

HILLINGDON SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 12 December 2019 at 2pm at the Civic Centre

Voting members

NAME	ORGANISATION	ATTENDANCE
Maintained Nursery (1)		
Ludmila Morris	McMillan Early Childhood Centre	PRESENT
Maintained Primary - Schools (4)		
Rachel Anderson	Dr Triplett's School	PRESENT
Duncan Greig	Breakspear Primary School	PRESENT
Kris O'Sullivan	Deanesfield Primary School	PRESENT
Sophia Shaikh	Grange Park Junior School	ABSENT
Maintained Primary - Governors (4)		
Jim Edgecombe (CHAIR)	Whiteheath Junior School	PRESENT
Tony Eginton	Minet Nursery & Infant School and Hillside Junior School	PRESENT
Phil Haigh	Cherry Lane Primary School and Meadow High School	PRESENT
Jo Palmer	Hillside Infant School and Hillside Junior School	PRESENT
Maintained Secondary (1)		
Liz Horrigan	Harlington School	PRESENT
Maintained Special (1)		
John Goddard	Hedgewood School	PRESENT
Academies (9)		
Aftab Ahmed	Guru Nanak Sikh Academy	APOLOGIES
Bob Charlton	Charville Primary School	PRESENT
Tracey Hemming	Middlesex Learning Partnership	PRESENT
Robert Jones	Haydon School	PRESENT
Helen Manwaring	Swakeleys School	PRESENT
Catherine Modsell	Frays Academy Trust	APOLOGIES
Peter Ryerson	Guru Nanak Sikh Academy	PRESENT
David Patterson	Queensmead School	PRESENT
Sandra Voisey	Laurel Lane Primary School	ABSENT
Special Academies (1)		
Sudhi Pathak	Eden Academy Trust	PRESENT
Alternative provision (1)		
Laurie Cornwell	The Skills Hub	APOLOGIES
Private Voluntary & Independent Early Years Providers (2)		
Elaine Caffary	4 Street Nursery	APOLOGIES
Lesley Knee	Ruislip Methodist Preschool	PRESENT
14-19 Partnership (1)		
(vacant)		

Other attendees (non-voting)

Independent Non-Maintained Special School		
Debbie Gilder	Pield Heath School	APOLOGIES
Shadow Representative (Maintained Primary - Schools)		
Rachel Blake	Whiteheath Infant School	NOT REQUIRED
Shadow Representative (Maintained Primary - Governor)		
John Buckingham	Glebe Primary School	NOT REQUIRED
Graham Wells	Colham Manor Primary School	PRESENT
Local Authority Officers		
Kate Boulter	Clerk	PRESENT
Steve Denbeigh	LA Finance	PRESENT
Dan Kennedy	Director Housing Environment Education Performance Health & Wellbeing	PRESENT
Peter Malewicz	Finance Manager - Children and Young People Services	PRESENT
Graham Young	Lead Finance Business Partner - School	APOLOGIES

		ACTION
1.	<p>APOLOGIES</p> <p>Apologies were accepted and recorded in the attendance list (above). The Chair confirmed the meeting was quorate and could proceed to business.</p>	
2.	<p>(a) MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 NOVEMBER 2019</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2019 were agreed as a correct record.</p> <p>(b) MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 NOVEMBER 2019</p> <p><u>Minute 4 – LAC placements</u></p> <p>PM to report to next meeting on whether all LAC placements were into registered homes.</p>	PM
3.	<p>MEMBERSHIP</p> <p>There were longstanding vacancies for two Academy Representatives. A number of rounds of nominations had failed to fill all vacancies, and the Forum had agreed at its September meeting that the Chair and Vice-Chair would identify candidates for co-option to fill the vacancies. The Forum AGREED to co-opt Catherine Modsell and Aftab Ahmed as Academy Representatives.</p>	
4.	<p>FEEDBACK FROM SUB-GROUPS</p> <p>The Forum NOTED the minutes of the DSG/EY Sub-Group held on 26 November 2019 and of the HN Sub-Group held on 4 December 2019.</p>	
5.	<p>DSG BUDGET 2019/20</p> <p>(a) MONTH 7 DSG MONITORING REPORT</p> <p>The Forum considered a monitoring report on the DSG budget 2019/20:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The DSG outturn position was an in-year overspend of £5,092k at Month 7, a favourable movement of £33K on the Month 6 position. When the £8,492k deficit brought forward from 2018/19 was taken into account, the cumulative deficit carry forward to 2020/21 was £13,584k. The overspend was due to continuing pressure in the cost of High Needs placements, where growth remained around 10%. Local provision was at capacity and pupils were being placed in more costly independent and non-maintained special schools, and there was pressure on the cost of SEN transport Recent data suggested that across London the post-19 high needs population was stabilising. A report would be going to the next HN Sub-Group showing the impact on the budget if the cost of Post-19 provision was extracted. <p>Members of the Forum requested that a breakdown of Central Services costs be provided.</p> <p>(b) SCHOOLS QUARTER 2 MONITORING UPDATE</p> <p>The Forum considered a monitoring report on schools' budgets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the end of 2018/19, two schools had a deficit, and thirteen schools had an in-year deficit 91% of maintained schools had submitted budgets for the 2019/20 financial year with an in-year deficit. Currently twenty maintained schools were RAG rated as 'red'. Three of these schools had set a licenced deficit budget. The remainder had set a balanced budget but had very low balances and were expected to experience financial difficulties in 2019/20 due to reductions in pupil numbers and funding not keeping up with year-on-year increases in costs. <p>Members of the Forum commented that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools were allowed to have a surplus of up to 5%/8% and it would be helpful if reports indicated which schools were above, within or below this. 	<p>GY</p> <p>PM</p> <p>PM</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Forum had observed a pattern in previous years of schools setting deficit budgets then reporting a surplus, and the meeting discussed whether schools were being realistic in their budgeting. • Members of the Forum reported that the position felt more challenging this year. Schools, with support from the LA's Finance Team, had been rigorous in their financial management and there were very few areas left where costs could be cut further. It was likely that balances would need to be used. • Schools were having to make difficult decisions to stay within budget and there was concern that spending reductions were impacting on outcomes for children. 	
6.	DSG BUDGET 2020/21	
	<p>(a) BASELINE BUDGET 2020/21</p> <p>The Forum considered a report which provided an update on the DSG 2020/21 base budget requirement, taking into account the 2019/20 position, the estimated growth in high needs pupil numbers and any planned savings, and reversed the one-off transfer of £3,499K from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block in 2019/20. The draft budget showed a shortfall of £7,068K for 2020/21 after additional funding and savings identified in the Deficit Recovery Plan were taken into account.</p> <p>The LA had submitted a disapplication request to the ESFA by the deadline of 29 November 2019 requesting that £7,068K be transferred from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block in 2020/21 in order to set a balanced budget. If the disapplication request was not approved, a deficit budget would need to be set. The timetable for agreeing the budget was very tight: the LA was meeting the DfE on 27 January 2020 and Cabinet would meet on 13 February 2020 to consider the budget. School budgets had to be set by 18 January 2020.</p> <p>Members of the Forum commented that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A version of the budget separating out the post-19 costs should be produced show the impact this was having on funding school age children. • The information sent to schools in January should include two sets of figures to show the budget with and without the disapplication request approved. This would enable schools to prepare for either scenario. <p>(b) DISAPPLICATION REQUEST</p> <p>The Forum considered the Disapplication Request, and supporting documents, for transfer of £7,068K from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block which the LA had submitted to the ESFA on 29 November 2019. The Forum acknowledged that the budgetary position had left the LA with no choice other than to submit the disapplication request if a balanced budget were to be set for 2020/21, however, consultation with schools had elicited very strong views against a transfer being made (see Minute 6c).</p> <p>(c) DSG BUDGET CONSULTATION</p> <p>The Forum considered a summary of the responses received from stakeholders in response to the Schools Block funding for 2020/21 consultation, which took place in November and December 2019. 48 responses had been received: 33 from primary, 12 from secondary and 3 from special schools.</p> <p>Members of the Forum commented that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools understood the High Needs deficit was the result of funding failing to keep pace with demand, particularly the inclusion of post-19 students without commensurate funding having been provided. • The LA had worked in conjunction with the Forum, schools and other stakeholders to identify plans to recover the deficit and manage escalating costs, and it was disappointing that the DfE had rejected the LA's proposals. • Over the years, where permitted, the Forum had agreed temporary and permanent transfers to assist in managing the DSG. • There was a strong message from consultation respondents, and in the LA Finance 	<p>PM</p> <p>PM</p>

Team's quarterly reports on school budgets, that schools were feeling the strain of operating under reduced resources, and could not support further transfers from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block.

- In Hillingdon, very little funding was retained centrally and most was delegated to schools. There was a risk that a large transfer to the High Needs Block could damage the sustainability of some of the Borough's schools.

The consultation had sought views on three areas, which the Forum considered and voted upon in turn:

School Funding Formula

Having been put to a vote, the Forum **AGREED** to distribute the additional funding by increasing pupil led factors by 4% (except for the free school meals factor which would be increased by 1.84%) in line with the changes to the NFF. 65.2% of consultation respondents had supported this view.

Schools Block Transfer

Having been put to a vote, the Forum **AGREED** to support no transfer of funds from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block. The vast majority of consultation respondents (around 95% and above) had indicated they did not support any transfer.

Minimum Funding Guarantee Disapplication

Having been put to a vote, the Forum **AGREED** to support rebase of the Minimum Funding Guarantee, effectively setting it at zero (dependant on the outcome of the disapplication submission). 70.8% of consultation respondents had supported this view.

(d) HIGH NEEDS CONSULTATION (2% THRESHOLD)

The Forum considered a summary of the responses received from stakeholders in response to the consultation, which took place in November and December 2019, on the 2% threshold mechanism for 2020/21. 48 responses had been received: 33 from primary, 12 from secondary and 3 from special schools. Nationally, the number of children in mainstream schools with an EHCP had increased to around 3%, and the increase to the threshold was proposed to bring the schools eligible for additional funding into line with the national average.

Members of the Forum commented that:

- Only 41.7% of consultation respondents had supported increasing the threshold to 2.5%, and only 12.5% had supported an increase to 3%.
- Schools were concerned they could be subjected to a funding decrease if the disapplication request was approved, and additionally have their threshold funding reduced. These combined cuts would damage children with EHCPs in mainstream schools.
- Schools were trying to protect their funding and may have responded differently if they were secure that no transfer would be made from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block.

Having been put to a vote, the Forum **AGREED** to increase the threshold to 2.5% if the disapplication request to transfer between blocks was rejected. If the disapplication request was approved, the threshold would remain at 2%.

(e) DE-DELEGATION CONSULTATION

The DfE required LAs to consult with primary and secondary maintained schools every year about the de-delegation of a number of central budgets. The Forum considered a summary of the responses received from stakeholders to the consultation on the de-delegation for 2020/21, which had taken place in November and December 2019.

A total of 25 responses had been received, all from primary schools. 80% of consultation

	<p>respondents had favoured de-delegation of Trade Union Duties staff cover, and 92% of respondents had favoured de-delegation of Teachers Pensions administration.</p> <p>It having been put to a vote to the respective voting representatives, the Forum AGREED:</p> <p>(1) to de-delegate Trade Union duties staff supply cover costs for secondary schools; (2) to de-delegate Teachers Pension Administration for secondary schools. (3) to de-delegate Trade Union duties staff supply cover costs for primary schools; (4) to de-delegate Teachers Pension Administration for primary schools;</p> <p>(f) GROWTH CONTINGENCY POLICY The Forum considered a proposal to revise the Growth Contingency Policy. There had been a surge in secondary growth and the LA had agreed with schools flexible options for increasing PAN which would address the demand for places without major permanent expansion. The Policy had been amended to reflect the process for accepting pupils above PAN and the funding mechanism that would apply.</p> <p>Members of the Forum commented that a temporary increase of PAN could have implications for Admissions Appeals, and the Policy should be clear that Growth Contingency Funding would not be provided to schools which went over PAN of their own volition without consulting the LA. Officers advised that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary schools had agreed in principle to increase their PAN if there was a need for more places. The LA would monitor demand and only release the additional places where needed. This would occur before National Offer Day which would enable the Admissions Team to offer places based on the revised PAN. • The Growth Contingency Funding would only be given to places commissioned by the LA and would not be provided if a school chose to go over PAN without the LA's prior agreement. The Policy would be amended to reflect this clearly. <p>The Forum AGREED (1) the revised Policy, subject to the above amendment, and (2) that the Policy would be reviewed after one year.</p>	
7.	<p>DEFICIT RECOVERY PLAN</p>	
	<p>(a) ANALYSIS FROM OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES This confidential item is minuted separately.</p> <p>(b) PROPOSED MEETING WITH OTHER SCHOOLS FORUM REPRESENTATIVES PH and PM were exploring setting up a meeting of pan-London Schools Forum officers and school representatives to discuss their shared concerns. Further details would be brought to a future meeting.</p>	
8.	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING It was AGREED that an additional meeting of the Schools Forum would be held on Monday 3 February 2019 at 2pm at the Civic Centre, to consider any issues ahead of Cabinet's approval of the 2020/21 budget.</p>	

The meeting closed at 3.30pm.