SCHOOLS FORUM
Agenda

Date Wednesday 25 March 2026

Time 4.00 pm

Venue

Notes 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST- If a Member requires any advice on any item involving a possible declaration of interest which could affect his/her ability to speak and/or vote he/she is advised to contact Paul Entwistle or in advance of the meeting.

2. CONTACT OFFICER for this Agenda is Tel. 0161 770 5151 or email

Item No

1 Schools Forum - Wednesday 25th March 2026 4.00pm (Pages 3 - 30)

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Oldham Council

Agenda

SCHOOLS FORUM

Wednesday 24th June 2026 4.00pm
Teams Meeting

		Approx duration	Officer	Papers
1	**Welcome and Apologies – including introduction for new members**		Chair	
	Apologies/Declarations of Interest (please send to schoolsteam.finance@oldham.gov.uk)			-
2	**Minutes and Matters Arising**	5 mins	Chair	Attached
	Minutes of meeting held on 25th March 2026			
3	**Dedicated Schools Grant Final Out turn 2025/26 and Budget Update for 2026/27 & 2027/28**	25 mins	Vicky Gibbons	Attached
4	**SEND Reform Plan Template**	20 mins	Katie Charlton	Verbal / presentation
5	**School Balances**	15 mins	Vicky Gibbons	Attached
7	**Future dates of meetings -** Wednesday 11th Nov 2026 – 4pm Wednesday 20th Jan 2027 – 4pm Wednesday 24th March 2027 – 4pm	5 mins	Chair	Verbal
	Any other business – Must be notified to schoolsteam.finance@oldham.gov.uk 24 hours before the meeting			

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To Members of the Schools Forum

Finance Directorate
Schools Finance Team
Oldham Council Offices
Spindles Shopping Centre
George Street
Oldham
OL1 1HD

Tel: 0161 770 4925

Dear Colleague,

Re: SCHOOLS FORUM 25TH MARCH 2026

Please find attached the agenda and papers for the next meeting of the Schools Forum to be held at **4.00pm** on Wednesday 25th March 2026 via Microsoft Teams.

If you are unable to attend this meeting, please email your apologies to schoolsteam.finance@oldham.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely

Andy Cooper

Senior Finance Manager

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Oldham Council

Spring Term 2026

Minutes

Meeting of the Oldham Schools Forum

Wednesday 21st January 2026
via Microsoft Teams
at 4.00pm

PRESENT:		
Liz Travis (Chair)	Holy Trinity CE Primary School (Headteacher)	Primary Maintained Representative
Stewart Ash (Vice Chair)	Pinnacle Trust (CFO)	Primary Academy Representative
Tracey Cavanagh	Holy Rosary RC Primary School (Headteacher)	Primary Maintained Representative
Kate Anais Hoggard	Channings	Early Years Representative- PVI
Paul McGrath	St Thomas CE Primary School, Werneth	Primary Academy Representative
Sharon Costello	Harmony Trust (CFO)	Primary Academy Representative
Karl Newall	Crompton House	Secondary Academy Representative
Nigel Woodworth	The New Bridge Group	Special Representative
Nigel Yeo	Trade Union Representative	Trade Union Representative

IN ATTENDANCE:	
Paul Tinsley	Director of Education, Skills & Early Years, Oldham Council
Katie Charlton	Assistant Director of SEND & Inclusion, Oldham Council
Lee Walsh	Director of Finance, Oldham Council
Andy Cooper	Senior Finance Manager, Oldham Council
Victoria Hayes	Senior Accountant, Oldham Council
Vicky Gibbons	Senior Accountant, Oldham Council

ABSENT:		
Gary Needle	St Joseph's Primary	Primary Maintained Representative
Gemma Cottingham	E-Act (Headteacher)	Secondary Academy Representative

Joe Brownridge	E-ACT (Director of Academies Finance)	Secondary Academy Representative
James Bell	The Cranmer Trust (CFO)	Secondary Academy Representative
Emmett Patel	Kingsland School (PRU) (Headteacher)	Special School Representative
Jeremy Sutcliffe	Kingfisher Special School (Governor)	Special School Representative

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1 Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone present and opened the meeting at 4.00pm.

1.2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Gary Needle.

1.3 Business, Pecuniary and Personal Interests

No declarations of interests were shared.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

2.1 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 03rd December 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair

2.2 Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes

Q. Will the current and future deficits impact (or not) on the Councils Cash flow?

R. The increased spend and the move to a deficit position will ultimately have an impact on the Councils cash flow, this was not however readily apparent in the draft financial statements to 31 March 25, the cash position had benefited from slippage on the capital programme throughout the financial year and also the receipt of significant and unexpected grant funding allocations just before the year end

3. SCHOOLS FUNDING UPDATE 2026/27 & UPDATE ON DSG MANAGEMENT PLAN

3.1 The Schools Funding update 2026/27 & update on DSG Management Plan joint report, from the Director of Finance and the Director of Education, Early Years and Skills, had been shared in advance of the meeting.

3.2 The Senior Finance Manager provided an update on the funding allocations published highlighted by the DfE on 17th December 2025.

Table 1 - DSG allocations for 2026/27 compared to 2025/26

He advised that funding across all four blocks has increased by £27.375m (an increase of 7.14% compared to the previous year) but that it was important to note that this increase included around £13.6m of grants that had previously been allocated separately but were being rolled into the NFF in 2026/27 for the Early Years, Schools & High Needs Block.

3.3 Points to note re the Schools Block allocations:

- Pupil led funding of £281.287m. This includes a final primary unit of funding (PUF) of £6,089.32 per pupil and a final secondary unit of funding (SUF) of £7,902.81 per pupil.
- Premises funding of £5.904m which includes funding for PFI, split sites and Business Rates
- Growth & Falling Rolls funding of £1.172m
- Core funding for 2026/27 includes funding that was allocated separately in 2025/26 through the Schools Budget Support Grant (SBSG) and National Insurance Contributions (NICs) grant. **Table 3 – SBSG & NIC rates rolled into formula 2026/27** details the amounts per pupil for each grant that have been rolled in.
- Almost all factor values have increased from 2025/26 to 2026/27. In addition to the grants rolled into the NFF; a further 2.11% increase has been applied to the basic entitlement; FSM6 values and the lump sum factors. A 2.11% increase had also been applied to the IDACI, Low Prior Attainment (LPA), English as an Additional Language (EAL), Mobility, Sparsity and Split Sites factors whilst a 1.66% increase had been applied to the FSM factor/
- Minimum Funding levels had been set at £5,115 per pupil for primary and £6,640 for secondary.
- Local Authority's funding formula must include a minimum funding guarantee of between 0% and -0.5%.

3.4 Points to note re the Central School Services Block (CSSB) allocations:

- Total budget for ongoing responsibilities in 2026-27 is £379m. This includes £22 million for centrally employed staff through the previously separate NICs grant and £17 million for centrally employed staff through the previously separate SBSG
- The CSSB continues to allocate funding to LAs for ongoing responsibilities using a pupil led formula
- In 2026-27, for LAs that receive it, their historic commitments funding will be reduced by 20% compared to their 2025-26 baseline
- **Table 5 – CSSB Proposed 2026/27 allocation.** The Senior Finance Manager provided details of the and amounts for each line within the CSSG for Schools Forum approval

3.5 Points to note re the indicative High Needs Block allocations:

- The DfE are temporarily suspending the High Needs National Funding Formula in 2026/27. Instead, LA's allocations will be based on 2025/26 allocations with additional funding for grants previously allocated separately:
  - the consolidated Core Schools Budget Grant (CSBG).

- funding allocated to mainstream schools for the elements of the 2025 to 2026 National Insurance Contributions (NICs) Grant and Schools Budget Support Grant (SBSG) paid in respect of special units and resourced provision.

- After the roll in of these grants the provisional allocation for Oldham for 2026/27 is £71.991m
- While the Statutory Override is in place many local authorities will continue to accrue deficits on their high needs spending.
- The DfE intends to publish the White paper later in Spring which will confirm the reforms of the SEND system.

3.6 Points to note re the indicative Early Years Block allocations:

- The EYNFF model provides Oldham with indicative Early Years Block funding of £47.611m
- Finance regulations require all local authorities to provide funding to all Early Years settings via one single base rate and LA's are required to pass through funding direct to providers a minimum of 97% (reduced from 96% in 2025/26).
- The grant for pay award costs and national insurance contributions previously allocated separately in 2025/26 have been rolled into the Early Years NFF model for 2026/27.

3.7 **Table 6 - DSG Management Plan**. The Senior Finance manager provides Schools Forum with an update on the DSG Management Plan which was now projecting a forecasted deficit of £9.753m at 31st March 2026 and £32.919m at March 2027. In isolation the decision to 'cash limit' the 2026/27 high needs funding has contributed circa £4.400m to the increased pressure for 2026/27.

Detailed work is ongoing to assess the impact of current spend across all of the High Needs Block areas for 2025/26

3.8 **Table 7 – Pupil Premium Grant**. The Senior Finance manager informed Forum of the DfE updated per pupil rates for 2026/27 for those pupils that attract Pupil Premium funding.

3.9 **Table 8 – De-delegated Funding**. The Senior Finance manager provided details of the services for Oldham which it is proposed will be de delegated in 2026/27 (maintained schools only) for Forum approval.

QUESTIONS :

Q: Other than directed revisions from the DfE and the move to the new banding systems, special schools have not seen any further increases in their top up funding although mainstream schools have seen inflationary increases. Are there any proposals to address this in 2026/27?
A: Finance colleagues confirmed that discussions had already taken place internally re High Needs top up rates for 2026/27 and that the proposal would be to increase these by 2.11% in line with mainstream for 2026/27. This will be on top of the additional funding being rolled in for those grants previously paid separately ('legacy funding') and the uplift will be applied to all rates on the banding matrix special schools, resourced units in mainstream settings and funding for pupils with ECHP's in mainstream settings).

Q. Does the LA have any more information re the proposed reduction to employer pension contribution rates being proposed from GMPF particularly around MAT's & pooling?

A: The LA doesn't currently have the full details re the proposed reduction though are expecting further information imminently. It is expected that GMPF will also contact academy trusts directly to discuss arrangements going forward.

Q: Can more clarity be given regarding the Growth budget allocation included within the DSG? Can this be allocated where schools have seen an increase in pupil numbers from one census to another? Do Oldham operate a falling rolls fund?
A: The growth fund is in place to support growth in pre 16 pupil numbers to meet basic need as agreed with the LA. It can't be used for growth due to the popularity of places or where settings have admitted above the PAN at their own choice, both of these will be picked up through lagged funding. LA's have discretion over whether to operate a falling rolls fund and Oldham don't currently operate a falling rolls fund but this could be pursued further should colleagues request.

RESOLVED:

i) that the Forum noted the contents of the report

ii) that the Forum approve no change to the local funding model for the Schools Block for 2026/27 incorporating the ACA of 0.997. **Approved**

iii) that the forum approve the allocation for each service area, totalling £2.522m of funding from the Central Schools Services Block. **Approved**

iv) that representatives from the primary sector for maintained schools are requested to approve the de-delegation of funding for School Improvement and under performing schools, Teacher Union Duties and contingencies for 2026/27 for locally maintained schools as follows to the value of £0.473m. **Approved**

4: DATE OF NEXT MEETING : Wednesday 25th March 2026

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

5.1 Following the recent resignation of Ian Windeatt (Trade Union representative) Schools Forum acknowledged the many invaluable years of support, dedication and professionalism given by Ian in his term in office and thank him accordingly for that. Ian's replacement on Schools Forum going forward will be Nigel Yeo

It was noted there were no other urgent items to consider.

The Chair thanked the Senior Finance Manager and colleagues for preparing and presenting the papers.

(There being no further business, attendees were thanked for their attendance and the meeting was declared closed at 4.40pm).

SIGNED as approved:

DATE:

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Joint Report:
Director of Finance
Director of Education, Early Years and Skills

Item 3 – Schools Forum Constitution

Schools Forum – 25th March 2026

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To seek approval to the revised version of the Schools Forum Constitution for 2026/2027.

2. Background

2.1 Schools' Forums were established by the Education Act 2002, as a statutory consultative body to support local authorities on matters relating to school budgets.

2.2 The Schools' Forum plays a critical role in representing the views of all schools, providers of post 16 provision and early education within the area. The Oldham Schools' Forum Constitution has been produced in accordance with the legal requirements referred to in The Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012. Further revision may be necessary arising from any additional statutory instruction

2.3 There have been no legislative changes over the last year requiring a change to the Forum's current practice. However, the membership has been reviewed to ensure that the balance between maintained primary / secondary schools and primary / secondary academies are broadly proportionate to the pupil numbers in each category to ensure debate within the Schools' Forum is balanced and representative.

2.4 Appendix 1 details the proposed updated constitution document (including membership) for the financial year 2026/27

Actions/ Recommendations

Schools Forum is requested to:

- Approve the revised Schools Forum Constitution for 2026/27

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SCHOOLS FORUM CONSTITUTION

Financial Year 2026-27

March 2026

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Appendices

Annex 1 - Membership

Annex 2 - Voting Procedures

Schools Forum Constitution

1 Principles

1.1 Whilst members are representatives of their specific sectors or phase, they must be able to consider the needs of the whole educational community, rather than using their position on the Schools Forum to advance their own sectional or specific interests.

1.2 Members must act in accordance with the Nolan Principles of Public Life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership.

1.3 The organisation is known as the Oldham Schools Forum ("the Forum")

1.4 Where the Constitution does not specify a procedure, the Department for Education (DfE) Schools Forum Operational and Good Practice Guide applies.

2. Terms of Reference

Role/Function

2.1 The Forum is not a Committee of the Council. It is a separate statutory body established by the Local Authority (LA) under the powers laid out in *The Schools Forum (England) Regulations* and brings together key partners in the provision of education at a local level, giving each an equal voice.

2.2 The role of the Forum is to:

- Act as a Strategic Partner as determined by the appropriate legislation.
- Be a formal channel of communication between the LA and schools as the principal mechanism for consultation concerning the funding of schools.
- Provide unambiguous professional advice and strategic direction to education decision-makers regarding the funding of schools.
- Agree recommendations which present the most equitable compromise between competing claims on limited resources through a transparent and properly informed process of discussion in a framework of agreed principles.
- Have strategic oversight of funding decisions which fall within the remit of the Forum affecting schools so that it can agree recommendations in the context of the full picture of funding
- Be involved in annual consultation in respect of the LA's functions relating to the schools' budget, funding relating to pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN), the funding of Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), funding for early years providers and revisions to the LA's scheme for the financing of schools.

2.3 The LA may also consult the Forum about any other matter relating to the funding of schools.

2.4 The LA must advise the Forum at the earliest opportunity of all local and national developments that impact on funding requirements for schools.

3. Powers and Responsibilities

3.1 Under Government regulation School Forums generally have a consultative role. Each Forum has decision making powers in a number of areas and must be consulted in other areas. The following table shows the relevant powers and responsibilities of the LA, the Forum and the Department for Education (DfE).

Activity	LA Role	Forum Role	DfE Role
1. Changes to funding formula:	Proposes and decides	Must be consulted [voting restrictions apply - see Annex 2] and informs the Governing Bodies of all consultations.	Checks for compliance with regulations
2. Movement of up to 0.5% from the Schools Block to other Blocks	Proposes	Decides	Adjudicates where Schools Forum does not agree LA proposal
3. Contracts:	Proposes terms	Gives a view	Approval to Application for Exclusions
4. Financial issues relating to: • arrangements for pupils with special educational needs, in particular the places to be commissioned by the LA and schools and the arrangements for paying top-up funding. • use of pupil referral units and education of children other than at school; in particular the places to be commissioned by the LA and schools and the arrangements for paying top-up funding • arrangements for early years provision • administration arrangements for the allocation of Government grants	Consults annually	Gives a view and informs the governing bodies of all consultations.	None
5. Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG)	Proposes any exclusions from MFG for application to DfE	Gives a view	Approval to application for exclusions

6. De-delegation in relation to: • contingencies • free school meal administration • insurance • licenses and subscriptions • supply cover • support for minority ethnic pupils/ underachieving groups • behavior support services • library and museum services: • school improvement	Proposes	Maintained primary and secondary school member representatives decides for their phase on a line-by-line basis	Adjudicates if Schools Forum does not agree LA proposal
7. General Duties for maintained schools: • Contribution to responsibilities that local authorities hold for maintained schools (please see operational guide for more information	Proposes	Will be decided by the relevant maintained school members (primary, secondary, special and PRU)	Adjudicates where Schools Forum does not agree LA proposal

8. Central spend on and the criteria for funding:
 	
• for significant pre-16 pupil growth, including new schools set up to meet Basic Need,
• falling rolls for surplus places
• central spend on:
  • admissions
  • servicing the Forum
  • equal pay back-pay
  • places in independent schools for non-SEN pupils
  • early years block provision
  • contribution to responsibilities that local authorities hold for all schools
	Proposes	Decides for each line	Adjudicates if Schools Forum does not agree LA proposal

9. Central spend on: • licenses negotiated centrally by the Secretary of State • high needs block provision	Decides	None but good practice to inform Schools Forum	None
10. Scheme of Financial Management Changes	Proposes and consults the Governing Body and	Approves (school members only)	Adjudicates where Schools Forum does

	Head of every school		not agree LA proposal
11. Length of service of Forum members	Decides	None (but good practice suggests gives a view)	None
12. Voting Procedures at Forum	None	Determines	None
13. Appointment of Chair of Forum	Facilitates	Elects (may not be an officer or Elected Member of the Council)	None

4. Membership

4.1 The composition of the membership of the Forum is determined by the LA in accordance with The Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012. Details of the composition are set out in Annex 1 for information.

Members are required to report back to their respective sponsoring groups in sufficient detail to inform debate and opinion including those issues which have specific implications for academies and faith schools.

4.2 Observers, Advisers and Elected Members**.**

Forum meetings are required to be open to the public and agendas and minutes must be published in advance on the Council's website. Forum members may decide, if required, to exclude observers and members of the public for specific agenda items or, in exceptional circumstances, for whole meetings.

The LA and the Forum may invite observers who can be asked to withdraw for certain items at the discretion of the Chair.

The professional advisers to the Forum will be the Director of Education, Skills and Early Years and the Director of Finance and/or his/her representative(s) all of whom will be entitled to attend, and speak at all meetings of the Forum and any sub-committees which it convenes.

4.3 Declarations of Interest.

It is recognised that all Schools Group members will have an interest in at least one school. It is important that members should declare if the item under discussion could make a material difference to that school, or where they may have a personal or prejudicial interest. Notwithstanding this, a member may continue contributing to the discussion, but should not take any part in any decision made concerning that particular proposal which ***uniquely*** changes funding for their particular school/schools.

4.4 Members may formally nominate a named substitute to attend meetings in their absence, subject to the approval of the relevant body that elected them. Such substitutes must be from the same category of membership. Such substitutes have voting rights. It is the

responsibility of the member concerned to pass on a copy of meeting papers to any such substitute.

4.5 If a member fails to attend three consecutive meetings without giving their apologies or without their apologies being accepted, the Forum may decide they are deemed to have resigned, and the clerk should advise the LA so that they can seek nominations from the appropriate group or sub group for a replacement.

Note: For clarity, a member is deemed not to have attended a meeting even if a formally nominated substitute has attended.

4.6 Members of the Forum will be appointed for a four-year term of office, ending on the 31st August in their fourth year of appointment, subject to their remaining eligible. A member is, however, eligible for re-appointment and there is no limit to the number of terms an eligible member may serve. A member may resign at any time.

4.7 If a member ceases to be eligible to serve on the Forum he/she will be deemed to have resigned with immediate effect.

4.8 Only the Chair, or in their absence, the Vice Chair, may formally represent the Forum. Members may publicly disagree with Forum decisions but should ensure that their views do not create damage to the reputation of the Forum.

5. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

5.1 The Forum will elect the Chair and Vice-Chair.

Nominations shall be sought from the floor and approved by a simple majority of votes cast by individual members, as indicated by a secret ballot. The Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected for a two-year period (academic year) but will hold office until the first meeting of the Forum after the two year period has elapsed, at which time they will be eligible for re-election. A member may serve as Chair for a maximum of two consecutive terms. A Council Officer who is member of the Forum may not hold the office of Chair or Vice Chair.

5.2 The Chair (or the Vice-Chair in his/her absence) will be responsible for chairing and managing meetings of the Forum, in collaboration with the appropriate LA Officers and the Clerk.

5.3 If both the Chair and the Vice-Chair are absent from a meeting, an acting Chair will be elected by the members present for that meeting.

5.4 The Chair and/or the Vice-Chair may be removed from office by a majority of votes cast by secret ballot. Any call for a ballot to remove the Chair and/or Vice-Chair must be made in writing, signed by at least 25% of the total voting membership and received by the Clerk at least 7 days in advance of the meeting at which the ballot would be taken. The clerk must advise the Chair and Vice Chair immediately any such motion is received.

6. Clerk

6.1 The LA shall nominate a Clerk for the Forum.

6.2 The Clerk will be responsible for:

- Arranging meetings of the Forum,

- Ensuring that members are notified of meetings and receive full agenda and supporting papers at the week before the meeting is due to take place.
- Recording the proceedings at meetings of the Forum,
- Ensuring that such a record is kept in a form that is easily accessible to others on request. Draft minutes should be sent to the Chair for approval within 8 working days of a meeting and distributed with the papers for the subsequent meeting.
- Publishing the draft minutes via email/ the website within one week of a meeting.
- Providing and seeking advice to the Forum and/or individual members and assisting the Chair/Vice-Chair with the management of meetings of the Forum.
- Ensuring that Governing Bodies and schools are informed of the outcome of the work of the Forum and consultation by the LA through the publication of minutes in the Schools' and Governors' bulletins along with posting of draft minutes, approved minutes, meeting agendas and associated meeting papers on the Schools' Forum page of the LA website.

6.3 In addition the Clerk to the Forum will (acting on behalf of the LA):

- Maintain an up to date list of members, nominated substitutes, and observers, detailing terms of office;
- Advise the Chair of the Forum and the LA and representative groups when vacancies occur.
- Facilitate or organise where appropriate for the vacancies to be filled, in accordance with the agreed procedure and will ensure that sufficient time is given to enable all constituency members have sufficient notice to be able to consider self nomination. It is unlikely that less than 10 normal school days would be sufficient.
- Notify changes to membership via the Schools' and Governors' bulletins.

7. Commissioning

7.1 LA Officers will be responsible for ensuring that all necessary papers for meetings of the Forum are supplied to the Clerk in accordance with section 5.2 in a timely fashion.

7.2 Where LA Officers are reliant on an external body (e.g., DfE) for receipt of information which may arrive too late for processing/distribution, papers may be e-mailed to members no less than 3 days before a meeting. Papers may only be tabled at a meeting to those members who do not have access to email.

8. Quorum

8.1 The quorum for meetings is 40% of the total voting membership (namely Schools Group and Non Schools Group) excluding any vacancies in those groups.

8.2 If a meeting is inquorate, it can proceed, but it cannot legally take decisions (e.g., election of a Chair or Vice-Chair, or a decision relating to funding conferred by the funding regulations). An inquorate meeting can respond to authority consultations and give views to the authority.

9. Proceedings

9.1 Meetings of the Forum will normally be held a minimum of 4 times a year. The Chair must ask for declarations of interest at the beginning of every meeting. Additional meetings may be convened as and when required with the agreement of the Chair. A calendar of dates for meetings will be agreed at the first meeting in each school year.

9.2 Schools Forums can meet remotely. This includes (but is not limited to) telephone conferencing, video conferencing, live webcast, and live interactive streaming.

9.3 Where a decision needs to be made and there is general consensus, a formal vote will not be necessary. If the Chair determines a vote is necessary, voting will take place by a show of hands by members and decided by a simple majority. Where there is an equality of votes, the Chair has a second and casting vote.

9.4 In order to address specific issues, the Forum may, on occasion, need to establish working groups from within its membership group. Such working groups must appoint a Chair who will be directly responsible for ensuring that the business of the group is recorded, also for reporting to the outcomes of the work of the group to the Forum. The Forum may vote to accept a report from a working group.

9.5 Agenda items are selected by the Chair in consultation with the appropriate LA officers. Items of Any Other Business must be proposed to the Chair/Clerk before a meeting.

10. The Forum Budget

10.1 The budget for the Forum is £12,500.

10.2 The budget may be used for any legitimate purpose of the Forum

10.3 Before the start of each financial year (1st April to 31st March) the Forum shall determine its annual spending plan

10.4 The Director of Finance shall notify the Forum of any major variations in forecast expenditure compared to the annual spending plan.

10.5 The Director of Finance will account for the Forum's budget and make any payments authorised by the Forum.

10.6 The Forum shall not exceed its budget allocation calculated in 10.1 above. Any overspend will be a first charge on the next year's budget.

Annex 1

1. Membership

1.1 The Local Authority is responsible for setting up the Oldham Schools Forum, determining the numbers of members comprising of the Schools Group and Non-Schools Group and Observers, as laid out in the *Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012.*

1.2 Local Authority Officers in attendance have no voting rights. The Forum is required to have a representative of 16 -19 education provision and a representative from Early Years though the LA may appoint additional non-school members to represent other interests

1.3 The Forum consists of 21 members as set out below:

Primary Academy		
Principal (or representative) academy	5	Liz Travis - Headteacher at Holy Trinity Dobcross **(Chair)** Tracey Cavanagh - Headteacher at Holy Rosary Paul McGrath - Headteacher at St Thomas CE, Werneth Gary Needle - Headteacher at St Josephs Sharon Costello - CFO at the Harmony Trust
Primary Maintained		
Headteacher (or representative) Maintained	3	Helen Woodward - Headteacher at St Martins Nicola Edwards - Headteacher at Beever Vacant
Governor	1	Vacant
Secondary Academy		
Principal / CEO (or representative) - academies	5	Karl Newell - CEO & Executive Headteacher at Crompton House Gemma Cottingham, Headteacher at Royton & Crompton Stewart Ash - CFO at Pinnacle Learning Trust **(Vice Chair)** James Bell - CFO at Cramner Education Trust Joe Brownridge - Director of Academies Finance at E-Act Trust
Governor- Academy	1	Chris Gloster - Chair of Governors at Crompton House
Secondary Maintained		
There are no maintained secondary schools in Oldham	0	
Special Schools		
CEO (or representative)	1	Clare John - CEO at the New Bridge Group
Governor	1	Jeremy Sutcliffe - Chair of Governors at Kingfisher Learning Trust
Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)		
Headteacher or representative)	1	Emmet Patel - Headteacher at Kingsland School
Non-School Members		
Trade Unions	1	Nigel Yeo
Early Years (PVI)	1	Katie Anais Hoggard - Channings Childcare
16-19 Provider	1	Vacant
Voting Members	**21**	

2. Election and Nomination of Members and Chair

2.1 Governors

Nominations for Governor representatives will be sought from School Governing bodies with all eligible members being given an opportunity to be elected. Schools may nominate their governors' representatives to the Governors Section of the LA. If there are more nominations than places, then Oldham Governors Service will arrange for the governing bodies to vote for their representative. Governors represent school members and non-school members.

3 School Members

3.1 Headteachers

Headteacher representatives are directly accountable to their steering groups, which are the bodies responsible for headteacher elections.

- Primary Headteachers represent Primary schools and should reflect each of the Primary phases as far as is possible
- Secondary Headteachers represent Secondary schools and should reflect each of the 11 to 16 and 11 to 18 phases
- The Special Headteacher represents all phases of Special schools.

4. Non-school Members

4.1 Non-school members of the Schools Forum shall be nominated by Oldham's Children's Services, and shall include:

- *A provider from the 16-19 sector* – This includes those in the FE sector (FE and sixth form colleges) and other institutions that specialise in special education needs (SEN) and learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) provision (ISPs), where 20% or more of their students reside in the local authority's area.
- One trade union representative
- A representative from Oldham's Private, Voluntary and Independent providers of free entitlement nursery education (PVI)

Annex 2

Voting Procedures

The regulations provide that a Schools Forum may determine its own voting procedures save that on voting on:

- The funding formula is limited to school members, academies members and PVI representatives
- De-delegation will be limited to the specific primary and secondary phase of maintained school members

The other areas on which Schools Forum make decisions on local authority proposals are:

- De-delegation from mainstream schools budgets (where applicable, separate approval will be required by the primary and secondary maintained phase members of schools forum), for prescribed services to be provided centrally.
- To create a fund for significant pupil growth in order to support the local authority's duty for place planning (basic need), including pre-opening and diseconomy of scale costs, and agree the criteria for maintained schools and academies to access this fund.
- To create a fund for falling rolls for good or outstanding schools if the schools' surplus capacity is likely to be needed within the next three years to meet rising pupil numbers and agree the criteria for maintained schools and academies to access this fund.
- Continued funding at existing levels for prescribed historic commitments where the effect of delegating this funding would be destabilising.
- Funding for the local authority in order to meet prescribed statutory duties placed upon it. Approval is required to confirm the amounts for each duty and no new commitments or increases in expenditure from 2013/14 are permitted unless agreed by the Secretary of State.

In each of these cases, the Local Authority can appeal to the Secretary of State if the Schools Forum rejects its proposal.

Schools Forum

Subject:
Early years funding 2026/27: Outcome of provider consultation.

Report of:
Jennifer Wright, Early Years Funding and Sufficiency Manager

Date: 12 March 2026

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to summarise responses to the 2026/27 Early Years Funding Consultation and update Schools Forum on the Early Years funding rates for 2026/27

2. Background

2.1 The Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF) was introduced in 2017/18. Since then, the Council has been responsible for setting the hourly funding rates paid to providers to deliver the free entitlements for under 2's, 2, 3 and 4-year-olds for both working families and families receiving additional support.

2.2 Local authorities are required to consult providers on annual changes to their local Early Years Funding Formula.

2.3 Early Years Statutory guidance states that a minimum of 97% of funding must be passed to providers, an increase from the mandated 96% in 2025/26. This means that centrally retained funding (for central services or services in-kind) combined with any funding movement out of the Early Years Block is now limited to a maximum of 3%.

3. Department for Education (DfE) Funding rates from April 2026

3.1 In December 2025 the DfE announced funding rates payable to local authorities from April 2026.

Table 1: Oldham's EYNFF Funding Rates from Government

	2026/27
Under 2-year-olds (9 month upwards)	£12.11
2-year-olds combined	£8.91
3 and 4-year-olds	£6.25

4. Current Local Funding Formula

4.1 The table below shows the hourly rates paid to providers in 25/26 and the relevant Special Educational Needs Fund (SENIF) contribution.

Table 2: Hourly rates paid to providers in Oldham 2025/26

	Base rate	Deprivation supplement	Maximum hourly rate
Under 2-Year-Olds, Working families	£11.10		£11.10
2-Year-Old – Disadvantaged Families	£8.14		£8.14
2-Year-Old – Working Families	£8.14		£8.11
3 and 4-year-olds*	£5.56	20p	£5.76

5. Consultation

5.1 The LA consulted providers on proposals for the 2026/27 funding rates and the SENIF contribution which must be applied to all entitlements.

5.2 The Consultation was launched by way of an online survey.

6. Consultation proposals

6.1 The LA consulted on 2 funding options.

6.1.1 Option 1

Age	Base rate per hour	Supplement per hour	Maximum hourly rate	SENIF	Uplift
3 & 4 Year old	£5.83	20p	£6.03	£100,000	4.5%
Disadvantaged 2 Year Old	£8.55		£8.55	£50,000	4.8%
Working families 2 Year old	£8.55		£8.55	£100,000	4.8%
Working Families under 2	£11.65		£11.65	£100,000	4.7%

6.1.2 Option 2

Age	Base rate per hour	Supplement per hour	Maximum hourly rate	SENIF	Uplift
3 & 4 Year old	£5.83	20p	£6.03	£100,000	4.5%
FRAS 2 Year Old	£8.59		£8.59	£30,000	5.2%
Working families 2 Year old	£8.55		£8.55	£100,000	4.8%
Working Families under 2	£11.65		£11.65	£100,000	4.7%

The locally applied formula for all entitlements must adhere to the following:

- 97% of funding must be passed to providers (including the base rate, supplements, and the SEN Inclusion Fund).
- There must be a universal base rate for all providers.
- There must be a deprivation supplement for 3-and-4-year olds.
- There must be a Special Education Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF) for all entitlements.
- Funding rates must be published by Friday 27 February 2026

7. Consultation Response

7.1 The LA received 62 responses to the consultation out of the 251 providers eligible to respond, this represents a 25% response rate.

Table 3: Overall response rates by provider type



Table 4- Responses to each option



8. Preferred Options

8.1 The sector opted for option 2

9. Conclusion

9.1 Based on the outcome of the consultation, the following early years funding rates for 2026/27 are approved and published.

Table 8- Early Years recommended Funding Rates for 2026/27

	Base rate	Deprivation supplement	Maximum hourly rate	SENIF
3 and 4-year-olds	£5.83	20p	£6.03	£100,000
2-year-olds disadvantaged families	£8.59		£8.59	£30,000
2-year-olds working families	£8.55		£8.55	£100,000
Under 2 -year- old's	£11.65		£11.65	£100,000

9.1 The SENIF will now be consulted on separately and the total that will be allocated for 26/27 is £330,000.

9.2 The Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) and the Disability Access Fund (DAF) are not part of this consultation since the payment process for these is prescribed by central government. From 1 April 2026, rates are as follows:

	2026-27 Rate
EYPP	£1.15 Per hour, first 15 hours
DAF	£975 per year

10. Recommendation

10.1 That Schools Forum note the outcome of the Provider Early Years Funding consultation 2026/27, as summarised above.