

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Islington Schools Forum Thursday 21 May 2020
at 2pm – held virtually.**

PRESENT

Forum Members

Anita Grant (AG)	CEO, Islington Play Association
Andrew Bosi (AB)	Governor, Rotherfield Primary School
Abi Misselbrook-Lovejoy (AM-L)	Head teacher, Newington Green Primary School (Chair)
Lisa Horton (LH)	Head teacher, Hargrave Park Primary School
Fiona Godfrey (FG)	Head teacher, Kate Greenaway Nursery School
Tanya Watson (TW)	Head teacher, William Tyndale (Primary Academy)
Penny Barratt (PB)	Head teacher The Bridge Special School
Vicky Linsley (VL)	Head teacher, St Mary Magdalene Academy
Susan Service (SS)	Head teacher Islington Arts & Media Secondary School
Francis Gonzalez (FrG)	Head teacher Richard Cloudesley Special School
Paul Lasok (PL)	Governor, St Aloysius Secondary School (and St Joseph's)
Maggie Elliott (ME)	Governor, Montem Primary School (Edventure Collaborative Federation with Drayton Park) (Vice-chair)

Other Attendees

Tim Partington (TP)	Head of Children's Services, Finance
Jane Wright (JW)	Manager Schools and EY Governance (Clerk)
Mark Taylor (MT)	Director of Learning and Schools
Debbie Stevenson (DS)	Head of Early Years and Schools Funding
Tim Barber (TB)	Observer (Associate Head Hugh Myddleton Primary School)

Apologies

Cassie Moss (CM)	Head teacher, Yerbury Primary School
Jo Dibb (JD)	Head teacher, EGA Secondary (Vice-chair)
Nigel Smith (NS)	Head teacher, New River College (Pupil Referral Unit)
Penny Kenway (PK)	Head of Early Years and Childcare
Bryan Johnston (BJ)	Deputy Director of City and Islington Sixth Form College
Cllr Rakhia Ismail (RI)	Elected member (not in attendance)

	Agenda item	Action
1.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/NOT IN ATTENDANCE</p> <p>Abi Misselbrook-Lovejoy (AM-L), Chair, welcomed all to the meeting.</p> <p>Tim Barber, Associate Head of Hugh Myddleton Primary, was observing as he is interested in getting involved with Schools Forum.</p> <p>Otherwise see above.</p>	

<p>2.</p>	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 16 JANUARY 2020</p> <p>a. Accuracy – the minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting subject to the following amendments:</p> <p><i>Susan Service is head teacher of Arts and Media Islington, not Islington Arts and Media.</i></p> <p>b. Matters Arising –</p> <p>i. <u>Item 3 - SCHOOLS FORUM COMPOSITION</u> <i>AG happy to have her term of office as representative of EY Childcare providers extended by a year to 27/09/21. Vicky Linsley, Head of St Mary Magdalene, happy to have her term of office as representative of secondary academies extended by a year to 19/10/21</i></p> <p>ii. <u>Item 6 - SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA (2020-21)</u> <i>DS confirmed the price index used to calculate the inflationary increase was the RPIX which complies with the schools’ PFI contracts and the DfE Operational Guidance. The way the Minimum Funding Guarantee works gives Ambler a perverse increase as it is a growing school, their per pupil amount is starting at a higher rate which is multiplied by their increased and growing pupil numbers – it is the only Islington school affected in this way and will cease once the additional class is reached across the whole school.</i></p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p>SCHOOLS FORUM COMPOSITION</p> <p>The clerk (JW) spoke to a short report that had been circulated.</p> <p>Update on Membership</p> <p>3.1. Since the last Schools Forum meeting in January there had been the following new appointments and extensions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary head teacher election – only one nomination, Abi Misselbrook-Lovejoy, Executive Head of Newington Green and Rotherfield. Abi thereby appointed, term of office to 31 March 2024. • Primary governor election – one nomination only – Joe Simpson from St Peter and St Paul’s Catholic Primary duly elected - term of office 6 March 2020 to 5 March 2024. JS was welcomed to his first meeting. • Primary Academy rep, Tanya Watson, William Tyndale – no objections were received from other primary academy heads to TW’s term of office being extended by a year, so term of office was now up to 16 March 2021. • PRU Rep – Nigel Smith, head of New River College, agreed formally to his term of office being extended by a year, so term of office was now up to 24 October 2021. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nursery head Rep – all heads agreed to the re-election of Fiona Godfrey, Head of Kate Greenaway Nursery School and Children’s Centre, so Fiona had thereby been appointed, term of office up to 31 March 2024. • Special Academy Head – Penny Barratt, Executive Head of the Bridge Academy Trust, appointed up to 31 March 2024. <p>3.2. There were no nominations/appointments for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary Academy head – no responses to email. • Secondary head teacher election – no nominations received. <p>3.3. Forthcoming additional vacancies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary Academy head (as above) and a further Secondary Academy Head from 19 October 2020. • One primary head teacher vacancy, and the potential one due to end of term of office of Lisa Horton. • Two primary governor whose terms of office due to end on 20 September 2020 (includes one of the vice-chairs). • The term of office of the Early Years Childcare Providers’ representative was due to end on 27 September 2020 but this has been dealt with under Item 2 above (AG). <p>3.4. Proposed actions/actions to be noted/agreed</p> <p>3.4.i. Schools Forum notes that, in the circumstances of the Coronavirus pandemic and given the importance of consistency on the Forum at this challenging time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jo Dibb, Executive Head of Islington Futures Federation, has agreed to stay as Secondary Head representative until 31.12.20 or even 31.3.21 • Lisa Horton, Head teacher of Hargrave Park Primary, has agreed to an extension of her term of office until 31.12.20.21 • Maggie Elliott and Andrew Bosi, the two primary governors whose terms of office were due to end on 20 September 2020 have agreed to their terms of office being further extended to 31 December 2020. • As set out in Item 2 above, Vicky Linsley, Head of Mary Magdalene Academy, has agreed to her terms of office as Secondary Academy Rep being extended until 31.12.20. • As set out in Item 2 above, Anita Grant has agreed to her terms of office as Early Years Childcare Rep being extended for a year until 27/9/21. • The clerk will email the Secondary Academy heads again to seek nominations for the vacancy. <p>NOTED and AGREED</p>	<p>JW</p>
	<p>It was agreed to take Item 8 at this point as MT was unable to attend the whole meeting</p>	

<p>8.</p>	<p>PLACE PLANNING REPORT SUMMARY</p> <p>MT gave a verbal report. The Education and Childcare Commissioning Board had met the previous week. Conversations were beginning with individual schools with issues around school roll. There were two secondaries and some primaries with a range of issues.</p> <p>It was noted that the formula for calculating the Falling Rolls part of DSG and the length of time schools could access it were to be brought to the July Schools Forum.</p> <p>DS reminded Forum what the criteria were for Falling Rolls funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DfE criterion – school Good or Outstanding • LBI criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More than 5% reduction in roll between one October and the next ○ More than 15% capacity within the school <p>MT added that local projections and knowledge of the area of the school are also important/looked at.</p> <p>AB commented that there had been consistent over estimates of population increases over the past 30 years in Islington (optimism bias). MT replied that the LA had been cautious about those estimates and had not responded by building unnecessary schools.</p> <p>NOTED</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>DRAFT SCHOOL BALANCES 2019-2020</p> <p>4.1. DS spoke to a report that had been circulated. This included a table of provisional schools’ balances which provides an initial financial summary of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the overall level of schools’ 2019-20 balances • 2019-20 schools’ balances compared to 2018-19 balances before deduction of earmarked balances for capital purposes • Individual School Budget (ISB) and balances as a percentage of the ISB. <p>4.2. The initial findings were that, before deduction of earmarked capital balances, (to be presented at the July meeting) 2019-20 school balances totalled £10,274,842 compared to a balance of £11,732,678 in 2018-19, a decrease of £1.457m.</p> <p>There were five schools that were in a deficit at year end 2019-20.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Drayton Park – additional costs throughout the year have put the school into a deficit position. A debt recovery plan is in place. - Duncombe - were due capital monies from LBI totalling £26,730 – when they receive this, the school will not be in a deficit position - Prior Weston – an issue from previous years – have been working very hard to address this 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - St Andrew's - additional costs throughout the year have put the school into a deficit position - AMSI – came into the year with a deficit and have reduced the deficit by £219k in 19-20. <p>Kate Greenaway Nursery School have moved out of deficit.</p> <p>DS pointed out that it was interesting to see the difference between schools' ratified schools budgets 2019/20 and their actual balances – reflecting the importance of budget monitoring.</p> <p>4.3. The report to July Forum will show schools forecasting any deficits in 2020/21 and requesting a deficit recovery plan.</p> <p>Forum was recommended to note:</p> <p>4.4.i. provisional 2019-20 schools' balances position</p> <p>4.4.ii. deficit schools and schools that have moved out of deficit</p> <p>4.4.iii. the differences between the ratified budget and draft YE positions, including some significant differences.</p> <p>4.4.iv. that a further report will be presented to the July meeting of this Forum to include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - earmarked revenue balances for capital purposes - identification of schools which may require review of their surplus balances - schools with deficit balances and actions being taken to achieve a deficit recovery - three-year summary of LBI schools' balances - schools forecasting a deficit position for 2020-21 - schools ratified budgets 2020-21 including identifying schools with high balances and high in year deficits <p>NOTED</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>DRAFT DSG OUTTURN 2019/20</p> <p>TP reported to a paper that had been circulated. LBI accounts being finalised – not expecting changes.</p> <p>The draft DSG outturn position for the financial year to 31 March 2020 was an underspend of £2.68m (1.5%), of which £2.46m related to balances from previous years.</p> <p>Schools Budget</p> <p>Centrally retained funding for Growth/Falling Rolls - a small underspend of £6K relating to unclaimed income from academies.</p> <p>The unallocated balance of £321k from the one-off cash payment in relation to the Secondary Unit of Funding (SUF) is being retained for use in 2020/21 as previously agreed by Schools Forum.</p> <p>De-delegated Budgets</p>	

There are a few underspends which will be rolled forward for their intended purpose in 2020/21.:

- £15k underspend against the trade union facility time budget.
- £26k underspend against the de-delegated NQT release time budget.
- £32k unallocated secondary school priority support funding
- £8k unallocated schools in financial difficulty funding
- £192k underspend against the redundancy budget, a reduction of £80k on the previous monitoring report to Schools Forum.

The total underspend against the school redundancy budget is £215k, meaning the full DSG budget of £192k can be carried forward. Usually we would request corporately for the core budget underspend of £23k to also be carried forward, but have not done so this year due to the extent of the cost pressures the Council is facing in relation to Covid-19.

AB asked what the criteria were for accessing the redundancy budget.

DS replied that this is a de-delegated budget which applies to maintained primary and secondary schools only, most permissible schools have benefited from the pot. This budget is used to fund 50% of redundancy costs with the remaining 50% to be met by the school. The underspend has come from fewer re-organisations than in the past, but there are expected to be some high costs this year.

DS added that if schools are embarking on major reorganisations, she would know as most buy in to HR and Finance SLAs and they would be talking to the services about support.

It was confirmed that only maintained primary and secondary schools can access de-delegated funding. EY funding is separate.

Central Schools Services Block (CSSB)

There is a £56k underspend against the CSSB block:

- £60K underspend in the School Admissions Service
- £27K unallocated CSSB funding

Set against this is £30K for under-achieving pupils is now included in the budget for 2020/21 (was removed in error in 2018/19 budget).

The underspend under CSSB will help offset the High Needs overspend.

High Needs Block

A one-off contingency budget for high needs was carried forward by Schools Forum from the 2018/19 DSG underspend of £854k. An underspend had been expected, but post 16 costs had been higher than expected and there have been extra costs for example for outreach (via Richard Cloudeley). So there is an overspend of £110K projected. This is a very volatile area of expenditure.

The overspend will be partly met from the net underspend against the CSSB (£56k), leaving a balance of £54k that will be offset against the 2020/21 high needs budget.

There will be a review of the High Needs Budget in 2020/21.

Early Years Block

An underspend of £2,134k against the early years block is projected. £463k of this underspend is the 2-year-old balance from previous years and is being held to smooth in new funding arrangements for providers in future years.

Forum was asked to note that the annual disapplication in relation to 3 and 4 year olds (whereby a part of the funding usually required to go directly to providers can be retained by the local authority) may not be available in 2020/21.

There have been these areas of overspend:

- £358k in relation to Early Years SEND following a significant increase in applications from settings during the year - will be met from the Early Years contingency budget.
- £16k overspend against the speech and language therapy budget
- £21k shortfall in funding for the Early Years Pupil Premium as eligibility was greater than the numbers used by the DfE to allocate funds to the Council.

And these areas of underspend:

- £25k in relation to the Disability Access Fund as eligibility was lower than the numbers used by the DfE to allocate funds to the Council.
- £96k staffing underspend across Children's Centres that is notionally funded by the DSG.

1,945k balance remains in the early years contingency budget (see below).

All of the above variances will be netted off against the Early Years contingency budget and carried forward to 2020/21 (£1,671k).

Early Years Contingency Budget

As previously reported to Forum, under the new Early Years funding arrangements, the Council sets aside a 3.7% contingency in line with DfE guidance. The purpose of this contingency budget is to fund increased numbers of 3 and 4 year olds in the summer term (funding allocations from the ESFA are based on January numbers) and any new provision. It also provides a buffer against any in-year reductions in funding from the ESFA which can be significant if numbers reduce in the January census.

In addition, the contingency holds the balance of deprivation funding - 10% of funding is channelled through the deprivation factor, however as not all children attract deprivation funding there is a balance of funding left over. Steps were taken for 2019/20 to reduce this balance, and further steps are proposed in the Early Years Funding Consultation for 2020/21, by changing

	<p>the way in which we calculate the deprivation factor, that passes more funding to providers. The EY Sub group has been focusing on this.</p> <p>The 2019/20 original contingency budget was £1,740k, made up of the 3.7% growth contingency of £628k and a balance of deprivation funding of £1,112k. The budget subsequently increased to £3,609k following the carry forward of unspent early years block funding from 2018/19 (£1,869k).</p> <p>There were a number of calls against the contingency budget during the year, leaving a year-end balance of £1,671k. These calls included additional funding due to settings following the October 2019 and January 2020 census, and a retrospective increase to the base rate and deprivation factor for 3 and 4 year olds following the outcome of the 2020/21 Early Years Funding Consultation and agreement by the Early Years Sub Group.</p> <p>AB asked if it will still be possible to fund the quality factor for 2 year olds (via disapplication). It was too early to say yet. If the Government stops the disapplication, this will equate to a loss to Islington of around £460K.</p> <p>NOTED</p>											
<p>6.</p>	<p>Special Schools Place Numbers 2020-21</p> <p>Schools Forum is asked to ratify the number of places at maintained special schools and resource units each year – Richard Cloudesley, Samuel Rhodes and the hearing unit at Laycock Primary.</p> <p>Numbers of current placements are taken from the current year January school census. The schools/unit set their budgets by end of March and the numbers of places are reviewed.</p> <p>High Needs Sub Group had agreed Top up funding for individual pupils in special schools to be increased by 1.5%, in line with maintained schools.</p> <p>Forum was asked to retrospectively agree these place numbers for 2020/21:</p> <table border="0" data-bbox="236 1384 1189 1552"> <tr> <td>Laycock Unit</td> <td>– 64 (no change from 2019/20)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Richard Cloudesley</td> <td>- Pre 16 – 63 (up 1 from 2019/20)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Richard Cloudesley</td> <td>- Post 16 – 22 (up 3 from 2019/20)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Samuel Rhodes</td> <td>- Pre 16 – 95 (down 4 from 2019/20)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Samuel Rhodes</td> <td>- Post 16 – 21 (down 4 from 2019/20)</td> </tr> </table> <p>AGREED</p>	Laycock Unit	– 64 (no change from 2019/20)	Richard Cloudesley	- Pre 16 – 63 (up 1 from 2019/20)	Richard Cloudesley	- Post 16 – 22 (up 3 from 2019/20)	Samuel Rhodes	- Pre 16 – 95 (down 4 from 2019/20)	Samuel Rhodes	- Post 16 – 21 (down 4 from 2019/20)	<p>TP</p>
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<p>7.</p>	<p>HIGH NEEDS STRATEGY (FUTURE YEAR)</p> <p>Deferred to July meeting as CH not present.</p>											
<p>8.</p>	<p>SCHOOL PLACES PLANNING</p> <p>Covered above after Item 3.</p>											

9. COVID-19 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

DS spoke to a report previously circulated.

The LA was providing as much support and guidance as possible to schools and early years settings in these challenging times.

LA maintained schools are continuing to receive budgets regardless of full or partial closures. Individual school budgets (ISBs) are not changing so schools can continue to pay their staff and suppliers and meet other financial commitments. Schools are not allowed to furlough their staff unless they are paid for via a private income stream (eg parental fees).

Schools are broadly expected to cover costs from their budgets and savings from reduced opening. Nevertheless, it is expected that schools will be able to apply in June to the DfE for additional funding to cover extra costs explicitly incurred in relation to COVID. This is to be a cost neutral exercise, with costs related to premises, extra cleaning and FSM vouchers. Capped limits will depend on the size (school roll), but schools can apply for more funding.

The biggest issue is likely to be the loss of private income streams.

Early Years income is more complex as so many funding streams. The summer term will be funded for the free entitlement in spite of much lower take up/closure of a setting. The flexibility of DSG funding does not allow LAs to fully offset loss of income. The EY Contingency budget may have to come into play and we will be working with EY providers around their longer-term sustainability.

Private nurseries are furloughing staff rather than using their reserves.

As there was no May Census, the funding for the summer term 2020 for 3 and 4 year olds will be 116% of the 2020 spring census given additional qualifying children during the summer term.

For 2 year olds, given there is a reduction in numbers during summer term as they become 3, the Council will pay settings for that term based on 85% of their 2020 spring headcount for 2 year olds.

The Council will continue to fund Priority Early Learning (PEL) places in summer 2020.

Other support to PVIs (not LBI) - retention scheme, VAT deferment, small business grants – may not totally offset loss of income from parental fees.

LBI will have a significant loss of income from fees for its early years settings. So care is needed in the use of the EY Contingency Funding.

ME asked how schools can budget the extra COVID-related costs. DS signposted Forum to the DfE guidance dated 7 April (shared via Schools Bulletin and Governor News). DS advised school business managers to segregate funds already spent so as to have clarity (Open Book) about which expenditure may be eligible for DfE Exceptional Costs funding.

	<p>MT added that it is good to have a record of COVID-related expenditure anyway – to assess its impact and for LBI discussions with the DfE.</p> <p>JS commented that children catching up from lost education should be lined up with the financial side.</p> <p>MT commented that impact of COVID will be longer than initially expected, and different ways of working are now required. We are working towards the safe and phased return of schools, then the second phase will require system changes. LBI has created a Recovery Plan on a Page – suggested this is considered at next Forum meeting.</p> <p>AG commented that capital funding will be needed to adapt premises to provide more space to accommodate social distancing. Voluntary children's centres are restrained by rules and statutory guidance. With reduced numbers of children, the nurseries won't be viable.</p> <p>MT responded that PK is working on these issues, given the mixed economy of the EY sector. It is not made easier by the frequent changes in DfE guidance. He would flag up the issue of capital spending with the DfE.</p> <p><i>TW left the meeting during discussion of Item 9 at 3.23pm</i></p> <p>AM-L commented that Newington Green losing substantial sums from not being able to offer breakfast and after school clubs.</p> <p>AM-L queried why schools have to top up to 100% if they furlough staff working on such fees-based provision. DS/TP agreed to contact Alan Grant for advice about this.</p> <p>TP stated that early years settings should make use of furloughing opportunities where appropriate in the first instance to address income shortfalls.</p> <p><i>AG left the meeting at 3.28pm after discussion of Item 9</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">MT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DS/TP</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>SCHOOL FORUM WORKPLAN</p> <p>DS spoke to a short report that had been distributed. Red text denoted changes to earlier versions of the plan.</p> <p>Higher Needs Strategy (Item 7 above) will be picked up at the July meeting.</p> <p><i>PB left at 3.33pm</i></p> <p>At that meeting, Internal Audit and the Plan on a Page will also be covered.</p> <p>If there is anything to ratify before then, the DSG Subgroup can cover – DS to liaise with ME.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">DS/ME</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS</p>	

	<p>The next Schools Forum meeting will be held on Thursday 16 July 2020, 2-4pm, likely to be virtual.</p> <p>DSG subgroup meeting date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thursday 9 July, 2-4pm <p>The chair was thanked for the smooth running of the meeting.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 3.45pm</p>	
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