* |

\*Denotes attendance

## AGENDA ITEM 1:

PRESENTING: Chair

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## AGENDA ITEM 2: Apologies

PRESENTING: Chair

Apologies from received from Alex Kenny, Pip Pinhorn and Jo Faulkner.

## AGENDA ITEM 3: Last minutes

PRESENTING: Chair

The minutes of the last minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting subject to the following amendment:

* Fanoula Smith will not be co-chairing the Schools Forum.

Matters arising

* Fanoula Smith informed the Forum that there was no new update from Trade Unions. KG added that a fixed rate per day had been agreed and this would be shared at the Headteacher’s Consultative for information.
* No update was available on the Lead Member for Education attending the Schools Forum Meetings. James Thomas agreed to follow up with Steve Nyakatawa to get an update on this.

**Action:** James Thomas and Steve Nyakatawa

## AGENDA ITEM 4: Initial DSG Budget Planning

PRESENTING: Kay Goodacre

The following papers were circulated prior to the meeting:

* DSG Final Outturn& NTA 2021-22 Final – for information.
* DSG Funding Headlines for 2023-24 Report
* CSSB Report
* Falling Rolls Fund
* De-delegation Service Review – for information

Schools Forum Members NOTED the following:

* The Final Outturn 2021-22 is for information.
* There is still an overspend in the High Needs Block. The LA has received an additional £6m in funding and this is helping it to move towards a better position.
* A meeting has taken place with consultants who are looking at delivering better value within High Needs nationally.
* Forum will receive an update on the High Needs Block and projections for the end of the year, in January 2023.

A Member asked if the High Needs Group could look at delivering better value and bring recommendations to the Schools Forum. KG replied that this may need to be explored.

**Action:** High Needs Group to look at delivering better value and bring recommendations to the Schools Forum.

James Thomas informed the Forum that broadly speaking the schools funding this year is reasonable. The LA will use a combination of the additional funding and ongoing work to explore how to deliver better value.

Falling Rolls

Kay Goodacre presented the paper on Falling Rolls and asked Forum to consider the criteria and funding as proposed and agree whether to pursue with a Falling Rolls allocation.

Forum NOTED

* Historically a Falling Roll allocation was discussed but not put in place.
* The Schools Forum would agree both the value of the fund and the criteria for allocation.

FS stated that previously there had been a Falling Rolls Fund but that was removed during the schools reorganisation. FS suggested that it may be helpful to see if Terry Bryan (Head of Pupil Access and School Sufficiency) had a budget to support falling rolls and consider a joint project of providing support jointly with sufficiency planning and monetary support.

Members discussed the Falling Rolls fund and the need to support schools.

In response to a question KG stated that new schools are protected for the first 7 years.

A Member commented that it is difficult to get a sense of the cost and the effect of having the fund. The criteria are also very tight and many schools may not meet them.

The Chair suggested it would be helpful for the Schools Forum to have an idea of the impact of having this fund, on the schools budget.

The Schools Forum RESOLVED to agree to modelling the impact of having a Falling Rolls Fund.

**Action:** Present a modelling of the impact of a Falling Rolls Fund on the school’s budget. KG

In response to discussions about the support available to help schools, FS stated that there is a LA strategy for supporting schools. The revised strategy and revised structure will be ready to share after the half term.

**Action:** Share the LA strategy for supporting schools.

Tracy Smith commented that there are 13 schools with falling rolls which may benefit from early intervention and support, and asked if there would be any flexibility with the eligibility criteria. KG replied that the fund will be funded through de-delegation and there will be no flexibility.

De-Delegation

Schools Forum was asked to NOTE the content of the De-delegation Service Review which sets out a review of the de delegated services during the financial year 2021-22.

A Member commented that it feels like the decisions about the Trade Union Forum keep getting postponed and it would be a good idea to bring together all outstanding actions. KG replied that this was delegated to a working group which has met with all Trade Union representatives and has moved towards an agreement. A daily rate has been agreed. There is an issue of some Academies not making a contribution and Alex Kenny will be following up on this.

Central Services Grant

Schools Forum was asked to NOTE the content of the Central Schools Services Block 2023-24 Report which summarises the centrally managed services for schools provided by Local Authorities administered under the Central Schools Service Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

## AGENDA ITEM 5: Schools Funding Formula

PRESENTING: Kay Goodacre

Kay Goodacre gave an update on Schools Funding Formula. Schools Forum members NOTED:

* Current headline figures listed by the central government is not relevant to Tower Hamlets as the increase in funding for schools in Tower Hamlets is an increase of 0.5%.
* The national insurance raise has been reversed.
* Schools will be impacted by the teachers and support staff pay increases.

A Member asked if this has been communicated enough to schools. KG replied that the team is working with a number of vulnerable schools to provide advice and support.

A Member commented that ultimately this will impact children’s achievement and suggested that schools who are managing their finances well can be used as a model to offer support to other schools.

A Member commented that it may be necessary to consider which schools children are placed in to support schools with a falling roll. FS commented that Terry Bryan had attempted to do this last year.

James Thomas said that he has and will continue to lobby the government about school funding.

## AGENDA ITEM 6: Update from Working Groups

PRESENTING: Kay Goodacre

Schools Working Party

The Schools Working Party Update was shared with members prior to the meeting.

Kay Goodacre informed the Forum that the Working Party had met in July. This group has also been supplemented with an Extended Schools Working Party so that representatives from the HTG could be invited to discuss the issues and feed into the improvement process.

The Schools Working Group will continue to meet half termly to continue the detailed improvement work and the Extended Working Party will meet once a term for an update.

## AGENDA ITEM 7: BASS Update

PRESENTING : Kerri Marriner

Kerri Marriner gave an update on the de-delegation funding for Behaviour and Attendance Service.

Schools Forum NOTED the following:

* Post pandemic, the level of challenging behaviour in all schools has risen leading to an increase in exclusions. There have been 4 exclusions in primary schools, the first in 5 years, and never more than 1 per year in the last 15 years.
* Mental health concerns have risen sharply. There has been a rise in concerning behaviours and parental conflict.
* Given the current levels of funding, resources have to be focused on primary support. The team is looking at developing a peer support model and will bring this back to the Schools Forum in the Spring.
* An audit of the needs of schools will be carried out. Following this schools will receive support and training for their development areas. The team will visit the school again in 6-8 weeks for a follow-up.
* The BASS team are also providing training and support for attendance.
* A short term re-integration provision will be up and running in January.

A Member asked if ‘It’s Your Life’ resources were still used. KM replied that this is no longer used. A primary provision is being developed, with a therapeutic focus. The current model sees pupils spending 2 full days in school, 2 days in their referral school and 1 day of outreach.

VA commented that the trauma-informed practice training is very good and Phoenix School would be happy to link up and work with schools.

A Member asked what the SEMH provision in Tower Hamlets is currently. KM replied that there are currently 4 places at Ben Jonson School, increasing to 12 eventually. There are also 4 places at Bowden House and this too will increase to 12. LEAP will also provide a further 12 places.

Plans for next year will be presented to the Schools Forum in January.

**AGENDA ITEM 8: Update on new school opening at Wood Wharf**

In the absence of Steve Nyakatawa, Farhad Ahmed gave a verbal update.

The school has opened successfully. It is currently located at a temporary site on Jack Dash House and will move to its permanent site in February 2023. The building programme is on track. The school has opened with 1 form and will increase to 2 forms.

**AGENDA ITEM 9: ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

A Schools Forum Training has been organised for new and existing members of the Schools Forum.

*The meeting ended at 9:48.*

**Summary of Action Points**

**Action:** Update on Lead Member for Education joining the Schools Forum JT and SN

**Action:** Present a modelling of the impact of a Falling Rolls Fund on the schools budget. KG

**Action:** High Needs Group to look at delivering better value and bring recommendations to the Schools Forum.

**Action:** Share the LA strategy for supporting schools.