# LBTH SCHOOLS FORUM

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| Date of Meeting | 6 March 2019 |
| 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(JC); Conor Magill (CM)\*; Gwen Wright(GW)\*; Alan Morton (AM); Bridget Cass(BC)\*; Dave Lake (DL)\*; Pip Pinhorn (PP) |
| **HEADTEACHERS** | Lorraine Flanagan\* (Chair); Esther Holland(EH) (Vice-Chair)\*; Sarah Helm(SH); Matthew Rayner (MR)\*; Jill Baker (JB)\*; Joanna Clensy (JC)\*; Sheila Mouna(SM)\*; Avril Newman (AN)\*; Belinda King (BK)\*; Martin Nirsimloo (MN); Monica Forty (MF)\*; Jemima Reilly (JR); John Bradshaw (JBr)\* |
| **Non-School Members** | Alison Arnaud (Tower Hamlets College); Kim Arrowsmith (PVI EYs Providers); Alex Kenny (Trade Union Rep)\* |
| **OBSERVERS** | Tracy Smith\*; Pauline Hoare (Head of Integrated EYS) (PH); Kevin Jones (KJ)\* |
| **Officers in Attendance** | Debbie Jones (Director of Children and Culture)\*; Christine McInnes (CMc)\*; John O’Shea (Head of SEND) (JOS)\*; Damon Lawrenson (Interim Director Finance, Procurement & Audit) (DL)\*; Steve Worth (Schools Finance Advisor) (SW)\*; Sailesh Patel (Schools Finance Manager) (SP); Neville Murton (Corporate Director of Resources) (NM); Runa Basit (Clerk to the Schools Forum)\*; Naomi Bell (Clerk)\* |

**\*denotes attendance**

**[The meeting was brought to order at 08:31 hours]**

## Agenda Item 1: Introductions and Apologies for Absence

Apologies were noted from Sarah Helm, Pip Pinhorn, Sailesh Patel, Kim Arrowsmith, Alan Morton and Neville Murton.

The Chair welcomed DL, Interim Divisional Director of Finance, Procurement &Audit to his first meeting of the Schools Forum. Kevin Jones, Principal of Old Ford Primary School was welcomed in the capacity of observer.

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

## Presenting : Chair

2.1 There being no material changes the minutes of the previous meeting were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting, subject to the following amendments:

[**Page 1- Membership List**] – *TS to be added to the list of attendees;*

**[Page 9 – Action Point 11]** – ‘representation to the working group…’ should read ‘*Special School*’

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

**[Agenda Item 4 –Schools Block Strategy - Page 3 - Item 2 – The proposed one-off transfer of £920k from the Schools Block into the HNFB for 2019/20]** - SW reminded the Forum that during the LA consultation on the transfer of funds into the High Needs Funding Block (HNFB), the figure quoted of £920k was provisional and that the final figure would be dependent upon the size of the LA’s rate rebate. The final figure transferred into the HNFB was £725k.

**Q&A – The Chair queried whether there were any implications in relation to the £200k variance in the amount of funds transferred?** There were no implications for schools, but the Forum was aware of the pressures within the HNFB.

**[Agenda Item 4 – Schools Block Strategy – Page 5- Item 4 - Growth Fund] -** SW clarified the disparity in figures quoted between the two (2) reports presented by the LA at the last Forum meeting regarding the Growth Fund allocation. The correct figure was £1496k.

**[Agenda Item 4 – Schools Block Strategy – Page 6 -Item 5d -De-delegation of former ESG General Duties - Trade Union Facilities Time]** – AK confirmed that that due to an underspend in this area the cost of representation had been reduced to £5.00 per pupil.

**[AN attended the meeting at 08:36 hours]**

**[Agenda Item 5- Central Schools Services Block – Page 8 – Enrichment Programme]** – The enrichment programme provided ‘looked after children’ access to inter alia; Saturday school ‘Raising Aspirations’ with West Ham and University of East London (UEL) for Years 7-11, the provision of study and exam support for KS4 and 5, KS2 SATs confidence sessions for carers/children and Summer school at Gorsefield etc.

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| **Action Point – 6 March 2019** | **Lead** | **Timescale** |
| **AP – 03/2019 -01 –** Details of what the enrichment programme covered to be circulated to the membership | SW | ASAP |

SW confirmed that all centrally retained budgets (CRBs) were currently subject to review and that the LA was seeking to provide clarity and a more transparent rationale for retaining those budgets. Should the strategic review identify a more efficient use for those funds, those recommendations would be presented to the Forum for its decision.

**Q&A – The Chair queried whether in terms of historical commitments, where services and financial structures had changed, were there still there were pockets of funding which had been allocated to areas which may not be transparent?**  SW confirmed that there was a possibility, but he would bring back to the Forum a report detailing a much clearer understanding of how the money was allocated and the priorities for the money retained centrally. In terms of priorities, there were significant pressures on the HNFB.

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| **Action Point – 6 March 2019** | **Lead** | **Timescale** |
| **AP – 03/2019 -02 –** A more detailed report on CRBs highlighting the spend against those budgets and strategy to take them forward to be presented to SF | SW | Autumn term |

**Q&A – The Chair queried whether the LA could provide a better timescale for information in the interest of clarity?** The outturn statements would be presented to the Forum during the summer term which would provide additional clarity, but the budgets had already been set for 2019/20 and the LA would review the CRBs for 2020/21. There would be transparency regarding historical commitments by the autumn term so the Forum would be able to make decisions regarding budgets for 2019/20.

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| **Action Point – 6 March 2019** | **Lead** | **Timescale** |
| **AP – 03/2019 -03 –** Outturn statements to be presented to the Forum | SW | Summer Term |

BC commented that the Forum had been expected to make decisions without relevant information and it was difficult to make decisions about budgets without considering previous years’ actual spend against budgets.

**Q&A – The Chair asked CMc to inform the Forum which LA reviews were currently underway and whether they would impact on the process of providing clarity because each budget decision has an impact on services delivered?** The LA was currently reviewing how the Behaviour Support Team (BST) provided its services, the area around SEND provision, the HNFB, the SLS review, the SEMH provision and the LBTH Fair Access Protocol (THFAP), which were the standardised agreed procedures for processing applications outside the normal admissions round e.g. managed moves, for which the majority of the costs were set against the HNFB. SW commented that the LA was also reviewing the contingency for schools in difficulty, the establishment of the Growth Fund and its methodology.

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| **Action Point – 6 March 2019** | **Lead** | **Timescale** |
| **AP – 03/2019 -04** – Historical budget showing actual spend against the budget for previous years. | SW | Autumn term |

**Q&A – The Chair queried whether, with the additional bureaucratic pressure around the Mayor’s FSM offer, FSM would be discussed at the next Primary Heads Consultative (PHC)?** JC confirmed that FSM would be an agenda item at the PHC.

**[Agenda Item 4 -Schools Block Strategy – Item 5e Behaviour Support/Anti-Bullying, Page 6]**

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| Carried Forward Actions from 16 January 2019 |  | Lead | Update |
| Item 4: SBS – TU Facilities Time | **AP – 01/2019 -07** – To provide clarity around the disparity in charges for Behaviour Support between Primary and Secondary schools – the per pupil rates are calculated this way due to the fact that there is one post for Primary and one for Secondary and the rates are based on the respective student populations. As the primary population is much bigger the service is spread more ‘thinly’ across the primaries but the referral rate is lower per school. We also have historically taken into consideration that secondary cases are usually more complex and may require an extended input. The bulk of anti-bullying work comes from the Secondary post as the volume of referrals for this is very high from secondary schools.  If the heads wanted to we could do a single per pupil rate against all pupils, but given the disparity in the size of small primary school and a big secondary’s budget, I’m not sure this would be welcomed. I am also open to adjusting the size of the service and weighting more heavily towards primaries. | CMc | **UNRESOLVED** – the information would be circulated to the membership following the meeting on 03.06.2019 |

## Agenda Item 3: Scheme for Financing Schools (Circulated)

## Presenting: SW

## Challenge/Discussion

The Forum **NOTED** and commented on the report entitled ‘***Scheme for Financing Schools***’ (SFFS).

SW reported the SFFS was a statutory requirement which set out the relationship between the LA and maintained schools. The LA was reviewing its SFFS to ensure it met current guidelines. The DfE model template listed the provisions to be included in the SFFS, but periodic directed revisions made by the Secretary of State also had to be incorporated.

There was one (1) significant directed revision that prohibited LAs from making loans as means of funding licensed deficits and, going forward, loan arrangements could only be put in place to assist schools in spreading the cost over more than 1-year of large one-off significant capital expenditure that would benefit the school lasting more than 1 financial or academic year. The loan mechanism for licensed deficits, whereby those schools that had been identified as being in financial difficulty were allowed a period of time to implement their recovery plans, would be removed from the LBTH SFFS.

**Q&A – JB queried whether those schools that had entered into a licensed deficit under the current arrangements would be expected to transfer to the new arrangements and have to repay the licensed deficit earlier?** The LA would not place additional burden on those schools as a result of the change and existing licensed deficits would be converted into cash advances. The DfE was concerned that where schools with accumulated deficits, regardless of loan arrangements, unless it was for capital expenditure, converted to sponsored academy status there was an expectation that the whole of the deficit would remain with the LA.

SW emphasised that those schools would still have access to additional funds through cash advances for a maximum period of 3-years and where the value of any cash advance not repaid by year-end would form part of those schools accumulated deficits. The criterion ‘up to 5-years with exceptional circumstances’ was no longer applicable, but the LA would honour the 5-year loans currently outstanding with LBTH schools.

BC commented that a cash advance came with the presumption that those funds would reduce expected income, whereas a loan involved the process of borrowing and repayment. SW confirmed that although the loan arrangement did have a mechanism whereby loans could be deducted from future budget shares, an agreement would be put in place with the school’s governing body and a schedule of repayments agreed.

The LA gave advanced notice to the Forum that under s48 SSFA Act 1998 as amended the LA intended to consult with all maintained schools on the proposed changes in March 2019 and seek approval from the Forum.

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| **Action Point – 6 March 2019** | **Lead** | **Timescale** |
| **AP –03/2019 -05–** Feedback proposals from the consultation for approval of changes to the scheme for financing schools | SW | Next SF meeting -24.04.2019 |

## Agenda Item 4: Falling Roll Fund (Circulated)

## Presenting: SW

## Challenge/Discussion

The Forum **NOTED** and commented on the report entitled ‘***Falling Roll Fund****’* ***(FRF)***.

The LA had revised the methodology as set out in Item 2.3 of the report to include the additional criteria requested at the last Forum meeting and would now base its calculations, in part, on the surplus balances which would be declared as at year-end 2018/19. However, 2017/18 surplus balances had been used in the table to demonstrate the implications of the new methodology.

It was estimated that there would be approx. 20 schools which could benefit from the FRF. SW reminded the Forum that academies would also have access to the FRF, but the LA did not currently have details of surplus balances for academies.

SW reported that the methodology would also be based on October 2018 census data compared with planned admission numbers (PANs) and whether a school could benefit from the additional funding would be determined by the number of pupils in its intake year. The LA believed that those years would be the best indicator of longer-term problems and would provide a clear basis on which to allocate funding.

MF commented that there had been a discussion at the last Forum regarding the LA’s rationale for basing the criteria on the intake year rather than all years because pupil numbers fell in other years. Ben Jonson Primary had issues with falling roll in Years 2-4 and the loss of £70k in income for 2018/19 was not in response to a falling roll in Reception. There was also a considerable amount of ‘churn’ represented by the number of pupils moving to other schools as part of the in-year admissions process due to the number of available pupil places, but there were no replacements for the pupils those schools lost. She suggested that the issue should be re-referred to the Consultative for discussion to determine whether other schools were also experiencing the same issue.

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| Action Point – 6 March 2019 | Lead | Timescale |
| **AP – 03/2019 -06** – Alternative methodology model to be worked out on schools overall PANS to identify a comparison between schools with falling rolls at Reception and those schools with falling rolls in other years | SW | Next SF meeting – 24.04.2018 |

**Q&A - MF queried whether the LA Finance Dept. had consulted with its Admissions Dept. in determining whether Reception numbers were a good indicator?** SW advised that the process was about strategic changes in the pupil population entering schools and the LA view was that the year of entry would the best indicator of that difficulty.

**Q&A - MF queried whether CMc, having seen the outcome of the Primary Place review, considered basing the modelling on Reception intake was a good indicator of falling numbers across schools?** CMc advised that they were 2 separate issues. In terms of the FRF there was a need to look across all schools. Some schools had adopted a triangular model and families had relocated out of the borough, the consequence of which meant that the issue remained unclear.

**Q&A – JC queried whether any of those 20 schools with potential access to the FRF were in Scope for PRAG and whether those arrangements superseded those of the proposed methodology?** SW stated that some of the schools were in Scope, but he could not provide a definitive number.

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| **Action Point – 6 March 2019** | **Lead** | **Timescale** |
| **AP – 03/2019 -07 –** Ascertain how many of the 20 schools with potential access to the FRF were in Scope | SW | Next SF meeting -24.04.2019 |

CMc confirmed that there was an overlap, but that the issue was one of timescale. Any recommendations from the Primary Place Review would take at least 1-year to implement. There were some schools facing financial uncertainty, but the LA was currently considering methods to assist those schools with their budgets. If the LA accepted the financial implications it would significantly increase the level of financial risk that already rests with the LA.

**Q&A – AK queried why the FRF was limited to outstanding or good schools?** There was a legal requirement to protect those schools. SW stated that the FRF would only provide an interim solution to those schools which experienced a temporary fall in pupil numbers from the need to reduce their PANs and make redundancies.

JB stated that the figure of £15.80 per pupil was a vast amount of money for schools and suggested that the issue should be referred to the Secondary Heads Consultative (SHC) before any decision could be made.

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| Action Point – 6 March 2019 | Lead | Timescale |
| **AP – 03/2019 -08** – The issue pertaining to the reduction in funding for school budget shares at £15.80 per pupil would be referred back to the SHC | Chair | Next SHC meeting -08.05.2019 |

**Q&A – Could the Forum change its decision regarding the creation of a FRF and whether, if the decision on methodology had been deferred, could the amount transferred to the FRF be changed?** SW confirmed that the Forum could not reverse its decision because the fund had already been top-sliced and budgets allocated. The Forum had made its decision 3 days prior to the deadline for LA to submit its final 2018/19 APT to the ESFA which needed to identify the level of funding allocated to schools budgets against funding that would be retained centrally. A longer-term lead-in on changes to proposals was required.

**Q&A - EH queried whether the Forum had been informed of the cost per pupil at the last meeting?** SW confirmed that the Forum had agreed to create a FRF in principle, but the breakdown of the fund was provided as a result of a request made at the last Forum.

EH expressed concern that the mechanism to allow any under/overspend in the FRF to be rolled forward had the potential to reduce budget shares by creating a substantial ‘pot of money’ which would disappear from schools budgets.

**Q&A – EH queried whether it would be more appropriate for the FRF to be an annual finite fund and for any underspend within the financial year to revert to schools per pupil within that same year?** SW stated that there would be greater clarity as to actual spend and the LA proposals for any potential carry forward when the outturn reports were presented in the summer term. It was emphasised that any decision regarding a potential carry forward was in the Forum’s remit to determine.

CMc commented that it would be optimistic to expect an underspend against the FRF budget. The work around the Primary Place Review was expected to make a difference in terms of the pressures on those schools and it was a question of aligning the timescales.

DL confirmed that SW was advocating a transparent view of all budgets against the outturn reports which would enable the Forum to determine which historical commitments needed to be honoured moving forward. He advised the Forum that in effect it was adopting a Zero Based Budgeting (ZBB) approach which was good practice and that any informed decisions pertaining to needs for 2019/20 and any potential surplus reverting to schools could be made in the summer term after the Forum had received additional transparency from the outturn reports.

The Chair commented that although the Forum had agreed there was a need for a FRF, it may not have fully understood the wider implications across all schools. If an agreement could not be reached regarding the methodology the FRF would remain inactive and the Forum needed to consider whether the FRF would be a functioning fund or whether the funds should revert to schools in the next financial year. The Forum also needed to consider whether there was a danger that schools in difficulty might assume there was a contingency when the FRF may not be affordable in the next financial year.

**Q&A – The Chair queried whether the FRF could be stalled for the year and the money revert to schools budgets?** SW advised that if the FRF was not utilised in this year the money would go back into budget shares for the next financial year. EH suggested that the money should be returned at the same rate it was taken out of budgets shares.

EH and MR stated that the Forum had approved the creation of a FRF at the last meeting, but it had no prior knowledge as to the cost per pupil. If the FRF ran for this academic year, the Forum needed to take a view whether it would repeat the decision when the issue was next revisited. MR commented that the Forum had been placed in a position where it needed to make a decision without pertinent information.

**Q&A - GW queried whether the FRF required an annual decision and whether the Forum could change its decision next year?** Yes, the FRF required the Forum to make an annual decision.

GW had abstained from voting at the last meeting and had personally estimated the cost per pupil during that meeting. She suggested that the decision should not be reversed after the Forum had determined that the creation of a FRF was justified only 2-months earlier.

BC stated that the process involved 2 issues, the principle and procedure and it was the procedure which did not demonstrate best practice. Meetings between the LA and the Forum should have been scheduled earlier to allow for considered decisions to be made. A long-term FRF had the potential to become an historical anomaly.

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| Action Point – 6 March 2019 | Lead | Timescale |
| **AP – 03/2019 -09** – The Schools Forum Annual Work Planner to be circulated to the membership | Clerk | ASAP |

JB stated that the issue of falling rolls predominantly affected primary schools, but secondary schools had been asked to fund primary school places. Consideration should be given as to whether primary schools, which had much smaller budgets, would be able to financially support secondary schools if they also became affected by the falling roll issue. CMc reported that the LA processes around pupil place planning had been strengthened in order to prevent the issue of falling rolls affecting secondary schools and it was building flexibility into the system to better manage the fluctuations in pupil numbers.

**Q&A – EH queried whether the formula would be readjusted should more eligible schools be identified as a result of the new model?** SW confirmed that there may be a need to reduce the possible percentages recommended and reminded the Forum that the FRF was a finite fund. There needed to be an agreement from the Forum as to which methodology would operate in order that the fund could be applied.

**[DL left the meeting at 9.19 hours]**

The Chair clarified that there was a consensus from the Forum that it had taken a decision to agree to the creation of a FRF, but needed time to consider the methodology with a view that the FRF would be active in 2019/20. The Forum could be in a position to make an informed decision when it agreed 2020/21 budgets. She advised that colleagues from the wider schools community should be made aware that the FRF may not be available after 2019/20 because the penalty for all schools was too high.

**[DL returned to the meeting at 9:22 hours]**

## Agenda Item 5: High Needs Consultation (Circulated)

## Presenting: CMc

## Challenge /Discussion

The Forum **NOTED** and commented on the reports entitled ‘*Consultation on the Changes to the use of High Needs Funding Block, including a reduction to the SEND banding allocation to schools’* and ‘*High Needs Funding Block Review and Recommendations for 2018-20*’.

CMc set the national context. SEND was in crisis and almost all LAs had a significant overspend against its HNFB. The issue of SEND remained a structural national issue around the level of national funding, the way in which the reforms had developed in practice and the financial implications. The small amounts of additional funding provided by the Government were not linked to pupil numbers and that failure by the Government and the LA to link funding to pupil numbers was one of the main issues around HNF.

The anticipated £3.5m overspend at year-end needed to be balanced out by other centrally retained schools funding, rolled forward or a combination of both options. The LA was cognisant that the issue of HNF could not be resolved by the LA on its own and it needed to develop an approach in concert with schools to provide an effective solution going forward.

CMc posed the question ‘*as system leaders, how does the LA manage that overspend in the short term and over the longer-term was it doing enough to manage down the overspend?’*

In terms of the local context the LA had made structural changes in collaboration with the Forum. It was currently reviewing the SLS which had a budget allocation of £2.4m from centrally retained funding. The review had identified that its reach across pupils with SEND was inequitable and specialist teams were not working across the whole pupil cohort. Other structural changes were being made that were expected to have an impact in the longer term.

The purpose of the proposal was to promote a discussion in an attempt to move towards a more systematic approach to resolve the HNF issues. She sought confirmation from the Forum as to whether the proposal, in principle, suggested the correct approach, whether the proposed cut in top-up funding was set at the correct level and whether it penalised some schools disproportionately.

JB suggested that the proposal could penalise some schools more than others because pupils with SEN were not shared equitably across schools. Schools with a high proportion of EHCPs would be significantly affected and the proposal had the potential to discourage schools from accepting pupils with SEN.

MF echoed that sentiment and acknowledged that there were no simple answers to resolve the issue of HNF, but pointed out that there were also hidden costs for those schools which were a provision or had high numbers of EHCPs. Those schools with pupils with very high needs already operated with less funding as a result of fewer higher bandings being approved by the LA before the proposed cut to top-up funding was applied. Costs for the Education Psychology Service (EPS) had increased. If the effect of the cuts could be shared out there would be an incentive for schools to continue to provide an inclusive setting.

JBr, Headteacher of LEAP, attended the Forum in his capacity as representative of Alternative Provision (AP) which had approx. 300 pupils; 200 of which attended LEAP, 100 of which attended South Key College and a small group of approx. 20 attended New City College.

The consultation would provide an opportunity to advocate that AP should be considered separately from the issue of SEND or ring-fenced. He intended to argue how exceptional AP was as a school and why its level of funding needed to be maintained. AP’s funding was made up solely from a combination of HNF and pupil place funding. At the last Forum he had cautioned against the reduction in place funding because the provision incorporated it into its budget planning, which provided a safety net against further cuts. He noted that the Forum was being asked to agree to consult on further cuts around top-up funding.

AP had experienced cuts Year-on-Year. Budget planning for 2019/20 was already underway and it would be difficult to implement cuts 4 weeks before year-end. Should the proposed cut to top-up funding take place it would result in significant reduction in staffing for special schools, in particular AP.

AP was very expensive to run. At a debate in House of Commons (HoC) an opposition member declared that an education provided by AP was equivalent to the cost of a public school education. JBr stated that the cost to society would be significantly higher in the longer term without it.

Nick Hurd MP had visited LEAP. LBTH had a model that was successful. LEAP had outperformed all inner London boroughs despite the 25% increase in pupils and less funding being allocated than it had received 2013 and it posed a significant risk to consider further cuts to the AP funding via HNF. The LA was seeking to reduce the numbers of pupils entering AP, but unless behaviour improved in local schools there would still be a need for AP.

There was an incredibly negative narrative around AP with the media attaching the blame for the rise in knife crime, serious violence and drugs county lines on PRUs. LBTH was contradicting that trend and colleagues needed to respond vigorously to that negativity.

The Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) figures were amongst the best in the country at a ratio of 1 in 4 and the increase in crime and violence was predominantly between 16-18 males who were not in education. AP had a plan for a Post 16 provision, funding permitting, which would reduce the NEET figures and reduce the significance of knife crime.

JBr urged the membership to visit AP to inform its decisions around future cuts to AP funding.

The Chair on behalf of the Forum **NOTED** the comments which had been well received.

MR welcomed the opportunity presented by point 2.6 of the report to address the historical funding anomalies for mainstream and special schools. However, the LA needed to be cognisant that a reduction in top-up funding could provide an opportunity for schools to charge for anything over and above the core offer provided in the EHCP. If mainstream schools were no longer able to meet the needs of pupils with SEN, those pupils would be transferred to a special school which had the potential to cost the LA more.

MF agreed that a transfer to a special school would be more expensive than maintaining a pupil with SEN in a mainstream school on Band D funding. As part of the consultation framework, the LA should identify what services around SEND other LAs were providing under corresponding banding levels.

The Chair expressed concern regarding the timing of the consultation especially as it would mean reducing staffing levels which could not be achieved by September 2019. The proposal should include a wider more constructive range of options.

CMc reported that the LA planned to take a more sophisticated approach with the consultation which intended to encourage a level of engagement and solutions from the wider community and schools were a vital part of the public consultation process. During the pre-consultation phase the LA would issue questions seeking the Forum’s views. The consultation would comprise ten (10) interactive facilitated sessions on problem solving. Other LAs had adopted the approach which had produced significantly higher savings than originally anticipated.

The LA could take its steer from the Forum regarding the timescale of the consultation, but she was accountable to the Director of Children and Culture and the Chief Executive for managing the budget. MR suggested that the consultation should not be delayed.

JBr sought clarity as to the percentage by which the LA was considering reducing top-up funding. CMc confirmed that there had been 1.5% cut in top-up funding and the LA was seeking a further cut of 3.5%. The Chair commented that colleagues across all schools would be reassured if the cut to the top-up funding was not made before September because schools were currently engaged in budget planning.

CMc sought clarification from the Forum that it agreed to the consultation process, but that process needed to make reference to a more equitable approach with a view to possible implementation in 2019/20. MF offered to assist the LA in shaping the consultation which needed to consider that HNF was for a minority of children from a minority of families and the structure of the consultation should protect those children and schools for the greater good.

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| Action Point – 6 March 2019 | Lead | Timescale |
| **AP – 03/2019 -10** – Members who wish to participate in the consultation process should notify CMc | ALL | ASAP |
| **AP – 03/2019 -11 –** Issue to be placed on the agenda of Ben Jonson’s focus group concerned with primary schools with provisions | MF | Next Focus Group meting |

**Q&A - AK queried whether all consultations would be merged into 1 consultation process?** The LA was concerned that there were several consultations around the issue of HNF being conducted at the same time and, in particular, the implication of those consultations on peoples’ time. Depending on timescales for implementation, the consultations had the potential to be combined into 1 consultation which would take place in May. BC commented that as HNF was a highly complex issue and emotive issue the consultation period had the potential to become a 2 tier consultation model which could be a drawn out process.

AK commented that if the SLS review impacted negatively on staffing levels its recommendation could not be implemented during September. CMc confirmed that there would be a public consultation followed by a restructuring process. It was anticipated that any changes to staffing levels, as well as the SLS model, would be implemented in 2020/21.

DJ acknowledged the considered response from the Forum to what was a national issue, but reinforced the fact that there was huge pressure both nationally and internally for the LA to achieve greater transparency, reduce the perverse incentives, continue to maintain inclusion within LBTH schools and address historical inequities. However the Government chose to respond to the national pressure, the pressure within the LA would remain and that the priority for the LA was to ensure that it continued to deliver those services it did well. There would be challenges ahead and welcomed the opportunity of developing a more sophisticated consultation approach.

## Agenda Item 6: Any Other Business

## Presenting: All

**School cuts campaign**

AK reported that it was encouraging that school funding was a recurrent theme in mainstream media. There had been a Parliamentary debate on 4 March 2019 during which the case was made for LBTH schools. Nick Gibb Minister announced in the debate that there was more money in schools than ever before. James Cleverly MP, Vice Chair of the Conservative Party, had insisted that the School Cuts website be taken down because it contained incorrect figures, but the institute of Fiscal Studies had confirmed that the figures were correct. There was a continual attempt to undermine the figures.

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| Action Point – 6 March 2019 | Lead | Timescale |
| **AP – 03/2019 -12** – The link to the journalistic piece on the Guardian website to be circulated to the Membership through the Heads Bulletin | AK/CMc | ASAP |

In the run up to the comprehensive spending review people were eager to keep the issue of school cuts high on the agenda. There was currently a campaign around the special needs crisis, but there had not been a meeting to discuss the local response.

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| Action Point – 6 March 2019 | Lead | Timescale |
| **AP – 03/2019 -13** – Schedule a meeting with the Mayor and Danny Haskell to ensure the issue remained on the local agenda | AK | ASAP |

The most significant development was that the F40 Group was now supporting the school cuts campaign.

The Chair suggested that there may be an assumption in the reviews that more money was reverting to schools and therefore they could afford to buy-in services which were previously managed centrally, but that was not true.

The Chair informed the Forum that Jill Cochrane had been discharged from hospital and was recovering well.

## Agenda Item 7: Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the School’s Forum was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 24 April 2019.

**[The Chair thanked members for their attendance and drew the meeting to a close at 10.01hours]**

**Summary Action Log**

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| **Carried Forward Actions from 16 January 2019** |  | **Lead** | **Update** |
| Item 4: SBS – TU Facilities Time | **AP – 01/2019 -07** – To provide clarity around the disparity in charges for Behaviour Support between Primary and Secondary schools - the per pupil rates are calculated this way due to the fact that there is one post for Primary and one for Secondary and the rates are based on the respective student populations. As the primary population is much bigger the service is spread more ‘thinly’ across the primaries but the referral rate is lower per school. We also have historically taken into consideration that secondary cases are usually more complex and may require an extended input. The bulk of anti-bullying work comes from the Secondary post as the volume of referrals for this is very high from secondary schools.  If the heads wanted to we could do a single per pupil rate against all pupils, but given the disparity in the size of small primary school and a big secondary’s budget, I’m not sure this would be welcomed. I am also open to adjusting the size of the service and weighting more heavily towards primaries. | CMc | **UNRESOLVED** – the information would be circulated to the membership following the meeting on 06.03.2019 |

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| **Agenda Item** | **Action Points 6 March 2019** | **Lead** | **Timescale** |
| Item 2: Review of Actions of previous meeting | **AP – 03/2019 -01 –** Details of what the enrichment programme covered to be circulated to the membership-see attached report from 2015. | SW | ASAP |
|  | **AP – 03/2019 -02 -** A more detailed report on CRBs highlighting the spend against those budgets and strategy to take them forward to be presented to SF | SW | Autumn term |
|  | **AP – 03/2019 -03 –** Outturn statements to be presented to the Forum | SW | Summer Term |
|  | **AP – 03/2019 -04** – Historical budget showing actual spend against the budget for previous years. | SW | Autumn term |
| Item 3: Scheme for Financing Schools | **AP –03/2019 -05–** Feedback proposals from the consultation for approval of changes to the scheme for financing schools | SW | Next SF meeting -24.04.2019 |
| Item 4: Falling Roll Fund | **AP – 03/2019 -06** – Alternative methodology model to be worked out on schools overall PANS to identify a comparison between schools with falling rolls at Reception and those schools with falling rolls in other years | SW | Next SF meeting – 24.04.2018 |
|  | **AP – 03/2019 -07 –** Ascertain how many of the 20 schools with potential access to the FRF were in Scope | SW | Next SF meeting -24.04.2019 |
|  | **AP – 03/2019 -08** – The issue pertaining to the reduction in funding for school budget shares at £15.80 per pupil would be referred back to the Secondary Heads Consultative | Chair | Next SHC meeting -08.05.2019 |
|  | **AP – 03/2019 -09** – The Schools Forum Annual Work Planner to be circulated to the membership | Clerk | ASAP |
| Item 5: High Needs Consultation | **AP – 03/2019 -10** – Members who wish to participate in the consultation process should notify CMc | ALL | ASAP |
|  | **AP – 03/2019 -11 –** Issue to be placed on the agenda of Ben Jonson’s focus group concerned with primary schools with provisions | MF | Next BJ Focus Group meting |
| Any Other Business | **AP – 03/2019 -12** – The link to the journalistic piece on the Guardian website to be circulated to the Membership through the Heads Bulletin | AK/  CMc | ASAP |
|  | **AP – 03/2019 -13** – Schedule a meeting with the Mayor and Danny Haskell to ensure the issue remained on the local agenda | AK | ASAP |

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

**Lorraine Flanagan**