

HILLINGDON SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 18 January 2022 at 10am via Zoom

Voting members

NAME	ORGANISATION	ATTENDANCE	TERM ENDS
Maintained Nursery (1)			
Ludmila Morris	McMillan Early Childhood Centre	APOLOGIES	Sep 2024
Maintained Primary - Schools (4)			
Rachel Anderson	Dr Triplett's School	PRESENT	Sep 2023
Duncan Greig	Breakspear Primary School	APOLOGIES	Sep 2025
Kris O'Sullivan	Deanesfield Primary School	PRESENT	Sep 2024
Carly Rissen	Colham Manor	PRESENT	Sep 2024
Maintained Primary - Governors (4)			
John Buckingham	Glebe Primary School	PRESENT	Sep 2024
Jim Edgecombe (CHAIR)	Whiteheath Junior School	PRESENT	Sep 2024
Tony Eginton	Minet Nursery & Infant School & Hillside Junior School	PRESENT	Sep 2024
Phil Haigh	Cherry Lane Primary School & Meadow High School	PRESENT	Sep 2024
Maintained Secondary (1)			
Liz Horrigan	Harlington School	APOLOGIES	Sep 2021
Maintained Special (1)			
John Goddard	Hedgewood School	PRESENT	Sep 2022
Academies (9)			
Aftab Ahmed	Guru Nanak Sikh Academy	PRESENT	Sep 2023
Tracey Hemming	Middlesex Learning Partnership	PRESENT	Sep 2024
Nicola Kelly	Charville	PRESENT	Sep 2024
Helen Manwaring	Swakeleys School	APOLOGIES	Sep 2022
Catherine Mosdell	Frays Academy Trust	PRESENT	Sep 2023
David Patterson	Queensmead School	PRESENT	Sep 2023
Colin Tucker	Ryefield	APOLOGIES	Sep 2024
Sandra Voisey	Laurel Lane Primary School	APOLOGIES	Sep 2023
(vacant)			
Special Academies (1)			
Sudhi Pathak	Eden Academy Trust	PRESENT	Sep 2021
Alternative provision (1)			
Laurie Cornwell	The Skills Hub	ABSENT	Sep 2024
Private Voluntary & Independent Early Years Providers (2)			
Elaine Caffary	4 Street Nursery	PRESENT	Sep 2024
(vacant)			
14-19 Partnership (1)			
(vacant)			

Other attendees (non-voting)

Independent Non-Maintained Special School			
Debbie Gilder	Pield Heath School		PRESENT
Shadow Representative (Maintained Primary - Schools)			
Rachel Blake	Bishop Winnington-Ingram		NOT REQUIRED
Eleesa Dowding	Harmondsworth		NOT REQUIRED
Shadow Representative (Maintained Primary - Governor)			
Jo Palmer	Hillside Infant School and Hillside Junior School		NOT REQUIRED
Graham Wells	Colham Manor Primary School		PRESENT
Local Authority Officers			
Kate Boulter	Clerk		PRESENT
Vikram Hansrani	Assistant Director, SEND & Inclusion		PRESENT
Dan Kennedy	LA		PRESENT
Graham Young	Lead Finance Business Partner - School		PRESENT
Observers			
(none)			PRESENT

		ACTION
1.	<p>INTRODUCTION & APOLOGIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apologies were accepted and recorded in the attendance list (above). The Chair confirmed the meeting was quorate and could proceed to business. A number of members' terms of office had expired in September 2021 and the nomination/election process had not been completed yet. The Forum AGREED that those members whose terms had expired (LH and SP) would be voting members for the purposes of this meeting (see also Minute 3a). 	
2.	<p>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2021 were AGREED as a correct record of the meeting.</p>	
3.	<p>MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>(a) MEMBERSHIP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Duncan Greig was appointed as a Primary Maintained representative for four years from the expiration of his previous term (September 2021). GY would write to academies and special academies seeking nominations for one vacancy in each. GY would liaise with Democratic Services to arrange an election for the 16-19 representative. The new Maintained Secondary representative would be confirmed at the next meeting. The LA had not yet found a suitable candidate for the PVI Representative vacancy. <p>(b) SCHOOL PROVISION FOR CHILDREN FROM ASYLUM SEEKER FAMILIES</p> <p>DK reported that a small number of schools were experiencing pressure from disproportionately high in-year admissions due to the schools' proximity to a number of Home Office commissioned hotels which provided temporary accommodation to asylum seeker families. The LA had raised concerns at a senior level in government about the impact on these schools, and had suggested that some of the hotels be decommissioned and the affected schools supported with additional funding. However there was no certainty that the government would be providing financial support so it was for the Forum to consider ways in which these schools could be supported out of existing budgets. GY advised that there was no contingency in this year's DSG and it was not clear from the guidance how this could be funded.</p> <p>The Forum commented that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As the admissions occurred in-year, many were not counted in the October census which meant the affected schools did not receive funding for the children for up to 17 months. One school had admitted 45 children post-census. The school was R.I and was on a journey of improvement. In addition to the financial pressure, there was an educational impact from such high in-year admissions. The pressure was on a small number of schools because the children were placed in those closest to the hotels. The impact would be reduced if the admissions were distributed across more schools. The children did not have money to use public transport and it was suggested that transportation costs be paid to enable the children to be placed in other schools. Many of the children had traumatic experiences prior to their arrival in the UK and required mental health support. It was important to support all their needs. Most of the children spoke no English. There was very little guidance on what to provide educationally for these children, such as whether schools should focus on teaching English first. It was suggested that a bespoke curriculum be provided for these children, in a 	<p>GY</p> <p>GY</p> <p>GY</p> <p>KB</p> <p>PR</p>

	<p>dedicated centre that bought in specialist help. The hotel conditions were not ideal and it was beneficial for the children to leave their accommodation, so any such provision should not be located in the hotels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was currently capacity in primary schools, however the Borough's secondary schools were full. The Home Office needed to be aware of the pressures on availability of places at secondary level. • It was noted that the hotels were used to temporarily accommodate people who arrived in the UK across the Channel as well as those who came into Heathrow. The Home Office could be asked to consider placing families in other boroughs to reduce the pressure on Hillingdon. • The Forum acknowledged that the options suggested to manage the pressure locally all involved additional costs, and there was no guarantee that the government would provide further funding. <p>The Forum AGREED that a meeting be set up between DK and the affected schools to discuss options, which DK could then take up with the Home Office. A costed plan outlining options could be given to the Home Office.</p>	DK
4.	<p>FEEDBACK FROM SUB-GROUPS</p> <p>The minutes of the DSG Deficit Recovery Working Group meetings of 10 November 2021, 18 November 2021 and 11 January 2022 were noted (see also Minute 6b).</p>	
5.	<p>ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION – DSG BUDGET 2022/23</p>	
	<p>(a) DSG FUNDING SETTLEMENT 2022/23 UPDATE</p> <p>The Forum considered a report which provided an update on the DSG for 2022/23 following the release of the updated DSG Funding settlement on 16 December 2021. The following points were highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Schools Block had increased by £4,392K (1.8%) compared to 2021/22. • In addition to the DSG, mainstream schools would receive an additional grant in 2022/23, related to the Health and Social Care Levy and other cost pressures. This would result in an additional £7,240K to be allocated to mainstream schools in Hillingdon in 2022/23. • Hillingdon had a slight reduction in pupil numbers overall, with reduction in primary pupil numbers compensated by growth in secondary pupil numbers. • The High Needs Block had increased by £6,050K (12%). • The Central Service Block had additional pupil-led funding of £84K however the 20% decrease in CSSB funding for historical commitments (£170K) meant there was an overall decrease of £86K or 3.3% compared to 2021/22. • For Early Years, there were slight increases to the hourly rate for 2 year old funding and 3 and 4 year old funding, to £6.29 (3.5%) and £6.14 (2.8%) respectively. The Early Years Pupil Premium funding rate would increase by 7p to 60p per hour. Funding for the disability access fund would increase to by £185 to £800 per eligible child. • The supplementary funding hourly rate for maintained nursery schools would increase by £37K (3.5%) to £275K. • Overall, the 2022/23 DSG had increased by £10,356K (3.5%). • A comparison was provided with assumptions in the DSG Deficit Recovery Plan. The High Needs Block allocation was higher, and the Schools Block and Central Services Block were lower, making the actual funding 0.3% lower than the assumptions in the Plan. • In response to questions, GY advised that the additional £7,240K funding for mainstream schools would more than cover the National Insurance increase. The amount allocated to each school would be different as it was calculated by a lump sum per school plus an amount per key stage pupil numbers. <p>The Forum NOTED the report.</p> <p>(b) GROWTH CONTINGENCY ALLOCATION 2022/23</p> <p>The Forum considered a report with set out the proposed draw down from the Growth Contingency Fund for expanding schools, including schools that had permanently expanded and would take on additional pupils in September 2022 and Secondary schools that had agreed to accept pupils in Year 7 above their Published Admission Number (PAN) in</p>	

September 2022.

The growth formula distributed to LAs based on lagged growth data had led to Hillingdon receiving growth allocation of £834K, which was a £713K reduction compared with 2021/22. The overall primary and secondary school roll had reduced from 44,951 in the 2020 census to 44,590 in the 2021 census.

The Forum commented that:

- Schools which had reduced their PAN could take bulge classes, and the use of bulge classes could discourage schools from increasing their PAN. Officers responded that the need for places was identified by the LA and schools could not form a strategy that was reliant on bulge classes.
- In response to a suggestion that the Growth Contingency Policy be reviewed to cover funding for schools facing financial pressure due to high in-year admissions from asylum seeker children, the Forum was of the view that it was not fair to take money from schools to cover costs incurred as a direct result of central government strategy to concentrate asylum seeker families in one area.

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

(2) the contingency budget for Secondary growth as set out in the spreadsheet at Appendix B of the report.

(c) PROPOSED AMENDMENTS IMPACTING ON THE SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA

The Forum considered a report on proposed amendments to the data set provided by the ESFA where there were anomalies which appeared unrepresentative.

Having been put to a vote, the Forum **AGREED** (a) the estimated pupil numbers for Nanaksar Primary School;

(b) the retrospective adjustment for St Martin's CE Primary School;

(c) the amended mobility percentages for De Salis Studio College and Parkside Studio College;

(d) the removal of the PFI factor from the MFG calculation, which was supported by the school, and for which a disapplication case had been submitted to the ESFA.

The Forum **NOTED** that two primary schools which amalgamated from separate infant and junior schools in 2021/22 would, in accordance with the guidance, retain the equivalent of 85% of the predecessor schools' lump sums for the following financial year. The lump sums for these two schools had therefore been adjusted to include an additional £98k protection.

(d) SPECIAL SCHOOL & SRP 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 2022/23.

The Forum commented that:

- One school with a planned place number of 250 already had 258, and more starters than leavers were expected in September. GY advised that any additional places would be funded in accordance with the over-numbers policy.
- The Forum observed that one school had two new purpose-built SRPs created to increase capacity in the Borough, but no places were included in the place planning for 2022/23. VH advised that the LA was re-negotiating with the school and that funding had been clawed back for unused places that had been included in last year's place planning.

- The Forum expressed concern that facilities created to expand the Borough's SRP capacity were not being used for the intended purpose, and requested that a report on this be provided to the Forum, including how the building had been funded, the current position, and future options, including recovery of funding if the building were not being used for SRPs.

Having been put to a vote, the Forum **AGREED** the planned places funding set out in the report.

(e) REVIEW OF DE-DELEGATED BUDGETS

The DfE required LAs to consult the primary and secondary LA maintained school representatives on the Schools Forum every year about de-delegation of a number of central budgets.

The secondary maintained representative was not present and had sent her voting intentions in writing to the Chair and Clerk prior to the meeting. It having been put to a vote to the respective voting representatives, the Forum **AGREED**:

- (1) to de-delegate Trade Union duties staff supply cover costs for secondary schools;
- (2) to de-delegate Teachers Pension Administration for secondary schools.
- (3) to de-delegate Trade Union duties staff supply cover costs for primary schools;
- (4) to de-delegate Teachers Pension Administration for primary schools.

In autumn 2021, the DfE had carried out a consultation on 'Reforming how local authorities' school improvement functions are funded' which included a proposal to remove the Local Authority School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering grant, which had been allocated to support with fulfilling the statutory school improvement functions. The DfE' consultation response confirmed that the grant would be ended with effect from the start of the 2023/24 financial year and reduced to 50% of the current amount on a per school basis in 2022/23 to give councils and maintained schools time to adjust to new arrangements. The government proposed giving councils the power to fund all school improvement activities, including core school improvement activities, via de-delegation of funds from maintained schools' budget shares. The LA was reviewing the consultation response and considering options in relation to the future funding of the School Improvement function.

The Forum commented that:

- No additional funding appeared to have been allocated to cover the cost of this to schools. GY advised that it would be expected to come out of the additional £7,240K funding to the Schools Block.
- The Forum requested that any proposal to de-delegate be brought to the Forum as soon as possible to assist schools with their financial planning.

GY

(f) PROPOSED DSG BUDGET 2022/23

The Forum considered a report which provided a consolidation of all of the DSG funding that the Council had been informed it would get for 2022/23 and all of the adjustments required to the DSG revenue budget, to enable the Council to set a budget for 2022/23. The following points were highlighted:

- At its last meeting, the Forum has agreed a transfer of 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block. This had been reflected in the total Schools Block funding to distribute through the funding formula.
- For 2021/22, there was an in-year deficit on the DSG, which at Month 8 was estimated to be £12.7m. When added to the DSG opening deficit balance of £25.4m, which was carried forward from 2020/21, it was projected that there would be a cumulative deficit of £38.0m carried forward to 2022/23.
- Given the on-going pressures in High Needs and the Central Schools Services Block, it would not be possible to set an in-year balanced DSG budget for 2022/23.
- The Council was currently in discussion with the DfE on a safety valve agreement with

	<p>the objective of securing conditional funding that would allow the DSG deficit to be eliminated by 2024/25 and no later than 2025/26.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a safety valve agreement was reached, the LA would be required to implement reforms to an agreed timetable. Identified savings had been included in the DSG budget for 2022/23 and were set out in the report. <p>The Forum commented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to a question as to whether there was duplication in the School Placement and Admissions Team £248K budget in paragraph 4.27, and the Head of Access to Education in a separate £282K budget in paragraph 4.29, GY advised that the Head role covered a wider remit than just admissions, and that savings in this area had been made as a result of last year’s education review by the LA. <p>Having been put to a vote, the Forum AGREED to recommend the 2022/23 DSG budget to Cabinet.</p> <p>(g) ILLUSTRATIVE INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL BUDGET SHARES 2022/23</p> <p>The Forum considered a report which provided Indicative School Budget Share information for 2022/23, together with a comparison with 2021/22 to illustrate the impact on individual schools of the additional Schools Block funding for 2022/23. The figures included the transfer of 0.5% from the Schools Block agreed at the Forum’s last meeting.</p> <p>GY advised that a final check would be carried out to ensure the budgets included everything that had been agreed by the Forum, and the share per school of the additional £7,240K funding would be calculated and added.</p> <p>The Forum commented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of primary schools had decreasing pupil numbers. This was an issue being faced by other local authorities, and one London borough was closing primary schools. • The LA should keep a close eye on place planning and act early if it was evident that a school was in to trouble financially as a result of reduced pupil numbers. <p>The Forum NOTED the report.</p>	<p>GY</p> <p>DK</p>
6.	<p>INFORMATION ITEMS</p>	
	<p>(a) DSG BUDGET MONITORING 2021/22 MONTH 8</p> <p>The Forum considered the Month 8 budget monitoring report 2021/22:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall there was no change from Month 7. • The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) monitoring position was an in-year overspend of £12,657K at Month 8, an increase of £5,329K on the budgeted deficit of £7,328K. • This overspend was due to ongoing pressures in the cost of High Needs placements, where due to a lack of capacity in borough, the number of independent placements had increased since the budget was set. In addition, the LA was increasingly seeing an uplift in the funding allocated to SEN placements due to a change in the level of need. The budget for High Needs was increased for 2021/22 to take account of projected growth, but it was projected that the budget would be significantly exceeded. • When the £25,385K deficit brought forward from 2020/21 was taken into account, the cumulative deficit carry forward to 2022/23 was £38,042K. • The High Needs Block projected overspend at Month 7 was £5,176K. • There was £153K overspend on the Schools Block. • Three maintained schools were unable to set a balanced budget for 2021/22 and the LA had approved licensed deficits. Eight academy schools were known to be in deficit at 31 August 2020. • Details of growth in High Needs was being looked at closely to see if it outstripped the built-in growth and this would be included in the Month 9 report. <p>The Forum commented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of mainstream schools were reporting issues with how top-up funding was 	

	<p>being paid and this shortfall needed to be taken into account.</p> <p>The Forum NOTED the report.</p> <p>(b) DSG DEFICIT RECOVERY PLAN UPDATE In the absence of VH, GY reported that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LA had submitted its draft DSG Deficit Recovery Plan to the DfE at the beginning of December. The Forum had indicated its support of the Plan at its December meeting. • Feedback had been received from the DfE just before Christmas. The feedback was mainly around timescales for projects, proposals that impacted on commissioning and governance of the Plan. • The LA intended to submit its revised Plan to the DfE early next week, with the aim of achieving an agreed Plan in good time before the end of the financial year. 	GY
7.	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS <u>Minutes on website</u> A member noted that the LA website was not up to date with Forum minutes. GY/KB would address this before the next meeting.</p>	GY/KB

The meeting closed at 11.45am.