

**Meeting of the Schools Forum  
Held on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 1.30pm  
via MS Teams Digital Platform**

**Quorum: 40% (8 of the 18 current School/Non-School Members)**

**MINUTES**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>Organisation - School Members</b>	<b>Attended</b>
Rachel Lewis	Hindley Sure Start Nursery	Yes
Louise Curran	Rowan Tree Primary	Yes
Anne Isherwood	Three Towers Alternative Provision Academy	Yes
Tracy Mingaud-Cunningham	Primary Governor	No (apologies)
Adrian Hardy	Secondary Governor	No (apologies)
Gary Hayes	Orrell St James Primary	Yes
Fiona Quinlivan	Howe Bridge St Michael's Primary	Yes
Julie Hassan	St Oswald's Catholic Primary	No (apologies)
Matthew Boyle	Leigh St Thomas CE Primary School	<b>Yes</b>
Lisa Hobden	St Patrick's Catholic Primary School	Yes
Alan Birchall	Byrchall High (Chair)	Yes
Andy McGlown	St. Peters RC High School	Yes
Martin Wood	The Deanery High School	No
Paul Davies	Fred Longworth High School	No
	<b>Organisation - Non School Members</b>	
Sue Morris	Care Love Learn Childcare Limited	No
Peter McGhee	St John Rigby College	Yes
Max Atkins	Wigan NEU	No
Need nominated member	Diocesan Representative	
	<b>Organisation- Nominated observers</b>	
Cllr Jenny Bullen	Cabinet Member	Yes
Karen Parkin	NEU	Yes
Mike Wilkinson	Wigan NASUWT	No (apologies)
Mark Clayton	GMB	No
	<b>Organisation - In Attendance</b>	
Mark Rotheram (KR)	LA Finance – Strategic Finance Manager	Yes
Kirsten Reid (KR)	LA Finance – Group Finance Manager (Schools)	Yes
Cath Pealing (CP)	Assistant Service Director, Education	Yes
Kellie Williams (KW)	Service Lead SEND	Yes
Jo Sullivan	Clerk to the Forum, Wigan Council Governor Services	Yes

## Item & Intended Outcome

### 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were **received** and **accepted** from Adrian Hardy, Tracy Mingaud-Cunningham, and Mike Wilkinson.

*NOTE FOR THE MINUTES: Julie Hassan submitted apologies to the Clerk following the meeting.*

### 2. Agreement of Any Other Urgent Business to Be Added to the Agenda

- High Needs Sub-Group meeting.

### 3. Previous Minutes

Members **confirmed** that the minutes from the Forum meeting held on **10<sup>th</sup> December 2024** were a correct record.

#### ***Members took item 6 of the agenda – DSG High Needs Block Budget 2025/26***

Members had **received** the DSG High Needs Block Budget 2025/26 report in advance of the meeting.

MR talked through the report and highlighted:

- Current projections, as presented as Appendix 1 of the report, indicated an in-year overspend on High Needs of £12.5 million, which would further increase the deficit position to £18.133 million.
- Special schools would remain protected from MFG.
- 16 AP places continued to be funded at £10k per place.
- The High Needs Sub-Group would continue to assist in monitoring and considering recovery plan.
- As highlighted in 1.12 of the report, the total funding for 2025/26 was £55128 million after deductions. This figure represented the initial allocation that the Local Authority will receive, however, the ESFA may adjust the allocation (after deductions) at points during the year to reflect changes in high need places and for the import/export adjustment for out of borough pupils.

**Q.** AP – 2024/25 funded places, would the additional 2025/26 8 additional places be funded at full cost? Or in delegated budget?

**A.** In the delegated budget but considering full cost funded.

Members **noted** the financial pressures and projected deficit and **agreed** the proposed 2025/26 budget.

### 4. Schools Block Funding Formula 2025/26

Members had **received** details of the Schools Funding Formula 2025-2026 – Schools Block in advance of the meeting.

MR talked through the report and highlighted:

- The Local Authority will remain responsible for determining the local schools funding formula model to be used to distribute final delegated budget allocations to individual schools (referred to by the DfE as the National Funding Formula “soft” approach). Each authority’s process must ensure that there is sufficient time to gain political approval before the APT (authority proforma tool) deadline of the 22/01/2025.
- Comparison between years had been detailed in the report – one off grants last year would be included in the formula in 2026.
- The number of pupils in primary and secondary schools had reduced; funding based on the October 2023 census would have resulted in an additional allocation of £1.032m.
- MFG had been maintained at the 0.5% maximum.
- £391,184 growth funding, lower than in previous years.
- Any unspent funding would be reported to Forum and carried forward to next year

**Q.** Growth fund 2024-25 figures, were these correct?

**A.** Calculated amount by EFSA based on pupil numbers, we had changed it based on local circumstances. This would benefit schools.

Members **agreed** the funding formula and school block allocations having considered the revised growth fund allocation set out in the report.

Members **agreed** the total growth fund for 2025/26.

Members **agreed** to the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) specified allocation for Local Authority statutory duties.

## 5. **Schools Funding Formula – De-delegations and Education functions 2025/26**

Members had **received** the revised de-delegation and education values for 2025/26 in advance of the meeting.

MR talked through the report and highlighted:

- Agreed uplift based on overall school’s block increase at the last School’s Forum meeting.
- We had now used this and based on revised pupil numbers.
- £7,766 reduction on what was previously predicted.

Members **noted** the updated values for de-delegated services in 2025/26.

## 6. **DSG High Needs Block Budget 2025/26**

Item 6 had been dealt with earlier in the meeting.

## 7. **Early Years Funding Formula 2025/26**

Members had **received** the Early Years Funding Formula 2025-2026 in advance of the meeting.

MR talked through the report and highlighted:

- There had been a huge expansion in terms of entitlement in Early Years.
- 2025-26 Early Years block £56,369,716m allocation.
- Increases in formula rates had been detailed in the report including EYPP and DAF.
- The Local Authority were comfortably meeting the pass-through requirement.
- Proposals were detailed in the report (5% increase on 2024-25 hourly rates).
- £373,085 indicative allocation for maintained nursery schools.

Members **noted** the contents of the report.

Members **agreed** to the rates proposed for 9 months up to 2-year-olds, 2-year olds, 3/4-year olds and the retention for central services.

## **8. Any Other Urgent Business**

The High Needs Sub-Group meeting was arranged for Monday 10<sup>th</sup> February at 2pm at St Peter's High School.

***ACTION – Clerk to set up meeting invites for sub-group members.***

## **9. Future Meeting Dates**

Members **noted** the agreed meeting dates (all via MS Teams unless otherwise stated):

- High Needs Sub-Group Monday 10<sup>th</sup> February at 2pm at St Peter's High School.
- Summer 1 – Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 1.30pm
- Summer 2 – Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2025 at 1.30pm

The meeting closed at 2:02pm.

### **Background documents (available for public inspection):**

Appendices to the circulated briefing reports disclose important facts on which the reports are based and were relied upon in preparing the reports. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy, please contact the Forum Clerk

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