

# HILLINGDON SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 16 January 2020 at 2pm at the Civic Centre

## Voting members

NAME	ORGANISATION	ATTENDANCE
<b>Maintained Nursery (1)</b>		
Ludmila Morris	McMillan Early Childhood Centre	PRESENT
<b>Maintained Primary - Schools (4)</b>		
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	APOLOGIES
<b>Maintained Primary - Governors (4)</b>		
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
<b>Maintained Secondary (1)</b>		
Liz Horrigan	Harlington School	PRESENT
<b>Maintained Special (1)</b>		
John Goddard	Hedgewood School	PRESENT
<b>Academies (9)</b>		
Aftab Ahmed	Guru Nanak Sikh Academy	PRESENT
Bob Charlton	Charville Primary School	APOLOGIES
Tracey Hemming	Middlesex Learning Partnership	APOLOGIES
Robert Jones	Haydon School	APOLOGIES
Helen Manwaring	Swakeleys School	APOLOGIES
Catherin Modsell	Frays Academy Trust	PRESENT
Peter Ryerson	Guru Nanak Sikh Academy	PRESENT
David Patterson	Queensmead School	PRESENT
Sandra Voisey	Laurel Lane Primary School	PRESENT
<b>Special Academies (1)</b>		
Sudhi Pathak	Eden Academy Trust	APOLOGIES
<b>Alternative provision (1)</b>		
Laurie Cornwell	The Skills Hub	PRESENT
<b>Private Voluntary &amp; Independent Early Years Providers (2)</b>		
Elaine Caffary	4 Street Nursery	APOLOGIES
Lesley Knee	Ruislip Methodist Preschool	PRESENT
<b>14-19 Partnership (1)</b>		
(vacant)		

## Other attendees (non-voting)

<b>Independent Non-Maintained Special School</b>		
Debbie Gilder	Pield Heath School	APOLOGIES
<b>Shadow Representative (Maintained Primary - Schools)</b>		
Rachel Blake	Whiteheath Infant School	NOT REQUIRED
<b>Shadow Representative (Maintained Primary - Governor)</b>		
John Buckingham	Glebe Primary School	NOT REQUIRED
Mr Graham Wells	Colham Manor Primary School	PRESENT
<b>Local Authority Officers</b>		
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	APOLOGIES
Graham Young	Lead Finance Business Partner - School	PRESENT



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Forum asked for an update on the expansion of local provision to reduce the need for costly out of borough high needs placements. Officers advised that the SEND Strategy Group would be meeting the following week and an update would be provided to the next meeting.</li> <li>Concern was expressed that the new Designated Unit at Harlington School had not been discussed publicly in any Cabinet reports. This was a key unit. A similar unit at Ruislip High was being publicly promoted.</li> <li>Three maintained schools currently had a licenced deficit budget and analysis of the quarter two returns submitted by schools indicated a further three schools were likely to end 2019/20 with a deficit balance.</li> <li>Details of academies' financial positions based on August 2019 accounts would be available for the next meeting.</li> </ul>	<p>VH</p> <p>PM/GY</p>
6.	<b>DSG BUDGET 2020/21</b>	
	<p><b>(a) 2020/21 FUNDING SETTLEMENT UPDATE</b></p> <p>The Forum considered a report on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2020/21 following the release of the updated DSG Funding settlement on 19 December 2019.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The base level of DSG funding (excluding growth) had been increased by over 4%.</li> <li>Schools Block Funding would increase by £12,813k in 2020/21, an increase of 5.8%.</li> <li>Hillingdon's High Needs Block Funding would increase by £5,289k in 2020/21, an increase of 13.1%.</li> <li>Additional funding would be provided in 2020/21 to fund the Teachers Pay Award.</li> <li>The Central Schools Services Block allocation would decrease as from 2020/21 the DfE was introducing a reduction of 20% to the historical commitments element of the funding formula. This was a reduction of £265K for Hillingdon.</li> <li>The Early Years Block was not included in the report as this was adjusted throughout the year based on January headcount data. The DfE had confirmed an 8p (1.4%) increase in the hourly funding rates for both 2 year olds and 3 &amp; 4 year olds.</li> <li>Hillingdon had an overall increase in pupil numbers, although primary pupil numbers had stabilised. Year 7 Secondary numbers had increased as the growth previously seen in Primary moved into Secondary. There had also been a significant in-year increase in Year 10 pupils.</li> <li>A funding formula was now used to calculate Growth, Premises and Mobility funding. This resulted in an increase of £601k compared to 2019/20 funding.</li> <li>Taking into consideration the published DSG settlement, the projected High Needs shortfall was £7,068k as at the end of November 2019 and a transfer of £7,164K or 3.1% from the Schools Block would be required to set a balanced DSG budget. This was in line with the disapplication request already submitted to the DfE.</li> <li>The Individual Schools Budget would increase by £12,813k, ignoring the Teachers Pay Award and Teachers Pensions grant funding. If the full £7,164k was transferred, the Individual Schools Budget would still increase by £5,649k.</li> </ul> <p>The Forum commented that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The reduction in funding for Central Services was a concern as the number of LAC and pupils entering Alternative Provision was increasing. The Forum requested an analysis of the impact of the funding reduction. Consideration would need to be given to how these services would be funded.</li> <li>There was shrinkage in pupil numbers in the transfer between Year 2 and Year 3. The Forum considered whether it would be helpful to have an analysis of any difference between pupil numbers leaving Year 2 in infant schools and combined primary schools, and concluded there would be of little benefit in doing this.</li> </ul> <p><b>(b) GROWTH CONTINGENCY</b></p> <p>The Forum considered a report setting out the proposed draw down from the Growth Contingency Fund for expanding schools and new basic need academy schools, including schools that had permanently expanded and would take on additional pupils in September</p>	<p>PM/GY</p>

2020, schools that were planned to expand for the first time in September 2020 and Secondary schools that had agreed to accept pupils in Year 7 above their Published Admission Number (PAN) in September 2020. 2020/21 would be the second year that growth allocations were distributed using a formula based on lagged growth data rather than historic spend. The growth in secondary pupil numbers in September 2019 had resulted in Hillingdon receiving an increase of £601k in growth funding for 2020/21.

The Forum commented that:

- Seven secondary schools had agreed to take an additional form of entry if needed in September 2020. The LA was asked to confirm whether this was required as schools needed to know as soon as possible to enable them to plan and prepare. Officers advised the position would be clear in the next couple of weeks.
- The LA was cautious to prevent unnecessary over-expansion. Where possible, expansion would be managed through bulge classes. The additional forms in September 2020 would not be PAN increases.
- Any temporary expansion would need to be managed carefully, with due regard to admissions policies. If a school admitted pupils over their PAN, it would be difficult to challenge any appeals.
- One academy had applied for £400K diseconomies funding. The DSG Group had considered the academy's budget and challenged a number of areas which were considered to be excessive compared with how other schools were managing their budgets. Officers were still awaiting a response from the academy on the areas challenged.
- The way funding was calculated meant schools with a bulge class received an additional year's funding after the bulge class had left.

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Having been put to a vote, the Forum **AGREED** (1) to release the expanding schools funding to schools as set out in Appendix A;

(2) to hold back the allocation for Hillside Junior School until further information was known regarding the prospective September 2020 intake;

(3) to delegate approval of the diseconomies of scale funding to the DSG Sub-Group which would be provided with details of the claims;

(4) to agree the contingency budget for secondary growth as set out in the spreadsheet at Appendix A.

#### **(c) PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO SCHOOLS FUNDING FORMULA**

The Forum considered proposed amendments to the data set provided by the ESFA where there were anomalies which appeared unrepresentative. The Forum noted that the mobility percentages for two schools, which had been extremely high last year, had both reduced, but remained disproportionately high compared with other schools.

The Forum **AGREED** (1) the estimated pupil numbers for John Locke Academy, Lake Farm Park Academy and St Martin's CE Primary School;

(2) the retrospective adjustments for John Locke Academy, Lake Farm Park Academy and St Martin's CE Primary;

(3) the amended mobility percentages for De Salis Studio College and Parkside Studio College.

#### **(d) SPECIAL SCHOOL PLANNED PLACES**

The Forum considered a report which set out the proposed funding arrangements for high needs placements at special schools and Specialist Resource Provisions (SRPs) for 2020/21.

<p>The Forum commented that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Forum questioned how the LA monitored whether SRPs were providing best value for money. Most SRPs were at capacity. Officers advised that the SEND Strategy Group would be looking at this and the SEND Advisory Team would support schools to ensure a standardised approach to children with needs in mainstream schools.</li> <li>• Meadow High was not mentioned in the report. Officers advised there was a contingency to fund an additional 20 places growth through the year.</li> <li>• Pupils were placed in costly out of borough placements due to insufficient capacity in Hillingdon. The Forum sought assurance that the SEND Strategy Group would be focusing on increasing places in the Borough.</li> <li>• It had been agreed that satellite hubs of special schools would be created to increase capacity in Hillingdon. Officers advised that the earliest the hubs would be ready to take pupils was September 2021.</li> </ul>	<p>VH</p>
<p>The Forum <b>AGREED</b> the proposed planned places funding for Special Schools and SRPs.</p>	
<p><b>(e) DE-DELEGATION</b></p>	<p>VH</p>
<p>The Forum <b>NOTED</b> a report on the items that maintained school representatives had agreed to de-delegate at the Schools Forum meeting on 12 December 2019.</p>	
<p><b>(f) PROPOSED DSG BUDGET 2020/21</b></p>	
<p>The Forum considered a report which provided a consolidation of all the DSG funding the Council had been informed it would get for 2020/21 and all the adjustments required to the DSG revenue budget to enable the Council to set a balanced budget for 2020/21.</p>	
<p>The report presented three DSG budget scenarios pending the DfE's decision on the LA's disapplication request to transfer funds from the Schools Block to address pressures in other funding blocks. If the full block transfer request was not approved, the LA would not be able to set a balanced DSG budget for 2020/21.</p>	
<p>The Forum commented that:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability Access Funding for early years settings providing a free entitlement place for 3 &amp; 4 year olds had been under-claimed. Some settings were not aware of the funding and it needed to be publicised more.</li> <li>• The Forum noted that the funding rate to local authorities for disadvantaged 2 year olds had increased to £6.00, which brought it into line with the rate paid to providers, so there was no plan to increase the hourly rate at present. Early Years providers were increasingly struggling to stay in business because of increased costs, difficulty recruiting and competition from 'free' childcare places. Officers were asked to model the figures to see if there was any potential to increase the hourly rate and bring this to a future meeting.</li> </ul>	<p>PM/GY</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A year ago, the LA had engaged a consultant to review the healthcare contribution for the eighty highest cost placements in the Borough to ensure funding was correctly apportioned. The Forum asked if this had resulted in any increase in healthcare contributions. Officers did not have the figures and would provide them to the next meeting.</li> <li>• Officers commented that the Council did not currently employ a Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) and consideration should be given to having one. The Forum was of the view that if budget were spent on a new post, there would need to be assurances that the outlay would result in savings elsewhere.</li> </ul>	<p>VH/GY</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The report stated that realignment of posts in the SEND Advisory Team had created an additional £90K cost to the DSG and there was an expectation that over time this would be off-set by a reduction in the number of EHCPs issued. The Forum questioned whether this was achievable, and observed that other reports presented to them stated that the number of pupils with an EHCP was continuing to grow at a significant rate.</li> <li>• It was reported that a Council meeting the previous evening had agreed a transfer of</li> </ul>	

	<p>costs of £161K from the Council to the DSG. The Forum was not aware of this and <b>AGREED</b> that any proposals to transfer costs to the DSG should come to the Forum for consideration and comment first.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Forum observed that it was being asked to recommend a budget to Cabinet, and the LA was required to submit schools budgets to the ESFA by 21 January 2020, both without knowing the DfE’s decision on the transfer disapplication request. The timing was not helpful.</li> <li>• Currently, without any transfer being agreed, the position was that the DSG would have to set a deficit budget.</li> <li>• Schools needed to know their indicative budgets for 2020/21 for planning purposes. It would be prudent to provide them with the worst case scenario, with a note that the budget could be higher if the DfE did not approve the transfer disapplication request.</li> </ul> <p>The Forum <b>AGREED</b> (1) to submit to Cabinet a budget based on a 0% transfer from School Block which would give a DSG deficit budget of £7,175K;</p> <p>(2) that schools’ individual budgets would be based on the transfer of 3.1% being agreed by the DfE, with indications of what the budget would be if the transfer was agreed at 1.6% or not agreed. Schools would be advised to plan around the lowest budget until the actual figure was confirmed.</p> <p><b>(g) ILLUSTRATIVE INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL BUDGET SHARES 2020/21</b> The Forum <b>NOTED</b> the report, which provided the Indicative School Budget Share information for 2020/21, a comparison with 2019/20 to illustrate the impact on individual schools of the additional Schools Block funding for 2020/21, and the possible impact on individual schools if the disapplication request to transfer funds from the Schools Block was approved by the DfE.</p> <p><b>(h) DISAPPLICATION REQUEST UPDATE</b> Officers reported that the DfE had rejected the LA’s disapplication requests to rebase the Minimum Funding Guarantee on the basis that there had been no significant changes in the schools, and any reduction could have an adverse effect on pupils. The Forum commented that the decision was disappointing as a strong case had been put forward by the LA based on data that showed some schools were being funded disproportionately. The Forum <b>AGREED</b> that the Chair would examine the response and appeal the decision if that was possible.</p>	PM/GY
8.	<p><b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An additional meeting of the Schools forum arranged for 3 February 2020 would only take place if the DfE had notified the LA of its decision regarding the transfer disapplication before then.</li> <li>• The next scheduled meeting was on Wednesday 25 March 2020 at 2pm.</li> </ul>	

The meeting closed at 4.05pm.