

# Schools Forum Draft Minutes

Thursday, 12 December 2019  
**4.30 pm – 6.30pm** , Committee Room 4 - Civic Suite  
Lewisham Town Hall  
London SE6 4RU

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## **Dates of Future Meetings**

16 January 2020

All meetings will be held 16:30 to 18:30

## **Sub Group meetings**

<b>High Needs Sub Group</b>
Spring Term – date to be confirmed.

# DRAFT

## LEWISHAM SCHOOLS FORUM

*Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 12th December 2019*

Membership (Quorum = 40% i.e. 9) ✓ = present    ✕ = absent    a = apologies  
s = substitute

		Attendance				
Primary School Headteachers		17/01	11/07	17/10	12/12	Date of Appointment
Paul Moriarty	Good Shepherd	✓	✓	✓	a	Dec 2018
Manda George	Torridon Primary	✓	✓	a	✓	Dec 2018
Sharon Lynch	St William of York	✓	✓	✓	✓	Dec 2018
Keith Barr	Kender	✓	✓	✓	✓	Dec 2018
Matthew Ringham	Our Lady & St Philip Neri	✓	✕	a	✓	Dec 2018
Nursery School Headteacher						
Cathryn Kinsey	Clyde Nursery	✓	✓	✓	✓	Oct 2018
Secondary School Headteachers						
Naill Hand	Prendergast Ladywell			✓	✓	July 2019
David Sheppard	Leathersellers Federation	✓	✓	✓	a	June 2018
Mark Phillips	Deptford Green	✕	✓	✕		Oct 2016
Clare Cassidy	Sedgehill	a	✓	✓	✓	Dec 2017
Special School Headteacher						
Lynne Haines	Greenvale	✓	✓	✓	a	Oct 2018

<b>Pupil Referral Unit Headteacher</b>						
Heather Johnston	Abbey Manor	✓	a	✓	✓	Dec 2017
<b>Primary School Governors</b>						
Rosamund Clarke	Perrymount	✓	a	✓	a	Dec 2018
<b>Secondary &amp; Special School Governors</b>						
Pat Barber	Bonus Pastor		✓	a	a	Dec 2018
Ruth Elliott	Watergate	a	✓	✓	✓	Mar 2019
<b>Academies</b>						
Dr Tesca Bennett	Haberdashers' Knights Academy	✓	✓	✓	✓	Oct 2018
<b>14-19 Consortium Rep</b>						
Asfa Sohail	Lewisham Southwark College		a	✓	a	Mar 2019
<b>Early Years – PVI</b>						
Dawn Nasser	Rose House Montessori	✓	✓	a	✓	Jan 2017
<b>Diocesan Authorities</b>						
Sara Sanbrook-Davies	Southwark Diocesan Board of Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	Dec 2016
Yvonne Epale	Education Commission – Catholic Diocese of Southwark	✓	✓	a	a	Feb 2018

<b>Lynne Haines</b>	<b>Forum Chair</b>	✓	✓	✓	a	<b>Oct 2017</b>
<b>Keith Barr</b>	<b>Forum Vice-Chair</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>Oct 2017</b>

<b>Also Present</b>	
*Sharon Docherty	Substitute – Catholic Diocese of Southwark
Angela Scattergood	Director of Education Services
Mala Dadlani	Group Finance Manager
Lurenco Reynolds-Moxam	LB Lewisham
Kim Knappett	NEU
Vaughan Williams	Clerk

### **1. Apologies and Acceptance of Apologies**

Apologies received from Lynne Haines, Pat Barber, Asfa Sohail, David Sheppard, Yvonne Epale, Paul Moriarty & Claudia Smith. Apologies accepted.

### **2. Declaration of Interests**

None.

### **3. Minutes of the Meeting – 17 October 2019**

Agreed.

### **4. Matters Arising**

Schools Forum noted that confirmation was required for the appointment to the Secondary Headteacher vacancy and that the Primary School Governor vacancy election would be held in the Spring term.

## **5. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2020/21 (Report 1)**

Prior to giving consideration to this report the Director of Education Services was pleased to notify Forum that Mala Dadlani had been appointed to the substantive post of Group Finance Manager.

At their meeting in October 2019 Forum were advised of the partial Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) settlement for 2020/21 and noted that Lewisham has received some of the lowest increases overall relative to other inner London Councils. Schools Forum were presented with the relevant tables showing Lewisham funding in context with other London councils. The borough is working with London Councils and the DfE to explore the rationale. Meetings have also been held with Members to advice on the perceived inequality. A meeting has been arranged with DfE on the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2019 with a view to exploring the 3 and 4 Year funding levels for EY.

The Chair indicated that the DSG report would be split into four sub-sections to ensure there is clarity on decisions and the associated funding. Report one was a summary report with sub reports for the Schools Block, High Needs Block (HNB) and Early Years (EY) Block. Forum noted that each Local Authority is required to submit their agreed Local Schools Funding Formula to the Department for Education (DfE) by the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020 (primary and secondary). There is a legal requirement for all schools to be advised of their schools budget share by the end of February 2020. The deadlines for producing this information are very challenging as the financial settlement is unlikely to be known until circa 18<sup>th</sup> December 2019. The report was seeking the necessary mandate to enable officers to provide Schools Forum with final funding information to enable both the above deadlines to be met.

### **Decision**

Schools Forum agreed the following recommendations:

Note the contents of this report and supplementary reports.

All proposed recommendations for approval will be considered as part of the relevant supplementary report.

## **5. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2020/21 – Schools Block (Report 2)**

Schools Forum received a report seeking agreement on the proposed application of the Schools Block as follows:

**Alignment to the National Funding Formula** - Continue to progress with the Principles of the National Funding Formula in full. This includes using all funding values as determined by the Department for Education. This would ensure that we are in readiness for the hard formula implementation which is due form 2021/22 (proposed). **Schools Forum AGREED (1).**

**Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) uplift** –the Department for Education requirement is

that all schools will receive an uplift of between 0.5% and 1.84%. Subject to affordability it is proposed that the formula will endeavour to deliver on or as close to the 1.84%. **Schools Forum AGREED (2).**

**Disapplication request DfE** for continued disapplication for service charge factors being St Michaels rent charges £21,925 and Bonus Pastor playing field management on behalf of the local authority. £162,096.00 **Schools Forum noted (A).**

**Disapplication request DfE** for two schools expanding from secondary to primary phase. The MFG protects these schools at an average per pupil rate that is inflated by higher secondary funding level, thereby providing excessive protection at the expense of other schools. Amended MFG will protect the schools appropriately. **Schools Forum AGREED (3).**

**Disaggregation of Schools** - The following schools have disaggregated from September 2019. There is a potential one-off funding pressure in 2019/20 expected to be circa £125k part year effect. This assumes the DfE will uplift Lewisham's final settlement by the equivalent of two extra premises lump sums. If not the pressure will continue into 2020/21 **Schools Forum NOTED (B).**

**De-Delegation** - The DfE guidance enables Local Authorities to provide services centrally which are funded by a process known as de-delegation. This only applies to mainstream schools and not academies. As such funding levels agreed will reduce should any school convert following finalisation of the budget process. The de-delegation process must be agreed every year and supported (by means of voting) by the representative of each phase at Schools Forums. The proposal for 2019/20 delegation are in line with the current de-delegation levels. It is proposed that de-delegation continues in line with current levels and supports the following: **Administration of Free School Meals (£59K), Trade union and non-sickness supply scheme (Maternity Fund) (£1.1m), School Improvement –to support the work of the Lewisham Learning Partnership. (£300k) (4) Schools Forum AGREED**

Schools Forum were further asked to consider a variation to the following:

**Schools Contingency** – to support costs that should not be reasonably incurred by a governing body. (£557k). The last few years the majority of this funding has been mainly used to support the Sedgehill transfer as agreed with Schools Forum.

School improvement support from Lewisham Learning focuses primarily on the quality of education, governance and teaching and learning. In these challenging times, the school finance function is crucial to delivering school improvement through strategic financial management. At present as requested by Schools Forum, there has been an intensive drive by the schools finance team to support schools with strategic financial leadership through a range of system-wide and individual school activity. Feedback from all phases has been very positive.

The statutory role provided by the finance service area is funded by the General Fund. With regards to additional support some schools purchase the finance Service Level Agreement

(SLA) and others do not. The current SLA is based on a historic offer which as schools forum accepts is not fit for purpose. The service budget is currently being supplemented by the General Fund to enable all schools to receive additional support and facilitate management of change.

It is critical in the current financial landscape that schools are supported in full. Finance has been working effectively with schools to progress a more hands-on finance support offer, including delivery of the new DfE reforms. Much of the work is currently of a transformation and change nature. Schools Forum is asked to support a temporary suspension of the SLA for finance for a two year period and replace that with de-delegation during this transition and embedding phase. It is proposed that following the two year period a more routine offer would be required which can be developed and offered over the next two years. To enable the current service with two senior accountants would cost approximately £130k per annum. This would mean a move of £4.20 from schools contingency to other (i.e. finance). Please note that schools who currently pay for the service will be covered by this agreement. This would still leave approximately £425k as contingency. **Schools Forum AGREED for a period of 2 years (5), and requested an exit strategy.**

### **Decision**

Schools Forum agreed proposals **(1)**, **(2)** and **(3)** as indicated.

Schools Forum noted information items **(A)** and **(B)** as indicated.

Schools Forum approved Disaggregation **(4)** as indicated.

Schools Forum approved the Disaggregation variation **(5)** as indicated

### **5. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2020/21 – High Needs Block (Report 3)**

Schools Forum were presented with a report that Lewisham had received a potential increase of £4.7m, which is offset by a reduction of £700k in the Schools Central Block which supports high needs. It was further noted that any increase is temporary as the DfE is undertaking a review of the High Needs National Funding Formula which could potentially impact on future funding levels. As such permanent commitments need to be avoided as much as possible.

Schools Forum were asked to consider the application of the additional funding for 2020/21 as follows:

**Revenue to Capital spend** - Schools Forum has been previously advised of the pressure on High Needs Funding. Schools Forum supported an establishment of a working group to review and implement a mitigation plan. One key area is the review of existing provision to ensure that it meets the needs and challenges of our young people.

The second key area is where possible to facilitate any possible expansions within the current provisions that are cost effective in increasing capacity to meet need in the Borough. The additional £4.7m offers Lewisham some opportunity to consider one off spend such as remodelling, minor expansions etc. **Schools Forum is asked to support a disapplication request to the Department for education to enable £2m worth of funding to be utilised for capital purposes. Any use of funds will be reported to back to Schools Forum (1). Schools Forum AGREED.**

**Supporting Schools with higher than average SEN (EHCP)** - At the July Schools Forum meeting, Schools Forum was advised of pressure on some schools who as a proportion have disproportionately more pupils with SEN (EHCP). Schools are expected to meet the first £6k of SEN spend. The analysis shows one school as an outlier if a 3% margin of variation from average is assumed. The SEN Service is currently working with schools as part of both the Inclusion Plan and the mitigation plan to consider ways of further promoting inclusive practices across all schools. ***Schools Forum is asked to support the method to financially support schools is they are 3% above average within their peer schools (2).***

**SEN support** – Schools have also made representation with regards pupils who need SEN support but don't have a formal plan. It is proposed that further analysis is undertaken with schools including a possible consideration of a pilot approach. Haberdashers' Knights Academy volunteered to be considered as a pilot school.

***Schools Forum is asked to support a more detailed review of SEN support with a view that a report should be presented to a future meeting of the Schools Forum (3).***

**Schools facing hardship as a result of the increase in support staff costs.**

It is recognised that special schools have faced greater pressure arising from the increase in costs for support staff. Schools forum needs to be mindful that it is unclear if the funding in 2020/21 will continue, coupled with pressures arising from increased number of EHCP/SEN support. ***Schools Forum is asked to support the proposal that the High Needs Review group considers appropriateness and method to support schools. Any support can at this stage only be one off. Wider considerations will also need to be taken into account for example, value of pressure, ability to absorb the cost pressure within current funding etc (4).***

Schools Forum expressed their support of the proactive work being undertaken between schools and the local authority and reflected that points raised above are good example of the forward strategic thinking around SEN.



## **Decision**

Schools Forum agreed the disapplication request **(1)** as indicated

Schools Forum agreed the method to support schools with disproportionately higher EHCP **(2)** as indicated.

Schools Forum noted further engagement with Schools with regards pupils with SEN support including potential pilot reviews **(3)** as indicated.

Schools Forum approved a business case approach to support schools that have been particularly hard hit by the increase in support staff costs for one year **(4)** as indicated.

### **5. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2020/21 – Early Years Block (Report 4)**

Schools Forum were presented with a report to agree allocations for the Early Years Block funding as follows:

**Increase in funding 2020/21** - The DfE has now confirmed that the funding rate per pupil will increase by 8p for 2020/21. Based on current numbers this is a total uplift of only circa £300k. Schools Forum were presented with a table showing the proposed distribution of the additional 8p, noting that at previous meetings, it has been noted that both the deprivation and inclusion fund budgets were under pressure. This option will enable funding to be passed on to early years providers and targeted to need. **Schools Forum noted the small level of increase and AGREED the deployment of this funding as advised (1).**

**Supplementary Funding for Nursery Schools** – Schools Forum noted that the DfE has confirmed that the supplementary funding for nursery schools is expected to continue for 2020/21. Whilst this is positive news, no indication is given as yet beyond 2020/21. At present the funding is allocated to each school on the basis of an uplift of £2.70 per hour. This is an arduous process which provides no benefit to either the nursery schools or the LA. It is proposed that the funding is allocated as a lump sum to the nursery schools. Lewisham will continue working with the two nursery schools with a view to progressing a sustainable funding model. **Schools forum AGREED this approach, including the delegation of authority to the Executive Director for Children and Young People in conjunction with the two nursery schools (2).**

**Deprivation Funding** - Schools Forum were advised at the October meeting of the need to revise the deprivation funding allocation which schools forum supported. For clarification Schools Forum is asked to approve the following:

Funding continues to be made at the January spring term census proceeding the financial year e.g. January 2020 to fund deprivation for 2020/21 and that funding will continue to target the 20% most deprived using the IDACI scoring of deprivation. The funding will

support all pupils equally within the overall affordability envelope and 2020/21, 2021/22 will be transition years where the current method and new method will be used i.e. 2020/21, 1 part new, 2 parts old, 2021/22 2 parts new, 1 part old, year 3 will see a full transition to the new funding method.

***Schools Forum noted and approved the approach to deprivation funding, recognising the need to provide stability to providers affected by the change. Service Manager for Early Years will communicate the revision to early years providers. (3).***

**Two year old funding** - Currently Lewisham receives £6.50 per hour for two year old funding. The funding is allocated on a January and January count date whilst allocations are made termly. Schools Forum to note that a review of the funding verses application needs to be undertaken with formalising of a funding approach. It is intended that any potential funding should be used to support the inclusion fund to extend that to two, three and four year old support.

***Schools forum noted this position and AGREED to receive a further update in January with a view to increasing the inclusion fund budget to support 2 year olds with SEN needs (4).***

## **Decision**

Schools Forum noted the increase in hourly rate at 8p and approved the revision of the Early Years Funding Formula **(1)** as indicated.

Schools Forum agreed to delegate responsibility to the Director of Education Services in discussion with Nursery Schools, the basis to allocate the supplementary funding for 2020/21 **(2)** as indicated.

Schools Forum approved the deprivation funding methodology incorporating a two year transitional period **(3)** as indicated.

Schools Forum noted the 2 year old funding and agreed to further detailed information that allocates the additional 50p between contingency and inclusion fund **(4)** as indicated.

## **6. Any Other Business**

Schools Forum requested the following:

Copy of the staffing structure, including the temporary posts, for schools finance.

The estimated final costs associated with Sedgehill School academy conversion as they are confirmed.