# LB TOWER HAMLETS SCHOOLS’ FORUM

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| Date of Meeting | 5 December 2018 |
| Venue | Bethnal Green Centre, 229 Bethnal Green Road, E2 6AB |
| Chair | Lorraine Flanagan |
| Clerk | Runa Basit; Head of Governance & Information |
| GS Officer – Minutes | Naomi Bell; Governor Support Officer |

# MEMBERSHIP

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| **TYPE** | **MEMBERSHIP** |
| **GOVERNORS** | Jill Cochrane; Conor Magill\*; Gwen Wright\*; Alan Morton\*; Bridget Cass\*; Dave Lake\*; Pip Pinhorn\* |
| **HEADTEACHERS** | Lorraine Flanagan\* (Chair); Esther Holland\* (Vice-Chair); Sarah Helm\*  Matthew Rayner\*; Jill Baker; Joanna Clensy\*; Sheila Mouna\*; Avril Newman\*; Belinda King\*; Martin Nirsimloo |
| **Non-School Members** | Alison Arnaud (Tower Hamlets College);  Kim Arrowsmith (PVI EYs Providers)\*; Alex Kenny (Trade Union Rep)\* |
| **OBSERVERS** | Julie Crew\*; Ben Carter\*; Tracy Smith |
| **Officers in Attendance** | Debbie Jones (Director of Children’s Services Partnership)  Christine McInnes\*; John O’Shea (Head of SEN); Steve Worth (Schools Finance Advisor)\*; Sailesh Patel (Schools Finance Manager)\*; Runa Basit (Clerk to the Schools Forum)\*; Naomi Bell (Supporting Clerk)\* |

**\*denotes attendance**

**[The meeting commenced at 08:30 hours]**

## Agenda Item 1: Introductions and Apologies for Absence

Apologies were noted from Debbie Jones, Neville Murton, John Bradshaw, Monica Forty, Jemima Reilly and Jill Baker.

The Clerk offered apologies to those Members who had not received their meeting packs.

Introductions took place. The Chair welcomed 3 new governors to the Schools Forum.

## Agenda Item 2: Minutes of the Last Meeting (Circulated) and Matters Arising

## Presenting: Chair/All

## Discussion/ Challenge

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

The following members were to be added to the list of attendees:

*Debbie Jones; Neville Murton and Sailesh Patel.*

The following member was to be deleted from the list of attendees*:*

*Bridget Cass*

2.2 **Matters Arising and Review of Actions:**

[**Page 1**] ERRATUM: The date of the last meeting should read 10th October 2018.

**[Item 3, Pages 1-2 Schools Surplus Balances]**

The Chair queried when this item would be returned to the Forum’s agenda? Steve Worth advised that a financial assessment would be completed at the end of the financial year.

The Forum **NOTED** a request for clarification on information on this issue to be circulated to the membership.

**[Item 3 Page 2 – LADN allocated funding decision to hold back]**

The request for further information concerning the Forum’s decision to hold back £270k of allocated funding for LADNs would be discussed under Item 5.

**[Item 4, Page 3 – DSG 2018-2019 and 2019-2020]**

The Chair **NOTED** that the request for information on de-delegation to be circulated ahead of the meeting had been actioned.

**Q&A** - Conor Magill sought clarification of the term ‘***real growth***’? Christine clarified that the term related to the number of EHCPs. There was no centralised assessment system in place, which allowed LAs to assess on slightly different criteria, resulting in EHCPs being issued for children in one LA, but not in another. LBTH had amongst the highest number of EHCPs in the UK which meant that there was a requirement for the LA to review its current processes in order to ensure that judgments were accurate, rather than assume it was ‘*real growth*’. She confirmed that there had been some measure of real growth, which was evident in the LA’s expansion of its special needs schools.

This item would be discussed further under Item 6 of this meeting’s agenda.

Christine McInnes also clarified the financial impact for the Support for Learning Service (SLS). As recommended by the Advisory Group from the last review of the High Needs Funding Block (HNFB), the LA was considering taking a £1m reduction in the retained funding. The initial request to reduce the level of HNFB funding being retained by the LA had been initiated by the schools institutions.

The reduction would not be a saving, but would be reinvested to meet current needs. The LA had services set up to meet historic needs, which needed to be reviewed. It was about reinvestment and change.

The request for further information made at the last Forum on the HNFB would be discussed under Item 6.

**[Item 4, Page 4 – DSG 2018-2019 and 2019-2020]**

**Q&A** - Esther queried whether there was an outcome regarding the Forum request that the LA should consider possibilities to address the issue of inequalities in funding for schools. She suggested that the issue could be resolved by the Forum prompting the LA to submit a letter direct to the DfE regarding the request. The Chair clarified that the issue was linked to historical matters pertaining to secondary schools. Sailesh advised that the issue of inequalities within funding for schools was not specific to LBTH, because the National Funding Formula (NFF) was based on the premise that there were historical elements within funding, not just within the LA, but also the individual school institutions. The issue went back to 2014-15.

The DfE may not consider the issue because it was currently introducing the NFF which assumes that, at the end of the NFF implementation process, all schools would be funded on the same basis nationally. The Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) which protected those schools with historical inequalities would resolve itself once those MFGs had diminished, but it could take 7-8 years depending on the stage reached on the level of protection those schools received.

Esther advised that the LA may have made an error in allowing some schools to continue to receive excessive funding after the period of time in which a school was placed in difficulty. A school had subsequently been outstanding for 7-8 years, but it still received the same level of funding it was allocated when it was in difficulty. She believed that the allocation, at the point of being made, should have been allocated for a set period of time. The same level of generosity had not been afforded to other schools which had fallen into difficulty.

There were at least two schools in the borough which were continuing to receive the same level of funding which had been allocated at the point of difficulty, because their contracts contained the phrase ‘*these sums are fixed*’. The LA should have qualified the duration of the funding and those schools should now be in receipt of the same level of funding as other schools. An argument could be made on the basis of that error.

The Forum **AGREED** that the issue should be taken forward through colleagues in the secondary consultative to clarify with the LA prior to the next meeting of the Forum and the item would be added to agenda for the next Forum meeting.

**[Item 5, Page 5 – Schools Funding 2019/20 – NFF]**

The Forum had requested an expansion of Executive Summaries. Steve advised that he had tried to expand the summaries to put the issues into context.

**[Item 6, Page 6 – New Members Induction]**

The Chair advised that Steve had held an induction session which had been informative and reassuring. He had also addressed the Full Consultative on 28th November regarding the implementation of the NFF and the LA’s recommendation. It was a complex subject which required further information.

The results of the consultations would be discussed under agenda item 3.

Steve would be hosting a short induction open session following the meeting for members who could not attend the original induction session.

**[Item 7, Page 6 – Teachers Pay Grant]**

Sailesh reported that the funding had been passported to schools. There was a small revision by the DfE which made no material impact on any school in LBTH.

**[Item 8, Page 6 – Any Other Business]**

**Q&A** - Alex queried whether there had been any further information regarding the extra funding for schools from the Budget? Sailesh advised that no information had been received possibly due to the forthcoming announcement of the December allocations for 2019-20. It was anticipated that within the funding announcement there would be a reference to the additional small amounts of extra funding.

**Q&A** - The Chair queried how the extra funding might be distributed? Sailesh confirmed that the headline figures based on pupil numbers, was limited to capital spending:

* approx. £10k for primary Schools
* approx.£40k for secondary schools

## Agenda Item 3: Schools Block Strategy 2019-20 (Circulated prior to the meeting)

## Presenting: Steve Worth

## Discussion/ Challenge

The Forum **NOTED** the report entitled ‘***Schools Block Strategy 2019-20***’.

The LA provided advanced notice of its intention to seek the Forum’s agreement of the following proposals at its next meeting on 16th January:

**Proposed Schools Funding Formula - 2019-20**

The LA had consulted with all mainstream schools and academies on its proposals. Option 3 had been the preferred recommendation, moving to the values of the NFF. LBTH was currently being allocated more funding than could be expected going forward under the NFF. The additional funding would be allocated to schools through the MFG.

There had been 10 responses received during the consultation period which supported the LA’s Recommendation. The LA would therefore be recommending Option 3 to the Forum.

**One-Off Funding in 2019-20:**

£920k would become available as a result of the reduced need to provide national non-domestic rates. The LA would be recommending that £920k be transferred into the HNFB which is under significant pressure. Transfers from the Schools Services Block (SSB) required an annual decision.

The Chair advised the LA that there had been dissent from colleagues at the Headteachers consultative regarding transferring funds to the HNFB. It was a ‘*sticking plaster*’ in an attempt to solve a much deeper rooted problem at national level.

**Retained Growth Fund**

The only centrally retained items allowed within the Schools Block were contingencies for the Growth Fund, which stood at £2.47m in 2018-19 and the Falling Rolls Fund (FRF), designed to offer protection to schools rated good or outstanding which faced a temporary fall in pupil numbers. The Forum had not agreed a FRF in 2018-19 and the LA was not proposing to introduce a FRF in 2019-20.

The Chair reminded the Forum that it had investigated this issue and had agreed the criteria for allocation, based on the fact that a large amount of funding earmarked for schools would have been held back as a consequence of only 1 school meeting the falling roll criteria.

**Q&A** - Matthew queried whether this issue should be reconsidered? It would be unfair to add undue pressure with regard to finances on those schools which were already facing the pressure of closure or amalgamation. Sailesh explained that if the Forum elected to support the introduction of a FRF it would need to be set up before the next Forum meeting in January.

**Q&A** - The Chair queried whether Christine could advise the Forum of the timetable involved? There was a 2-year statutory process to complete before any formal changes could be made. Initial proposals based on discussions with individual schools were expected in spring 2019, with any informal changes made through discussions with the admissions team. There would be an initial consultation, in which schools would advise their communities of potential changes, followed by a formal wider consultation.

Alan noted that there was the potential for more schools to be put in difficulty during the 2-year consultation process. Sailesh advised that there had been a 2-step process: the agreed formula worked on the principle that schools had a maximum in-take of 30 pupils, but in order to ensure that the process was equitable, the initial proposal offered support to schools which had falling rolls of a baseline figure of 10 or more pupils. On review, there was only 1 school which met the criteria. There were schools which had lost 5/6 pupils, but that was insufficient to trigger the formula and tap into the Growth Fund.

The 2nd step required the agreement of all primary schools to contribute towards the FRF. Those schools which were not on the baseline figure would have an additional pressure of supporting both a Growth Fund and an FRF.

Bridget advised that the LA had made an assumption about the decision of the Forum with regard to the FRF. Steve confirmed that the decision had been taken last year and the LA had considered all options. The criteria allocation, as well as the decision for primary schools to contribute to the Growth Fund and potential FRF, required an annual decision.

The information would be reviewed in order that the Forum could develop an understanding, not only of the implications for the wider school budget if it agreed to set up a FRF, but also the options that would be available for the 18 schools currently in Scope to access a potential FRF.

The Forum **AGREED** that it could **NOT** make an informed decision before the next meeting of the Forum on 16th January. This issue would be taken back to the Consultative for consideration to gain an indication, particularly in relation to the issue pertaining to foundation schools, for which the diocese would have a role in supporting.

Steve apologised to members for the discrepancies in appendices submitted with his reports. The appendix relating to the NFF which summarised information regarding the Option 3 recommendation had been omitted, but was tabled at the meeting.

**De-Delegation of Delegated Funding – item 4**

The LA was seeking agreement to de-delegate delegated funding provided to mainstream maintained schools and Voluntary Aided (VA) schools in order to continue to provide centrally retained services for which the LA has a statutory duty to provide, as listed in 4.2 of the ‘*Schools Block Strategy*’ report.

Only representatives from maintained primary and secondary schools could vote on this issue.

Table 3 set out the implications of those services in terms of the funding being retained in order to fund those services.

**De-delegation of Former Education Services (ES) Grant and General Duties– Item 5**

Steve advised that S5 of his report set out a separate stream of de-delegation, involving funding not originally allocated to schools, but which had funded some statutory services. The DfE had removed the funding source for those continuing services when the ES Grant was phased out in 2017-18. Part of the funding was transferred into the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB), but the DfE provided a route by which the LA could seek permission for a second point of de-delegation to offset the significant loss in funding.

In 2018-19 all of the de-delegation funding came from mainstream maintained schools. No request had been made in respect of special schools or PRUs, but the LA was seeking to extend the request to cover all schools.

**Q&A** - Conor queried why had special schools been exempt from the requirement to contribute? Sailesh advised that there had been an error. The original methodology was based on an amount per pupil through the ES Grant but nurseries and special schools did not work on the same principle.

Esther and Matthew advised that some schools had bought-in professional services from other agencies, e.g. HR due to the LA cutting back its services resulting in those schools paying double contributions. It would be appropriate for the LA to offer a slight reduction.

Alex reported that there had been discussion pertaining to the level of HR services that schools could access through the LA. A review was being undertaken that would clarify and potentially enhance the offer of HR.

**Q&A** - The Chair queried what were the implications if the Forum did not agree the de-delegation? Sailesh advised that the DfE proposal allowed LAs to seek to overturn the Forum’s decision through petitioning the Secretary of State. He reported that the DfE had ruled in favour of other LAs.

In its final year the ES Grant was reduced to £3.74m which failed to meet the cost of all the LA services and *Table 4* set out current budgets and proposed contributions the LA was seeking to recover through de-delegation or the CSSB.

The Chair clarified that the LA was not seeking pay per use; it was an item which historically the LA would have retained as part of the ES Grant and the money would be going back to maintained mainstream schools. Academies were not required to de-delegate to the LA because those responsibilities would be subsumed by the academies themselves. The decision was based on the collective rather than the individual school.

**School Improvement (SI)**

**Q&A** - Joanne advised that this item had been delegated to THEP, but THEP was not receiving that level of funding due to cuts. Steve advised that the funding was met from the General Fund for items that were deemed to be for SI which fell outside the scope of work undertaken by THEP e.g. the contribution to the PDC included £96k capital costs which were not necessarily a direct SI service.

**Q&A** - The Chair queried whether the Forum could challenge how the money would be allocated? Steve clarified that the cost of providing those duties amounted to £5.5m, the bulk of which would be met by the General Fund. The ES Grant had represented a significant amount funding to the overall costs. The LA was only seeking a contribution towards those costs.

The Forum **NOTED** Bridget’s concern in the LA seeking the Forum’s approval of this level of funding without a clear idea of the costs of services used particularly when schools were under pressure.

**Q&A** - Esther queried to what did the £366k relate? Steve clarified that s251 set out the LA spending both in the Schools budget and LA’s own budget. The SI element sits within the General Funding element of the LA budget and included items not specifically identified as SI e.g. £160k of the costs related to the PD Centre. That part of the funding did not come within the Forum’s preview, although it was possible to de-delegate specifically to the SI element.

He also clarified that column 3 in Table 4 contained the proposals for which the LA was seeking approval at its January meeting.

**Q&A** – Esther queried if the Forum put forward a proposal to de-delegate funds to THEP at its next meeting would that have impact in 2019-20 financial year? Steve confirmed that it would impact if the proposal was agreed at the next meeting. THEP was a traded organisation which presumably charged all schools for its services, but that the contribution to the de-delegation would only come from maintained mainstream schools.

## Agenda Item 4: Central Schools Services Block 2019-20

## Presenting: Sailesh Patel

## Discussion/ Challenge

The Forum **NOTED** the report entitled ‘Central School Services Block’ which included the additional information requested by the Forum at its last meeting.

Sailesh reported that the 2nd column in Table 1 the figure £630 in the DSG remained unchanged and Table 2 contained the components within the Ongoing Duties provided by the LA.

The CSSB was calculated based on the DfE formula and there was an expectation that the ‘ongoing duties’ would be funded in the same way. The DfE had not yet confirmed the rate of reduction on the CSSB which was currently reduced by a rate of 3% and which may accelerate going forward. There was an expectation that the historical commitments would cease by the end of NFF process and if the NFF was tapered by a potential 10% year-on-year reduction it may take approx. 10 years before it diminished.

He reported that there would be a review in 2021 of the sources of historical commitments. A key issue was the element around funding for combined services which inherently funds a number of activities e.g. the clothing grant, in/outreach programmes etc. and those components would all diminish over time.

**Q&A** – Joanne queried what were Independent Schools without SEN? Sailesh confirmed that it related to children for whose remand was provided by the Social Services, including children in care from out of borough, but for which the LA had the duty to provide SEN.

The component came from the Welfare Services for which there was a charge. In 2017-18 approx.it received £460k funding, but the current spend was £375k, although it was expected to increase by year-end when further invoices were submitted.

**Q&A** - Alex queried to what did the amount relate in the redundancy/retirement category? Sailesh clarified that the amount related to pre-retirement costs from 2013 in which employees who had retired on early retirement for which there was an ongoing cost to the LA to support that activity. Those redundancies were funded historically by the ES Grant but that spend was now met by the General Fund. There was a growing pressure on the ES Grant that needed to be reviewed collectively to determine how that was to be resourced.

**Q&A** - The Chair queried what was the strategic plan from the LA with the complexity of the historical commitments moving forward to a tapering of less funding being allocated the LA? Sailesh advised that there was additional pressure on the in/outreach programmes which supported the 6 individual institutions and the LA needed to review its current processes on how those institutions were resourced through the HNFB.

He also advised that those processes pertaining to historical commitments, such as the clothing grant, needed to be reviewed strategically and consideration given to whether there was an option for the Mayor to continue to support it through an alternative mechanism.

**Q&A** - Matthew sought clarification as to the current spend on the in/outreach programmes and what was the pressure from the point of view of other services? Sailesh confirmed that the current spend for the outreach programme undertaken for the 6 independent institutions was approx. £680k. The in/outreach programmes were mostly supported from the combined services element which was a contribution from the LA and combined activities.

## Agenda Item 5: Early Years Central Retained Funding

## Presenting: Christine McInnes

## Discussion/ Challenge

The Forum **NOTED** the report submitted by Christine McInnes entitled ‘*Early Years Block Centrally Retained Funding 2018-19*’ which provided an update on the outcome of the public consultation into the closure of the LADNs.

The Forum had agreed to continue the contribution to the LADN for the 1st 6 months of the 2018-19 financial year. The decision to close the LADNs had been agreed by the Cabinet on 26th September and ratified by the Mayor on 31st October after the proposal had been called-in and reviewed by the O&S committee.

Christine advised that there was a protracted process around the closure of the nurseries and it was anticipated that closure would be at end of 2018-19 academic year. The financial pressures remained and the LA would be seeking agreement from the Forum to release the remaining funding originally earmarked for LADNs.

**Q&A** - The Chair queried from which budget the remaining LADN funding came? Sailesh advised that the majority of the costs associated with the closure were held within the General Fund. Its budget which was a drawdown on the General Fund, but the amount of income generated was a component and not a contribution. However, he had only reviewed the retained element which contained £270k.

**Q&A** - Bridget queried what were the costs of the closures? The Forum had not received the breakdown of the budget or detailed plan that was requested by the Forum at its June meeting. The LA had provided the intention, but not the costed budget for the remaining funds.

Christine apologised to the Forum for not providing the information requested, but she would circulate the detailed breakdown of costs presented to O&S Committee.

The cost of closure was currently being scoped out. There was a protracted statutory process to follow in terms of the HR process. The LA’s Organisational Change process needed to be enacted regarding restructure, which was due for consultation with staff and unions shortly and would be shared with the Forum in January. During the consultation processes costs would still be incurred. There was also a requirement to maintain the current nursery provision for those 18 children until end of this financial year. The LA had ceased intake in September and those families of the 18 children had been made aware that the provision was only for 1 academic year. The costs appeared disproportionately high due to the reduction in the number of children. In its Fees and Charges report the LA was seeking a decision from elected members to increase the charges. Previous proposals had been unsuccessful.

Christine further reported that the LA was currently undertaking a project on the costs of closure which would be circulated to the Membership on completion. She advised that one of the financial pressures related to the costs of leasing the buildings that still needed to be met regardless of the building being empty.

The Forum sought clarification from the LA that those funds would benefit EY education across the whole family of schools and the quote (reference 2.6.1) rather than supporting statutory services, such as ER/VR or costs relating to leasing buildings?

The Chair suggested that the Forum give consideration to proposing that the remaining funds be shared directly with the maintained nursery schools as the receiving institutions, which provide excellent value for money and a provide a higher qualitative service. It would also benefit the broader group of children and that the £270k funds should not be released to meet costs incurred from the closing the buildings and potential redundancies, which should be met from the General Fund.

Concern was expressed at the level of costs of £15k per child per year when alternative provision was available.

**Q&A** - Sailesh queried whether the decision not to release the funds would disadvantage those 18 children? He reminded the Forum that those salaries which support those individual children still required being met until those children transfer.

Esther Holland advised that the Forum took the decision to withhold the EY Retained funding and it needed to take responsibility for the consequences involved. The Forum had a responsibility to ensure that the process was followed through and that the remaining funding was appropriately spent.

The Forum needed to review the costs involved with the closure before it could make a decision.

The Forum **NOTED** Kim’s comment whether the funds could be allocated to ensure that they follow the children regardless of whether they attended maintained nurseries or school nurseries? The £15k would benefit whatever setting chosen.

The Forum **AGREED** that it was not in a position to release the remaining funding without first determining the exact costs incurred from the closure, whether the closure process could be accelerated, rather than elongated into the summer term 2019-20, for which the extra running costs would be enormous. It needed to know from which funding block was the remaining funding was coming from and the implications of NOT releasing the £270k.

The Chair queried whether the Forum would be required to revisit the decision next year and whether the limit which could be centrally retained in the EYBCF was still available? Sailesh confirmed that the regulatory EY proposal of 5% was still available, but that the Forum was not required to make a decision at the January meeting. A decision could be made through a March paper.

The Chair proposed that the Forum move this issue to a constructive dialogue around addressing the wider issue of maintained nursery schools and take a more equitable decision for all children in Tower Hamlets.

Sailesh advised that the budget needed to be set before 28th February, so at the meeting in January the LA would discuss the 2019-20 EY’s principal element and retained element as a clarity. The LA would provide a proposal how that would be fully used in the context releasing the funding for remainder of 2018-19.

## Agenda Item 6: High Needs Strategy Working Groups - Update

## Presenting: John O’Shea

## Discussion/ Challenge

John reported that as part of the request to review the work taking place in the light of the recent HNFB review the pressures identified on the HNFB meant that there would be a projected overspend of approx. £3m in the 2018-19 budget. The review produced the following recommendations:

1. The increase in special schools places had taken place; a thorough needs analysis and projection for those school places had taken place and it was anticipated that by 2021 there would be an additional 120 places within the special school system.
2. The review looked at top-up payments for special schools and resourced places. The underlying principle was to retain an economy of mixed provision in the locale. The LA was currently considering a resource-based provision, which could provide an opportunity to review the current provision and how best it could be supported. It also considered the gaps in the current resource and how the LA could increase the provisions by introducing resource-based provision into other areas to meet other needs.

It was anticipated that the recommendations would be delivered in the summer term.

1. A further work stream needed to be developed with school representation to review the current Banding system for top-up payments. The LA was considering how to use the HNFB budget more flexibly. The finance team would work in collaboration with representatives from schools on any decisions going forward.

**Q&A** - The Chair queried whether the LA was suggesting that it was moving to a strategy in which the LA was reducing the availability of top-up because the offer of specialist resource-based provision would be improved? John clarified that the area of Top-up needed to be reviewed because the current structure does not allow for flexibility within the HNFB budget e.g. the decision to grant an EHCP was a binary decision. Colleagues in primary schools would be able to potentially identify those children who require additional need and may need to be supported in the short transitions process and may consider that an EHCP may not be the correct method.

**Q&A** - The Chair queried what had been the LA consultation with the wider family of primary schools because there was clarity around the thresholds for EHCP which were not applied for lightly? John clarified that there could be ways in which the LA could support a wider range of pupils by reviewing the HNF Bandings.

Christine confirmed that a consultation had not yet taken place, but that there was an intention to take it forward. The Forum needed to be kept informed of how that the schools funding was being spent. The SLS had been discussed as part of the HNFB review to ensure that any retained funding was aligned to need.

The majority of the funding was spent around top-up banding. The LA was seeking to create resources to target more intervention in the EY. There was an unmet need around pre-diagnosis around autism and the LA had insufficient funds to meet that need. The purpose of the review was to seek ways to free-up funding in order to reinvest in the system around the EYs intervention and would be reviewing the Top-up Banding in collaboration with the Forum. The fund was not being increased to reflect the increase in pupil numbers.

1. There had been a review of the SMEH provision and recommendations were due in January. The group comprised representative from mainstream schools, the local area, LA and Health and had included presentations from special schools who deal with SMEH.
2. The LA was considering reducing the retained budget – that work focussed around the SLS and the review was expected to continue in to the next academic year and could have the potential to carry over into the autumn term 2019-20.

**Q&A** – Matthew proposed that the Forum support the LA and SEN panel in making those decisions about placements of children, particularly in special schools, to ensure that those children were placed in appropriate settings and that those settings were good value for money. He was concerned that some settings were deciding their own top-up level which was significantly greater and was not good value for money. The Forum **NOTED** the comment.

The Chair reminded the Forum that there were meetings with the Primary, Secondary and Special Consultatives on Wednesday 9th January and their views would be feedback through the Forum vote in January. The additional information which had been requested had been circulated. Clarification on the funding to be de-delegated for Behaviour, Anti-Bullying and SLS would be circulated the Membership.

## Agenda Item 7: Any Other Business

## Presenting: All

## Discussion/ Challenge

Esther advised that the Forum had not received a breakdown of the TU funding and that the collaborative work between the LA and the TUs in proposing better ways of working between schools and TUs had yet to be concluded. The funding for the TUs remained the same, but NEU combined a lot of the workstream of Unison so there should be a reduction in the funding.

**Q&A** - The Chair asked Christine to provide feedback from the recent Children’s TU Forum meeting in which those issues were raised? Christine reported that there had been discussion with support staff unions around why schools should support de-delegation when there is no adherence to the agreed protocols around ways of working collaboratively when there was an issue of redundancy. As a response the LA had agreed to circulate the existing protocol around expectations of behaviour of unions in schools restructure processes. Apart from the teaching unions there had not been a clear acceptance that there should be transparency and accountability around the funding.

The Chair advised that greater clarity was apparent on the papers which had been circulated in which each TU broke down the number of cases undertaken for each type of contact. There were different charges for Primary and secondary as well as for 1 form-entry Primary schools. There had also been discussion about reducing that charge further. Caroline Pullinger monitored finance to whom a request should be made before January that in light of an underspend that charge could be reduce even further. All the funds de-delegated last year should be exhausted. Any carry forward should be deducted from the proposed funding for 2019-20.

Christine reported that in terms of the working relationship and the contextual piece of work around the TUs, a new Head of Service (HR) came into post 3 weeks ago. She confirmed that piece of work had not been taken forward but it would be raised with HR a matter of concern.

The Chair thanked the members for their hard work and wished them a happy break.

## Agenda Item 8: Date of Next Meeting

## Discussion/ Challenge

The next meeting of the School’s Forum was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 16th January 2019.

[The meeting concluded at 10:28 hours ]

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