

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HAVERING
SCHOOLS FUNDING FORUM**

**Thursday 15th January 2026 at CEME
(8.00am – 9.15am)**

Present:

LA Maintained School Representatives:

Primary	Kirsten Cooper (<i>Chair</i>) Georgina Delmonte Hayley McClenaghan David Unwin-Bailey (DUB) Mike Ross (also representing the Diocese of Brentwood) Steve Bowers
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Special	Emma Allen (EA)
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Governor	Les James (LJ)
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Academy Representatives:

Primary	Chris Hobson (CH)
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Secondary	David Turrell (<i>Vice Chair</i>) (also representing Post 16) Paul Larnar (also representing Post 16) Neil Frost
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Non-School Representatives:

Alternative Provision (Academy): Tony Machin

Trade Unions:	Julia Newman (JN) (Support staff union representative) John McGill (JM) (Teaching staff union representative)
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Non-Members in attendance:

Angela Adams	Clerk, HGS
Marcus Bennett	Head of SEND
Kavan Cheema (KC)	Strategic Business Partner
Trevor Cook (TC)	Assistant Director of Education
Katherine Heffernan (KH)	Head of Finance (Business Partnering)
Lisa Jones	Principal Education Finance Officer
Jacqueline Treacy (JT)	Senior Inspector for schools causing concern (HSiS)

1. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW MEMBERS, APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS OR OBSERVERS

All were welcomed to the meeting.

Apologies were received from the following Forum Members:

Chris Speller, Steve Bowers was attending on his behalf.
Scott McGuinness
Emma Reynolds

It was also noted that Trudy Spillane from the Drapers Academy Trust was observing the meeting.

2. TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11th DECEMBER 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th December 2025 were received and agreed.

3. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes that were not included elsewhere on the agenda.

4. SCHOOLS BLOCK

Forum members were asked to:

- (i) Consider the responses to the Consultation on Schools and High Needs Funding 2026-27 submitted by schools and academies.**
- (ii) Havering adopts the national funding formula rates for the funding of schools and academies in financial year 2026-27 with a minimum funding guarantee of 0.00% per pupil and a gains cap of 2.00% per pupil.**
- (iii) £1,349,465 (0.50%) of the DSG Schools Block is transferred to the DSG High Needs Block**
- (iv) £1,020,948 of the DSG Schools Block is used to support Pupil Growth and Falling rolls in addition to the £876,134 funding received for this.**

Forum members were advised that the circulation of the consultation had been delayed as it could only be circulated once the data from the DfE had been received. However, despite the delay there had been a reasonable level of response and feedback had been included in the pack. Webinars on how the funding formula would work were to follow to support schools in understanding the process.

The initial consultation data showed that the per pupil funding was higher but as a number of schools had falling rolls, funding overall would reduce as a result of this. Falling rolls support was allocated through a formula that looked at year groups, but it was advised that the falling rolls funding needed to be increased. Only a small group of schools were entitled to the minimum funding guarantee (MFG). The gains cap would be set at 2%.

DUB stated that the borough formula for pupil number predictions should be accurate going forward. In response it was advised that it would be predicted as accurately as possible but mobility due to housing impacted the predictions. The draft strategy would be shared through cluster groups and Secondary schools could be impacted going forward. The reduction of PANs with flexibility to introduce bulge classes as needed was currently under review.

DUB further queried the figures listed in the data for growth and falling rolls. In response it was advised that the formula looked at each year group and compared it to the nearest class size, the formula looked at the funding for a class teacher alongside pupil numbers. Schools could ask H Moussa for further information with regards to the amount received under this funding allocation.

In response to a further question from LJ it was noted that additional funding received for a class would be paid for every year that cohort was in the school. Previously it had only been paid for 2 years.

It was stated that the environment was changing, some schools were over number in some year groups and other schools had been asked to retain empty spaces. TC advised that numbers were continually reviewed to established what needed to be and what could be done, discussions were held with schools as needed.

It was further questioned if when allocating funding how some schools who were not in deficit but had falling rolls were allocated funding when other schools could be in deficit and not get funding, was considered. In response it was noted that this was considered. Schools also needed to be outstanding or good to qualify for falling rolls funding.

There was a mixed picture with regards to pupil number across London, but across the country rolls were falling which may prompt the DfE to look at this issue further.

All eligible School Funding Forum representatives then voted on the following:

- (i) Funding forum members noted the outcomes of the Consultation on Schools and High Needs Funding 2026-27 submitted by schools and academies.**
- (ii) Funding forum members voted unanimously for Havering to adopt the national funding formula rates for the funding of schools and academies in financial year 2026-27 with a minimum funding guarantee of 0.00% per pupil and a gains cap of 2.00% per pupil.**
- (iii) Funding forum members voted unanimously for £1,349,465 (0.50%) of the DSG Schools Block to be transferred to the DSG High Needs Block**
- (iv) Funding forum members voted unanimously for £1,020,948 of the DSG Schools Block to be used to support Pupil Growth and Falling rolls in addition to the £876,134 funding received for this.**

5. HIGH NEEDS FUNDING

Forum members were asked to:

- (i) note the forecast for expenditure on the High Needs Block in 2025-26**
- (ii) note the indicative allocation of funding for High Needs in 2026-27**
- (iii) note the update from the High Needs Working Group**
- (iv) give any feedback, comments and further suggestions on the issues outlined.**

Forum members noted that this would be reviewed further by the High Needs working group which would meet following this meeting.

An in-year deficit of £31,404M was forecast for period 9 which had the potential to increase due to the backlog of assessments. Overall, the deficit was £68M which was concerning but this was impacted by complexity of need and banding. There were more pupils being placed outside of the Borough for their needs to be met due to the lack of specialist capacity in the Borough. Out of Borough placements came with a high banding but Havering was not in a strong negotiating position. However, Havering were continuing to increase capacity and a new special school was in the process of being built which would increase capacity in the Borough.

By March 2026, a reform plan needed to be produced for Special Education Needs (SEN), but Havering was an inclusive Borough. The statutory override was also due to finish in 2 years' time, at which point the DfE would manage this funding.

The Borough needed to ensure transparency and continue to do what they did to support high needs, the concerns about schools being in deficit due to High Needs had been shared with the DfE. At this point in time there was less of an impact on Secondary schools with regards to SEN.

High needs block allocations for 2026 -27 were noted and the forecast deficit for the end of 2026 -27 was noted as £100 - £110M. In response to a question from JM it was noted that the figure came from the in-year deficit of £30M, plus the deficit carried forward and an increase of £10M had also been included.

It was questioned if any other Boroughs were also in this position. In response it was noted that the Borough were an anomaly as they were still growing, this was not the case in other Boroughs, but forecasts needed to be realistic. In response to a further question, it was noted that forecast costs had been included in the figures.

Forum members noted the report.

A forecast overspend of £28.5m remained unchanged with a cumulative deficit of £64.6M forecast for the end of 2026 -27. The overspend was impacted by several factors including increasing needs and the cost of placing pupils in out of Borough provisions. Updated clearer guidance was expected from the DfE. It was further noted that there would be no more safety valve funding going forward.

Forum members noted the report and commented as needed.

6. CENTRAL SCHOOLS SERVICES BLOCK (CSSB)

Forum members were asked to:

- (i) note the final allocation of CSSB for 2026-27**
- (ii) consider the revised funding retention for central statutory services.**

Forum members noted that the allocation was £8K less but this would be absorbed by the Local Authority.

Forum members noted the final allocation of CSSB for 2026-27 and considered the revised retention.

7. EARLY YEARS

Forum members were asked to:

- (i) note the indicative funding allocations for 2026-27.**
- (ii) note the process and timeline for determining funding rates for 2026-27.**

A consultation would be completed and voting would follow at the meeting in February 2026.

There were a number of bands for Early Years funding and termly head counts would now be completed which could impact funding due to fluctuating attendance in Early Years. The Local Authority would retain 3% to cover costs and the remaining funding would be distributed in line with the formula.

This information had been shared with early years providers. However, clarification was requested as to how the lunch time costs would be covered.

ACTION: H Moussa

Forum members noted the indicative funding allocations for 2026-27 and timeline for determining funding rates.

8. NEXT MEETINGS

Thursday 12 February 2026 - This would be a remote meeting.
Thursday 11th June 2026

Meetings to start at 8.00am at CEME either in room 233 or 235.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no additional business items.

The Chair thanked Forum members for their contributions.

Meeting closed at 9.15am.