

Islington Schools Forum

Meeting documents and minutes published on [Islington Schools Forum webpage](#).

Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting held on Thursday 23 March 2023, MS Teams

Attendees

Present

- Abi Misselbrook-Lovejoy (AM-L); Executive Head teacher, Rotherfield and Newington Green Primary Schools (Chair)
- Maggie Elliott (ME); Governor, Montem Primary School (Edventure Collaborative Federation with Drayton Park) (Vice-chair)
- Joy (Odunayo) Abegunde (JOA); Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), Islington Play Association
- Jenny Lewis (JL); Head teacher, Thornhill Primary School
- Patrick Mildren (PM); Head teacher, Canonbury Primary School
- Fiona MacCorquodale (FM); Head teacher, Prior Weston Primary School and Children's Centre (Interim Vice-chair)
- Andrew Bosi (AB); Governor, Rotherfield Primary School
- Claire Hersey (CHe); Principal Finance Officer, City of London Academy Trust
- Tanya Watson (TW); Head teacher, William Tyndale (Primary Academy)
- Penny Barratt (PB); CEO, The Bridge MAT
- Susan Service (SS); Head teacher, Arts & Media School Islington
- Nigel Smith (NS); Head teacher, New River College (Pupil Referral Unit)
- Joe Simpson (JS); Governor, St Peter and St Paul Primary
- Paul Lasok (PL); Governor, St Aloysius Secondary School (and St Joseph's)
- Cllr Angelo Weekes (AW); Islington Council – non-Executive Member
- Ana Sevilla, Executive Head, Packington and New River Green Children's Centres

- Coleen Marshall (CM), 14-19 Partnership, City and Islington College

Other attendees

- Tim Partington (TP); Head of Children's Services, Finance
- Debbie Stevenson (DS); Head of Early Years and Schools Finance Services
- Alison Cramer (AC); Assistant Director, School Support and Information Services
- Jane Wright (JW); Manager Schools and EY Governance (Clerk)
- Matthew Beavor (MB), Digital Communications and Customer Services Manager

Apologies

- Cassie Moss (CM); Head teacher, Yerbury Primary School (Vice-chair)
- Vicky Linsley (VL); Head teacher, St Mary Magdalene Academy (Secondary)
- Francis Gonzalez (FrG); Head teacher/Chris Smaling, Richard Cloudesley Special School
- Sarah Callaghan (SC), Director of Learning and Achievement
- Candy Holder (CH), Head of Pupil Services

Not in attendance

- Sally Franklin (SF); Head teacher, North Islington Nursery and Children's Centre
- Alan Streeter (AS); Head teacher, Beacon High Secondary School (Islington Futures Federation)
- Matthew Hillman (MH); Head teacher, The Pears Family School

Meeting minutes

No.	Agenda item	Action
1.	<p>Welcome/Apologies for absence/not in attendance</p> <p>AM-L welcomed all to the meeting. The chair mentioned that the minutes of the previous meeting (held on 19 January 2023) had been shared with Forum just after the main papers, so discussion of their accuracy and matters arising would be on the agenda of the next ordinary meeting on 25 May 2023.</p> <p>Apologies as above.</p>	
2.	<p>Quality Assurance Framework for LBI Services – for decision</p> <p>There had been lengthy discussion at the previous Forum in January (Item 6 – Dedicated Schools Grant [DSG] Central Retention 2023-24), so AM-L suggested the focus of this meeting would be queries and questions about the proposed Quality Assurance (QA) Framework which had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>AC recapped to the meeting that Forum had asked for a QA Framework for LA services before it could confirm its provisional agreement in January to agree the proposed Central Retention of DSG for LA services.</p> <p>The proposed QA framework covered all LA services for schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traded services • Functions/services funded from the Central Services Schools Block • Functions/services funded through the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokerage Grant (SIMBG) • Functions/services funded through de-delegated funds. <p>The document set out the steps to be taken, timelines, a sample survey for schools to rate the services out of five (Appendix A), and a template for services to conduct an annual self-assessment QA Service Report (Appendix B).</p> <p>Members of Schools Forum thanked AC and MB/team for their work on these documents. The points raised were:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the context of these discussions – that money was limited and schools were having to make significant cutbacks - it was important that LA services were good value for money (VFM). NS would like the sources and amounts of money to be set out against the services – help to match QA outcomes with proportionate funding. AC clarified that the amounts and sources were included within each QA Service Report, but she agreed to add a covering sheet summarising all the services, amounts and sources in one document. JL suggested that some areas should have a greater weighting. JL and others also asked that the services in Appendix A be broken down to allow schools to give different ratings for different parts of a service if appropriate. PC queried how a service scoring 3 would know how to improve itself. TW echoed this, suggesting there should be further breakdown of use of budget per service in Appendix B – this would help the services themselves to achieve better VFM. AC replied that they had been trying not to overload the survey, but she was happy to make the survey more detailed if headteachers were happy to complete additional questions. The timing of the surveys to be in summer was queried, given the low take up of the previous summer survey at the end of term. AC clarified that the surveys can be sent at any time, but we have proposed the summer term as the end of academic year seemed an appropriate time. The first of the biennial reviews (Autumn 2023) needed to be completed in time for Schools Forum in January 2024 to make decisions about de-delegated funds. She noted to avoid holding the detailed panels during the summer and to ensure the surveys were issued well before the end of term.. A M-L suggested dedicating 15 minutes at a Headteachers’ Meeting/Briefing for Heads to complete the surveys. PC queried how the information from the survey would be collated efficiently – MB explained that the work of his team in relation to Traded Services and other survey activity would be expanded to cover this. They would analyse the results and advise services with low scores. A M-L clarified that this information was collated to help Schools Forum to make decisions in relation to de-delegated services and that Forum was accountable to other schools for this decision-making – but it also provided a framework for the LA to improve its services. 	<p>AC</p> <p>AC</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JL asked for drop-down menus for Questions 4 and 5 on the survey with common reasons. This would speed up the process for the heads of completing the survey. It would also allow for visual analysis of results, such as pie charts. MB agreed to look at that – he added that MS Forms have good reporting functions, picking up common words. He suggested that initially it would be good to allow for free text to provide a wider narrative. SS suggested, along with the greater breakdown of services, that there be a free text box under each service combining 4 and 5, asking in particular for feedback if a school rated a service 2 or less. • A M-L asked what had been done to reduce the level of de-delegated services. TP replied that there had been a 20% per annum reduction in the historical element of the Central School Services Budget (CSSB) over the last three years and there would be further reductions in the next two years. CSSB funding had reduced by £247k since 2020/21. DS added that De-delegated Services had been at the same level over the years and they were for very specific areas. The redundancy pot was still at the same rate, to support schools undergoing reorganisations – if it were reduced, those schools would have to find more funding. Similarly, the Schools in Financial Difficulties budget could be reduced, but that would place extra pressure on vulnerable schools. • In answer to a question from A M-L, TP and DS clarified that, if the proposed levels of central retention were confirmed, 0.9% of DSG would be used for CSSB and 0.9% for De-delegated services. CL commented that medium MATs usually top-sliced about 6% to 7%. <p>The Chair brought the meeting back to the purpose of the item – to confirm or otherwise the provisional agreement reached in January on the levels of de-delegated funding and spending on CSSG provided a robust QA Framework was in place.</p> <p>NS felt it was a good start, but more work and discussions about the framework were needed.</p> <p>A M-L’s personal view was she was uncomfortable about making decisions without the QA in place. But she acknowledged that the QA process had started and more development work would take place.</p> <p>JL felt QA should be a standing item on Schools Forum.</p>	<p>MB</p>
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	<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support the proposed process for quality assurance of LBI Services to schools • To agree 2023-24 central retention as set out in the January Forum report <p>Agreed: subject to the improvements to the surveys asked for at this meeting and QA being a standing item on Forum meetings, 16 votes in favour, one vote against.</p> <p>DS informed the meeting that she had added QA on to the Forward Planning document for every Forum meeting.</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p>Meeting close and dates of future meetings</p> <p>AM-L thanked Schools Forum members for preparing for the meeting and their contributions and feedback at the meeting. She also thanked the LA staff for their work on the QA framework in such a quick timeframe. The meeting closed at 2.42pm.</p> <p>Dates of next meetings</p> <p>(Virtual meetings on MS Teams unless otherwise indicated)</p> <p>Summer Term 2023</p> <p>Capital Sub Group - Thursday 11 May, 12.30pm – 2pm</p> <p>DSG/Chairs Sub Group - Wednesday 17 May, 2 – 3.30pm</p> <p>Early Years Sub Group - Friday 19 May, 1pm – 2.30pm</p> <p>High Needs Sub Group - Monday 22 May, 11am – 12.30pm</p> <p>Schools Forum - Thursday 25 May 2-4pm, in person – venue tbc</p> <p>DSG/Chairs Sub Group - Wednesday 5 July, 2 – 3.30pm</p> <p>Schools Forum – Thursday 13 July, 2-4pm, in person – venue tbc</p>	