

HILLINGDON SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 28 January 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 - Schools (4)			
Kris O'Sullivan	Deanesfield Primary School	PRESENT	Sep 2028
Kate Needs	Lady Banks	PRESENT	Sep 2027
Mel Penney	Glebe Primary School	PRESENT	Sep 2027
Carly Rissen	Colham Manor	PRESENT	Sep 2028
Maintained Primary - Governors (4)			
John Buckingham	Glebe Primary School	PRESENT	Sep 2028
Jo Palmer	Hillside Infant School and Hillside Junior School	PRESENT	Sep 2028
Tony Eginton (CHAIR)	Minet Infant & Nursery School & Hillside Junior School	PRESENT	Sep 2028
Phil Haigh	Cherry Lane Primary School & Meadow High School	PRESENT	Sep 2028
Maintained Secondary (1)			
Dan Cowling	Oak Wood School	PRESENT	Sep 2026
Maintained Special (counts as 1 for voting)			
Pearl Greenwald/Bryony Smith (Co-Headteachers)	Hedgewood Primary	PRESENT	Sep 2028
Academies (9)			
Harshinder Buttar	Lake Farm Park Academy	PRESENT	Sep 2027
John Garner	Ruislip High School	PRESENT	Sep 2026
Nicola Edwards	William Byrd	PRESENT	Sep 2028
Nicola Kelly	Charville	PRESENT	Sep 2029
Roger Leighton	Partnership Learning	PRESENT	Sep 2029
Liam McGillicuddy	Bishopshalt	PRESENT	Sep 2027
Ben Spinks	Middlesex Learning Partnership	PRESENT	Sep 2028
Roseline Wilkinson	Charville	APOLOGIES	Sep 2029
(1 vacancy)			
Special Academies (1)			
Sudhi Pathak	Eden Academy Trust	PRESENT	Sep 2026
Alternative provision (1)			
Paul Chambers	The Skills Hub	PRESENT	Sep 2027
Private Voluntary & Independent Early Years Providers (2)			
Elaine Caffary	4 Street Nursery	APOLOGIES	Sep 2028
Naazish Haq	Little Companions	PRESENT	Sep 2027
14-19 Partnership (1)			
Jonathan Jacob	Global Academy	APOLOGIES	Sep 2028

Other attendees (non-voting)

Independent Non-Maintained Special School			
Debbie Gilder	Pield Heath School		PRESENT
Shadow Representative (Maintained Primary - Schools)			
Louise Crook	Coteford Infant School		PRESENT
Nicky Bulpett	Ruislip Gardens		PRESENT
Shadow Representative (Maintained Primary - Governor)			
Graham Wells	Grange Park Junior School		NOT REQUIRED
Maintained Special			
Jenny Rigby	Meadow High School		NOT REQUIRED
Officers			
Gary Binstead	LA		PRESENT
Kate Boulter	Independent Clerk		PRESENT
Andrew Good	LA Finance		PRESENT
Sanjaya Gunatilake	LA Finance		PRESENT
Luisa Hansen	LA Finance		PRESENT
Julie Kelly	LA Director of Children's Services		APOLOGIES
Andy Moore	LA Finance		PRESENT
Abi Preston	LA Director of Education & SEND		PRESENT
Philip Ryan	LA Families' Information Service		PRESENT
Observers			
Michael Wilmott	NEU		PRESENT
Simon Warne	NEU		PRESENT

		ACTION
1.	APOLOGIES & OPENING COMMENTS - Apologies were accepted and recorded in the attendance list (above). - The Chair confirmed the meeting was quorate and could proceed to business. - There had been three nominations for three vacancies for Academy Representatives: Nicola Kelly had been re-appointed for a further term, and Roger Leighton and Roseline Wilkinson were welcomed as new members of the Forum.	
2.	ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS None.	
3.	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING	
	The minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2024 were AGREED as a correct record of the meetings subject to the following amendment: Attendance list (front page) – Paul Chambers was present.	
4.	SUB-GROUP MINUTES	
	(a) EARLY YEARS GROUP – 9 JANUARY 2025 The Forum received the minutes of the Early Years Group meeting held on 9 January 2025, which was a one-item meeting to consider what to include in the consultation on Early Years funding proposals for 2025/26. The Chair of the Sub-Group advised that the draft consultation paper subsequently produced by the LA differed from what had been discussed and agreed at the meeting, and would be discussed again later in this meeting (see minute 6c). (b) HIGH NEEDS GROUP The High Needs Group had not met since the last Schools Forum meeting.	
5.	ITEMS FOR DECISION	
	(a) TRADE UNION DE-DELEGATION 2025/26 The Chair reminded Forum that it had decided not to de-delegate trade union facilities time for 2024/25 and there was an unspent balance of around £40K from 2023/24. Agreement needed to be reached on what to do with this balance, and whether to de-delegate trade union facilities time for 2025/26. Documents produced by the NEU had been circulated before the meeting, setting out a proposal for 2025/26 and addressing concerns put forward by Forum members at previous meetings in relation to parity across all school (maintained and academies) and transparency of reporting spend. Presenting the report, NEU representatives added that: - Having a pooled pot of money enabled schools to access skilled caseworkers. - Having decided not to de-delegate in 2024/25, Hillingdon was currently an outlier in its approach to the statutory duty to provide facilities time. Nowhere else in London operated facilities time via individual schools rather than a shared pot. The LA commented that this could be because Hillingdon delegated all its funding out whereas other LAs retained funding for central functions. - In response to a proposal in the NEU report that the LA hold the de-delegated contributions, the LA advised that it did not have the capacity to hold the pot centrally. Members of Forum commented: - The Forum noted that it could only determine de-delegation for maintained schools and could not agree any part of the proposal relating to academies' role in procuring facilities time. - In response to a question asking why only maintained schools were required to de-delegate if all schools had a statutory requirement to provide facilities time, the NEU advised that all schools were required to contribute to facilities time, but LA schools received their funding via the LA so could de-delegate, whereas academies received their funding directly via the Annual General Grant (GAG) and part of that had to be used to contribute to facilities time or cover the release of staff representatives. - Members observed that the DfE guidance indicated that the statutory requirement was to give staff members who were representatives reasonable time off but did not specify how schools should manage facilities time.	

	• The DfE guidance also specified that de-delegation should be proposed by the LA, however the proposal had come from the NEU, and the LA had indicated it was unable to fulfil the role for it set out in the NEU proposal. • The Chair and Vice Chair had met with the NEU before the meeting and an alternative proposal had been suggested, which was to use the money currently in the pot (£40K) to fund facilities time for 2025/26 which would enable schools to be assured regarding parity, transparency and reporting ahead of making a decision on de-delegation for 2026/27. • At the last meeting, the Chairs of Primary Forum and HASH had been asked to consult their respective members on their views. 87.5% of maintained primary heads had voted not to de-delegate for 2025/26, and 54% had voted for the £40K surplus to be re-distributed to schools. Across all schools (maintained and academies), 84% had voted for facilities time to be 'level playing field' with no de-delegation. Having been put to a vote, Forum AGREED as follows: The proposal to de-delegate for 2025/26 (maintained primary representatives): • Primary members: 2 in favour, 7 against (de-delegation refused) • Secondary members: 0 in favour, 1 against (de-delegation refused) The proposal to use the £40K surplus in the pot to fund facilities time for 2025/26 (maintained primary and maintained secondary representatives voting together): • 8 in favour, 0 against (proposal agreed)	
	(b) GROWTH/FALLING ROLLS FUND 2025/26 <i>Before considering this item, the Forum considered the report on Bulge Places 2025/25 (see minute 7b).</i> The Forum considered a report which proposed a Growth Fund of £260K for 2025/26. This information had been presented at previous meetings and was now put forward for formal approval. Members of Forum commented: • At a previous meeting Forum had requested that a per pupil figure be provided so members could understand the impact on individual schools, however the figure was not provided in the report. • Growth funding was normally paid to expanding schools, however the report did not state which schools the funding would be paid to. A spreadsheet shared by officers at the meeting indicated that the £260K Growth Fund proposed for 2025/26 included schools which had bulge classes in 2024/25. This was incorrect as, after the first bulge year, pupils were included in the census and funded in the usual way. A report on bulge classes for 2025/26 (see agenda item 7b) gave a figure of 30 places being needed for 2025/26, and re-calculation at the meeting estimated £100K Growth Fund would be required in 2025/26 to fund 30 pupils for 7 months at £5,712 per pupil. • Members expressed frustration at the inaccuracy of the information provided in the report and proposed deferring a vote to enable an accurate report to be provided, however it was decided that it was necessary to decide the matter at this meeting to enable budgets to be set. It having been put to a vote, the Forum AGREED (i) to make provision for £100K Growth Fund for 2025/26, and (ii) that a decision on allocation of bulge places for 2025/26 would be considered at the next meeting.	
	(c) CENTRAL SCHOOLS SERVICES BLOCK (CSSB) 2025/26 The Forum considered a report which set out the services and support which the LA proposed to fund from the 2025/26 CSSB grant together with the budget allocations. The CSSB allocation for 2025/26 was £2.511M which represented an increase of £0.048M from last year. Members of Forum commented that, at £0.9M, Education Support Grant (ESG) retained	

	services took the largest share of this block, yet schools did not have a clear sense of what this covered. Officers advised that a substantial proportion went on statutory attendance services provided for all school (maintained and academies), which was different from services only for maintained schools which were funded through de-delegation. Members asked whether the outturn figures for 2023/24 showing spend in each area could be shared. It having been put to a vote, the Forum AGREED the CSSB allocation and spending for 2025/26 as set out in the report.	AG
6.	ITEMS FOR CONSULTATION	
	(a) DSG ALLOCATIONS 2025/26 The Forum NOTED a report which provided an overview of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding announced by the Government on 18 December 2024 and the indicative amounts of each block of the DSG that would be allocated to Hillingdon for 2025/26.	
	(b) SCHOOL BLOCK REPORT 2025/26 The Forum NOTED a report which (i) provided a briefing on the final Schools Block allocation of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2025/26 following the receipt of final funding allocations and the Authority Proforma Tool (APT) in December 2024, and (ii) outlined the principles under which the Council would set the local Hillingdon school funding formula for 2025/26. The figures were based on a transfer of 2.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block in 2025/26, and it was noted that this was subject to change pending the outcomes of the LA's disapplication request to the DfE. Members of Forum observed that the report stated the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) would be set at -0.5%. In previous years Forum had been consulted on the MFG level, and members expressed surprise that the LA had set a negative MFG. Officers advised that the MFG could be re-modelled when further information was known, which could include the impact of changing to a positive MFG, and officers would welcome input from the Forum on which elements to adjust. Forum requested that, if the block transfer approved by DfE was less than the amount requested by the LA, the MFG should be set at the highest level of +0.5%.	
	(c) EARLY YEARS BLOCK 2025/26 The Forum considered a report which sought Forum's views on proposals to be included in the consultation on the Early Years Funding Formula for 2025/26. Due to the need for a decision to be made before the next meeting of Schools Forum, it was proposed that Forum delegate review of the consultation responses to the Early Years Sub-Group. Members of Forum commented: • The EY Group had discussed at its meetings in October 2024 and January 2025 potential changes to the way the SEN supplement was calculated. The Group supported the principles behind the proposal to move to a 'real time' funding methodology to support current children, but was concerned that reducing the supplement at short notice could result in some settings receiving an unanticipated reduction in their funding for 2025/26, which could have a significant financial impact on some PVI's. • Normally consultations would include a 'no change' option. • In view of the changes the LA had made to the proposed consultation since the EY Group meeting on 9 January 2025, the Chair and Vice Chair of Forum had met with the LA yesterday to agree information to be included in the consultation document to enable settings to understand how the proposed changes would impact them. A further meeting with the LA would take place later that week to review the consultation document before it was issued. On the basis that representatives of Forum would be meeting with the LA to review the final consultation document before it was circulated, Forum NOTED the proposed consultation and AGREED to delegate final review of the consultation responses to the Early Years Group.	
7.	ITEMS FOR INFORMATION	
	(a) SCHOOL BALANCES The Forum NOTED a report which provided the latest update position of Hillingdon	

	maintained schools which had a deficit. It was noted that the closing balances should be viewed with some caution as most of the school's forecasts were produced in May 2024. Members of the Forum observed that 29 of the Borough's 48 maintained schools reported an in-year deficit last year and any reduction in funding could create a risk of more schools falling into a deficit position.	
	(b) BULGE PLACES The Forum NOTED an information report on bulge places for 2025/26, which provided advance notice that a further 30 secondary bulge places were likely to be required from September 2025 in the south of the Borough to ensure there were sufficient surplus places to allow for local mobility, in year movement and to provide parents with an element of choice. It was best practice to have 5-10% capacity and Hillingdon was currently below this. The additional 30 places would raise capacity above 5%. Headteachers had been asked at HASH to express interest if they were able to meet additional capacity, and a report requesting approval for specific school(s) to access Growth Contingency Funding would be presented to the Forum in March 2025. Members of the Forum commented that: • It was HASH's view was that there should not be bulge classes in the south of the Borough if other schools had space. The LA advised that mobility was particularly high in the south of the Borough and the LA had to ensure there was sufficient capacity in areas pupils could reasonably travel to. The LA did not wish to risk having insufficient spaces if numbers fluctuated in-year. • There was at least 5% shrinkage primary to secondary each year and members asked what the pupil number predictions were based on. Officers advised that secondary preferences submitted had indicated 162 vacancies, which would be below the target level of 5-10% vacancies. The GLA also provided predictions which were usually accurate. • More accurate figures would be available at national offer day in March. The Forum AGREED that Growth Contingency Funding would be provided for in the budget (see minute 5b) and a decision on specific school bulge class allocations would be made at the next meeting when further information was known.	NM
8.	STAFFING UPDATE AP reported that: • Luisa Hansen had been appointed Head of Finance. • Sanjaya Gunatilake would be supporting on the DSG. • Ndenko Asong would be returning to LA Finance. • Andrew Good would be leaving. • All posts were interim.	
9.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS None.	
10.	DATE OF NEXT MEETING Tuesday 25 March 2025 at 1pm via Teams.	

The meeting closed at 3.45pm