# LB TOWER HAMLETS SCHOOLS FORUM

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| Date of Meeting | 23 June 2021 |
| Venue | Virtually, via Zoom |
| Chair  | Fanoula Smith |
| Vice-Chair | Monica Forty / Brenda Landers |

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| TYPE | MEMBERSHIP |
| GOVERNORS | Alan Morton (AM)\*; Bridget Cass (BC); Pip Pinhorn (PP)\* and Dave Lake (DL); Gwen Wright (GW). |
| HEADTEACHERS | Fanoula Smith (Chair)\*, Monica Forty (MF)\*; Brenda Landers (BL)\*, Stewart Harris (SHa); Liz Figuerelo (LF)\*; Belinda King (BK)\*; Paul Woods (PW)\*, Maria Lewington (ML)\*, Astrid Schon (AS)\*, Kevin Jones (KJ)\*, Becky Dolamore (BD)\*, and Danny Lye (DL)\* |
| Non-School Members | Kim Arrowsmith (PVI EYs Providers)\*; Alex Kenny (NEU Trade Union Rep)\*; and Tracy Smith (TS)\* |
| OBSERVERS | Jill Baker (JB)\*, Asma Begum (AB)\* |
| Officers in Attendance | Kay Goodacre (KG)\*(Strategic Finance Children and Culture), Nikki Parsons (NP)\* (Senior Accountant); Runa Basit (RB)\* (Head of Governance & Information); Patricia Wells (PW), Amanda Harcus (Divisional Director HR)\*, Kerrigen Marriner (KM) (Head of Behaviour and Attendance Support)\*,  |

**\*denotes attendance**

[The meeting commenced at 8:32 hours]

# Agenda Item 1: Introductions and Apologies for Absence

* 1. **Welcome and apologies**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Dave Lake and Bridget Cass.

* 1. **Membership**

It was noted that the Term of Office for Monica Forty, Alan Morton, Gwen Wright, Dave Lake and Bridget Cass is coming to an end.

The Chair thanked the members for their contribution during their term of office.

# Agenda Item 2: Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 28 April and Matters Arising.

# Presenting: Chair

**2.1 Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 28 April **were APPROVED** as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.

**2.2 Action points**

There were no action points.

# Agenda Item 3: Biannual review of the de-delegation budget

# Presenting: Amanda Harcus

**3.1 Union Facilities Time Breakdown**

Amanda Harcus presented a report on Union Facilities time and gave an overview of the paper. AH added that Unison have written to express their objection and inform that they believe their allocation to be .15 FTE and the remainder of the role is 0.6 FTE as Assistant Branch Secretary. AH said that this means in practice Unison are combining allocation from schools and the corporate allocation. AH said that the allocations of 1.4 FTE are broadly accurate and for the 1.5 FTE allocation some work may need to be done with the trade unions.

There is budget across schools and corporate for 1.0 FTE for support staff, 1 from Unison and 1 from GMB. AH said that based on current membership the level of facilities agreement is broadly correct and part 2 of the papers lays out the options for the Forum to consider. AH outlined the options and what the impact of each option might be.

The Chair said that there are further inaccuracies in the paper than the ones identified and some

emails from other union representatives have been received. These will need to go back to the Trade Union Forum to be unpicked. AH added that the allocations stated in the report are taken from the statutory returns from unions. All points raised will be looked at.

Belinda King enquired about the review and asked whose responsibility is it and what will it entail? What will the review look like? Both NAHT and ASCL have an allocation of 0.1 and yet NAHT has a wider representation. How will such anomalies be explored? AH responded that current allocations are historical. The review will involve benchmarking against other LA’s, there is reliance on the information that unions share about their membership and it has been the case that numbers which have been provided are different to the allocations. The review will need to benchmark and identify the best way of calculating release time. AH added that there is no intention to reduce the total amount of facilities time, but some robust conversations are required with unions about how that time is allocated. How allocations are made should be set out much more clearly.

The Chair invited Alex Kenny, who has been briefing the Head’s Consultative on this matter to comment. Alex Kenny said that teacher unions have been allocated 0.4 FTE and unions have been dividing that up based on membership and that hasn’t changed significantly over the years, but it is looked at every year. AK said that the figure of £85,000 allocated for the equivalent of 2x 1.0 FTE posts for support staff was a surprise and needs to be reviewed. In terms of options available, AK said that the cost per pupil should not be increased, however there are implications of the other options available. AK suggested that through discussions with Trade Unions other solutions may be identified.

The Chair commented that trade union reps represent the people they work with and therefore need to be in a post and cannot be a full-time union rep. The Chair proposed that, given the inaccuracies, the paper is presented again. The Borough is at the top end of de-delegation and it will not be appropriate to increase this.

Amanda Harcus clarified that the GMB full time rep has been covering the role for 7-8 years and this has been a historical arrangement and is not covered by the de-delegated funds, this is covered by the corporate budget. GMB did have a school’s rep who stepped aside for personal reasons and GMB have been asked to resolve this. Pat Chen, Head of HR has had a conversation with John McLoughlin in relation to GMB. AH agreed with the Chair that the anomalies need to be resolved.

The Chair thanked AH and said that in previous years the Forum has had to rely on updates on the spend and allocations from Alex Kenny. Further clarity is needed on what is covered by the de-delegation and what is covered by the Borough.

Alex Kenny said that it is not clear how there is an allocation of £85,000 for support staff rep if the GMB rep time is not paid for out of the de-delegated budget?

Kay Goodacre added that the GMB rep cost was being covered by the Borough and this year the rep was representing schools so this can be charged against this budget, however it was realised that this budget would be overspent. This year the overspend will be managed from the corporate budget. There has been a history of invoices not being paid and other issues and these have been cleared. Looking at a fixed rate should be explored so that schools can manage the cost of finding cover when releasing staff, not necessarily compensating a fraction of the person’s salary. There may be different rates for teachers and for support staff but having a fixed rate would make it simpler to calculate.

*Belinda King left the meeting at 9:01.*

The Chair agreed that a fixed rate would make it easier as different people are on different salaries and the figure would otherwise fluctuate every year. Allocation should be set to number of days. This would need to be agreed upon by School Forum or proposed through the Trade Union Forum.

Alex Kenny said that this is a neater method but not without complications. If only a supply teacher’s rate is covered, a school is potentially penalised if the member of staff has leadership responsibilities. This was the system previously and was not working and the current model was adopted in 2014.

The Forum considered the options presented in the paper and did not agree to any of the options presented. The facilities time will remain as it is this year. More accurate information will be presented, and the facilities time and cost will be reviewed.

The Forum AGREED to overspend on the de-delegated funds this year.

**Action:** A review of Union Facilities Time will take place before Christmas and will be bought to the Forum meeting in December.

*Amanda Harcus left the meeting at 9:10*

**3.2 Behaviour and Attendance**

Kerrigen Marriner gave a presentation on de-delegated funding for BASS and the work being completed by the Behaviour Support Team using de-delegated funding. Kerrigen Marriner summarised the core offer provided by the BASS team and the comparative costs of the offer. All of the core offer is pre-statutory threshold for the LA and is based on what schools are advised to be providing and good practice for promoting positive behaviour and reducing the risk of exclusion of vulnerable groups. None of the activities that BASS undertake are funded through de-delegation, they are funded through the HN funding block. Academies buy into the service on an individual basis.

KM gave an update on indicative costs per school which would be £900 per annum for a 1-form entry school, £6,740 for a 6-form entry secondary school. In comparison the cost of a single exclusion is over £10,000. Early intervention and support are needed to prevent those exclusions from arising. KM gave a breakdown of the number and types of cases dealt with during the lockdown.

The Chair thanked KM and said that having the BASS team is very reassuring when things go wrong. Understanding how BASS sits apart from SEND is also useful.

The Schools Forum ACCEPTED the report which will be presented to Headteachers in due course.

Monica Forty thanked KM for the explanation of where SEMH sits and said it will be useful to share this with Headteachers. MF said that it will be useful to know what the KPIs are and include them in the autumn report. KM replied that the overarching KPI is to keep exclusions low and below national and Inner London rates and the range of work is designed to achieve that overall KPI which is further broken down to smaller KPIs. This information will be included in the next report.

# Agenda Item 4: DSG Outturn

# Presenting: Kay Goodacre

Kay Goodacre asked the Forum to note the provisional outturn position which shows an overspend of £1.5m and an underspend in EY of £1m. The underspend offsets the overspend. There is an underspend of £0.3m in the Schools Block. Overall, there is a £0.2 m increase in the deficit position.

The Forum AGREED the use of bought forward balances to offset the High Needs Block deficit.

# Agenda Item 5: Update on Early Years

# Presenting: Steve Nyakatawa

In Steve Nyakatawa’s absence Kay Goodacre gave a brief update.

Pauline Hoare has left the LA and a new appointment will be made. Further updates will be given at a later date.

# Agenda Item 6: Update from Working Groups

# Presenting: Steve Nyakatawa/John O’Shea

**6.1 HNF Working Group**

Kay Goodacre gave an update on the High Needs Funding Working Group. The group has met 3 times so far and will be looking at the allocation of the funding that was moved into the HN block in January.

There has been a meeting with the DfE to discuss the High Needs Management Plan and the DfE has agreed to meet in October for a management plan.

KG asked the Schools Forum to agree the distribution of funding for schools with lower levels of notional SEN and higher levels of EHCPs. Some modelling was taken to the HN working group the feedback from the group was that all schools who were not receiving enough notional SEN should be included and the paper includes this.

KG gave a breakdown of how the Notional SEN has been calculated and the factors reviewed.

Monica Forty asked for clarification about the 2 columns titled Notional SEN/pupil and asked what is the difference between the two? KG said that one column is per pupil identified as SEN and the other is per pupil. If schools overidentify SEN but still have low numbers of EHCP’s they would not receive the overall funding.

The Forum AGREED the distribution of funding for schools with lower levels of notional SEN and higher levels of EHCPs. The impact of this will be reviewed next year and the formula may be changed.

**Action:** Add review of HN Support Funding to workplan. RB

Brenda Landers said that it would be useful to understand parental decision making and what are the factors which influence how parents choose schools. Schools can sometimes be victims of their own success and inclusivity. The Chair agreed that this is something which can be looked into.

# Agenda Item 7: Forum Membership Update

# Presenting: Runa Basit

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An update on Forum membership was given earlier and nominations will go out for new members.

# Agenda Item 8: Workplan 2021-22 and future items

# Presenting: Runa Basit

Forum was asked to note that a workplan has been circulated and will be updated with actions from this meeting.

# Agenda Item 9: Any Other Business

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The Chair thanked Monica Forty for her contribution to the Forum.

# Agenda Item 10: Next meeting Date

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Wednesday, 13th October 2021 at 8:30am

Wednesday, 1st December 2021 at 8:30am

Wednesday, 12th January 2022 at 8:30am

Wednesday, 9th March 2022 at 8:30am

Wednesday, 22nd June 2022 at 8:30am

**[The Chair drew the meeting to a close at 9:58 hours]**

**Chair’ssignature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Action:** A review of Union Facilities Time will take place before Christmas and will be bought to the Forum meeting in December.

**Action:** Add review of HN Support Funding to workplan. RB