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| **Date of Meeting**  | 4 December 2019  |
| **Venue**  | Bethnal Green Centre, 229 Bethnal Green Road, E2 6AB  |
| **Chair**  | Lorraine Flanagan  |
| **Clerk**  | Runa Basit; Head of Governance & Information  |

**Together Open Willing Excellent Respect**

# LBTH School forum

**MEMBERSHIP**

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| **TYPE**  |  | **MEMBERSHIP**  |
| **GOVERNORS**  |  | Jill Cochrane (JC); Conor Magill (CM)\*; Gwen Wright (GW)\*; Alan Morton (AM)\*; Bridget Cass (BC)\*; Dave Lake (DL)\*; Pip Pinhorn (PP)\* |
| **HEADTEACHERS**  |  | Lorraine Flanagan\* (Chair); Brenda Landers (BL); Monica Forty (ViceChair)\*; Sarah Helm (SH)\*; Stewart Harris (SH)\*; Jill Baker (JB)\*; Liz Figueiredo (LF)\*; Avril Newman (AN)\*; Belinda King (BK)\*; Martin Nirsimloo (MN); John Bradshaw (JBr)\*; Paul Woods (PW)\*  |
| **Non-School** **Members**  |  | Alison Arnaud (Tower Hamlets College); Kim Arrowsmith (PVI EYs Providers)\*; Alex Kenny (NEU Trade Union Rep)\*; Tracy Smith\* (THEP);  |
| **OBSERVERS**  |  | Kevin Jones (KJ)\* - Old Ford Primary School;   |
| **Officers** **Attendance**  | **in**  | Debbie Jones (Director of Children and Culture)\*; Christine McInnes (CMc)\*; John O’Shea (Head of SEN) (JOS)\*; Steve Worth (Schools Finance Advisor) (SW)\*; Kevin Bartle (Interim Director Finance, Procurement & Audit) (KB)\*; Shamila Ganeshalingam (Senior Accountant) (SG)\*; Farhad Ahmed (Governor Services) (FA)\*; Ronke Martins-Taylor (Divisional Director Youth and Commissioning) (RMT)\*; Pauline Hoare (Head of Integrated EYS) (PH)\*  |

**\*denotes attendance**

**[The meeting commenced at 8.30am]**

# Agenda Item 1: Introductions and Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Schools Forum. Introductions were made. There were no apologies to note.

# Agenda Item 2: Minutes of the Last Meeting held 16 October 2019 (Circulated), Matters Arising, Review of Action Points Presenting : Chair

2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting subject to the following amendment:

*[Correction] The EYS had a duty to support the quality of early childhood and care in those settings which boasted extremely high standards of quality for birth-5years led by the maintained nursery schools (MNS) all, ~~but one~~ of which, had received Ofsted ratings of ~~good or~~ outstanding.*

 191204 LBTH SCHOOLS FORUM MINUTES 1

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| Agenda Item  | Action Points 24 April 2019  | Lead  | Update/ Timescale  |
| Item 3: Admin of LA Grants | **AP –04/2019 -03–** Grant release dates to be circulated via Heads Bulletin | SW  | **RESOLVED**  |
|   | Top-Up dates also to be circulated  |   |  |
|   | **AP – 04/2019 -04 –** A report on the EP service to be presented to the Forum  | CMc  | **RESOLVED**  |
| Item 4: High  | **AP – 04/2019 -05 –** The report to separate out SEND and AP funding  | CMc  | **RESOLVED:**  |
| Needs Block  |  |   | This will be presented at a future meeting |
|   |  |  |  |
| Agenda Item  | Carried Forward Actions - 19 June 2019  | Lead  | Timescale  |
| Item 5: Falling Roll Fund | **AP –06/2019 -05 –** Nursery school funding to be placed on the agenda.  | Clerk/ PH/SW | **RESOLVED –** to be presented at the January 2020 meeting.  |
| Item 6: SFS  | **AP –06/2019 -07 –** Forward email to SW regarding PFI recharges  | SW  | **RESOLVED**  |
| Item 8: Any Other Business - | **AP –06/2019 -12 –** Ascertain whether the process applied to special schools  | Clerk  | **RESOLVED**  |
| Provider Portal  |   |   |  |

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| **Agenda Item**  | **Action Points 16 October 2019**  | **Lead**  | **Timescale**  |
| Item 1: Welcome  | **AP –10/2019 -01**– A nomination should be sought from Governors to fill the vacancy left by Jill Cochrane  | Clerk  | **RESOLVED**  |
| Item 4: DSG Recovery Plan  | **AP –10/2019 -02 –** Ascertain whether the report refers to the RLHS and whether or not funding was ring-fenced direct from the DfE  | CMc/ JOS | **RESOLVED**  |
|   | **AP –10/2019 -03 –** Ascertain the ratio of LAs in London which declared an overspend in their HNFB  | CMc/JOS | Deferred  |
|   | **AP –10/2019 -04 –** The report submitted to the DLT to be circulated to the membership  | CMc  | **RESOLVED**  |
|   | **AP –10/2019 -05 –** Suggestions/Solutions on how to reduce the HNFB overspend to be submitted to the LA  | All/ CMc | ASAP  |
|   | **AP –10/2019 -06 –** Comparisons with other LAs to be circulated  | CMc  | ASAP  |
|   | **AP –10/2019 -07 –** DSG Recovery Plan to be reviewed and represented to Forum  | CMc  | **RESOLVED**  |
|   | **AP –10/2019 -08 –** DSG recovery Plan to be placed on the agenda as a standing item  | Clerk  | **RESOLVED**  |
| Item 5: Strategic Support for Schools- Financial Difficulty | **AP –10/2019 -09 –** A proposal for retaining the contingency fund and an appropriate methodology to be presented  | SW  | Next Forum meeting 04.12.2019 / 15.01.2020 |
| Item 6: CRBs  | **AP –10/2019 -10** – Proposals for 2020/21 CRBs to be presented to Forum  | SW  | Next Forum meeting 04.12.2019 / 15.01.2020 |
| Item 7: EY Update  | **AP –10/2019 -11 –** The EY report to provide clarity around the issue of attendance monitoring | PH  | Jan-20 |
|   | **AP –10/2019 -12 –** The Finance/Early Years to submit a clear rationale around the proposal to hold back 20% of funding for a term as part of the quality assurance process  | DJ/ SG/PH | Jan-20 |
| Item 8: Traded Services | **AP –10/2019 -13 –** The effect of the review of traded services to be presented to Forum  | CMc  | **RESOLVED**  |
|   | **AP –10/2019 -14 –** A definitive list of statutory/non-statutory services to be circulated  | CMc  | Deferred  |
| Item 9: AOB – FSM  | **AP –10/2019 -15 –** Feedback to Secondary Headteachers Consultative  | JB  | **RESOLVED**  |
|   | **AP –10/2019 -16 –** Clarity regarding the reorganisation of the catering service to be presented with confirmation of charges/recharges  | SW  | **RESOLVED**  |
| TUFT  | **AP –10/2019 -17 –** A report on breakdown of how the TUFT funding was spent by all Tus to be circulated to the Chairs of the Consultative  | AK  | **RESOLVED**  |
| Induction Session  | **AP –10/2019 -18 –** Potential dates for induction sessions to be circulated  | SW  | **RESOLVED**  |
|   | **AP –10/2019 -19 –** Members wishing to attend an induction should contact SW  | All  | **RESOLVED**  |

**2.2 Matters Arising:**

 - School Meals Catering

RMT advised that Headteachers were previously informed of the planned changes to the catering contracts for the both the Secondary and Primary schools. RMT advised that for primary any price increase will be in line with the consumer index. The LA was working with Secondary schools to identify a provider to deliver the catering service.

RMT advised that for Primary schools they were undertaking a review and focussing on delivery of the service. It was anticipated that there would be improved customer services.

BK suggested RMT attends the Primary Consultative to discuss the changes to the school meals catering. **Action**

BL asked whether secondary schools have been offered management contracts.

RMT replied that that was one of the options, however schools decided to go with an external provider. It was noted that schools could choose an alternative provider.

* Trade Union Facilities Time

In relation to the TU facilities time members sought clarity regarding costs. There was some discrepancy in relation to the cost per child in the report circulated and the cost previously shared with Headteachers.

AK said that he does not manage the budget. SW clarified that the budget belonged to the LA.

It was noted that AK had provided the qualitive data and information previously requested by Headteachers.

The Chair said that clarity is being sought around the financial breakdown. The Chair requested that this information is shared ahead of the Phase Consultative meeting in January.

It was agreed that SW and AK will provide financial breakdown for the Phase Consultative meetings in January. **Action**

* Induction Training

The Chair thanked SW for the induction training. Members commented that the training was helpful and provided clarity.

LF said that she did not receive confirmation of the date and asked whether there would be another opportunity for the training. SW said that he would organise another session in the New Year. **Action**

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| **Action Point**  | **Lead**  | **Timescale**  |
| **12/2019 -01 -** BK suggested RMT attends the Primary Consultative to discuss the changes to the school meal catering.  **12/2019 -02 –** It was agreed that SW and AK will provide financial breakdown for TUFT for the Phase Consultative meetings in January.  **12/2019 -03 -** SW to organise another Induction training session in the new year.  | BK   SW  | January 2020  January 2020  Spring Term  |

# Agenda Item 3: Schools Block Strategy 2020-21 Presenting: SW Challenge/Discussion

SW presented the Report on the Schools Block Strategy 2020-21. The report set out the recommended use of the Schools Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2020-21 and covered:

1. The schools funding formula for 2020-21.
2. The requested transfer of £1.3m from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block for 2020-21 only.
3. The Growth and Falling Roll Funds for 2020-21.
4. The de-delegation of:
	1. Delegated funding.
	2. Former Education Services Grant (ESG) general duties elements.

SW stated that a provisional allocation of the 2020-21 DSG was published in October 2019 based on October 2018 census data. This will be further updated once the 2019 census figures become available.

SW highlighted that this year’s provisional allocation was three months later than expected and this made it difficult to review and consult on the proposals for 2020-21.

SW highlighted that the provisional allocation indicated a growth in three out of the four DSG blocks., however there would be reduction to the Central School Services Block (CSSB).

In 2019-20 the CSSB was £4.811m and this would be provisionally reducing to £4.204m. This was a 12%.6% reduction and the LA’s proposals on how to contain this are included in the report on the CSSB (Item 4).

SW stated that this meant that some of the growth in the DSG blocks will be offset by the reduction in the CSSB.

The Forum noted that the provisional growths in the three blocks were:

* Schools and Early Years Blocks – by 1.84% per pupil
* High Needs Block (HNB) by £7.3m (15.3%)

* **Schools Block**

In relation to the Schools Block (item 2.1 in the report), SW said the provisional Schools Block for 2020-21 was £263.7m, which included a growth of £4.5m. SW advised that this did not include the allocation for the future growths as this was not yet available.

SW informed the Forum that when setting the individual school budget shares, the LA can seek the Forum’s permission to top-slice for two contingency areas:

* 1. Growth Fund. SW highlighted that Appendix 3 showed what has been spent against this fund in the past. It was noted that prior to 2018-19 underspends against this fund was used to relieve pressure in the HNFB. In 2018-19 the underspend of £0.72m was carried forward to 2019-20. Given the provisional allocation for the Growth fund was not yet available, the LA’s recommendation was to review the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) formula allocation and carry forwards sums once the Growth fund allocation is confirmed.
	2. Falling Roll Funds. It was AGREED by the Forum that there will be no Falling Rolls Fund for 2020-21 and that the unused allocation from 2019-20 will be reimbursed to schools in 2020-21.

* **Tower Hamlets Schools Funding Formula 2020-21**

It was noted that previously the Schools Forum had agreed to follow the National Funding Formula (NFF) factors and factors in the Tower Hamlets Schools Funding Formula.

The Forum was informed that there were no proposed changes to the principle of following the NFF. An amendment to the NFFF for 2020-21 was the reintroduction of a formula factor for mobility. Further detail on the factor values was provided in Appendix 4.

SW advised that majority of factors in the NFF were increasing by approximately 4%, with the exception of the Free Schools Meal, which will increase in line with inflation. SW stated that the 4% increase was significantly above Tower Hamlets’ increase on 1.84% per pupil in the Schools Block, therefore the amount distributed through the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) will fall substantially.

The impact of increasing the factor values in line with the NFF’s 4% and implementing the maximum MFG of 1.84% is shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. Comparison of Individual School Budget Allocations (ISB) 2020-21 and 2019-20.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Element**  | **2020-21**  | **2019-20**  | **Change**  |
|   | £m  | £m  | £m  |
| ISB  | 263.680  | 257.825  | 5.855  |
| Funding Formula  | 237.017  | 228.160  | 8.857  |
| MFG  | 24.666  | 29.665  | -4.999  |
| Headroom  | 1.997  | 0  | 1.997  |

In reply to a question, SW advised that Table 1 showed a reduction by distributing more through the MFG and did not include any proposed changes.

The changes to the Individual School Budget allocation included the following:

* In 2019-20 0.725m was transferred to the HNB
* There is more money this year to distribute

SW further clarified that the funding available for the Individual School Budget Allocations (ISB) leaves a headroom of £1.997m. The options available for using this fund are:

* Contributing to the High Needs Block to help offset the pressures in that budget. The maximum contribution that can be made is 0.5% - amounting to £1.318m. - Remodelling factor values above the NFF’s values.

The LA’s recommendation is that the Forum agree to transfer this into the HNB. SW highlighted that if the Forum agrees this in principle, all schools will then be consulted, and the proposal will be reconsidered in January 2020.

**Q&A**

MF asked should the Forum move to agree in principal to contributing to the HNB, how will this money be used.

SW said that the contribution would ease the pressure in the HNB. The LA was relooking at how the HNB is managed.

In relation to the discontinuation of the Falling Rolls Fund, BL asked what support will be put in place to support those schools affected by decline in pupil numbers.

CMc advised that Forum members will know that work was taking place under the Primary Review and the work that is taking place with Raine’s. CMc added that the Cabinet Report in October had outlined the plans for the schools in scope under the Primary Review and for Raine’s, and how schools are being supported. Further work was taking place and the LA was working closely with the schools in relation to their finances.

One of the first steps for schools facing financial difficulties was to look at a license deficit and whether the school is able to pay back the license deficit. If it is unlikely that the school will be in a position to repay the licence deficit then this cannot be agreed as a way forward. CMc commented that the license deficit cannot be indefinite.

CMc advised that they were working on interim measures and looking at longer term plans. Work was taking place to support schools in making them sustainable.

DJ further added that the work taking place was multipronged – including the Primary Review, work taking place at the Schools Forum and the work being carried out by the Schools Finance Team.

BL commented that there were significant changes in the allocation within these factors and asked whether this had been modelled for smaller schools to give them a sense of their indicative budget for next year.

SW said that modelling information has not yet been provided as the provisional allocation was 3 months late. SW confirmed that schools will receive the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG).

BL said that the MFG did not meet the increase in costs.

In reply to a question relating to the HNB, SW said that the LA needs to relook at the bands for Special schools and Alternative Provision. It was possible that the LA would be seeking to reduce the top–up funding. There were many factors that could mitigate this and would be taken into consideration. The LA also had a pending meeting with the DfE in the New Year in relation to this.

 - **De-delegation**

Section 4 of the report outlined the proposals for the de-delegation.

Table 2 presented the previously agreed de-delegation in 2019-20.

**Q&A**

BK questioned the cost for Trade Union Facilities included in Table 2 as £6 per pupil. BK commented that this was agreed as £5 per pupil last year. SW replied that he would relook at this.

Clarification was sought relating to de-delegation and whether this applied to Academies. SW said that the de-delegation only applied to maintained schools. Top-slicing of the budget (item 2.1 Schools Block in the report – Growth/Falling Rolls Funds) applied to all schools, including Academies.

JB enquired about the Licence and Subscriptions, in particular the subscriptions for ALPS as it was understood that the Tower Hamlets Education Partnership (THEP) paid for this too. SW will look into this. **Action:**

BK enquired about the Free School Meals Eligibility Assessment and whether this was required given that schools were able to carry out this function individually. Headteachers would like to understand the implication of moving away from the LA in relation to the School Meals Eligibility Assessment. SW will discuss this with the Tower Hamlets Benefits Section. **Action**

AM asked that once this was clear School Business Managers need to be kept informed so that they do not renew the licenses automatically.

Members requested clarity on the subscription and licenses, specifically - which ones are required and paid by whom. **Action:**

The Forum noted the information on Behaviour and Anti-Bullying.

The Chair stated that members had requested greater clarity on the de-delegation for behaviour and anti-bullying and the information provided did not include the full breakdown requested.

CM said the de-delegation had not being properly calculated last year. Further information including increases in salary and breakdown on the costing will be shared before the next meeting. **Action**:

CMc advised that information about the services as a whole will be shared.

Members requested information/breakdown by number of schools and the statutory element covered by the Service.

The Chair highlighted the information needs to be provided in good time for the January Phase Consultative meetings.

SW referred to item 4.2 Former Education Services Grant (ESG) Services. The LA was seeking the Forum’s approval to de-delegate the same amount for 2020-21 as a contribution towards its statutory duties. These were being developed to be more closely targeted at the needs of maintained schools, particularly in the areas of finance support, development of policies and other central HR support, and Health and Safety monitoring.

Table 5 in the Report outlined the ESG budgets and the proposed CSSB and De-delegated Contributions for 2020-21.

In relation to the de-delegation it was noted that decisions need to be made at the January 2020 Schools Forum meeting.

The Forum was asked to consider the following recommendations:

1. Endorse the proposed schools funding formula for 2020-21 (Non-school members, other than PVI representatives, cannot vote on this item).
2. Agree in principle the transfer of £1.3m to the High Needs Block for 2020-21 only.
3. Agree to discontinue the Falling Rolls Fund for 2020-21.
4. Agree Growth Fund for 2020-21.
5. Agree the discontinuation of the Falling Roll Fund.
6. School representatives are asked to agree the de-delegation of former ESG funded services set out in Section 4.
7. Primary school representatives are asked to agree the de-delegation of services, rates and values set out in columns a, b and d of tables 3 and 4.
8. Secondary school representatives are asked to agree the de-delegation rates and values set out in columns a, c and e of tables 3 and 4.

The Forum was asked to consider items 1-6 at this meeting as this will enable the Schools Finance Team to work towards finalising the Schools Block Strategy 2020-21.

**Q&A**

Members asked about the alternatives should the Forum not agree the recommendation 2 above and not transfer funds to the HNB.

SW responded that if this is not agreed and the £1.3m is not available then the LA would need to relook at how they balance the HNB.

KB added that the government was consulting on how this is operated. The Council would need to look at the DSG to supplement the HNB, adding further pressure on the DGS. It was further noted that the LA’s general fund can no longer be used.

[LA officers – DJ, CMc, KB, SW, RMT and PH, and Tracy Smith (THEP) were asked to withdraw from the meeting to enable the Forum to discuss the above]

A discussion ensued and the following comments were noted:

* The HNB served the most vulnerable children and the pressures experienced due to the increase in pupils with SEND was noted.
* It was acknowledged that the funds had been moved to the HNB last year. Members commented that the LA needs a different way of managing this budget.
* Members agreed that there were greater clarity and trust in the information provided. This was much improved from previous years.
* Members commented that they would need further information in some areas, including plans to make the HNB more sustainable.
* Members requested further information on the plan for the SEND/HNB and strategies around that budget area.
* It was acknowledged that the LA had moved a great distance towards transparency and sustainability; it was suggested that the transfer of the £1.3m would help towards that process.
* Members also noted the implications on the DSG and general fund.
* It was suggested that there needs to be a robust plan in place for the HNB.
* It was acknowledged that there was a national crisis in relation to the HNB and that the Forum should wait to see the outcome of the election.

i. *The Forum was asked to agree recommendations in relation to the de-delegation as outlined in the report (item 4).*

The Forum **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** the following:

* 1. To endorse the proposed schools funding formula for 2020-21 (Non-school members, other than PVI representatives, cannot vote on this item).
	2. Agreed in principle the transfer of £1.3m to the High Needs Block for 2020-21 only.
	3. Agreed to discontinue the Falling Rolls Fund for 2020-21.
	4. Agreed Growth Fund for 2020-21.
	5. Agreed the discontinuation of the Falling Roll Fund.
	6. School representatives agreed the de-delegation of former ESG funded services set out in Section 4 in the report.

[Officers (DJ, CMc, KB, SW, RMT and PH, and Tracy Smith) re-joined the meeting at this stage]

The Chair stated that they understood the challenges that the LA faced and that the resources were stretch.

The Chair confirmed that the Forum had agreed items 1-6 of the de-delegation as stated above.

SW highlighted that further consultation needs to take place in relation to the item 2 above (the transfer of £1.3m to the HNB for 2020-21). SW will consult with schools. **Action**

The Chair confirmed that the Forum would like additional clarification on de-delegation, in particular the cost of the Behaviour and Anti-bullying and the cost of the Trade Union Facilities time.

Members requested if possible to receive modelling information.

DJ said that they would look at what the Finance team can produce due to the capacity issues. DJ added that given the timeframe and that it was the end of term it may not be possible for the team to produce the modelling information.

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| **Action Point**  | **Lead**  | **Timescale**  |
| **12/2019 – 04 –** JB enquired about the Licence and Subscriptions, in particular the subscriptions for ALPS as it was understood that the Tower Hamlets Education Partnership (THEP) paid for this too. SW will look into this.**12/2019 – 05 –** BK enquired about the Free School Meals Eligibility Assessment and whether this was required given that schools were able to carry out this function individually. Headteachers would like to understand the implication of moving away from the LA in relation to the School Meals Eligibility Assessment. SW will discuss this with the Tower Hamlets Benefits Section. AM asked that once this was clear School Business Managers need to be kept informed so that they do not renew the licenses automatically. **12/2019 – 06 –** Members requested clarity on the subscription and licenses, specifically - which ones are required and paid by whom. **12/2019 – 07 –** Behaviour and Anti-Bullying - further information including increases in salary and breakdown on the costing will be shared before the next meeting. **12/2019 – 08 –** SW highlighted that further consultation needs to take place in relation to the item 2 (the transfer of £1.3m to the HNB for 2020-21). SW will consult with schools.  | SW                 CM  SW  | January Meeting                   |

# Agenda Item 4: Central Schools Services Block (Circulated) Presenting: SW

**Challenge /Discussion.**

The Report:

1. Sets out the background to the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) and the allocation for 2021-21.
2. Informs members of the cut of £0.607m in the CSSB for 2020-21
3. Sets out the various budgets that the Local Authority wishes to retain centrally and the proposed budgetary reductions to accommodate the cut in funding.

4th

The Forum noted the details of the recommendations and timescales for decisions with the report:

* 1. Agree the retention of the funding for the former Education Services Grant retained duties.
	2. Agree the retention of funding for statutory ongoing duties.
	3. Agree the retention of funding for the historical commitments.

SW said that they did expect a reduction. The overall CSSB for 2020-21 is £4.204m compared to the 2017-18 baseline of £4.920m.

The Forum noted that CSSB allocations in Table 1.

SW advised that legal costs were included within the Education Services Grant (ESG) allocation.

In relation to the weekend GCSE classes, it was noted that previously there was some miscoding under this area.

**Action** – further information will be provided at the next meeting, when a decision on above recommendations will be taken.

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| **Action Point**  | **Lead**  | **Timescale**  |
| **12/2019 – 09 –** further information on the CSSB allocation will be provided at the next meeting.  | SW  | By the next meeting  |

# Agenda Item 5: Early Years National Funding Formula (EYFF): Early Years retained funding Presenting: SW Challenge /Discussion

It was noted that the report required more work and would be presented at the January meeting. In addition, further discussions will take place with schools.

SH said the implications for schools have not been understood and that there was great concern regarding the funding.

RMT said they would ensure that the implications are shared ahead of the next meeting.

BC commented that the LA needs to consult with the nursery governors.

RMT advised that the guidance states that the EYFF needs to be presented to the Schools Forum in the first instance for consideration. The LA had intended to share this at this meeting however this was not possible. The paper on the EYFF will be shared at the January meeting. **Action:**

DJ said that they had taken the decision not to present at this meeting as it required additional work.

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| **Action Point**  | **Lead**  | **Timescale**  |
| **12/2019 – 10 –** The paper on the EYFF will be shared at the January meeting. | RMT/PH  | January Meeting  |

# Agenda Item 6: High Need Funding Block (HNFB) (Verbal Update) Presenting: SW Challenge /Discussion

CMc advised that a review of the HNFB was continuing. One element was retained funding and the second was top-up funding. Discussions were also taking place with the legal services and DfE in relation to the HNFB top-up funding.

The LA was awaiting further information on the way forward. The LA was planning a cut to the block in the region of 2-3%. The LA was seeking advice from the legal team on whether there is a need to consult and an update will be provided at the next meeting on whether a consultation is required. **Action: CMc**

It was clarified that there was a possibility that there would be a cut to the HNFB across the board from April 2020.

It was further clarified that information on the cut will be shared with the Forum, however, first the LA would need to establish whether to consult or not.

CMc confirmed that this will be brought back to the Schools Forum in the first instance.

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| **Action Point –**  | **Lead**  | **Timescale**  |
| **12/2019 - 11–** The LA was seeking advice from the legal team on whether there is a need to consult and an update will be provided at the next meeting on whether a consultation is required.  | CMc  | By next meeting  |

# Agenda Item 7: Education Psychology (Circulated) Presenting: JOS Challenge /Discussion

The Forum noted the report.

DT advised that since September 2019, the service has been organised and delivered via three areas. This was part of a longer-term redesign in order to have a more transparent process for allocating EP services.

* **Core Service:** All state schools (including academies and free schools) in LBTH have a link EP, a minimum Core service of three days a year of EP time (six for special schools and schools with special provision), and access to the EPS Crisis Response service when needed.

* **Traded Service:** Traded work in schools is led by the needs and priorities of the school and is usually provided by their link EP. The service is large relative to the size of the borough when compared to EP services in other LAs. This is due to a substantial and established traded service. School leaders recognise the value of EP time and invest in the service as a way of supporting their priorities. The service is used by 93% of schools, colleges, and settings in the borough (103 in total).

* **Statutory Service:** Any work in schools required by the LA is provided through the Statutory Service, which is allocated as and when it is needed. This is mainly used to provide psychological advice for EHC needs assessments, and to respond on behalf of the LA to Section 23 notifications from Health.

The majority of EPS funding (77%) is via the Traded Service or DSG rather than directly funded by the LA.

It was clarified that the traded service was not for the sole purpose of preparing for an EHCP. If the LA agrees to assess, then that child comes with an EP entitlement.

DT explained that one of the main purposes of the evaluation of the service was to ensure that there was clarity around route of the EP service and who was paying for it.

DT advised that the minimum contact with a school from the EP Service would be 3 days per school, per year. The traded service was ring-fenced to meet school priorities.

CMC said that previously the LA was asked to bring the detailed information on the EP service to the Forum. Members commented that the report was helpful and thanked officers for the clarity around the service and offer.

The Chair asked SW to highlight where this service sits in terms of the budget. SW replied that it sits with the Central Schools Service Budget.

In response to a question DT advised that one of the issues faced was there was very little flexibility. This was addressed through the redesign and how the service could be offered to meet the needs. MF commented that some schools have high number of SEND and this can impact on the amount of cases/workload and capacity. MF asked whether there were plans on how to best support schools with high number SENDs.

DT replied that they would be looking at the core time and how this is allocated. DT advised that they did try and avoid changing too many aspects too quickly and were monitoring and reviewing the service.

The Chair asked about the plan for ongoing review. JOS said that they welcomed feedback from schools and also attended the last SENDCo conference to provide feedback from the service. JOS advised that this was an evolutionary process and they were keen to explore other ways to use the core time.

BK asked whether the timeframe for assessment had reduced. JOS said the average time for the review had reduced for two months. JOS added that there was a combination of the changes in the service that was taking place to improve the process – i.e. how information is gathered and the work with Public Health. The aim was to improve the quality of the Plan.

In response to a question regarding the delay in receiving the EP Reports, DT said there were some issues last year with staffing/cover arrangements which had impacted on the timescale for the report completion. DT offered to discuss any individual issues outside of the meeting. The Chair thanked DT and JOS for the report.

# Agenda Item 8: Traded Services Review Presenting: All

CMc said there was an agreement for two posts to support the Traded Services in the LA. CMc said the LA will be contacting schools to obtain feedback on the existing Traded Services to better understand the requirements, and a high level scoping on any additional service that needs to be offered.

# Agenda Item 8: Any Other Business Presenting: All

Forum Members noted that there was no parking at the PDC and any parking would need to be prearranged with the Centre.

# Agenda Item 7: Date of Next Meeting

**Next meeting** – Wednesday, 15th January 2020

* Wednesday, 4th March 2020
* Wednesday, 22nd April 2020
* Wednesday, 17th June 2020

**[The Chair drew the meeting to a close at 10:00 hours]**

**Summary Action Log**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Agenda Item**  |  **Action Points 4th December 2020**  | **Lea d**  | **Timescale**  |
| Item 2: Matters Arising  | **12/2019 -01 -** BK suggested RMT attends the Primary Consultative to discuss the changes to the school meal catering.  **12/2019 -02 –** It was agreed that SW and AK will provide financial breakdown for TUFT for the Phase Consultative meetings in January.  **12/2019 -03 -** SW to organise another Induction training session in the new year. | BK    SW  | January 2020   January 2020   Spring Term  |
| Item 4: School Block Strategy  | **12/2019 – 04 –** JB enquired about the Licence and Subscriptions, in particular the subscriptions for ALPS as it was understood that the Tower Hamlets Education Partnership (THEP) paid for this too. SW will look into this.**12/2019 – 05 –** BK enquired about the Free School Meals Eligibility Assessment and whether this was required given that schools were able to carry out this function individually. Headteachers would like to understand the implication of moving away from the LA in relation to the School Meals Eligibility Assessment. SW will discuss this with the Tower Hamlets Benefits Section. AM asked that once this was clear School Business Managers need to be kept informed so that they do not renew the licenses automatically. **12/2019 – 06 –** Members requested clarity on the subscription and licenses, specifically - which ones are required and paid by whom. **12/2019 – 07 –** Behaviour and Anti-Bullying - further information including increases in salary and breakdown on the costing will be shared before the next meeting. **12/2019 – 08 –** SW highlighted that further consultation needs to take place in relation to the item 2 (the transfer of £1.3m to the HNB for 2020-21). SW will consult with schools.  | SW                      CMc   SW  | January Meeting                   |
| Item 4: CSSB  | **12/2019 – 09 –** further information on the CSSB allocation  | SW  | By the next meeting  |
|  | will be provided at the next meeting.  |  |  |
| Item 5: EYFF  | **12/2019 – 10 –** The paper on the EYFF will be shared at the January meeting. | RMT/PH  | January Meeting  |
| Item 6: HNFB  | **12/2019 - 11–** The LA was seeking advice from the legal team on whether there is a need to consult and an update will be provided at the next meeting on whether a consultation is required.  | CMc  | By next meeting  |

**Chair’s signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Lorraine Flanagan**