

HILLINGDON SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 19 May 2021 at 1pm via videoconferencing

Voting members

NAME	ORGANISATION	ATTENDANCE	TERM ENDS
Maintained Nursery (1)			
Ludmila Morris	McMillan Early Childhood Centre	ABSENT	Sep 2024
Maintained Primary - Schools (4)			
Rachel Anderson	Dr Triplett's School	APOLOGIES	Sep 2023
Duncan Greig	Breakspear Primary School	APOLOGIES	Sep 2021
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	APOLOGIES	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	PRESENT	Sep 2021
Maintained Special (1)			
John Goddard	Hedgewood School	PRESENT	Sep 2022
Academies (9)			
Aftab Ahmed	Guru Nanak Sikh Academy	ABSENT	Sep 2023
Peter Edgley	Bishopshalt	PRESENT	Sep 2024
Tracey Hemming	Middlesex Learning Partnership	PRESENT	Sep 2024
Nicola Kelly	Charville	APOLOGIES	Sep 2024
Helen Manwaring	Swakeleys School	PRESENT	Sep 2022
Catherine Mosdell	Frays Academy Trust	PRESENT	Sep 2023
David Patterson	Queensmead School	ABSENT	Sep 2023
Colin Tucker	Ryefield	PRESENT	Sep 2024
Sandra Voisey	Laurel Lane Primary School	PRESENT	Sep 2023
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		NOT REQUIRED
Shadow Representative (Maintained Primary - Schools)			
Rachel Blake	Whiteheath Infant School		NOT REQUIRED
Eleesa Dowding	Harmondsworth		NOT REQUIRED
Shadow Representative (Maintained Primary - Governor)			
Jo Palmer	Hillside Infant School and Hillside Junior School		PRESENT
Graham Wells	Colham Manor Primary School		NOT REQUIRED
Local Authority Officers			
Kate Boulter	Clerk		PRESENT
Vikram Hansrani	Assistant Director, SEND & Inclusion		APOLOGIES
Dan Kennedy	LA		PRESENT
Philip Ryan	LA		PRESENT
Graham Young	Lead Finance Business Partner - School		PRESENT

		ACTION
1.	<p>ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR</p> <p>The Forum AGREED to appoint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jim Edgecombe as Chair of Schools Forum until the end of the 2022/23 financial year. • Phil Haigh as Vice Chair of Schools Forum and Chair of the working groups until the end of the 2022/23 financial year. 	
2.	<p>APOLOGIES</p> <p>Apologies were accepted and recorded in the attendance list (above). The Chair confirmed the meeting was quorate and could proceed to business. It was noted that two representatives from PVI who had expressed an interest in joining the Forum were observing the meeting.</p>	
3.	<p>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 MARCH 2021</p> <p>The minutes were agreed as a correct record.</p>	
4.	<p>MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 MARCH 2021</p> <p>(a) MEMBERSHIP UPDATE</p> <p>GY would ask Democratic Services to progress the election for a 16-19 representative.</p> <p>(b) SWAKELEYS GROWTH CONTINGENCY</p> <p>GY to explore whether there was any entitlement to funding prior to September 2020 and report back to Forum.</p> <p>(c) DSG OVERHEADS APPORTIONMENT</p> <p>GY confirmed that the call charges provided in the report were correct. There was a planned review of all charges made to the DSG which would pick up any anomalies.</p> <p>(b) EDUCATION STRUCTURE</p> <p>DK reported that all management roles had been appointed to apart from the Deputy Director of Education which was in the process of appointing. The Forum requested a document setting out the new structure and roles for members' information.</p>	<p>GY</p> <p>GY</p> <p>DK</p>
5.	<p>FEEDBACK FROM SUB-GROUPS</p> <p>(a) DSG/EY</p> <p>The Forum NOTED the minutes of the DSG/EY Group held on 5 May 2021. PH reported that there had been concern regarding low Reception numbers across the Borough for September 2021 entry, however it was understood that many late applications were being made which would make a substantial change to the final numbers.</p> <p>(b) HNG</p> <p>The Forum NOTED the minutes of the High Needs Group held on 12 May 2021. PH reported that there continued to be a substantial number of children and young people placed in independent and non-maintained special provision due to a lack of capacity in the Borough's maintained schools. This meant the budget for 2021/22 was likely to be exceeded.</p> <p>A significant part of both meetings had been spent looking at the DSG Deficit Recovery Plan.</p>	
6.	<p>ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION</p>	
6.1	<p>(a) ST MARTIN'S DISECONOMIES FUNDING 2019/20</p> <p>Cathy Modsell and Sandra Voisey declared an interest in that they worked for Frays Academy Trust.</p> <p>The Forum considered a report which provided an update on St Martin's request for diseconomies funding, which the LA had been negotiating with the school since September 2019. The matter had been discussed at previous Forum and Sub-Group meetings, and the Executive Headteacher of the Trust to which St Martin's belonged had attended the DSG/EY Working Group on 5 May 2021 to present his request. The Sub-Group had asked PH and GY to meet with the Trust to design a rationale for calculating the funding due. Further details were provided in the Sub-Group minutes.</p>	

	<p>Based on those discussions, the proposed rationale for the calculation of diseconomies funding was: subtract the direct pupil related costs (classroom-based staff and non-staffing pupil related costs) from the total expenditure to calculate the total expenditure not directly linked to pupils; divide the total by seven to give a total per primary year group; multiply this by the number of year groups which were unfilled at the school for that year (in 2019/20 this was three). Using this method of calculation, St Martins diseconomies requirement for 2019/20 came to £367K. The school had to date received £209K and therefore the proposal was to pay the balance of £158K. The Trust had agreed this amount subject to the Forum’s agreement.</p> <p>The Forum commented that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using a formula provided a fair and transparent way to calculate diseconomies funding. The formula should be added to the Growth Contingency Policy and applied to all schools. • A member commented that the issues around St Martin’s diseconomies request for 2019/20 had taken a long time to resolve, and suggested that a formal appeal process be created setting out how to deal with the situation should it arise again. The Forum noted that the introduction of a formula would provide a clear method for calculating funding, and limited discussions would be necessary in the future. The Forum was the decision-maker for diseconomies funding, and discussions or disagreements would be brought to the Forum as they had been in St Martin’s case. <p>The Forum AGREED (1) the proposal to release further diseconomies funding of £158K to St Martin’s for the academic year 2019/20, taking the total diseconomies funding for this year to £367K; (2) the rationale for the calculation of diseconomies funding for future years as outlined in Section 4 of the report; (3) that the new calculation be incorporated into the Growth Contingency Policy and the revised policy brought back to the Forum for approval.</p>	
7.	INFORMATION ITEMS	
	<p>(a) DSG PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2020/21</p> <p>The Forum considered the DSG Outturn 2020/21 and the School Balances report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DSG had an in-year overspend of £10,355K at outturn, an increase of £3,180K on the budgeted deficit of £7,175K and a £126K adverse movement from the position reported at Month 11. • The overspend was due to ongoing pressures in the cost of High Needs placements, where significant growth continued. The budget for High Needs was increased for 2020/21 to take account of projected growth, but the latest projections indicated a further increase in the expenditure on pupils with an EHCP being placed in Independent special school placements along with an increase in the spend on specialist SEN tuition for pupils with an EHCP. • When the £15,002K deficit brought forward from 2019/20 was taken into account, the cumulative deficit carry forward to 2021/22 was £25,357K. • The Schools Block had £329K underspend as the Forum had withheld growth contingency allocations for one school due to insufficient projected pupil growth in September 2020, actual funding requirement for Year 7 numbers above PAN had been lower than budgeted, and the Forum had limited diseconomies funding for one school. • The Early Years Block had £111K underspend. There was adverse movement of £97K which related to the final number of children accessing the free entitlement in the Spring term being higher than anticipated . Attendance was very difficult to project due to Covid. • The Central Services Block had £206K underspend. There was favourable movement of £239K as a result of the final recharge for the contribution to the education element of non-SEN LAC placements being significantly lower than projected. • The High Needs Block was showing £3,604K overspend due to built-in growth having been exceeded. Capacity was driving the pressure on High Needs costs. 	

The Forum **NOTED** the report.

(b) SCHOOL BALANCES 2020/21

The Forum considered the School Balances report:

- Maintained schools ended the 2020/21 financial year with a cumulative closing surplus balance of £14.3m (£13.8m revenue and £0.5m capital). This was a £4.1m increase from the previous year total.
- Three maintained schools ended 2020/21 in deficit which was an improvement on the start of the year when the Local Authority approved licensed deficits for five schools.
- The comparison between maintained schools' budgeted balances at the start of the year and their final outturn positions indicated that the majority (48 schools) ended the year with a revenue balance greater than budgeted at the start of the year. The LA would work with schools to make sure realistic budgets were set.
- Published academy accounts to 31 August 2020 showed that 8 out of the Borough's 46 academy schools were in deficit as at 31 August 2020.
- The four studio colleges continued to report deficits.

The Forum **NOTED** the report and commented:

- There were various reasons why a school might report a higher outturn than was budgeted. It had been an anomalous year due to Covid and many schools had not been able to complete plans they had budgeted for. At least one school had been required to re-write its budget as the base data from the LA had been incorrect.
- Members were reminded that it was within the Forum's power to set up a clawback mechanism, however surpluses could not be taken from academies, but academies had to be included in the distribution of clawed-back funds.
- The Forum expressed concern that one maintained school did not appear to be financially viable. GY advised that the LA was meeting with the school to discuss a way forward. GY confirmed that if a church school were to close, the deficit would come back to the DSG.
- The Forum had asked the DfE to consider making changes to the Minimum Funding Guarantee as some schools were being disproportionately funded and were reporting surpluses. The DfE had refused the request.
- The viability of the studio academies was a concern and the Forum asked GY to raise it with the Cabinet Member for Education. JE/PH would also raise it. It was noted that the issue was outside of the LA's control as academy funding came directly from the ESFA.

(c) DSG DEFICIT RECOVERY PLAN

The Forum was provided with the Deficit Recovery Plan submitted to the DfE which set out how the LA planned to address the cumulative deficit position. A sub-group of the Forum had been set up to contribute to the draft plan, which the DfE had requested by week commencing 19 April 2021. Officers would be meeting with the ESFA in the second week of June and it was anticipated that feedback on the draft plan would be provided at that meeting.

GY reported that five LAs had agreed 'safety valve agreements' with the DfE under which their deficits would be written off if they kept to the plan agreed by the DfE. Hillingdon's plan set out how a balanced in-year budget would be set within five years. The Plan set out how this would be achieved in the following areas: SEND Pathway; High Needs National Funding Formula funding; 0.5% Schools Block transfer; SEND places; 3% threshold mechanism; Health & Social Care contributions; FE college places banded funding model; Pupil Support Team commissioning; Tuition for school refusers; Support costs recharge. There were other potential areas which required further modelling: review of Banded Funding model; review of Special School Funding; review of Alternative Provision; review of Outreach Provision; and use of current school estate for Specialist provision.

The report contained some indicative timings for progressing the actions set out in the Plan,

	<p>such as consultation with stakeholders in the autumn term.</p> <p>The Forum commented that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 3% threshold mechanism and 0.5% Schools Block transfer were within the Forum’s authority and it would be helpful to have confidence that the Forum would support those actions before committing to them. • Considerable consultation would be needed with stakeholders to cover all the proposals in the plan, and time should be allowed for this. <p>The Forum NOTED that the Plan was an LA document and the Forum was being asked to note rather than approve it. An update would be provided to the next meeting, after officers had met with the ESFA.</p>	
8.	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>None.</p>	

The meeting closed at 2.30pm.