

MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS' FORUM
HELD on 27th JANUARY 2026
VIRTUAL MS TEAMS MEETING
(10:00AM TO 12:00PM)

Present	Maintained Primary Representative	
	Scott Halliwell (SH) (Co Chair)	HT, Southwood Primary School
	Jamie Bell (JB)	HT, Warren Juniors School
	Gill Massar (GM)	HT, William Bellamy Primary School
	Richard November (RN)	HT, Valence Primary School
	Simon Abeledo (SA)	HT, Rush Green Primary School
	Lauren Pearce (LP)	HT, Parsloes Primary School
	Sara Rider (SR)	HT, Monteagle Primary School
	Maintained Secondary Representatives	
	Tony Roe (TR)	HT, Barking Abbey School
	Lisa Keane (LK)	HT, Jo Richrdson Community School
	Maintained All-through (A/T)	
	Russell Taylor	HT, Robert Clack School
	Governor Representatives (1 Pri & 1 Sec)	
	Vacant	
	Vacant	
	Academy & Free Primary	
	Sarah Kinnaird (SK)	HT, Goresbrook Primary School
	Academy & Free Secondary	
	Andy Roberts (AR)	HT, Riverside School
	Academy & Free Schools (A/T)	
	Roger Leighton (RL)	Chief Executive, Partnership Learning
	Maintained Special Schools Representative	
	Jo Long (JL)	HT, Trinity School
	Maintained PRU Representative	
	Cathy Stygal (CS)	HT, Mayesbrook Park School
	Early Years Representative	
	John Trow-Smith (JTS)	Early Years, Local Authority
	Trade Union Representative (shared role)	
	Dominic Byrne (DB)	NUT
	John McGill (JMcG)	NASUWT
	Church of England Representative	
	David Huntingford (DH)	HT, William Ford C of E Junior School
	Catholic Representative	
	Clare Cattle	HT, All Saints Catholic School
	14-19 Representative	
	Natalie Davison	Principal, BDC

Also present: Jane Hargreaves (JH) – Commissioning Director, Education; Jessica McQuaid (JMcQ) - Head of School Performance and Partnerships Councillor Elizabeth Kangethe (CEK) – Cabinet Member for Educational Attainment and School Improvement; Kofi Adu (KA) – Head of Finance, Local Authority Finance; Florence Fadahunsi (FF) – Senior Finance Business Partner, Local Authority Finance; Gurmit Kaur (GKa) – Schools Senior Accountant, Local Authority Finance; Kamber Qema (KQ) - Accounting Technician Apprentice; Kwesi Adobah (KAd) - Principal Accountant; Amrita Kaur (AK) - Schools Senior Accountant; ~~Ronan Fox (RF)~~, Rikke Damsgaard (RD) – Strategic Lead for Early Years and Childcare); Clare Cross (CC) - Sydney Russell School, Simon Abeledo (SA) - Rush Green School, Tracey Whittington (TW) Beam County Primary; Mairead Pryor (MP) Furze Infants; ~~James Smith (JS) Thames View Junior School~~, Holly Wolf (HW) Mayesbrook Park; Jani J; Dawn Buchanan; Amrita Kaur; Shabana Kausar; Bei Braithwaite-Cotton (BBC) – Local Authority Minute Clerk.

Scott Halliwell chaired the meeting

1.0	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u>				
	None received.				
2.0	<u>DECLARATION OF INTEREST</u> None				
3.0	<u>MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING</u>				
	The minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2025 were confirmed as accurate.				
	<i>Update on previous actions:</i>				
	No	Date of Meeting	Item No	Action	Owner
	1	16.12.2025	10.4	Check the Eastbrook growth fund allocation with the admissions team and respond to Claire regarding the accuracy of the data. Update: Number. Update: The admissions team clarified the figures: Eastbrook Primary will have an increase of 30 pupils, resulting in an additional reception class this coming year. There is no change for Eastbrook Secondary, as numbers remain capped. Figures have been amended the figures previously reported in April, and the current numbers for next year have now been confirmed.	
	2	21.10.2025	10.1	Add column to table of a percentage reduction on falling rolls. Applied to next year falling roll table. Update: It was agreed that additional columns would be added to the falling rolls table for next year, specifically to reflect the percentage of reduction and falling rolls.	

	3			There was an outstanding action from a previous meeting for the heads of primary and secondary to meet with Andy Carr and Lisa O'Dwyer. This meeting has since taken place during the current term. As the applications for reception for September had not closed at the time, a follow-up meeting will be scheduled, and a further update will be provided at the next Schools Forum. The initial meeting was productive, focusing on admission numbers over a five-year period, including the current year and projections for September 2026 and beyond.		
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REPORT FROM HEAD OF FINANCE/GROUP FINANCE MANAGER

4 2025/26 Projected DSG Outturn

4.1 The table below sets out the projected 2025/26 DSG outturn at period 9. There has been no change to the DSG projected outturn reported in December 2025. Among the funding blocks, Schools, Central and Early Years blocks are projecting a breakeven position at year end. Conversely, the high needs block is forecasting an overspend of **£3.1m**. This overspend is due to growth in places at special schools, expansion of Additional Resource Provision (ARP) places, pressures from Home Tuition service, increase in demand for post 16 places and meeting the needs of SEND pupils. Within the forecast overspend is a contingent liability of £1m of which £372k has already been paid.

4.2 DSG reserves brought forward from 2024/25 is £1.158m. The in-year projected overspend of £3.1m on the High Needs Block results in an anticipated year-end deficit position on the reserve of **£1.942m**. The resulting deficit places further pressure on future years' DSG budgets and highlights the need for continued recovery planning and cost-management actions.

	2025/26 DSG Funding £'000	2025/26 Projected Outturn Oct 2025 £'000	Surplus / (Deficit) £'000	Surplus / (Deficit) £'000	Movement from Dec-24 Favourable/ (Adverse)
Schools Block (ISB)	212,714	212,714	0	0	0
Central Services Block	2,237	2,237	0	0	0
High Needs Block	56,995	60,095	(3,100)	(3,100)	0
Early Years Block	35,333	35,333	0	0	0
	307,278	310,378	(3,100)	(3,100)	0
DSG reserves B/f	1,158		1,158	1,158	0
Revised DSG Carried forward-Surplus/(Deficit)			(1,942)	(1,942)	0

Table - 2025/26 projected DSG outturn

Recommendation: School Forum are asked to:

Note and comment on the projected DSG outturn position for 2025/26

All noted. No action required from the schools' forum at this time.

52025/26 Update on High Needs Projected Outturn

The High needs budget continues to be under pressure due to:

- increased demand and complex cases of children presenting with SEND and the financial pressures schools are facing especially the primary phase in managing these cohort of children.
- The table below shows details of the outturn position.

2025-26 High Needs Projected Outturn						
High Needs Budget and Outturn	2023/24 Outturn £	2024/25 Outturn £	2025/26 Budget £	2025/26 Outturn Forecast £	+Surplus (Deficit) Month 9	+Surplus (Deficit) Month 8
Alternative Provision (excl PRU)	3,369,139	4,145,018	4,083,002	4,348,489	(265,487)	(256,018)
ARP Funding	9,789,848	10,001,189	10,276,640	10,147,967	128,673	169,287
Education Inclusion	1,945,955	1,866,872	2,392,321	2,413,188	(20,867)	(3,159)
SEN - Non maintained	5,501,905	3,901,597	3,993,776	2,941,150	1,052,626	1,099,235
High Needs Top Ups - OB	2,661,046	3,109,263	2,939,727	4,073,016	(1,133,289)	(874,497)
SEND (Commissioned Services)	1,369,200	2,045,491	1,016,317	2,146,174	(1,129,857)	(1,129,857)
Legal fees & CiC Residential Education	839,121	1,219,200	1,460,850	1,460,850	0	200,103
HN Top Ups - Post 16	2,664,888	3,977,999	4,055,150	5,727,180	(1,672,030)	(1,638,304)
Mainstream Top Ups	5,474,350	5,175,066	5,750,000	7,077,537	(1,327,537)	(1,051,770)
Provisional Payments	2,790,000	2,440,000	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Aspire Vitual School	380,035	377,667	382,324	419,388	(37,064)	(39,428)
Initiatives (Rapid Response)	903,872	817,251	791,917	808,575	(16,658)	0.00
Special School Funding	14,438,249	16,930,529	18,175,947	17,306,481	869,466	835,966
EY Portage & Youth Service	471,527	404,597	395,049	395,049	0	(135,000)
Wordfirst & Salt Projects	570,315	1,130,509	568,000	467,672	100,328	0.00
Gatekeeping		620,580	713,651	371,815.32	341,836	713,651
Historic Pressure			0		0	(1,000,000)
Total Expenditure	53,169,450	58,162,829	56,994,671	60,104,531	(3,109,860)	(3,109,790)
Total Budget	49,836,711	51,567,397		56,994,671		
Variance (Overspend)	(3,332,739)	(6,595,432)		(3,109,860)		

Table – High Needs Outturn

5.1The pressures in the budget are driven by the following areas:

- Post 16 placements
- Demand for Home Tuition Outreach service
- SEND Commissioned Services

Mainstream top-up payments for LBBd schools

5.2Post 16 placements

- There is ongoing increase in demand for post 16 SEND places, the transition from pre-16 has contributed to the demand. The LA is monitoring, benchmarking and challenging Post-16 placement costs, supported by strong partnership working with the local college to maximise local placements.
- We are also reviewing Post-16 placements in the Independent and Non-Maintained (INM) sector to ensure value for money, with a focus on the highest-cost cases.
- Improving the early flow of information to support more accurate forecasting of provision and costs.

The table shows the trend in demand for Post-16 places.

Post 16 Special Schools & College Places	2024/25	2025/26	% Increase
Post 16 College Places	330	352	7%
Post 16 Special School places	63	59	-6%
Grand Total	393	411	5%

5.3 SEND commissioned Services

Barking and Dagenham continues to face significant financial pressures in meeting the needs of pupils with SEND, particularly due to a sharp increase in demand from families newly arriving in the borough.

5.4 The requirement to secure interim placements—often at short notice—has led to a substantial rise in expenditure. This is driven by unprecedented levels of demand and the high number of children and young people moving into the area who require specialist provision.

5.5 The SEND Code of Practice 2015 sets out a clear statutory duty for local authorities to secure suitable education for all children and young people with SEND, ensuring their needs are met without delay. When a child or young person with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan moves into Barking and Dagenham from another authority, the previous authority must transfer the EHC plan to the new authority on the day of the move, or within 15 working days if prior notice was not given. Upon transfer, Barking and Dagenham becomes responsible for maintaining the plan and securing the special educational provision specified within it, as well as arranging interim tuition if a suitable placement is not immediately available. This statutory duty, combined with lagged funding mechanisms and a shortage of local specialist places, means the borough must often resort to costly interim solutions to uphold its legal obligations, further stretching already limited resources.

5.6 Mainstream top-up Funding Update

The table below shows the funding position for mainstream top-up payments.

Distribution of Mainstream Top-Up Funding		
Top-up Budget	5,750,000	
Central Services Savings	1,004,332	
Total Funding Available		6,754,332
EHCP Payments (30th June)	-4,149,755	
EHCP (July - Oct) to be paid	-253,877	
Total EHCP Payments		-4,403,632
Available for distribution		2,350,700
Add Provision for Historic top-up		400,000
Distribute Equally to Non-EHCP		2,750,700

- Budget Allocation for the year is £5,750,000
- One-off in year savings from centrally managed High needs services is £1,004,322
- Additional £400,000 has been earmarked to be included in the funding for top-up for mainstream schools. Therefore, the total budget available for top-up payments for this year is £7,154,332
- Payment has been made for 792 pupils with EHCP @ 30 June 2025
- Further payments for 61 pupils (53 prim & 8 sec) issued with EHCP between July – October will be made.
- Balance available for distribution for non-EHCP pupils is now 2,750,700. This amount will be distributed equally to 738 primary pupils only.

Recommendation (ii): School Forum is requested to:

- (a) Note & comment on the outturn forecast for High Needs Block for 2025/26
- (b) Note & comment on the revised mainstream top-up payments for 2025/26

All noted. No action required from the schools' forum at this time.

Comments:

SH asked for confirmation that the updated funding changes mean schools will receive more mainstream top-up funding than originally planned. **KA** confirmed that the new actions mean schools will receive significantly more support than originally budgeted for.

SH noted that although mainstream top-up funding has reduced over the years, the reduction is now much smaller than expected. **KA** explained that without these changes, schools would have faced a large shortfall, so the revised approach brings funding closer to previous years' levels.

SH highlighted that the extra funding being added is helpful for schools.

SH queried the rise in out-of-borough costs and whether this was due to more pupils or changes in placement types. **KA** clarified that out-of-borough cost increases are due to more placements in maintained out-of-borough schools, not private ones.

SH asked whether funding for pupils without EHCPs would continue to use a flat-rate payment or be adjusted. **KA** stated that the final method for allocating funding to pupils without EHCPs is still being finalised.

MN clarified that, due to pressures in the primary sector and early years, the non-EHC funding was focused on primary schools for 2025/26. There was consensus that future years should include all phases, given the increasing number of high needs pupils transitioning to secondary.

6 **Early Years Update 2025/26**

- 6.1** The Early Years Budget for 25/26 is £35.3m. Our financial modelling for Early years funding shows there will be an estimated surplus of £2.8m due to reduced take-up of 3 & 4-year-olds and under 2-year-olds as compared to census numbers. Refer to the table below for details.

2025-26 Early Years Funding	Budget Allocation	Actual Spend @ Month 8	Projected Forecast	Variance (Deficit) Underspend
Centrally Retained	1,396,407	999,554	1,609,601	-213,194
Total 3&4 YO EY Block	19,717,931	11,070,011	17,405,016	2,312,915
Total Entitlement 2 Y O	8,331,638	5,805,696	8,708,544	-376,906
Under 2 Funding Total	5,887,330	2,772,969	4,759,453	1,127,877
TOTAL EY BLOCK	35,333,306	20,648,230	32,482,614	2,850,692

- 6.2** We are therefore proposing to release additional payments of circa £866k to PVI's & Nurseries from the projected underspend by increasing the rate for 3 & 4-year-olds from £5.70p to £6.90p for spring term only. This is an increase of £1.20p per PTE. This will equate to an estimated £707k for 3–4-year-olds. The rate for 2-year-olds will also be increased from £12 to £14 per PTE, an increase of £2, this will equate to an estimated £158k for spring term only. Please refer to the table below for details and basis of calculation. **Please note the figures are based on estimated data, the actual amount may differ.**

3- & 4-Year-olds					
Spring Term	Estimated PTE	Termly Hrs	Funded Hrs	Rate (£)	£
Universal	2,430	165	400,950	1.20	481,140
Additional	1,142	165	188,430	1.20	226,116
Total	3,572		589,380		707,256

2-Year-olds					
Spring Term	Estimated PTE	Termly Hrs	Funded Hrs	Rate (£)	£
Entitlement	481	165	79,365	2.00	158,730
Total	481		79,365		158,730

Proposed Total One-off	865,986
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Comments:

SH & KA Kofi discussed the risk that some of the underspend may be clawed back by the DfE, as the final amount is not confirmed until July.

JT-S raised the impact of the move to termly census, which **KA** confirmed would make funding more accurate and reduce future underspends.

Recommendation (iv): Schools forum is requested to:

- a. Note the Early Year's projected outturn forecast
- b. Approve the one-off payment to PVI's & Nurseries for the spring term only worth estimated £865,986.

All noted & approved.

7 DSG Funding allocation for 2026/27

- 7.1** The DSG allocation for 2026/27 was published by the Department for Education (DfE) on 17 December 2025 with LBD being granted the sum of £418.282m across the four blocks (before academy recoupment). The table below provides a breakdown of the grant across the DSG blocks and shows the movement in funding between 2025/26 and 2026/27 allocations.

	2025/26 DSG Allocation as at 25/11/25			2026/27 DSG Allocation as at 17/12/25					
	DSG Before Recoupment £'000	Less Recoupment /NDR deductions £'000	Net £'000	DSG Before Recoupment £'000	Less Recoupment /NDR deductions £'000	Net £'000	Change (Includes SBSG & NIC grants) £'000	Additional 25/26 grants £'000	Real Increase
	d	e	f = d - e	a	b	c = a - b			
Schools Block	299,589	(6,727)	292,862	309,322	(6,765)	302,557	9,695	(8,450)	1,245
Central Block	2,237	0	2,237	2,267	0	2,267	30	-	30
High Needs Block	62,233	(5,238)	56,995	65,015	(5,618)	59,397	2,402	-	2,402
Early Years Block	35,333	0	35,333	41,678	0	41,678	6,345	-	6,345
	399,392	(11,966)	387,426	418,282	(12,383)	405,898	18,472	(8,450)	10,022

Table - DSG Grant Allocation 2025/26 -v-2026/27 (in £'000s)

- 7.2** The overall 'real' increase in DSG from last year is **£10.022m**, after stripping out **£8.45m** received in additional grants (Schools Budget Support Grant -SBSG and National Insurance Contributions-NIC Grant)
- The school's block has increased by **£9.695m**. The 'real' increase after excluding the £8.45m paid in additional grants (SBSG & NIC) which have been rolled into the main grant is £1.245m.
 - The unit of funding of the Central School Services block has increased by £2.71 per pupil whilst the historical commitments have been reduced by 20%. The net effect is an increase of **£30k**.
 - The budget allocation for high needs has increased by **£2.4m**. This is an uplift of 4.47% on the 2025/26 allocation.
 - The Early Years allocation has been increased by **£6.345m** due to the expansion to the early years offer.
- 7.3** The total school block funding for 2026/27 is **£309.322m** as set out in the table in section 4.1. This figure is before recoupment for academies. This allocation has been calculated based on the guaranteed unit of funding for primary and secondary multiplied by the number of pupils on roll at the October 2025 census.

The total pupil led funding is **£296.715m**, and in addition to this is the allocation of **£654,384** for growth and **£11.952m** for the premises factors (NDR & PFI).

DSG Schools block allocation			
Guaranteed Unit of Funding	2025/26	2026/27	Change
Primary Unit of Funding (PUF)	£6,165.47	£6,426.70	£261.23
Secondary Unit of Funding (SUF)	£8,351.21	£8,732.50	£381.29
Numbers on roll (Oct Census)			
Primary Unit of Funding (PUF)	24,174	23,792	-382
Secondary Unit of Funding (SUF)	16,468	16,469	1
Total Primary school funding	£149,040,990	£152,903,995	£3,863,005
Total Secondary school funding	£137,523,551	£143,811,230	£6,287,679
Total pupil led funding	£286,564,541	£296,715,224	£10,150,684
Premises Factor	£11,721,990	£11,952,139	£230,149
Growth Funding	£1,302,413	£654,384	-£648,029
Total Schools block before recoupment	£299,588,944	£309,321,747	£9,732,804
Deductions for NNDR	£6,727,303	£6,765,180	£37,877
Total schools funding after deduction before recoupment	£292,861,641	£302,556,567	£9,694,927*

Table: Schools block allocation 2025/26-v-2026/27

***This figure includes £8.450m of other grants previously paid separately but has now been rolled into the 2026/27 baseline.**

Recommendation (iv): Schools forum is requested to:

Note the updated DSG funding for 2026/27

All noted. No action required from the schools' forum at this time.

8 Response to Consultation: Schools Block funding option 2026/27

- 8.1** A total of 25 (44%) of schools responded to the consultation, 19 primaries, 4 secondaries and 1 all-through school.
- The main findings are as follows:
- Q1- Schools were invited to rank “the three illustrative funding models in order of preference, 1 being the most favoured and 3 the least favoured option”.**

The summary of response is as below:

Phase	Model A Full NFF 1:1.41	Model B Adjusted AWPU 1:1.37	Model C Adjusted AWPU 1:1.41	Total Responses	% responses by phase
Primary		19		19	76%
Secondary			4	4	16%
All Through	1		1	2	8%
	1	19	5	25	100%
	4%	76%	20%	100%	

- 8.2** The principles outlined in the consultation have been applied to the funding formula to set 2026/27 indicative school level allocation.

Refer to:

Appendix A- Overview of Funding Model

Appendix B - School level budget allocation for 2026/27

- 8.3** The overall primary to secondary ratio nationally is **1:1.301**. The preferred Model B pending DfE approving the budget allocations is a ratio of **1.37**. This sits above the national average ratio of 1:1.301, indicating that, compared with national norms, the LA allocates a relatively higher proportion of funding to secondary provision.

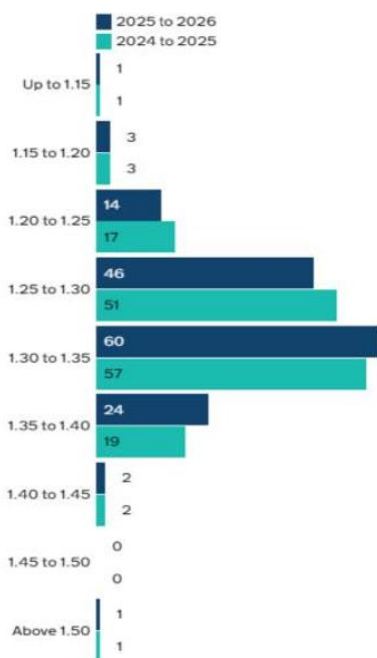


Chart: National Primary: Secondary ratios

Recommendation (v): Schools forum are requested to:

- a) Note the consultation response.
- b) Approve the indicative school level budget allocation with the funding ratio of 1:1.37 for the 2026/27 funding formula.

All noted & approved. No action required from the schools' forum at this time.

9 High Needs Provisional Budget 2026/27

9.1 The total high needs block allocation for 2026/27 after deductions is **£59.396m**. There is an increase of only **£2.4m** from 2025/26 allocation. This represents 4.7% uplift as compared to 8%-10% average uplifts in the past few years.

9.2 Please refer to **Appendix C** for details of the draft budget for 2026/27 with a 4-year Budget trend. The budget has been set using the following assumptions:

- 4.47% uplift equates to only £2,402,175 increase for 2026/27
- 0% Minimum Funding Guarantee for all budget lines
- Selected budget lines will receive 2% uplift for staff costs
- Mainstream top-up receives 18% uplift, circa £1m.
- Place funding for 2026/27 will be @ £10,000 for special schools
- Funding rates for Special Schools, ARPs & EHCP will remain at 2025/26 levels
- Projected budget pressures for 2026/27 are **£6m deficit**. See details below.

2026/27 for Budget Pressures

Budget Pressures for 2026/27	
Special schools - Level 2 (90 places) 7months	£1,802,850
Complex NARP (60places) 7 months	£749,350
OOB Commissioned Services - New Arrivals	£875,777
Post 16 demand	£1,533,868
Historic top-up funding	£600,000
Other Pressure - growth/demand ARPs, OOB.	£500,000
2026/27 Estimated Pressure	£6,061,845

Comments:

RL raised concerns about the high needs provisional budget, particularly for special schools and pointed out that while mainstream schools are expecting a modest increase of around 1% in their block funding for the next year, special schools are facing a real-terms cash cut. This is due to the removal of the £340 top-up on place funding, meaning a 300-place special school could lose £100,000 per year. RL described this as an “extreme position” and questioned the sustainability of such a cut beyond a single year.

KA acknowledged **RL's** concerns, agreeing that the situation had been discussed in the High Needs Working Group and reflected that while the decision not to apply the 3.4% uplift for special schools is painful, it was considered less damaging than previous measures, such as the removal of the provisional provision funding which had a much larger impact. **KA** noted that special schools currently have slightly better reserves than most maintained schools, which influenced the decision to manage this for a year and review for the following year.

JH and **SH** discussed the rapid increase in pupils with high needs, especially reception-aged children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). There was a focus on the need for flexible provision for these children, including the potential to double capacity for complex needs places (NARP). **JH** emphasised the challenge of supporting children whose long-term needs are not yet clear and highlighted that many will eventually require special school provision.

JH and **MN** discussed the need to create new places for children with complex needs, particularly in early years and reception, and the challenge of finding schools to host such provision. The increasing number of high-needs pupils was noted as a key pressure.

JH also noted that the number of children entering the borough with high needs far exceeds those leaving, putting additional strain on budgets and necessitating agency tuition for children without specialist placements. This leads to complaints from schools having to support children in need of special places and highlights the broader pressure on the system.

MN described ongoing discussions with schools about what such provision could look like, acknowledging the complexities of integrating children not yet ready for mainstream education and ensuring they become "school ready" between reception and Year 2.

SH questioned whether there would be enough specialist places for children transitioning from interim provision. **JH** responded that, if specialist provision is unavailable, funding would need to support alternative educational arrangements, requiring ongoing dialogue with schools about where and how to place these children.

The conversation also highlighted national-level concerns, such as the impact of including children with complex needs in accountability data (e.g., SATs scores for primary schools). There was hope expressed that forthcoming national policy (The White Paper) would address these issues and better support inclusive practice without penalising schools in performance tables.

KA highlighted that the figures for next year's high needs budget represent a worst-case scenario and may not fully materialize and explained that funding is based on maintaining last year's level of demand, with some money set aside for unforeseen pressures. While a £6 million deficit is forecast for next year, this is an improvement from the previous year's £6.5 million deficit. This year's deficit is projected at £3 million.

	Recommendation (vi): Schools forum is requested to: Note and comment on High Needs Provisional Budget for 2026/27. All noted. No action required from the schools' forum at this time.																																																		
10	Early Years Funding 2026/27																																																		
10.1	Department for Education (DfE) provides local authorities with a number of funding streams listed below, which together form the early years block of the dedicated schools grant (DSG). They are: The universal 15-hour entitlement for all 3-and-4-year-olds The additional 15-hour entitlement for eligible working parents of 3-and-4-year-olds The 15-hour entitlements for eligible working parents of children aged 9 months to 2 years and subsequent 30-hour entitlements for this group The 15-hour entitlement for disadvantaged 2-year-olds Disability Entitlement for under 2-year-olds. Disability access fund (DAF) Early years pupil premium (EYPP) Maintained nursery school (MNS) supplementary funding (if applicable).																																																		
10.2	2026/27 EY funding rates for local authorities were announced in December 2025. The proposed rates to be paid to providers are set out below. <table><tr><th></th><th colspan="3">DFE Rates</th><th colspan="3">LBBD Provider Rates</th></tr><tr><th>Funding Classification</th><th>Rates 2025/26</th><th>Rates 2026/27</th><th>% Increase</th><th>Rates 2025/26</th><th>Rates 2026/27</th><th>% Increase</th></tr><tr><td>Universal entitlement for 3- and 4-year-</td><td>£6.48</td><td>£6.95</td><td>7.25%</td><td>£5.70</td><td>£6.22</td><td>9.17%</td></tr><tr><td>Additional 15 hours entitlement 3&4 yr</td><td>£6.48</td><td>£6.95</td><td>7.25%</td><td>£5.70</td><td>£6.22</td><td>9.17%</td></tr><tr><td>2-year-old disadvantaged entitlement</td><td>£9.41</td><td>£9.72</td><td>3.29%</td><td>£8.92</td><td>£9.33</td><td>4.61%</td></tr><tr><td>2-year-old entitlement for working</td><td>£9.41</td><td>£9.72</td><td>3.29%</td><td>£8.92</td><td>£9.33</td><td>4.61%</td></tr><tr><td>Under 2s entitlement</td><td>£12.83</td><td>£13.21</td><td>2.96%</td><td>£12.00</td><td>£12.68</td><td>5.67%</td></tr></table> Table: EY funding rates for 2026/27		DFE Rates			LBBD Provider Rates			Funding Classification	Rates 2025/26	Rates 2026/27	% Increase	Rates 2025/26	Rates 2026/27	% Increase	Universal entitlement for 3- and 4-year-	£6.48	£6.95	7.25%	£5.70	£6.22	9.17%	Additional 15 hours entitlement 3&4 yr	£6.48	£6.95	7.25%	£5.70	£6.22	9.17%	2-year-old disadvantaged entitlement	£9.41	£9.72	3.29%	£8.92	£9.33	4.61%	2-year-old entitlement for working	£9.41	£9.72	3.29%	£8.92	£9.33	4.61%	Under 2s entitlement	£12.83	£13.21	2.96%	£12.00	£12.68	5.67%	
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10.3	The government has indicated that 3% of the funding is retained centrally to meet LA support costs for early years provision as opposed to 4% in previous years. This will apply to all provision levels as opposed to 3 & 4-year-olds funding only as was the case in previous years.																																																		
10.4	The table above shows the proposed funding rates for providers for 2026/27 to be published by February 28th as per regulation.																																																		
10.5	The budgeted distribution of funding is set out in the table below: <table><tr><th>2026-27 Early Years Funding</th><th>Draft Budget</th><th>Funded Hours</th><th>Rates paid by DFE</th><th>Total DSG Funding</th><th>Proposed Providers Rates</th><th>Projected Expenditure</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>2026-27</td><td>2026-27</td><td>2026-27</td><td>2026-27</td><td>2026-27</td></tr></table>	2026-27 Early Years Funding	Draft Budget	Funded Hours	Rates paid by DFE	Total DSG Funding	Proposed Providers Rates	Projected Expenditure			2026-27	2026-27	2026-27	2026-27	2026-27																																				
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		2026-27	2026-27	2026-27	2026-27	2026-27																																													

Centrally Retained 3%	1,250,344					1,250,344
Universal 3&4 YO	14,277,941	2,347,608	6.95	16,315,874	6.22	14,609,051
Plus 15 PTE 3& 4 YO	4,304,658	638,531	6.95	4,437,792	6.22	3,973,549
Deprivation	895,842				0.30	895,842
Flexibility	313,545				0.21	313,545
SEN Inclusion	311,305					311,305
Contingency	27,765					
EY Pupil Premium	468,473	407,368	£ 1.15	468,473		468,473
DAF - 3&4YOF	205,725		975	205,725		205,725
Total 3&4 YO EY Block	20,805,253			21,427,863		20,777,488
Entitlement 2 YO	6,491,723	701,659	£ 9.72	6,820,123	9.33	6,547,318
Plus 15 PTE 2YOF	5,392,676	571,961	£ 9.72	5,559,460	9.33	5,337,081
2YOF PP	320,913	279054.9	1.15	320,913		320,913
2YOF DAF	34,125		975	34,125		34,125
SEN inclusion fund	123,796					123,796
Contingency						0
Total Entitlement 2 Y O	12,363,233			12,734,621		12,363,233
Under 2 year old Funding	7,192,411	566,916	13.21	7,488,965	12.68	7,188,499
Under 2YOF PP	14,991	13,036	1.15	14,991		14,991
Under 2s DAF	11,700		975.00	11,700		11,700
SEN Inclusion Fund	71,885					71,885
Contingency						
Under 2 Funding Total	7,290,988			7,515,657		7,287,075
TOTAL EY BLOCK	41,709,819			41,678,141		41,678,141

Table – Early Years draft indicative budget for 2026/27

10.6

The early years funding requirements include the need to:

- Set a single funding for universal and additional hours.
- Pass on a minimum of 97% of the funding to providers.
- Use a universal base rate for all types of providers.
- Use a deprivation supplement.
- Not to channel more than 10% of their funding through supplements
- Provide a Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF)
- Pass on Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) in full to providers for eligible 3- and 4-year-olds.
- Pass on the Disability Access Fund (DAF) in full to providers.

10.7

LBBD will retain 3% of the funding for all provision levels centrally, to meet support costs of the early years provision. The retained amount is used for:

- Home portage scheme (home visiting)
- Early years teacher service (qualified teachers working with settings to raise standards, Childminding development officer)

- Commissioning costs. (Please refer to table below for details.)

Centrally Retained Costs	2026/27
EY Teachers & Childminding Officers	625,000
Home Portage Scheme	120,000
Nursery Education Staff	175,500
2 Year Old Central costs	329,891
Total	1,250,391

Table – Early Years centrally funded services

Comments:

JT-S & SH noted that while early years funding is ring-fenced and cannot offset high needs pressures, investment in early intervention remains crucial for long-term outcomes.

JT-S noted that referring to the “two-year-old central cost” is misleading, as this cost covers the whole team responsible for administration and service promotion, not just services for two-year-olds. The government has held to its plan to gradually reduce central retention funding and queried whether these central costs are increasing or decreasing, particularly as the team’s remit now covers a wider age range. He also raised the importance of ensuring the team’s work aligns with high needs spending.

KA responded that central retention is being reduced from 5% to 4% to 3%, as planned by the government. Some positions created for the expansion entitlement were always time-limited and are being discontinued to manage the reduction in funding. This approach was anticipated and is being managed accordingly.

SH agreed with the importance of monitoring whether centrally retained costs are rising or falling, supporting the concerns raised.

Recommendation (vii): Schools forum are requested to:

- Note and comment on Early Years funded hourly rates for 2026/27.
- Approve the SEN Inclusion fund

304-year-olds	311,305
2-year-olds	£123,796
Under 3-year-olds	£71,885
- Approve the Early Years Centrally funded services (Refer to section 10.7)

Noted & Approved by Schools Forum

11 Central Schools Services Block 2026/27 (CSSB)

11.1 The Central Block is made up of **Ongoing statutory functions** and local arrangements for **Historical services**. The Government’s clear intention is to move the statutory functions elements towards a per head funding regime plus yearly inflation uplift and taper off historical services by 20% reduction year on year beginning from 2021/22.

11.2 CSSB is used for the following services:

CENTRAL SCHOOLS SERVICES BLOCK (CSSB)						
Services	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Admission Service	636,000	648,000	671,000	686,836	768,451	834,645
Schools Forum	60,000	60,000	62,000	63,463	71,003	72,515
Copy right Licences	180,000	180,000	186,000	190,390	213,008	217,545
Statutory responsibilities	743,000	743,000	769,000	787,300	880,832	899,593
Ongoing Resp. Budget	1,619,000	1,631,000	1,688,000	1,727,989	1,933,293	2,024,298
School Improvement	68,800	55,040	44,032	35,226	28,180	22,544
Schools Estates	96,000	76,800	61,440	49,152	39,322	31,457
School Games Organiser	32,000	25,600	20,480	16,384	13,107	10,486
Trewern outdoor education	133,600	106,880	85,504	68,403	54,723	43,778
Community Music Service	198,400	158,720	126,976	101,812	81,449	65,161
Advisory Teachers	211,200	168,960	135,168	108,134	86,508	69,206
Historic Resp Budget	740,000	592,000	473,600	379,111	303,289	242,632

Total CSSB Budget	2,359,000	2,223,000	2,161,600	2,107,100	2,236,582	2,266,930
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Table – Services funded from CSSB Budget

11.3

The summary below shows how the services funded from the historic element of the CSSB has been remodelled to mitigate the 20% annual reductions:

School improvement – the reductions are being offset by School Improvement central budget, the reductions will be absorbed by the school improvement service through rationalisation and service redesign.

Advisory Teachers – this is part of BDSIP contract, and the savings have been passported as a reduction to the contract price.

Community Music Service – the service has remodeled the delivery by entering into a service level agreement with schools.

Trewern outdoor education – to mitigate the impact of the reductions, Trewern has been working on various service delivery options including remodeling of staff deployment, providing additional offers to schools to increase income and build-up of financial reserves.

School games organiser – the reduction in DSG funding is being replaced by other grants such as the young Londoners Fund, Inspiring Futures, Sports England, and annual subscription by schools.

Schools' estates – the reduction is being mitigated by capitalisation of eligible staffing costs that meets the criteria for capital funding, this is assign to the building of school assets.

Recommendation (viii): Schools forum is requested to:

- a) Agree he proposed central spend under paragraph 11.2
b) Note the reduction in historic funding element of CCSB and impact on education services

Agreed & noted by Schools Forum.

12 De-Delegation (Maintained Schools)

12.1 There are no proposed changes to the de-delegation rates for the various services. The de-delegation rates for 2025/26 and the proposed rates for 2026/27, for both the primary and secondary phases, are presented in the tables below. The updated figures are based on the October 2025 census. The de-delegated amounts are top-sliced from the budget shares of local authority-maintained schools to fund the relevant services. There is no longer a de-delegated amount for contingencies.

	2025/26 Primary De-delegation			2026/27 Primary De-delegation			
	Primary Pupil Nos	Unit Rate	Total Amount	Primary Pupil Nos	Unit Rate	Total Amount	Movement
LSCB	19,177	1.40	26,848	18,782	1.40	26,295	(795)
Trade Union	19,177	5.25	100,679	18,782	5.25	98,606	(2,982)
FSM Eligibility	19,177	0.84	16,109	18,782	0.84	15,777	(477)
Sch. Improve.	19,177	5.06	97,036	18,782	5.06	95,037	(2,874)
Primary Total:	19,177	12.55	240,671	18,782	12.55	235,714	(7,128)

Table: Primary De-delegation Rates 26/27

	2025/26 Secondary De-delegation			2026/27 Secondary De-delegation			
	Secondary Pupil Nos	Unit Rate	Total Amount	Secondary Pupil Nos	Unit Rate	Total Amount	Movement
LSCB Board	10,588	1.40	14,823	10,562	1.40	14,787	(36)
Trade Union	10,588	5.25	55,587	10,562	5.25	55,451	(137)
FSM Eligibility	10,588	0.84	8,894	10,562	0.84	8,872	(22)
Sch. Improve.	10,588	5.06	53,575	10,562	5.06	53,444	(132)
Secondary Total:	10,588	12.55	132,879	10,562	12.55	132,553	(326)

Table: Secondary De-delegation Rates 26/27

Total De-delegation		373,551				368,267	
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Both academies and local authority-maintained schools' benefit from the arrangements in respect of trade unions and safeguarding children's partnership - SCP formally Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB). Academies are to be invoiced as there is no provision to de-delegate. The table below presents the amounts chargeable to Academies.

12.2 The unit rate for the trade union facility time will be uplifted by the baseline per pupil funding increase.

	Total 2025/26	2026/27 Academy Charges (to be invoiced)							
		Primary NOR	Unit Rate	Primary Total:	Sec. NOR	Unit Rates	Secondary Total:	Total 2026/27	Movt
LCSB	15,228	5,012	£1.40	7,017	5,909	£1.40	8,273	15,289	£62
Trade Union	57,104	5,012	£5.25	26,313	5,909	£5.25	31,022	57,335	£231
	72,332			33,330			39,295	72,625	£293

Table: Charges to Academies 2026/27

	25/26 Total De-del.	26/27 Total De-del.	25/26 Academy to be Invoiced	26/27 Academy to be Invoiced	25/26 Total	26/27 Total	Movement
LSCB	£41,671	£41,082	£15,228	£15,289	£56,899	£56,371	-£528
Trade Union	£156,266	£154,056	£57,104	£57,335	£213,371	£211,391	-£1,979
FSM Elig.	£25,003	£24,649	£0	£0	£25,003	£24,649	-£354
Sch. Improv	£150,611	£148,481	£0	£0	£150,611	£148,481	-£2,130
Total	£373,551	£368,267	£72,332	£72,625	£445,883	£440,892	-£4,991

Table: De-delegation and amounts to fund the different services

Comments:

JH and **KA** clarified that if academies do not pay their share, there will be a shortfall, and schools will need advance notice to adjust staffing. Any overspend or underspend will be adjusted in the following year's budget.

It was agreed that the uplift to the trade unions' facility time rate should be calculated using the actual cash increase in the schools' block (0.4%) allocation, specifically measured before recruitment takes place. This method will be used as the basis for determining the rate adjustment, and all attendees confirmed their approval of this approach.

Recommendation (ix): Schools forum is requested to:

- Agree by phase (maintained schools only) and line by line delegation rates and amounts (Section 12.1)
- Note rates to be used for billing academies (Section 12.2)

Agreed & noted by Schools Forum.

13.1	Growth funding is allocated through the national funding formula within the local authority's school's block. Growth fund is used by Schools to manage an increase in pupil numbers in 2026/27 before the lagged funding catches up. The DfE allocate growth funding based on the differences between primary and secondary pupils at school within each Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA) between the October 2024 and October 2025 census figures. Only positive MSOA growth will be used in calculating the number of pupils to be funded. The criteria set by LBBD for the growth fund is as below: • Support growth in Pre-16 pupil numbers to meet basic need. • Support additional classes needed to meet the infant class size regulation. • Meet the revenue costs of new schools. • Meet revenue costs, for schools, of removing or repurposing surplus places. • Where a school or academy has agreed with the local authority to provide an extra class to meet basic need in the area (either as a bulge class or as an ongoing commitment), regardless of whether the additional class is within or outside of the PAN. Growth fund should not be used to support schools in financial difficulty or general growth due to popularity.
13.2	LBBD will be responsible for funding growth needs for all schools in the borough and will fund them based on the same criteria. The LA will need to provide growth funding where a school or academy has agreed with the LA to provide an extra class to meet basic need in the area (either as a bulge class or as an ongoing commitment).
13.3	The published 2026/27 DfE growth fund allocation is £654,384. The associated growth requirement has not yet been determined and will be confirmed upon receipt and review of the September 2026 PAN data. Recommendation (x): Schools forum is requested to: Note the proposed growth fund allocation for 2026/27. <i>Noted by Schools Forum.</i>
14	Falling Rolls Fund 2026/27
14.1	The DfE allocates funding to LA's for falling rolls within the Schools Block DSG allocations, alongside the growth funding. Falling rolls will be distributed based on reduction in pupil numbers that the LA's experience from year to year. It is based on the observed differences between the primary and secondary numbers on roll in each LA between October 2024 and October 2025.
14.2	Local authorities have the discretion over whether to operate a falling rolls fund. The DfE requires that the fund is only operated where the most recent school capacity data (SCAP) shows that school places will be required in 2026/27 or any of the subsequent two years. This is a DfE mandatory requirement. Schools' forum approved a revised falling rolls criterion at the December 2024 meeting. The local criteria are set as below: a) Reduction of 2% or more in pupil numbers. b) Only pay falling rolls above the 2% drop in pupil numbers. c) Review rate annually to ensure affordability within cash envelope. d) There must be a year-on-year reduction in delegated budget.

	e) The school's reserves do not exceed 8% for primary schools and 5% for secondary schools delegated budget.																																								
14.3	Appendix D sets out the movement in pupil numbers in October 2025 when compared to the October 2024 census. LBBB schools have seen a net reduction in overall pupil numbers of 377. A total of 39 schools has seen a combined drop in numbers on roll of 783. 85% of the schools impacted are in the primary sector with 33 primary schools seeing a net drop in pupil numbers of 620. 18 schools have a combined increase in pupil numbers of 406. <table><tr><th>Phase</th><th>Oct 2024 NOR Pri</th><th>Oct 2024 NOR Sec</th><th>Oct 2025 NOR Pri</th><th>Oct 2025 NOR Sec</th><th>Primary Movement</th><th>Secondary Movement</th><th>Net</th></tr><tr><td>Primary</td><td>22,399</td><td>0</td><td>21,965</td><td>0</td><td>-434</td><td>0</td><td>-434</td></tr><tr><td>Secondary</td><td>0</td><td>9,235</td><td>0</td><td>9,264</td><td>0</td><td>29</td><td>29</td></tr><tr><td>All-Through</td><td>1,775</td><td>7,233</td><td>1,829</td><td>7,207</td><td>54</td><td>-26</td><td>28</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>24,174</td><td>16,468</td><td>23,794</td><td>16,471</td><td>-380</td><td>3</td><td>-377</td></tr></table> Table: Change in number on roll – October 2024-v-October 2025	Phase	Oct 2024 NOR Pri	Oct 2024 NOR Sec	Oct 2025 NOR Pri	Oct 2025 NOR Sec	Primary Movement	Secondary Movement	Net	Primary	22,399	0	21,965	0	-434	0	-434	Secondary	0	9,235	0	9,264	0	29	29	All-Through	1,775	7,233	1,829	7,207	54	-26	28		24,174	16,468	23,794	16,471	-380	3	-377
Phase	Oct 2024 NOR Pri	Oct 2024 NOR Sec	Oct 2025 NOR Pri	Oct 2025 NOR Sec	Primary Movement	Secondary Movement	Net																																		
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Secondary	0	9,235	0	9,264	0	29	29																																		
All-Through	1,775	7,233	1,829	7,207	54	-26	28																																		
	24,174	16,468	23,794	16,471	-380	3	-377																																		
14.4	The falling rolls criteria will be applied to the affected schools to identify those eligible to be supported by the fund. The falling rolls allocation for 2026/27 will utilise any 'surplus' on the growth fund, however as mentioned in section 10 of this report, the growth fund allocation is a reduced amount of £654,384. Comments: It was acknowledged that, due to the reduced funding, once growth payments are allocated, there may be limited funds left for schools qualifying for the falling rolls fund. The criteria may need to be revisited once the final numbers and budget allocations are known, to ensure support reaches the schools most affected by falling rolls. It was agreed that the criteria for the falling rolls fund can be amended locally to better support schools as needed, whereas the growth fund criteria are set nationally and cannot be changed. Recommendation (xi): Schools forum is requested to: <i>Note change in pupil numbers for 2026/27.</i> <i>Noted by Schools Forum.</i>																																								
15	Any Other Business																																								
	Nothing to report.																																								
16	Date of Next Meeting																																								
	23rd June 2026																																								
17	Action Log																																								

No	Date of Meeting	Item No	Action	Owner		
1						
2						