



HILLINGDON SCHOOLS FORUM

AGENDA

Tuesday 9th September 2025 at 1pm via TEAMS

Voting Members

NAME	ORGANISATION	TERM ENDS
Maintained Nursery (1)		
Shabana Aslam	McMillan Early Childhood Centre	Sep 2026
Maintained Primary (8)		
Vacancy		
Vacancy		
Kris O'Sullivan	Deanesfield Primary	Sep 2028
Carly Rissen	Colham Manor	Sep 2028
John Buckingham	Glebe School	Sep 2028
Jo Palmer	Hillside Infant & Junior Schools and Minet Junior School	Sep 2028
Tony Eginton	Minet Infant & Nursery Schools and Hillside Junior School	Sep 2028
Phil Haigh	Cherry Lane Primary School & Meadow High School	Sep 2028
Maintained Secondary (1)		
Dan Cowling (VICE CHAIR)	Oak Wood School	Sep 2026
Maintained Special (1)		
Pearl Greenwald	Hedgewood School	Sep 2027
Academies (9)		
Harshindar Buttar	The Park Federation	Sep 2027
John Garner	Ruislip High School	Sep 2026
Nicola Edwards	William Byrd School	Sep 2028
Liam McGillicuddy	Bishopshalt School	Sep 2027
Ben Spinks (CHAIR)	Middlesex Learning Partnership	Sep 2028
Nicola Kelly	Charville Academy	Sep 2029
Roseline Wilkinson	Charville Academy	Sep 2029
Roger Leighton	Partnership Learning Trust	Sep 2029
(vacancy)		
Special Academies (1)		
Sudhi Pathak	Eden Academy Trust	Sep 2026
Alternative Provision (1)		
Paul Chambers	The Skills Hub	Sep 2027
Private, Voluntary & Independent Early Years Providers (2)		
Elaine Caffary	4 Street Nursery	Sep 2028
Naazish Haq	Little Companions	Sep 2027
14-19 Partnership (1)		
Jonathan Jacob	Global Academy	Sep 2028
Diocesan Representative (1)		
Nicola Dallibar	St Andrews C of E Primary	

Other attendees (non-voting)

NAME	REPRESENTING	TERM EXPIRES
Independent Non-Maintained Special School		
Debbie Gilder	Pield Heath School	
Shadow Representatives (Maintained Primary)		
Nicky Bulpett	Ruislip Gardens	Sep 2028
Louise Crook	Coteford Infant School	Sep 2028
	I	
Maintained Special		
Jenny Rigby	Meadow High	Sep 2027
Officers		
Ndenko Asong	LA Strategic Finance Consultant	
Gary Binstead	LA Head of Education & SEND Commissioning	
Helen Boundy	LA (Clerk)	
Luisa Hansen	LA Head of Children's Finance	
Dominika Michalik	LA Assistant Director of SEND & Inclusion	
Nav Minhas	LA School Place Planning Manager	
Abi Preston	LA Director of Education & SEND	
Philip Ryan	LA Portage and Families' Information Service - Service Manager	

Item		Approx. time	Lead	Paper/ Verbal
1.	Welcome, apologies & opening comments		Chair	
2.	Minutes from previous meeting 08.07.2025		Chair	
3. Items for Consultation				
a)	Review Constitution & Membership Review		Chair & AP	Verbal
b)	School Block Transfer (Consultation to run to 26 th September 2025)		AP/NA	
c)	Education Statutory Duties De-delegation		AP/NA	
4. AOB				
	Top Up Payment changes		NA	
5. Next Meeting Date				
	Next meeting will be held on Tuesday 7 th October 2025 @ 1pm (in-person Council Chamber).		Chair	
6. Closing Comments				

Actions from meeting 08.07.25

Item	Action	Lead
Review Constitution for Schools forum & Membership Review	AP/BS/DC will reflect on views of the group and look to return a constitution that provides a balance between the historic memory with a mechanism to allow new voices and new members to join.	AP/BS/DC
Review Constitution for Schools forum & Membership Review	AP to add item to the Constitution regarding the attendance of LA Officers and who is invited to Forums.	AP
Review Constitution for Schools forum & Membership Review	Profile of Schools Forum to be raised with more communications being sent out by the LA.	All
Review Constitution for Schools forum & Membership Review	New Constitution and a transition arrangements will be brought to Schools Forum meeting on 9 th September.	AP
Review Terms of Reference for High Needs & Early Years Sub Group	EC will review Early Years ToR and membership and email AP with comments.	EC
Review Terms of Reference for High Needs & Early Years Sub Group	Groups to meet in September and review/approve their Terms of Reference and membership including identifying new Chairs for the next academic year. Will then bring this back to Forum meeting in October for approval.	HN Group & EY Group
Review Terms of Reference for High Needs & Early Years Sub Group	HB to cancel HN Group scheduled for 17 th July circulate new dates for both HN and EY for September these meetings will focus on ToR's and appointing Chairs.	HB
Training Review & Future Meeting Arrangements	AP to send out a survey regarding training and then arrange training accordingly.	AP
Training Review & Future Meeting Arrangements	HB to share meeting invites for next academic year.	HB
2024-25 DSG Outturn	When reviewing schools block allocations, reports must identify where the £849K is and track where it is to be distributed to ensure visibility and clarity.	NA
2024-25 DSG Outturn	All finance reports must contain greater narrative and details behind the numbers to ensure clarity and transparency for Forum members.	NA/ LH



HILLINGDON SCHOOLS FORUM MINUTES

Tuesday 8th July 2025 at 1pm via TEAMS

Voting Members

NAME	ORGANISATION	Attendance	TERM ENDS
Maintained Nursery (1)			
Shabana Aslam	McMillan Early Childhood Centre	Present	Sep 2026
Maintained Primary (8)			
Kate Needs	Lady Banks	Present	Sep 2027
Kris O'Sullivan	Deanesfield Primary	Present	Sep 2028
Mel Penney	Glebe Primary School	Present	Sep 2027
Carly Rissen	Colham Manor	Present	Sep 2028
John Buckingham	Glebe School	Present	Sep 2028
Jo Palmer	Hillside Infant & Junior Schools and Minet Junior School	Present	Sep 2028
Tony Eginton	Minet Infant & Nursery Schools and Hillside Junior School	Apologies Sent	Sep 2028
Phil Haigh	Cherry Lane Primary School & Meadow High School	Apologies Sent	Sep 2028
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Roseline Wilkinson	Charville Academy	Present	Sep 2029
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Paul Chambers	The Skills Hub	Present	Sep 2027
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Naazish Haq	Little Companions	Present	Sep 2027
14-19 Partnership (1)			
Jonathan Jacob	Global Academy	Apologies Sent	Sep 2028
Representative from the Diocese			
Nicola Dallibar	St Andrews	Present	July 2029

Other attendees (non-voting)

NAME	REPRESENTING	ATTENDANCE	TERM EXPIRES
Independent Non-Maintained Special School			
Debbie Gilder	Pield Heath School	Absent	
Shadow Representatives (Maintained Primary)			
Representative from the Diocese			
Nicky Bulpett	Ruislip Gardens	Present	Sep 2028
Louise Crook	Coteford Infant School	Present	Sep 2028
Graham Wells	Colham Manor Primary School	Present	Sep 2024
Maintained Special			
Jenny Rigby	Meadow High	Apologies Sent	Sep 2027
Officers			
Ndenko Asong	LA Strategic Finance Consultant	Present	
Michael Naughton	Head of Capital Programme Works Service	Present	
Helen Boundy	LA (Clerk)	Present	
Sanjaya Gunatilake	LA Finance Business Partner DSG	Present	
Luisa Hansen	LA Head of Children's Finance	Present	

Dominika Michalik	LA Assistant Director of SEND & Inclusion	Present	
Abi Preston	LA Director of Education & SEND	Present	
Philip Ryan	LA Portage and Families' Information Service - Service Manager	Present	

Item	
1.	Welcome, apologies & opening comments - BS welcomed everyone to the meeting. - Apologies were sent from Phil Haigh and Tony Eginton, these were accepted. - The Chair thanked SF members for nominating him and DC in the roles of Chair and VC of the Schools Forum.
2.	Minutes from previous meeting 25.03.2025 - Clarification to be sought as to whether Jonathan Jacobs from Global Academy is still in post and to remain a member. - Minutes of last SF meeting held on 25.03.25 were AGREED as a true and accurate account. - Actions are listed at the bottom of the agenda, all are complete, with finance items pertaining to future reports.
3a)	<u>Review Constitution for Schools forum & Membership Review</u> - Constitution has not been reviewed since 2013, therefore it is necessary to update constitution. AP has looked at DfE guidance and reviewed other LA's Schools Forum Constitutions to ensure Hillingdon's is in line with others. A draft was shared with BS/DC for their input. Intention for Forum to discuss the proposed changes, ready to adopt it for the new academic year. - AP outlined main changes, numbers of members in each sector to change to accurately reflect the numbers of children in each of these settings. Also remove specific number of governors as the membership is open to both Headteachers and Governors without stipulating numbers. There must be a minimum of one of each type of member (HT/ Gov) within schools members in overall terms. - The constitution would then be reviewed on an annual basis and re-adopted, ensuring that membership reflects correct representation from each sector. Membership numbers are not anticipated to change each year as it is based on one member per 2,500 children in any one setting. - Clear on composition of Schools Forum, how meetings are to be conducted along with clear details of appointment of Chair/Vice Chair and Subgroup Chairs. Voting matrix also attached to ensure clarity for existing and new members. - A Diocesan member is required for the board. Nicola Dallibar from St Andrew's has been nominated by the Diocese and is now a member. <u>Schools Forum Discussion regarding proposed changes:</u> - With the changes proposing a two-term limit to membership, are we not losing expertise and what impact this would have on current members terms of office. Is everything to be reset? - AP confirmed that though the new Constitution would take effect from September, and current terms of office would remain except where there needs to be a reduction in the number of members. - Some sectors e.g. PVLs where there are fewer representatives. - Concern that the forum would be losing longstanding members and the historic knowledge and experience. - AP noted that there are some very long serving members on the Forum for which the LA is very appreciative, though it is important to ensure we have a variety of members over time. For some sectors where representation is less, the incumbent could re-apply for the role. Also, often it is the same people who sit on multiple boards, trying to reduce the pressure on people. - Questions raised about whether terms of office are reset immediately in September and fresh elections take place for everyone? Members felt there were many questions which remained unanswered in regard to the implementation of the new constitution. - Currently inconsistent regarding numbers of governors – specifies numbers for some phases but not all, amended constitution will ensure same approach across all phases and not stipulate numbers of governors (just a minimum of one). - Concern raised that Governors will not have a voice. Strategy to encourage governors to take on an active role, not just through the Governors Exec Group, but to also use our governors network and primary CoGs. Process to be created to ensure membership is accessible for governors. Raising the profile of SF is essential to ensure governors are aware of the forum and something they want to be part of.

	- Queried why the two-term rule was being imposed, members have to be re-elected every 4 years currently. It was discussed that, if that is the case, the elections go via the LA to ensure a transparent process for all sectors where appropriate. - Transition plan for the new constitution needs to be clear, logistics for the changes to be agreed. - Adopting this for starting in September 2025 feels like a quick transition, with too many questions.. - Highlighted that the LA representation in the group should be by invitation only - DC noted that serving 8 years on a board is a long time, new voices and change is good for any board. Also, in the 5 years he has been part of Schools Forum, there have been 9 other new secondary HTs in Hillingdon and none of them has participated in the Forum. MP offered to step down as a voting member of the Maintained Primary group. - AP requested PG and BS confirm which one of them is to be the member as it is not a joint role. – PG confirmed that she would be the named member representing Maintained Special Schools. Response to issues raised - AP reiterated that this was not being rushed but there is a clear intention of starting the new academic year afresh with a new clear constitution and framework with a new way of working for the forum, having this aligned at the same time. AP to provide details of a transition arrangements to implement the new Constitution. - Not significant changes - tweak to numbers of members and amendment around terms of office. - Two term office in principle but with caveat that incumbent could re-nominate themselves for election if there are no other candidates. - Need to have a constitution that has a membership that reflects the numbers of children in the different sectors. This will result in the numbers in some voting groups changing. - Acknowledge unique characteristic of PVI settings, noting DfE guidelines identify that PVI and Post 16 members are nominated by LA - LA Officer attendance will be controlled, a clear mechanism that Forum will agree which relevant officers are to be routinely invited and other appropriate Officers depending on specific agenda items. - BS recognised the importance of SF members having the opportunity to contribute to the review of the constitution. At the same time, it is important for this not to become an agenda item that is continually returned to without resolution. We need to get it agreed in a timely manner so that SF can focus on the actual purpose and decision making of the Forum. Suggested that the wording around election process and terms of office is revisited, with a revised draft to be presented at the next meeting. - Schools Forum is a public meeting, and anyone is welcome to attend, members have voting rights but anyone is welcome to contribute. More information about SF and its work will be shared with stakeholders. Agreed Actions: Action: AP/BS/DC will reflect on views of the group and look to return a constitution that provides a balance between the historic memory with a mechanism to allow new voices and new members to join. Action: AP to add item regarding the regular attendance of LA Officers and who is invited to Forums. Action: Profile of Schools Forum to be raised with more communications being sent out by the LA. Action: New Constitution and transition arrangements will be brought to Schools Forum meeting on 9th September. A vote will be taken.
3b)	Review Terms of Reference for High Needs Sub Group - AP has created a ToR for the High Needs Sub group as these previously did not exist. It is a concise document that outlines the purpose of the group and its remit. Have reviewed other LA's ToR's as a baseline but it is specific to Hillingdon referencing DSG Safety Valve, for example. - Members noted their appreciation for this document, outlines clear expectations and very useful for any new members coming onto the board. Review Terms of Reference for Early Years Group - EC requested clarification to be given around the proposed number of members that will be on the new constitution – currently one maintained nursery and 2 PVI's.

	Action: EC will review Early Years ToR and membership and email AP with comments. - AP noted that upon reviewing the HN and EY subgroup membership, it was difficult to understand what the membership makeup is. - EC clarified that there was a structure to the membership of these groups and previously there was a crossover with ESF funding, but this is no longer the case. - SA as the HT of the only LA maintained nursery asked about membership to the group as their funding works differently to nursery schools that are part of a primary school. Would be helpful to have the maintained sector as part of this. Action: Membership structure for both HN and EY to be reviewed, ensure that the groups adequately represent the different sectors. Action: Sub Groups to meet in September and review/approve their Terms of Reference and membership including identifying new Chairs for the next academic year. Will then bring this back to Forum meeting in October for approval. Action: HB to cancel HN Group scheduled for 17th July, circulate new dates for both HN and EY for September these meetings will focus on ToR's and appointing Chairs.
3c)	Training Review & Future Meeting Arrangements AP outlined that she would welcome any thoughts on what training is required. - Clear induction process for any new members - Meeting dates for next year will be shared, 2/5 meetings will be held in person 7th October and 24th March. - Meeting scheduled for 9th September, will be shorter meeting but will include agenda items around the Schools Block Transfer and general education duties. Wanted members to be aware of this early, have sufficient time for consultation and feedback ahead of voting on these items at the meeting in October. Action: AP to send out a survey regarding training and then arrange training accordingly. Action: HB to share meeting invites for next academic year.
4a)	Schools Balances at 31.03.25 (31.08.24 for Academies) Information papers – providing broader overview with context of other schools. - Provide context of all schools in the borough shows a direction of movement (particularly chart 1) Identify some trends, primary balances are dropping over the last 3 years with a 29% drop year on year, academies appear to be quite stable and maintained secondaries are struggling but are stabilising and significant amount of work is being done in this area. - As of March 2025, a further 5 schools have gone into deficit budget bringing the total number of schools in Hillingdon to 12. Schools Finance is actively working with these schools to support them in recovering this position. - Reiterated if any schools feel they need any additional support from the finance team – reach out. Response from Forum Members - LM felt this was a very rudimentary way of looking at figures, Bishopshalt have money that is tied up in loan repayments over the next 10 years, some caution needs to be paid than just looking at bank balances, as it's unrestricted but ring fenced. - BS also noted that the data is an interesting snapshot but limited without school context. Barnhill's figures, for example, have moved significantly as the 25 year PFI contract has come to a close. Also, some schools are carrying historical deficits (through no fault of those currently involved) these figures skew the overall numbers. - BS raised issue of falling roles and impact falling rolls will have on finances, has there been any projections done on these numbers? NA confirmed that a projection of falling rolls are monitored and place planning work closely with schools to ensure are supported if pupil numbers are dropping. A School Organisation Plan is updated annually by the LA and is a useful document for projections of numbers, helps schools plan accordingly. - The figures highlight the significant financial issues that will occur within 3 years if they continue at the current rate. As a Forum we should be actively communicating these figures more widely. Funding is not adequate for schools and the data cannot be ignored. - AP noted that this year's School Organisation Plan projections are being finalised and Hillingdon is fortunate that it is not closing any schools due to pupil numbers like other boroughs are doing but are monitoring pupil numbers very closely. - Several schools have completed some large building projects recently, which has used up significant amount of reserves - this looks like a negative trend on schools' balances but there is a context behind them.
4b)	2024-25 DSG Outturn Overall, a positive outcome, with a significant improvement from where we were. Currently we have a total deficit in High Needs of a £65.7m at the end of the financial year. The aspirational in-year deficit we were working towards was £16m but the final

	position was lower at £14.8m (a 40% improvement from where we ended last year) Significant work done behind the scenes to reach these numbers and working closely with schools. • The deficit has been reduced as the service continues to improve outcomes for children whilst still reducing the deficit. The EHC team have worked with schools to avoid using high cost independent placements where alternative maintained settings can meet needs. The number of EHCPs have been reduced through the annual review process as young people have moved into employment or met outcomes. The LA has a much stronger grip on its spending without denying a young person provision. • DSG is currently ring fenced, separate from the Council's budget, referred to as the statutory override, which government has announced will stay in place for a further two years (if this was removed, as was planned, many LAs would have been made bankrupt). • Government is expecting LAs to bring their budgets in line with expenditure within two years – further reforms and White Paper are expected shortly. • A lot of the pressure is around the high needs and there is an overspend in the Central Services Block. • Papers that come to Forum this year will clearly show how funds are distributed around the Central services block allocation. Response from Forum • As with the first paper, some additional narrative around the figures would be useful. • Two figures that immediately stand out is a £849K underspend in the schools block and a £1m overspend in central services. • Significant concern raised that the £849K for the Growth Fund allocation could have been distributed to schools, was this just swallowed up in reducing the DSG deficit? Money should have been apportioned to schools more accurately. • As Schools Forum didn't agree a growth fund this year, there shouldn't be any underspend in 25/26. Were the initial projections wrong and it further illustrates the point that we need papers to be given to Forum that provide a context as well as the numbers. • Item raised about the Growth Fund not being required and concern that this funding will go into the High Needs deficit. Appreciate direction of travel but need greater information behind the numbers to have an informed discussion and decision making. • Central services block has a £1.1m overspend on a £2.5m budget (40% overspend) without the narrative, unclear as to what has caused this. • SG clarified that any underspend in the Schools Block is not set against the High Needs block. The forum has the option of re-allocating funds to schools in their next budget setting opportunity. It is not something that schools have lost. NA can provide a breakdown of the growth plans/payments for 2024-25. Action: NA to review schools block allocations, identify where the £849K is and track where it is to be distributed to ensure visibility and clarity. Action: All finance reports must contain greater narrative and details behind the numbers to ensure clarity and transparency for Forum members.
4c)	2025-26 Schools Maintenance Programme Michael Naughton went through slides for the School Conditions Programme. • 31 Community Schools – Capital Funding. Not impact academies or voluntary aided schools. • Fund is for fabric, mechanical, electrical and associated areas of the school. • Outlined the eligible capital works in the project and what revenue expenditure is not qualified. • Condition of the estate survey undertaken – inform for future programmes of work.- accurate survey of measured survey. AP reminded members that all schools undertaking any building works must inform the LA and seek permission as the freeholder. Essentially maintained schools but also academies who have long term leases in place where the LA is the freeholder (previously maintained schools but does not apply to foundation schools). This relates to structural works – additional buildings/expansion not general maintenance.
4d)	Threshold Funding for Mainstream Schools • An information report for Schools Forum showing the funding allocations for non-statutory threshold funding for schools with high numbers of EHCPs. Last year the threshold for additional funding was 3.5% to support those with disproportionate amounts of pupils with EHCPs. (It is not applicable to special schools). • BS asked for confirmation as to whether the threshold of 3.5% might change

	- AP confirmed that the threshold is likely to increase, continue to monitor national trends as this funding is to provide additional funding to top up the difference where it's exceptional. - Reminded that this falls under non statutory funding – there is no obligation, but the LA feels is the right thing to do. If we were unable to do the schools block transfer, then all non-statutory funding would be paused.
	Next meeting will be held on Tuesday 9 th September (online).
6. Closing Comments – BS thanked everyone for their time and participation, wished them well for the summer and dates for meetings next year will be circulated.	

Actions from meeting 08.07.25

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2024-25 DSG Outturn	All finance reports must contain greater narrative and details behind the numbers to ensure clarity and transparency for Forum members.	NA/ LH

Hillingdon Schools Forum Constitution

September 2025



HILLINGDON
LONDON

www.hillingdon.gov.uk

Constitution for the Hillingdon Schools Forum

September 2025

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1. Powers and Responsibilities

Hillingdon Schools Forum is set up under the requirements of Section 47A of the School Standards & Framework Act 1998, in compliance with the requirements of the [Schools Forums \(England\) Regulations 2012](#). Where any procedural matter relating to the working of the Forum is not specifically covered in the Constitution, the [Schools Forums: Operational and Good Practice Guidance](#), issued by the Department for Education (DfE) in December 2015 (or the latest version thereof) shall apply.

The Constitution will be reviewed annually, in the summer term. This will include reviewing the proportionality of membership against the January School Census data.

The Schools Forum is a statutory consultative body, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. It is not a committee of the Council and therefore sits outside the legislation relating to Council Committees. Its powers and responsibilities have been defined by the Department for Education (DfE): [Schools forum powers and responsibilities](#).

2. Purpose and strategy

The purpose of Schools Forum is to oversee financial decision making in relation to funds designated for the benefit of all pupils in Hillingdon. Schools Forum oversees all aspects of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), including funding for high needs and Early Years.

Schools Forum will be effective if:

- School leaders have confidence that the Dedicated Schools Grant for Hillingdon is being deployed to provide the most value possible for all pupils in state-funded schools.
- School leaders have confidence in decisions made by the Forum, and feel they have been given clear, timely and suitable opportunities to make their views known on matters that affect them.
- Members of Schools Forum feel they have benefitted from their time as members through the learning and development available to them.

3. General Principles of Conduct

In carrying out their duties in respect of Schools Forum, Members will be expected to observe the following Nolan Principles of conduct.

Selflessness

Members should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. Members should serve only the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage on any person or individual school.

Integrity

Members should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties. Members should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned, should not behave improperly and should on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, members should make choices on merit.

Accountability

Members are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office. Members should be accountable for their actions and the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities, and should co-operate fully and honestly with any scrutiny appropriate to their role

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Should any member of Schools Forum be found to have committed a serious breach of any of the seven principles in any dimension of their professional role, whether in relation to matters relating to Schools Forum or in any other matter, that member may be subject to a motion of censure by the Forum:

This may only be considered in relation to the most serious matters.

A breach may only be established by prior investigation under formal powers (e.g. safeguarding, council complaint procedures, DfE, Ofsted).

- Any member of the Forum may propose a motion in relation to a breach of conduct, which must be made in writing to the Clerk. (see section 3.4).
- A decision must be taken by the local authority within a calendar month whether to allow the motion to be proposed to a vote by the Forum at a formal meeting.

- The local authority, having decided to allow the motion to be proposed, must first seek the resignation from the Forum of the member subject to the motion, and must do so at least ten working days before a meeting agenda is published containing such a motion.
- A member who impedes the ability of the Forum to take decisions by non-attendance may be asked to resign.

4. Composition of Hillingdon Schools Forum

Regulations prescribe that:

- School and academy members must make up at least two-thirds of the membership of the Schools Forum
- Representation for each sector must be proportionate to the number of pupils in the sector and will be reviewed annually based on January census data of pupil numbers. This review will take place in the July meeting
- School representation may be provided by Headteachers, Governors or representatives of either.

In accordance with the regulations, the Schools Forum must comprise of members from maintained schools, academies (if they exist) and non-school members. School members and Academies members must comprise at least two thirds of the membership of the Schools Forum and at least one member must be a representative of the governing bodies of maintained schools and at least one member must be a representative of the headteachers of maintained schools. *For the maintained primary sector, a minimum of 50% of members must be Headteachers. Ideally a similar proportion of representatives for academies to maintained settings would be preferable, however, academies can decide to put forward any representative, therefore, this will be guidance for academies only.*

The determination of the number of school representatives on Schools Forum will be based on the proportionality of pupil numbers in schools within a given category when compared to the total number of pupils in schools.

To become a member of the Schools Forum, the relevant group is responsible for electing their own representative.

The membership of the Schools Forum is set out in the following table:

Type	No. of reps	Number of pupils	Elected by
Maintained School members - 9 (min 50% Headteachers for Maintained)			
Nursery	1	n/a	Automatic
Primary/ Infant/ Junior	6	15,930	Primary Forum
Secondary	1	2,655	HASH
Special	1	474	Agreed between the 2 x schools
Academy members - 14			
Primary /Infant/Junior	4	10,371	Formal election process with academy schools
Secondary	8	19,836	
Special	1	664	Formal election process with special academies
Alternative Provision	1	45	Automatic
Non-School members - 4			
PVIs	2	4920 (approx.)	Local Authority
14 – 19 Partnership	1	n/a	
Diocesan Representative	1	n/a	
Total	27		

(1:2500 pupils)

4.1 Conduct of elections

In the conduct of elections, all persons eligible to stand for Schools Forum must be given a reasonable opportunity to stand:

- A communication must be delivered to all eligible institutions who must be given a window of opportunity to express an interest in standing for office.
- Notice of the opportunity to stand must also be published by the local authority and in regular communications to all schools.
- If the number of persons expressing an interest in standing for election does not exceed the number of available places, no ballot will be held.
- If a ballot is held, this must be conducted by email and not in a general meeting, and the voting record of individuals must remain confidential.
- Ballots will be counted by the Clerk and Director of Education & SEND. The candidate with the most votes will be elected, followed by the next most votes, continuing until all available positions are filled. Any remaining candidates will not be elected.

4.2 Conduct of School members elections

Primary maintained schools

The Clerk to the Forum will write to all Headteachers and Clerks inviting nominations (either via the weekly briefing or directly). Nominations must be submitted to the Clerk to the Forum. Once received, all nominations for Headteachers and governors will be shared with Primary

Forum who will vote (maintained schools only) for the representatives for primary maintained schools.

Academies

The Clerk to the Forum will write to all Headteachers and Chairs of Governors/Trustees of Hillingdon academies (either via the weekly briefing or directly) to alert them to the vacancies and request nominations. Secondary academy representatives will be selected via an election process by HASH. For primary academy representatives, Primary Forum will manage the election process.

Special Schools

The Clerk to the Forum will write to the Headteacher and Chairs of Governors/Trustees of Hillingdon special school academies (either via the weekly briefing or directly) to invite self-nomination. An election will be run by the LA with special academy schools to select the representative. For maintained special schools, as there are only two maintained special schools in the borough, the schools will decide who is best to be represented as a member.

4.3 Conduct of Non-Schools members elections

Non-Schools members refers to:

- PVI's representatives
- 14-19 representatives
- Diocese representatives

Private, Voluntary and Independent Providers (PVI)

The Head of Education Improvement & Partnerships will write to all Hillingdon PVI members to invite self-nominations. A ballot will be undertaken at the Early Years Sub-Group.

14-19 Partnership

The Clerk to the Forum will write to the Principals of 14-19 settings which serve the locality. The LA will identify the representative from nominations put forward.

Diocesan Representative

The Head of Education Improvement & Partnerships will write to the Diocese to ask for the representative they wish to put forward.

5. Membership

5.1 Terms of Office

Members are representatives not delegates. They should act in accordance with what they consider to be the best interests of Hillingdon's children and young people. A forum member remains in office until:

- a. The member's term of office expires. In accordance with this constitution, this is 4 years from the anniversary date of appointment.
- b. The member ceases to hold the office by virtue of which the member became eligible for election, selection or appointment to the forum
- c. In the case of a non-school member, the member is replaced by the local authority, at the request of the body which the member represents, by another person nominated by that body.
- d. The member fails to attend at least 3 meetings within the annual meeting cycle running from September through to August
- e. The member resigns, providing 1 months' notice
- f. A member has served two terms (2 x 4 years) or more, at which point an election will take place. Members who have served two terms or more can be nominated again, however, new members will be prioritised over those members who have served two terms or more, to enable a broad representation across the settings and a range of contributions from different members.

5.2 Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair

Schools Forum will need to elect a Chair and Vice-Chair in the first meeting at the beginning of the academic year running from September through to August. The Schools Forum must elect a Chair from amongst its own members, so it is not possible to elect an independent Chair. In addition any elected member of the local authority or officer of the local authority who is a member of a Schools Forum may not hold the office of Chair.

The Chair and Vice-Chair will remain in office for two years from the date of election unless:

- a) The member ceases to hold the office by virtue of which the member became eligible for election, selection or appointment to the forum
- b) The member resigns, providing 1 months' notice

The Chair and Vice Chair can remain in post for up to two terms (four years), following elections, if members vote to agree to a second term. Following this period, the Chair and Vice Chair should change to an alternative member.

A local authority officer will be responsible for the conduct of any election required. The method for voting will be confirmed at the meeting, usually by a confidential ballot.

Only voting members of the Forum can be elected as Chair or Vice Chair.

At any meeting where both the Chair and Vice Chair are absent the Forum shall elect, from those voting members present, a person to take the Chair for that meeting only.

The Chair and / or the Vice-Chair may be removed from office by a majority of votes cast by secret ballot. Any call for a ballot to remove the Chair and / or Vice-Chair must be made in writing, signed by at least 25% of the total voting membership and received by the Clerk at least 7 days in advance of the meeting at which the ballot would be taken. The Clerk must advise the Chair and Vice Chair immediately any such motion is received.

5.3 Local Authority officers and elected members

Professional advice to the Forum will be provided by officers of the local authority who will be entitled to attend and speak at meetings of the Forum and any sub-groups/ task and finish groups that it convenes. Local Authority officers do not have voting rights.

Regular attendees of LA officers will be:

- Director of Education & SEND
- Assistant Director of SEND & Inclusion
- Head of Education & SEND Commissioning
- Head of Education Improvement & Partnerships
- Finance Business Partner
- Head of Children's Finance
- Clerk

Other LA officers will attend the forum meetings as appropriate, depending on the agenda and items to be discussed.

Executive members with responsibility for education/children's services or resources of the local authority are able to participate in Schools Forum meetings. By doing so such elected members are able to contribute to the discussion and receive first-hand the views of the Schools Forum. The regulations provide the right for executive members to attend and speak at Schools Forum meetings. However, there is no requirement for this to happen. There should be clear channels of communication between the Schools Forum and executive members.

5.4 Appointment of Sub-Group Chairs

In the event that Schools Forum sets up subgroups, Schools Forum will need to elect a Chair at the meeting where it was decided to set up such a sub group.

The Chair of the Subgroup will remain in office for two years from the date of election unless:

- a) The member ceases to hold the office by virtue of which the member became eligible for election, selection or appointment to the forum
- b) The sub group is no longer required
- c) The member resigns, providing 1 months' notice

5.5 Changes to membership:

- If a member is moving from their current school, they must inform the Schools Forum Clerk who will advise on whether this will affect their ability to continue as a member of Schools Forum.
- A member will be seen as a non-attender when they have failed to attend three consecutive meetings. At this stage, their position will be advertised as a vacancy and the nomination process will begin.
- Where a member has resigned, or been deemed to resign, a nomination and election process will be held within a 3 month period following the resignation. Their membership will be ratified at the first meeting following their election.
- Membership will be reviewed each July following the school census where any changes will be reflected.

5.6 Quorum & substitute members

For meetings to be quorate, at least 40% of members (excluding vacancies) must be present. Schools Forum may not legally take decisions when it is not quorate. Voting methods will be confirmed within each meeting.

If a member is unable to attend a meeting, they may send a representative on their behalf to act as a substitute. Substitute members will have the same constitutional powers and responsibilities as full members.

It is the responsibility of the elected representative to:

- Notify their substitute if they are unable to attend a meeting.
- To forward any papers and meeting invites to the substitute.
- Notify the Forum Clerk that their substitute is attending on their behalf at least 2 working days before the meeting.

6. Conduct of Meetings

6.1 Agenda and documentation

- The agenda will be agreed at a pre-meeting of the Chair, Vice Chair and local authority officers, held at least 10 working days prior to the meeting. All items for the agenda must be raised and agreed in the pre-meeting.
- Members wishing to add items to the agenda should notify the Chair, Vice Chair or clerk one month before the meeting.
- Agendas, including relevant papers, will be published at least 5 working days prior to the meeting, via the Schools Forum pages of the local authority website and via email to members.
- Reports to the Schools Forum should be submitted using the standard template which indicates the purpose of the item and which members are eligible to vote if applicable.

The Schools Forum should set its own agenda within the remit as set out in the regulations. A forward plan will be in place to detail the key items that will be presented at each meeting. Additional items can be agreed through the pre-meetings or via agreement in forum meetings. Meeting dates will be set at/ by the last meeting of the academic year for the next academic year.

The Schools Forum must meet at least **four** times in a year, where the timing and location of meetings should be determined by the Schools Forum.

Meetings should take place in public, although confidential items, such as commercially sensitive information regarding contracts, may be considered in private with the agreement of the forum.

The Regulations provide that the Secretary of State can appoint an observer to attend and speak at Schools Forum meetings, e.g. a representative from the Department for Education (DfE). This allows a conduit for national policy to be discussed at a local level and provide access for Schools Forum to an additional support mechanism, e.g. where there are highly complex issues to resolve.

6.2 Frequency

The Forum will meet formally at least four times a year.

Meeting dates will be set at the last meeting of the academic year for the next academic year.

Dates will be set to fit with key decision points in the year. Forum members may be invited to join informal meetings for the purposes of CPD.

Where necessary, additional meetings may be called. This includes Task and Finish groups for specific pieces of work. The Forum will agree clear terms of reference for such groups, using a standard template.

6.3 Record of meetings

The meeting record will include formal minutes of the meeting and a record of actions. These will include:

- Details of any papers presented before or during the meeting
- Details of attendees, and any declarations of interest
- Main discussion points
- Decisions and actions
- Voting record
- Details of subsequent meetings

These will be published within 10 working days of the meeting, via the [Schools Forum](#) pages of the local authority website, following sign-off by the Chair.

Notification of decisions made in Schools Forum meetings will be included in the weekly Schools Bulletin circulated to all Hillingdon schools and governing bodies.

The minutes will be ratified at the next formal meeting of the Schools Forum.

Meetings will be recorded in line with the process for public meetings.

Although the business of Schools Forums must be open and transparent, it is recognised that from time to time items of a confidential nature will need to be discussed.

7. Urgent matters

- Where the Chair or Local Authority identifies an urgent issues / proposal needs to be considered outside the planned meetings, members may be consulted via email.
- The Chair & Vice Chair may also give a view to the Local Authority on an urgent issue but have no power to take a decision on behalf of the Forum in any circumstances.
- If a decision is needed outside of the planned meeting, the Chair may call an additional meeting to discuss the urgent issue and make a decision. The additional meeting will be held in public and every effort will be made to ensure that as much notice as possible is given and papers published ahead of the meeting.

8. Support to the Schools Forum

8.1 Clerk to the meetings

Hillingdon Council will provide a Clerk to support the Schools Forum. The Clerk will work with the Chair, Vice Chair and local authority officers to arrange and support meetings, including additional meetings of the Forum as the need is identified. This includes:

- Meeting invitations for members
- Publication of meeting details via the Schools Forum website
- Collation and publication of papers prior to meetings
- Preparation and publication of minutes
- Managing the voting process (private or public) at meetings
- Advertising membership vacancies
- Overseeing the nomination, election and ratification of new members
- Providing new members with the relevant information to support them in undertaking the role
- Preparing communications for schools and providing written updates to be published in the weekly Schools Bulletin
- Ensuring up to date information about the Forum is available via the Schools Forum website.

8.2 Training and development

In order to be effective in their role, a member of Schools Forum should have a good understanding of financial management as it relates to education. This understanding is not assumed, and all members of Schools Forum have the right to expect that good learning and development opportunities be made available to them to enable them to meet their obligations.

Hillingdon Council will provide:

- An induction pack to newly appointed Schools Forum members
- A programme of learning and development in relation to financial management for Schools Forum members to access on a voluntary basis.
- Information about relevant learning and development opportunities available to Schools Forum members including, but not exclusively, the programme provided by the Department for Education (DfE).
- Opportunities for staff employed in education in Hillingdon who are not members of Schools Forum to be informed about the workings of the group, and about financial matters generally.

9. Functions

9.1 Consultation on financial issues

The London Borough of Hillingdon must consult the Schools Forum annually in respect of the authority's functions relating to the schools budget, in connection with the following:-

- a) amendments to the school funding formula;
- b) arrangements for the education of pupils with special educational needs;
- c) arrangements for the use of pupil referral units and the education of children otherwise than at school;
- d) arrangements for early years provision;
- e) administrative arrangements for the allocation of central government grants paid to schools via the authority

9.2 Consultation on contracts

The London Borough of Hillingdon must consult the forum, at least one month prior to the issue of invitations to tender, on the terms of any proposed contract for supplies or services (being a contract paid or to be paid out of the schools budget) where the estimated value of the proposed services contract is not less than the specified threshold which applies to Hillingdon in pursuance of Regulation 8 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006.

9.3 Powers under Department for Education regulations

Schools Forums generally have a consultative role. However, there are situations in which they have decision-making powers. The overarching areas on which Schools Forums make decisions on local authority proposals are:

- a) De-delegation from mainstream school budgets (approval will be required by the relevant phase members of Schools Forum), for prescribed services to be provided centrally.
- b) To create a fund for significant pupil growth in order to support the local authority's duty for place planning and agree the criteria for maintained schools and Academies to access this fund.
- c) Funding for prescribed historic commitments where the effect of delegating this funding would be destabilising.
- d) Funding for the local authority in order to meet prescribed statutory duties placed upon it. Approval is required to confirm the amounts for each duty and no new commitments or increases in expenditure from 2014/15 are permitted.
- e) Funding for central early years expenditure, which will include funding for checking eligibility of pupils for an early years place and/or free school meals.
- f) Authorising a reduction in the schools budget in order to fund a deficit arising in central expenditure that is to be carried forward from a previous funding period.

In each of these cases, the local authority can appeal to the DfE if the Schools Forum rejects its proposal.

10. Support for Schools Forum

Hillingdon Council will provide a Clerk to support the Schools Forum

The Clerk will work with the Chair, Vice Chair and local authority officers to arrange and support meetings, including additional meetings of the Forum as the need is identified.

10.1 The treatment of forum costs in relation to the LA's budgetary arrangements.

The costs of administering the forum and any expenses reimbursed or the costs of any work commissioned by the Schools Forum will be a charge against the Schools' Budget for the year.

11. Register of Interests

All members of the Schools Forum are required to provide and maintain their entry in the register of interests.

Appendix 1: London Borough of Hillingdon Schools Forum Member Roles & Voting

De-delegation Primary	De-delegation Secondary	Schools Block Transfer to High Needs	Scheme for financing schools	Schools Funding Formula	Central spend – pupil growth/ falling rolls	General Duties	Retained Duties	Central spend – EY, CSSB	last updated 2025	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
Voting									Phase	Role
Schools Members										
		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	Maintained nursery	Head
x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	Maintained Primary	Head/ Gov
	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	Maintained Secondary	Head
			x	x	x	x	x	x	Maintained Special	Head/ Gov
Academies Members										
		x		x	x		x	x	Primary Academy	Head
		x		x	x		x	x*	Secondary Academy	Head/ Gov
							x	x*	Special Academy	Finance Rep
							x	x*	Alternative Provision	Head
Non-School Members										
								x	PVI	Head
								x*	14-19	Head
Other Attendees										
No voting rights									INMSS	Finance rep
									Shadow reps	Head

*for CSSB only

Appendix 2: Weblinks

Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012 - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/2261/contents/made>

Schools Forums: Operational and Good Practice Guidance - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-forums-operational-and-good-practice-guide-2015>

Schools forum powers and responsibilities -

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/971711/2021_Schools_forums_powers_and_responsibilities.pdf

Schools Forum - <https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/schools-forum>

	London Borough of Hillingdon Schools Forum Meeting 9 September 2025
Title	Schools Block Transfer to High Needs Block for 2026/27
Agenda Item	3b
Report by	Abi Preston, Ndenko Asong, Luisa Hansen
Appendices	N/A
Recommendation(s)	☐ Information ☒ Consultation ☐ Decision

1. Purpose

To vote on 1% Schools Block transfer to High Needs Block for 2026/27.

2. Context

The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is the main funding grant for Schools and Academies in England and Wales. It is made up of four blocks as follows:

- Schools Block
- High Needs Block
- Early Years Block
- Central Services School Block

The grant is subject to complex and detailed regulations which specify how this funding should be utilised and reported upon and where transfers between Blocks are possible. In the case of Schools Block to the High Needs Block (HNB), transfers above 0.5% are subject to an approval process which requires Schools Forum consultation first then a disapplication submission to the Secretary of State for approval. This process is called a Disapplication and must be submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) in November 2025 (awaiting the latest release of the High Needs Operational Guidance to have confirmation on the date for this academic year).

[High needs funding: 2025 to 2026 operational guide - GOV.UK](#) states that ‘*The Schools Forum must be consulted on all transfers between Blocks. The Schools Block is ringfenced which means that this Block must be spent for the purposes specified in the conditions of grant. Local Authorities retain the ability to transfer up to 0.5% of funding out of the Schools Block, with the agreement of the Schools Forum. Formal permission from the Secretary of State (a disapplication of the DSG conditions of grant) will be required for transfers out of the Schools Block above 0.5%, or any amount without Schools Forum approval. This applies to any transfers even if approval has been given in previous years. Local Authorities should consult with local maintained schools and academies. The Schools Forum should take these views into account before making their decision.*’

The London Borough of Hillingdon (LBH), like a large number of Local Authorities in England, is incurring extreme pressure on their HNB expenditure as a combined result of a number of factors including rising numbers of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and rising costs within the independent sector and low levels of HNB funding increases over a number of years. As a result of these pressures, and a growing cumulative deficit, LBH entered into a Safety Valve agreement with the DfE to bring the overspends under control over a five-year period. Part of this recovery plan has been the assumption that Block transfers from the Schools Block to the

HNB would be undertaken for a number of years to fund statutory and non-statutory services to schools. In 2025/26, a transfer was approved at 0.5% which equated to £1.50m.

The DfE suspended the Safety Valve funding agreement in March 2024, as a result of the historic deficit. LBH has been negotiating with the DfE to move forward and reinstate payments. In May 2025, LBH received validation from the DfE, stating that: *“We commend you on the significant progress that has been achieved in Hillingdon and your rigorous approach to providing a high quality, financially sustainable SEND service.”*

It is hoped the DfE will reinstate the outstanding Safety Valve payments imminently. However, the DfE’s expectation is that LBH uses the transfer process to fund services to schools, which will support to ease the pressure on the HNB.

3. Statutory Override

What the Statutory Override Does

The statutory override currently allows Councils to exclude SEND-related DSG deficits from their general balance sheets, preventing these deficits from triggering Section 114 notices. The statutory override for the DSG was introduced in 2020 and its purpose was to allow local authorities to exclude DSG deficits - primarily driven by High Needs SEND spending - from their main revenue budgets. This accounting treatment was designed to prevent Councils from breaching their legal duty to set a balanced budget and avoid triggering Section 114 notices.

Initially, the override applied to the financial years 2020/21 to 2022/23, but it has since been extended multiple times, most recently to cover up to and including the 2027/28 financial year, with the override now set to expire in March 2028. It is expected that Councils reach a balanced budget by March 2028 as, once the override ends, accumulated DSG deficits will count against Councils’ usable reserves.

SEND reforms are expected to be announced in Autumn 2025, in light of the challenges and pressures the system faces. It is not yet known what these reforms may look like.

4. Hillingdon Position

The local area is working hard to improve outcomes whilst working towards a more financially sustainable position. There have been many successes to date, whereby outcomes have improved whilst the in-year deficit position has reduced:

- The net growth of EHCPs was -1% during 2024, which is a significant reduction when compared with 7% growth reported in 2023 and 8% growth in 2022.
- Every step of the Education Health Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA) journey to EHCP in LBH is above national, and in some cases significantly. LBH achieved 90.8% compliance in 2024 (56.5% reported in 2023) for statutory timelines excluding exceptions vs London 66.9%, and national 46.4%.
- LBH is below national for SEND children absences, persistent absence, authorised and severely absent, as well as approximately 50% lower for suspensions compared to national figures.
- LBH had 0% permanent exclusions vs London 0.2%, national 0.04%.
- At the end of the financial year 2024/25, LBH had 3521 EHCPs compared with FY end 2023/24, at 3441 EHCPs. This data considers the growth in new plans, movers in and ceasing of plans. In December 2023, the projection for EHCP numbers after Safety Valve

initiatives was set to grow at 3740 EHCPs by 2024/25, therefore, the service has successfully managed to reduce demand of plans by a further 219 more plans than originally projected. This has predominantly been as a result of young people achieving their outcomes and/ or moving into employment opportunities.

- There has been a 6% increase in the timeliness of the 6 weeks decision to assess compared to last year.
- The number of ceased plans due to moving to the paid employment has increased to 44 compared to 21 last year (110% increase).
- The number of ceased plans due to educational and training needs met without plan has increased to 25 compared to 12 last year (108% increase).
- The revised banding model for mainstream schools successfully launched in September 2024 and the new special school banding model launched in April 2025. This was independently led and co-produced by schools. Along with a new funding model, the banding frameworks now mean the Local Area has a fairer, more transparent, efficient and effective high needs funding system across Hillingdon that supports delivery of the ambitions within Hillingdon's SEND & AP Strategy.
- Commissioners have a new Dynamic Purchasing System for Alternative Provision providers, aiming to increase options for children, improve market influence, and ensure value for money, with additional projects enhancing collaboration, mediation, and cost scrutiny.

5. Financial Position

As at end of March 2025, the funding paid to independent settings had been reduced by 15% when compared to March 2023 with a total cost of £13m making up 24% of DfE funding allocated to LBH compared to 33% in March 2023. There were over 400 active placements in independent settings at the start of the 2022/23 costing an average of £49k per placement. By the end of 2024/25, the number of placements in independent provisions had been reduced to approximately 263 placements at an average cost of £54k. The increase in average cost is as a result of only the most complex of needs being met in independent settings with fewer children and young people now meeting this criterion.

LBH maintains a sharp focus to continue to reduce the DSG High Needs Block deficit earlier than forecasted. Some of the full impact of savings will be seen from 2025/26 onwards, due to the lag between the implementation of service improvements and the benefit realisation in cash terms.

LBH's break even in-year financial outlook is stable, evidenced by the team's progress to date, exceeding the set original projections. A revised projection sees the LA achieving an in-year balance in 2027/28.

The HNB funds all elements of provision within an EHCP above the notional funding. Significant progress has been made to operate more efficiently whilst meeting children and young people's assessed needs, however, the pressure on the HNB is beyond a Council responsibility alone. It is impacted by many other factors.

It is important to note that all of the work to date to reduce costs against projections has led to significant decrease in the in-year deficit position:

2023-24 - **£28.7m** in-year deficit

2024-25 - **£14m** in-year deficit

The proposal this year is requesting a Schools Block transfer of 1% to the HNB. This is due to the continued pressure on the budget, which has to be brought in line with the budget envelope by March 2028, when the override is removed. The focus for the HNB is to ensure the statutory duties

are met in line with the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice 2015. LBH currently offers a range of non-statutory funding to schools to support early intervention. This is a priority for LBH and outcomes are monitored to ensure it is having an impact. However, LBH cannot afford to continue to offer this non-statutory funding, without the Schools Block transfer.

The non-statutory funding provided to schools currently is as follows:

- SENDEX - paused in 2025/26
- Early Support Funding
- Notional Threshold funding

The spend on each of the non-statutory funding streams is as follows:

Non-statutory area	2023-24 £'000	2024-25 £'000
SENDEX	212	136
Early Support Funding	797	580
Notional Threshold funding	1,338	800
SAS service	1,446	2,556
Total	3,793	4,072

Many LAs do not provide non-statutory funding, however, LBH understands the value that the above non-statutory funding provides to our schools and the significant impact that will be caused if removed. It is hoped that schools will support this important transfer in order to for them to continue to be available to schools.

6. Proposed Disapplication for 2026/27

LBH is proposing to submit a disapplication request of 1% to the Secretary of State which will transfer circa £3m¹ from the Schools Block to the HNB.

The table below outlines the projected expenditure should no action be taken, the impact of the savings currently enacted by LBH as part of the Safety Valve and why the Block transfer is required. It does not represent a deficit carry forward position and is an extract only.

Indicative Impact of the 1% Schools Block Transfer on Safety Valve Position				
Description	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Projected Total Expenditure (Before Savings)	80.4	83.3	87.4	90.2
Savings enacted by Hillingdon	-7.7	-12.2	-16.0	-20.5
Block Transfer	-1.5	-3.0	-3.2	0
Revised Reduction Total	-9.2	-15.2	-19.2	-20.5

Note 1: This table illustrates the forecast expenditure and the impact of actions and savings.

Note 2: The above table does not show any future Safety Valve Contributions or the £16m contribution from LBH

Current Forecast Cumulative Deficit incl. proposed SB Transfer	65.6	75.9	84.1	89.3
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¹ Based on the assumption of a 5% increase on the 25-26 allocation

The funding will be used to support key aspects of our Safety Valve plan, particularly:

- Non-statutory services to support SENDEX, ESF, Notional Threshold Funding
- Continuing support from non-statutory services such as SEND Advisory Service

This increase will clearly impact the level of individual school budgets in 2026/27, and this is estimated to be in the region of £20k - £25k for an average Primary School at 1% transfer. The previous impact of the 0.5% transfer was circa £13k, therefore, the increase to 1% is likely to lead to an average increase of £7k - £12k per primary school. It should be stressed that this average impact is highly indicative as no APT has yet been issued by the DfE so modelling at a school level can only be broad brush in nature. LBH will continue to constructively support schools who find themselves struggling to set a balanced budget.

It should also be noted that the existing statutory override which allows Councils to keep any cumulative DSG deficits off our Council's balance sheet comes to an end in March 2028. This is set out in The Local Authorities Capital Finance and Accounting (England) Regulations.

7. Consultation with schools

It is proposed to issue a consultation with mainstream schools between the September and October to enable views to be sought on the proposed level of Block transfer from Schools Block to the HNB.

Questions:

1. Do you support the transfer of 1% of Schools Block to the High Needs Block which will enable the non-statutory funding to continue? Yes / No
2. If you have answered No, what percentage transfer would you support? _____%
3. If you do not agree with the transfer of funds, do you have any suggestions on how schools will fund the pre-statutory services from the High Needs Block and reduce the deficit, to enable the local area to meet our duties within the allocated budget envelope?

A survey has been created to enable all schools to respond to this Schools Block transfer, which maintained schools and academies should respond to. The survey can be accessed using the following link: [Schools Block Transfer and De-delegation Survey](#).

8. Recommendations

Schools Forum agree to the consultation questions which will be shared with schools following the meeting.

	London Borough of Hillingdon Schools Forum 9th September 2025
Title	General Education Duties De-Delegation 2026-27
Agenda Item	3c
Report by	Abi Preston & Ndenko Asong
Appendices	n/a
Recommendation(s)	☐ Information ☐ Consultation ☒ Decision a. Agree to a de-delegation of General Education duties from maintained schools block budgets of £12 per pupil to support the statutory duties required

1. Purpose:

This report outlines the proposed de-delegation from maintained schools budget shares for funding the statutory functions of the Education Improvement Service in monitoring and supporting maintained schools. This paper aims to seek approval by those members to agree to fund these statutory duties.

2. Background:

Local authorities can fund services previously funded from the general funding rate of the Education Services Grant (ESG) from maintained schools budget shares, with the agreement of maintained school members of the Schools Forum.

Until 1 April 2017, the Council received an ESG to cover the cost of delivering its responsibilities in respect of schools. This had two elements, a retained duties element covering the Council's duties to all schools (which now forms the Central Schools Services Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant) and a general duties rate which related to maintained schools only. The general duties rate ended on 1 April 2017 with a transitional grant being payable to local authorities for 2017/18. This resulted in a reduction in the Council's grant income of c£2M from 2018/19 whilst the duties remain.

The Council proposes to charge the maintained school budget shares **£12 per pupil** (based on 2025/26 rates) to cover the costs of the services listed below, which were previously funded by ESG, totalling £217k.

- £17k - monitoring of National Curriculum assessments (Schedule 2, paragraph 76)
- £60k - expenditure on inspecting attendance registers under the Education (Schedule 2, paragraph 80)
- £50k - appointment of governors and payment of governor expenses (Schedule 2, paragraph 74)
- £10k - functions under the Equality Act 2010 (Schedule 2, paragraph 72)
- £50k - appointment or dismissal of employee functions (Schedule 2, paragraph 67) and consultation costs relating to staffing (Schedule 2, paragraph 68).
- £30k - monitoring of compliance with requirements in relation to the scheme for financing schools and the provision of community facilities by governing bodies (Schedule 2, paragraph 60)

Benchmarking was undertaken to ensure that the charges to Hillingdon schools are in line with other local authorities. It was found that Hillingdon charges a quarter of the average cost charged by other Local Authorities.

Table 1: Benchmarking per pupil net expenditure

Per pupil net expenditure	Hillingdon	Outer London	England
School improvement 1.6.7	£0	£5	£7
Statutory/ Regulatory duties – education 1.5.3, 1.6.4	£3	£12	£11

* Per capita figures are derived using the Section 251 Outturn data with pupil numbers and/or population estimates, depending on the sub-category of the planned expenditure being looked at.

Please note, the benchmarking figures are not accurate charges to schools but are calculated against population to benchmark costs per pupil net expenditure, which is why the amount being requested doesn't correlate with this amount. The benchmarking should be used as a comparative tool rather than actual amounts.

Examples of charges in other LAs for General Education Duties for maintained schools:

- Manchester - £17.45 per pupil (24/25)
- BCP - £23.15 per pupil (23/24)
- West Sussex - £27.58 per pupil
- Norfolk - £18 per pupil (23/24)

Please note: no charges are being proposed specifically for school improvement, in line with last year. Other LAs do charge for this function, often in addition to the general education duties.

Free School Meal checking –

FSM auto-enrolment is an initiative designed to automatically identify and register eligible pupils for Free School Meals using existing data held by the Local Authority. As part of the ongoing commitment to supporting children and families, Hillingdon Council is implementing a Free School Meals (FSM) auto-enrolment programme. This removes the need for families to complete a separate application, ensuring that no child misses out on their entitlement due to lack of awareness or administrative barriers.

As a result, a working group was created with officers from our Business Intelligence, Revenues and Benefits, Education, Data Protection, FIS, Public Health, Household Support Grant, Finance and Admissions teams to deliver the project and combine existing datasets from different services. This helps to identify potential families, ensuring our residents receive the correct funding they are entitled to.

Hillingdon CYPS in Hillingdon Schools identified through this exercise:

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Settings	Number of Pupils Identified	Benefit to Schools – Pupil Premium
Nursery	19	Up to £570 per child
Primary	800	£1515 per child
Secondary	204	£1075 per child
Post-16	90	N/A
Grand Total	1113	£1,442,130

The Education and SEND teams are looking to run this exercise annually with the expectation that more children will be eligible next year with the changes to the Universal Credit threshold.

Other LAs charge a per-pupil rate for this service, however, Hillingdon are not charging this at present.

Cost per pupil in other LAs:

Newcastle – Primary £2.31, secondary £3.69

Telford & Wrekin - £9 for each eligible child

Norfolk - £4.23 (24/25)

Further analysis was undertaken on individual school budgets which evidences Hillingdon schools have higher per-pupil funding than other areas. For Hillingdon schools, the average per pupil net expenditure is £6,155 compared to national - £5,782

Staffing

Whilst the Education Improvement Service is often predominantly funded from the general education duties/ school improvement de-delegation, only a proportion of the service is funded through these contributions and the rest is funded by the Council currently. This may be reviewed in future.

EIP service costs: The structure for the EIP team totals £766,500 for staffing. This includes Education Improvement advisors and coordinators, governance and safeguarding officers, and the post 16 officer. The contribution of £217k is roughly 28% of the team's costs, with the remaining amount funded from General Fund.

3. Recommendations:

For forum to approve the de-delegation of schools block to fund the statutory duties local authorities are expected to provide to maintained schools. It is expected this will be £12 per pupil.

4. Appendices

Appendix 1: Example modelling based on previous year's census return – values will change but this demonstrates an example of the typical impact on each school.

LAESTAB	School Name	NOR	Education functions for mainstream maintained schools
3123300	Bishop Winnington-Ingram CofE Primary School	202	£2,424
3123401	Botwell House Catholic Primary School	619	£7,428
3122003	Bourne Primary School	198	£2,376
3122084	Cherry Lane Primary School	592	£7,104
3122010	Colham Manor Primary School	554	£6,648
3122012	Coteford Infant School	171	£2,052
3122016	Deanesfield Primary School	620	£7,440
3123307	Dr Triplett's CofE Primary School	408	£4,896
3122019	Field End Infant School	240	£2,880
3122076	Frithwood Primary School	378	£4,536
3122020	Glebe Primary School	579	£6,948
3125203	Grange Park Infant and Nursery School	245	£2,940
3125202	Grange Park Junior School	369	£4,428
3122024	Harefield Infant School	134	£1,608
3122023	Harefield Junior School	203	£2,436
3125411	Harlington School	1117	£13,404
3122025	Harlyn Primary School	375	£4,500
3122026	Harmondsworth Primary School	191	£2,292
3125211	Hayes Park School	607	£7,284
3122029	Heathrow Primary School	379	£4,548
3122063	Highfield Primary School	249	£2,988
3125204	Hillside Infant School	169	£2,028
3125205	Hillside Junior School	227	£2,724
3123302	Holy Trinity CofE Primary School	177	£2,124
3122032	Lady Bankes Primary School	571	£6,852
3122037	Minet Infant and Nursery School	306	£3,672
3122036	Minet Junior School	392	£4,704
3122039	Newnham Infant and Nursery School	257	£3,084
3122038	Newnham Junior School	353	£4,236
3125200	Oak Farm Primary School	544	£6,528
3125409	Oak Wood School	1069	£12,828
3122064	Rabbsfarm Primary School	599	£7,188
3122080	Ruislip Gardens Primary School	247	£2,964
3123405	Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School	624	£7,488
3125208	St Andrew's C of E Primary School	185	£2,220

3123402	St Bernadette Catholic Primary School	403	£4,836
3123403	St Catherine Catholic Primary School	202	£2,424
3123404	St Mary's Catholic Primary School	211	£2,532
3123400	St Swithun Wells Catholic Primary School	204	£2,448
3122004	The Breakspear School	609	£7,308
3122065	Warrender Primary School	411	£4,932
3122069	Whitehall Infant School	287	£3,444
3122052	Whitehall Junior School	399	£4,788
3122074	Whiteheath Infant & Nursery School	198	£2,376
3122054	Whiteheath Junior School	301	£3,612
3122060	Yeading Infant and Nursery School	340	£4,080
3122059	Yeading Junior School	450	£5,400

Appendix 2 - Description of Services for All Schools and for Maintained Schools

Below is a tabulised format of information from the Schools Operational Guide 2025-26 which shows the split of services between the two groups of duties, retained duties for all schools and general duties for maintained schools.

From 2017-18, the general duties rate ended and funding previously allocated through the ESG retained duties rate (£15) was transferred into the schools block. Local authorities are able to fund central services previously funded within the retained duties rate (for all schools), with the agreement of schools forum – this is via the Central Block of DSG.

Local authorities are able to fund services previously funded within the general duties rate (for maintained schools only) from maintained school budgets shares with the agreement of maintained school members of the schools forum.

The split of services between the two groups is shown below. References are to the relevant schedules in the Schools and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2020.

Responsibilities held for all schools	Responsibilities held for maintained schools only
Statutory and regulatory duties	
Director of children's services and personal staff for director (Schedule 2, paragraph 15a)	Functions of local authority related to best value and provision of advice to governing bodies in procuring goods and services (Schedule 2, paragraph 58)
Planning for the education service as a whole (Schedule 2, paragraph 15b)	Authorisation and monitoring of expenditure in respect of schools which do not have delegated budgets, and related financial administration (Schedule 2, paragraph 59)
Authorisation and monitoring of expenditure not met from schools' budget shares (Schedule 2, paragraph 15c)	Monitoring of compliance with requirements in relation to the scheme for financing schools and the provision of community facilities by governing bodies (Schedule 2, paragraph 60)
Formulation and review of local authority schools funding formula (Schedule 2, paragraph 15d)	
Internal audit and other tasks related to the local	Internal audit and other tasks related to the local

authority's chief finance officer's responsibilities under section 151 of the 'Local Government Act 1972' except duties specifically related to maintained schools (Schedule 2, paragraph 15e) Consultation costs relating to non-staffing issues (Schedule 2, paragraph 19) Plans involving collaboration with other local authority services or public or voluntary bodies (Schedule 2, paragraph 15f) Standing 'Advisory Committees for Religious Education' (sacres) (Schedule 2, paragraph 17) Provision of information to, or, at the request of The Crown other than relating specifically to maintained schools (Schedule 2, paragraph 21) Revenue budget preparation, preparation of information on income and expenditure relating to education, and external audit relating to education (Schedule 2, paragraph 22)	authority's chief finance officer's responsibilities under section 151 of the 'Local Government Act 1972' for maintained schools (Schedule 2, paragraph 61) Functions under regulations made under section 44 of the 'Education Act 2002' (Consistent Financial Reporting) in so far as the functions related to maintained schools (Schedule 2, paragraph 62) Investigations of employees or potential employees, with or without remuneration to work at or for schools under the direct management of the headteacher or governing body (Schedule 2, paragraph 63) Functions related to local government pensions and administration of teachers' pensions in relation to staff working at maintained schools under the direct management of the headteacher or governing body (Schedule 2, paragraph 64) HR duties, including advice to schools on the management of staff, pay alterations, conditions of service and composition or organisation of staff (Schedule 2, paragraph 65) Determination of conditions of service for non-teaching staff (Schedule 2, paragraph 66) Appointment or dismissal of employee functions (Schedule 2, paragraph 67) Consultation costs relating to staffing (Schedule 2, paragraph 68) Compliance with duties under the 'Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974' (Schedule 2, paragraph 69) Provision of information to, or, at the request of The Crown relating to maintained schools (Schedule 2, paragraph 70) School companies (Schedule 2, paragraph 71) Functions under the 'Equality Act 2010' (Schedule 2, paragraph 72) Establish and maintaining computer systems, including data storage (Schedule 2, paragraph 73) Appointment of governors and payment of governor expenses (Schedule 2, paragraph 74) Budgeting and accounting functions relating to maintained schools (Schedule 2, paragraph 75) Retrospective membership of pension schemes where it would not be appropriate to expect a school to meet the cost (Schedule 2, paragraph 77)
Education Welfare	

Functions in relation to school attendance (Schedule 2, paragraph 16) Responsibilities regarding restrictions on the employment of children (Schedule 2, paragraph 18) Functions in relation to the exclusion of pupils from schools, excluding any provision of education to excluded pupils (Schedule 2, paragraph 20)	Inspection of attendance registers (Schedule 2, paragraph 80)
Asset Management	
Management of the local authority's capital programme including preparation and review of an asset management plan, and negotiation and management of private finance transactions (Schedule 2, paragraph 14a) Landlord responsibilities, including those in relation to land leased to academies for schools (Schedule 2, paragraph 14b)	General landlord duties for all maintained schools (Schedule 2, paragraphs 78a & b (section 542(2)) 'Education Act 1996'; 'School Premises (England) Regulations 2012') to ensure that school buildings have: - appropriate facilities for pupils and staff (including medical and accommodation) - the ability to sustain appropriate loads - reasonable weather resistance - safe escape routes - appropriate acoustic levels - lighting, heating and ventilation which meets the required standards - adequate water supplies and drainage - playing fields of the appropriate standards General health and safety duty as an employer for employees and others who may be affected (Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974) Management of the risk from asbestos in community school buildings 'Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012'
Central Support Services	

No functions	Clothing grants (Schedule 2, paragraph 54) Provision of tuition in music, or on other music-related activities (Schedule 2, paragraph 55) Visual, creative, and performing arts other than music (Schedule 2, paragraph 56) Outdoor education centres (but not centres mainly for the provision of organised games, swimming, or athletics) (Schedule 2, paragraph 57) Services set out above will also include administrative costs and overheads relating to these services (regulation 1(4)) for: • expenditure related to functions imposed by or under chapter 4 of part 2 of the 'School Standards and Framework Act 1998' (financing of maintained schools), the administration of grants to the local authority (including preparation of applications) and, where it is the local authority's duty to do so, ensuring payments are made in respect of taxation, national insurance, and superannuation contributions • expenditure on recruitment, training, continuing professional development, performance management and personnel management of staff who are funded by expenditure not met from schools' budget shares and who are paid for services • expenditure in relation to the investigation and resolution of complaints • expenditure on legal services
Premature Retirement and Redundancy	
No functions	Dismissal or premature retirement when costs cannot be charged to maintained schools (Schedule 2, paragraph 79)
Monitoring National Curriculum Assessments	
No functions	Monitoring of national curriculum assessments (Schedule 2, paragraph 76)
School Improvement	
No functions	Expenditure related to core school improvement activities of local authorities with respect to maintained schools (Schedule 2, 54)
Other Ongoing Duties	
Licences negotiated centrally by the Secretary of State for all publicly funded schools (Schedule 2, paragraph 8); this does not require schools forum approval Operation of the system of admissions and appeals (Schedule 2, paragraph 9) Fees or expenses payable in connection with the attendance of non-SEN pupils at schools not	No Functions

maintained by any local authority (Schedule 2, paragraph 10) Remission of boarding fees at maintained schools and academies (Schedule 2, paragraph 11) Servicing of schools forums (Schedule 2, paragraph 12) Back-pay for equal pay claims (Schedule 2, paragraph 13) Writing to parents of year 9 pupils about schools with an atypical age of admission, such as university technical colleges (UTCs) and studio schools, within a reasonable travelling distance (Schedule 2, paragraph 23)	
Historic Commitments	
Capital expenditure funded from revenue (Schedule 2, paragraph 1) Prudential borrowing costs (Schedule 2, paragraph 2(a)) Termination of employment costs (Schedule 2, paragraph 2(b)) Contribution to combined budgets (Schedule 2, paragraph 2(c)) SEN transport costs (Schedule 2, paragraph 2(d))	