

HILLINGDON SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 18 January 2023 at 1pm via Teams

Voting members

NAME	ORGANISATION	ATTENDANCE	TERM ENDS
Maintained Nursery (1)			
Shabana Aslam	McMillan Early Childhood Centre	APOLOGIES	Sep 2026
Maintained Primary - Schools (4)			
Rachel Anderson	Dr Triplett's School	PRESENT	Sep 2023
Kris O'Sullivan	Deanesfield Primary School	PRESENT	Sep 2024
Mel Penney	Glebe Primary School	PRESENT	Sep 2027
Carly Rissen	Colham Manor	PRESENT	Sep 2024
Maintained Primary - Governors (4)			
John Buckingham	Glebe Primary School	PRESENT	Sep 2024
Jim Edgecombe (CHAIR)	Whiteheath Junior School	PRESENT	Sep 2024
Tony Eginton	Minet Nursery & Infant School & Hillside Junior School	PRESENT	Sep 2024
Phil Haigh	Cherry Lane Primary School & Meadow High School	PRESENT	Sep 2024
Maintained Secondary (1)			
Dan Cowling	Oak Wood School	PRESENT	Sep 2026
Maintained Special (1)			
Jenny Rigby	Meadow High School	APOLOGIES	Sep 2027
Academies (9)			
John Garner	Ruislip High School	PRESENT	Sep 2026
Tracey Hemming	Middlesex Learning Partnership	APOLOGIES	Sep 2024
Nicola Kelly	Charville	PRESENT	Sep 2024
Helen Manwaring	Swakeleys School	PRESENT	Sep 2022
Catherine Mosdell	Frays Academy Trust	APOLOGIES	Sep 2023
David Patterson	Queensmead School	PRESENT	Sep 2023
Sandra Voisey	Laurel Lane Primary School	PRESENT	Sep 2023
(2 vacancies)			
Special Academies (1)			
Sudhi Pathak	Eden Academy Trust	PRESENT	Sep 2026
Alternative provision (1)			
Paul Chambers	The Skills Hub	PRESENT	Sep 2027
Private Voluntary & Independent Early Years Providers (2)			
Elaine Caffary	4 Street Nursery	PRESENT	Sep 2024
(vacant)			
14-19 Partnership (1)			
(vacant)			

Other attendees (non-voting)

Independent Non-Maintained Special School			
Debbie Gilder	Pield Heath School		NOT REQUIRED
Shadow Representative (Maintained Primary - Schools)			
Eleesa Dowding	Harmondsworth		NOT REQUIRED
Kate Needs	Lady Bankes		PRESENT (OBSERVING)
Shadow Representative (Maintained Primary - Governor)			
Jo Palmer	Hillside Infant School and Hillside Junior School		NOT REQUIRED
Graham Wells	Colham Manor Primary School		NOT REQUIRED
Officers			
Kate Boulter	Independent Clerk		PRESENT
Paul Gledhill	LA Finance		PRESENT
Vikram Hansrani	LA Executive Director, Education & SEND		PRESENT
Gemma McNamara	LA Finance		PRESENT
Coral Miller	LA Finance		PRESENT
Lynda Poole	LA SEND		PRESENT
Philip Ryan	LA Early Years		PRESENT
Alison Vaughan	LA		PRESENT
Observers			
Sarah Flick-Smith	Middlesex Learning Partnership		PRESENT

		ACTION
1.	<p>APOLOGIES & INTRODUCTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apologies were accepted and recorded in the attendance list (above). The Chair confirmed the meeting was quorate and could proceed to business. Before commencing business, the Chair reported that Helen Manwaring's term of office had expired in September 2022 and the nomination/election process for Academy Representatives had not been completed yet. The Forum AGREED that Helen would be a voting member for the purposes of this meeting. 	
2.	<p>ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Union de-delegation accounts 	
3.	<p>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2022 were AGREED as a correct record of the meeting.</p>	
4.	<p>MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>(a) TRAINING FOR SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERS</p> <p>This item had been on the agenda for over a year awaiting confirmation of dates from the LA Finance Team. At the last meeting, the Forum had requested CM confirm training dates and provide an outline of training content before this meeting.</p> <p>CM advised that she was delivering training for governors in February and could use the same slides for Schools Forum member training. The Forum requested CM confirm dates for in-person training to take place at the end of February.</p> <p>(b) SCHOOL PROVISION FOR ASYLUM SEEKER CHILDREN – FINANCING FOR SCHOOLS</p> <p>VH reported that the Leaders of Hillingdon and Hounslow Councils had written to the Department for Levelling Up and the Department for Education regarding the issues facing the two boroughs due to the high number of asylum seekers accommodated in the Heathrow area. A response was awaited and an update would be provided at the next meeting.</p>	<p>CM</p> <p>VH</p>
5.	<p>SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP & CONSTITUTION</p> <p>(a) MEMBERSHIP UPDATE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were three vacancies for Academy Representatives and nominations requests were normally sent to governing bodies and CEOs. At the last meeting, VH had reported that a call for nominations had been sent out in December, but he was unsure who the request had gone to, or what the closing date was. VH advised he still did not have this information and would report to the next meeting. A possible 14-19 representative had been identified and the Clerk would be notified. No further progress had been made with the appointment of a second PVI rep. <p>(b) SUB-GROUP REORGANISATION & CALENDAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The updated membership of the reorganised sub-groups had been circulated. Members to contact PH if they wished to be added to or removed from a sub-group. 	<p>VH</p> <p>VH/PR</p> <p>ALL</p>
6.	<p>FEEDBACK FROM SUB-GROUPS & WORKING GROUPS</p> <p>As overview was provided of the following sub-group meetings:</p> <p>(a) HIGH NEEDS FUNDING GROUP – 12 JANUARY 2023</p> <p>The minutes were noted. PH reported that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Group was starting to receive more information on EHCP growth rate, however it was necessary to know value of plans as well as number to determine the impact on overall cost. The LA had still not resolved the internal issues preventing accurate payment of top-up funding to schools. This amounted to a significant amount for some schools, which would need to make provision in their accounts for funding not yet received. 	

- In addition to the impact on individual schools' financial planning, the absence of accurate figures for top-up funding meant the LA could not produce reliable figures for DSG Monitoring Reports.
- The sub-groups were concerned that they were frequently not receiving information requested from officers, which impeded the sub-groups' ability to function properly.

(b) DSG DELIVERY GROUP – 17 JANUARY 2023

There were no minutes. JE reported that the DSG Delivery Group had met, however little financial information was provided at the meeting. This followed a pattern of a wider issue. At the last Forum meeting, there had been no DSG Monitoring Report, and officers had committed to providing a DSG Monitoring Report for this meeting of Forum, however, no report had been provided.

CM advised that the LA was in the process of resolving the internal issues regarding payment of top-up funding to schools. Until that was completed and accurate SEND costs were established, officers were not confident publicly providing DSG budget monitoring figures. CM was not in a position to confirm whether the provision made covered the costs. It was the aim to get legacy payments completed in this financial year to see how the LA was performing against the Safety Valve Agreement.

The Forum commented:

- The DSG Monitoring Report was fundamental to the work of the Forum and to understanding how the LA was performing against the Safety Valve Agreement. The Forum had not received an accurate report for several months.
- The Forum had been asking officers to provide a report on 2021/22 school budgets since spring 2022 (maintained) and summer 2022 (academies). The Forum used this information to understand how schools were managing financially, and took this into account when making decisions affecting schools.
- The Forum had also been asking for a report on place planning. Some of the Borough's schools were reporting falling rolls which was a concern and could affect the sustainability of some schools.
- The failure to provide these reports meant the Forum was required to make decisions unsupported by up to date information.

7.

ITEMS FOR DECISION

(a) DSG FUNDING SETTLEMENT 2023/24

(i) Central School Services

The Forum considered the proposed budget set out in the report and **AGREED** the Central School Services budget for 2023/24.

(ii) Schools Block

The Forum considered a report which set out two options for the Schools Block budget 2023/24. No date had been provided for implementation of the 'hard' National Funding Formula (NFF) however the 'soft' approach required LAs to move their local formula closer to the NFF, and LAs were only permitted to use NFF factors in their formula. At a previous meeting it had been agreed that three options would be provided for the Forum's consideration, however modelling had found a funding shortfall of around £3million for the third option, so only two options were given in the report.

The Forum commented that:

- This decision required Forum members to have an understanding of technical issues relating to school funding, and highlighted the need for members to be trained.
- Some years ago the Forum had submitted a disapplication request in relation to the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG). This had been refused, however it was the Forum's desire to keep MFG as low as possible.
- In previous years, mobility factor had been limited for some schools which reported disproportionately high mobility figures. The same should be applied this year if

	<p>permitted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The growth contingency estimates in the report appeared to be inaccurate. • In previous years the Forum had received a document showing the impact of all factors on individual schools. Without this information, the Forum was unable to understand how the two options moved money between schools. CM advised that Option 1 was more weighted to AWPU whereas Option 2 was more weighted to deprivation factors, and schools which lost funding did so because of a drop in pupil numbers rather than per pupil funding. • It was noted that the available funding would reduce if the 0.5% transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block was agreed. If the School Improvement de-delegation was agreed, that would affect maintained schools' funding only. • The Forum expressed concern that it was required to make a decision with limited information and no opportunity to consult with schools. • In response to a question as to whether Forum could propose Option 2 with MFG reduced to 0, CM advised that she did not think this was possible under the funding terms. <p>Having been put to a vote, the Forum AGREED (1) Option 2 in the report for the Schools Block budget for 2023/24 and (2) the Growth Contingency Budget of £1,209K for 2023/24, as set out in the report.</p> <p>(iii)Early Years</p> <p>The Forum considered a report on the Early Years budget 2023/24 and AGREED 5% of the Early Year's Block permitted by the DfE for Early Year's centrally retained budget. It was noted that the Early Years Funding Group would be meeting to consider the 2023/24 budget proposals in detail and would make a recommendation to Forum.</p>	PH
	<p>(b) RESULT OF CONSULTATION WITH SCHOOLS ON THE FUNDING FORMULA FOR 2023/24</p> <p>There had been no consultation with schools.</p>	
	<p>(c) DECISION ON PROPOSED SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA 2023/24</p> <p>See Minute 7(a).</p>	
	<p>(d) RESULT OF CONSULTATION WITH SCHOOLS ON 0.5% HIGH NEEDS BLOCK TRANSFER</p> <p>The Forum had stated at its November meeting that it wished to consult with schools before making decisions on matters which affected schools. Despite this, a report seeking agreement of a transfer of 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block had been presented to the December meeting for decision, with no consultation with schools having taken place. In view of the time limitation which precluded any opportunity to consult fully with schools, Forum had agreed to defer the decision to this meeting, to give Forum members of Primary Forum and HASH an opportunity to seek the views of its members. The Forum recognised that schools which were not part of those bodies would not have an input, but this method would provide an indication of schools' position in the absence of any other consultation.</p> <p>MP (Primary Forum) advised that 48 schools had responded to the question. Of these, 1 supported the transfer and 47 did not support the transfer.</p> <p>DC (HASH) advised that 18 schools had responded, of which 0 supported the transfer and 18 did not support the transfer.</p> <p>The Forum NOTED the responses from schools.</p>	
	<p>(e) DECISION ON PROPOSED 0.5% BLOCK TRANSFER</p> <p>The Forum considered an updated report which sought the Forum's approval to transfer 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block in 2023/24. The Forum had deferred this item from the last meeting to obtain further information to support the Forum in making its decision, namely: consultation with members of Primary Forum and HASH to obtain an indication of schools' position, and for officers to provide further information modelling the impact of the 0.5% transfer on schools.</p> <p>Officers advised there were three updates since the report was presented to the last meeting:</p>	

- Based on the DSG allocations for 2023/24 published in December 2022, the 0.5% transfer would be £1,337,029.
- In response to the SEND and Alternative Provision Green Paper consultation, the DfE had confirmed that it had agreed to extend the DSG statutory override by a further three years, to March 2026.
- As a Safety Valve Local Authority, it had been confirmed that disapplication requests included in the Safety Valve agreement would not need to be sent to the ESFA and would instead be reviewed by the DfE Safety Valve team. Formal approval would still need to be sought for disapplications in each subsequent financial year and it was expected that consultation would still take place on these requests.

Officers reiterated the reasons for supporting the transfer put forward at the last meeting:

- Agreement of the transfer was vital to the Safety Valve Agreement.
- The LA was contributing £20million (£4million/year) towards wiping out the deficit.
- The Forum had supported the transfer last year to secure the Safety Valve Agreement with the DfE. The Agreement included the 0.5% transfer built in each year.
- If the Safety Valve Agreement were to fail, there was a risk to the Council's services.

The Forum commented that:

- At its last meeting, the Forum had requested officers provide modelling to show the impact of the proposed transfer on schools. In previous years officers had provided detailed information showing the impact on individual schools. The only additional information that had been provided for this meeting was the impact of the transfer on the AWPU.
- This information, which had not been provided for the report considered earlier in the meeting seeking a decision on Schools Block budget options (see Minute 7(a)), showed that under the Forum's agreed Option 2, more money would come out of primary schools than secondary schools if the transfer was agreed.
- The Forum had expressed concern earlier in the meeting, when discussing information presented to the DSG Delivery Group for the Quarter 3 Safety Valve Agreement Submission to the DfE, that no meeting of the Forum or its sub-groups had received a DSG Monitoring Report for several months (see Minute 6(b)). In response, officers had explained that they were trying to establish accurate SEND costs, and until that was completed, they were not confident publicly providing DSG budget monitoring figures.
- It was unlikely that an accurate picture of the DSG outturn would be provided to Forum until the year end figures were provided in May 2023.
- The Forum observed that, for several meetings, it had not been provided with information requested from officers relating to a number of significant items. This impeded the work of the Forum and prevented the Forum from making informed decisions based on accurate and up to date information.
- Officers had not carried out the consultation with schools on the 0.5% transfer requested by Forum, and the Forum had needed to consult Primary Forum and HASH through its members. This consultation had indicated schools were overwhelmingly against the 0.5% transfer (see Minute 7(d)).

Having been put to a vote, the Forum **AGREED** that it did not support the 0.5% transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block.

(f) SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT DE-DELEGATION

At its last meeting the Forum had considered a report which sought the Forum's approval of the introduction of a new de-delegated service area for school improvement activities following the cessation of the school improvement monitoring and brokering grant, and agreement of funding to support the service in 2023/24. The Forum had deferred a decision to give Forum members of Primary Forum and HASH an opportunity to seek the views of its members, and for officers to provide clarification of which services were statutory and which were 'extras'.

MP (Primary Forum) advised that 48 maintained schools had responded to the question. Of

	<p>these, 1 supported the de-delegation and 47 did not support the de-delegation.</p> <p>DC (HASH) advised that 2 maintained schools had responded, of which 0 supported the de-delegation and 2 did not support the de-delegation.</p> <p>The Forum noted the responses from schools and commented that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools had been unhappy with the LA School Improvement Service for many years. Hillingdon always performed badly compared with other London boroughs • No clear plan had been provided setting out how the service would be improved and what benefits this would bring to schools. • Some of the statutory services listed in the report were already funded from the DSG. <p>It having been put to a vote by the respective voting representatives, the Forum AGREED: (1) not to de-delegate School Improvement services for secondary schools; (2) not to de-delegate School Improvement services for primary schools.</p>	
	<p>(g) GROWTH CONTINGENCY ALLOCATION 2023/24 See Minute 7(a)(ii).</p>	
	<p>(h) MOBILITY FORMULA As in previous years, the Forum AGREED to limit mobility funding for schools which received a disproportionate amount. CM to look at previous years' information and check this was permitted within current funding rules.</p>	CM
8.	<p>INFORMATION ITEMS</p>	
	<p>(a) DSG BUDGET MONITORING MONTH 8 Officers had advised that a monitoring report was unlikely to be provided before May 2023 as officers first needed to establish accurate SEND funding.</p>	CM
	<p>(b) SCHOOL BUDGET SURPLUSES & DEFICITS The Forum requested the school budget information for 2021/22 be provided for the next meeting. Information for maintained schools had been available since spring 2022 and academy information since summer 2022.</p>	CM
	<p>(c) SEND PUPIL PLACE PLANNING There was no written report. The High Needs Group was receiving updates.</p>	VH
	<p>(d) SEND PAYMENTS - DELAYS This had been discussed (see Minute 6(b)) and an update would be provided for the next meeting.</p>	VH/CM
	<p>(e) ILLUSTRATIVE SCHOOL BUDGET SHARES 2023/24 The Forum requested detailed illustrative 2023/24 budgets for individual schools be provided.</p>	CM
9.	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS <u>Trade Union De-Delegation Accounts</u> The Forum had requested the accounts to see how de-delegated trade union income was used. The activity and budget information for the 2021/22 academic year had been provided, and the budget for the 2022/23 academic year. The Forum commented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintained schools provided around 75% of the income for a service which was provided to all schools (maintained and academy). It would be helpful to have a list of schools which bought into the service. • It was noted that in 2022/23 a third GMB representative was in place. Information on 2022/23 activity would be available at the end of the academic year. • The Forum requested that further information on which schools bought into and benefitted from the service be provided when the de-delegation was next discussed by Forum. 	JE

The meeting closed at 3.25pm