Oldham Council

Autumn Term 2025

Minutes

Meeting of the Oldham Schools Forum

Wednesday 03rd December 2025
via Microsoft Teams
at 4.00pm

PRESENT:		
Liz Travis (Chair)	Holy Trinity CE Primary School (Headteacher)	Primary Maintained Representative
Stewart Ash	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

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

ABSENT:		
Gary Needle	St Joseph's Primary	Primary Maintained Representative
Karl Newall	Crompton House Trust (CEO)	Secondary Academy Representative
Gemma Cottingham	E-Act (Headteacher)	Secondary Academy Representative
Joe Brownridge	E-ACT (CFO)	Secondary Academy Representative

James Bell	The Cranmer Trust (CFO)	Secondary Academy Representative
Emmett Patel	Kingsland School (PRU) (Headteacher)	Special School Representative
Claire John	Newbridge Group (CEO)	Special Sector Representative
Jeremy Sutcliffe	Kingfisher Special School (Governor)	Special School Representative
Ian Windeatt	Trade Union Representative	Trade Union 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 25 June 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair

2.2 **Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes**

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting that were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

3. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (DSG) UPDATE

3.1 The Dedicated Schools Grant 2025/2026 and 2026/2027 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 highlighted Table 1 - DSG Management Plan 2024/25 to 2026/27

He advised that the local authority's Financial Statements for 2024/2025 were still awaiting final Audit approval and subject to this, the outturn for 2024/25 was confirmed as a net surplus of £1.182m.
The June 2025 Schools Forum was advised that there would be an estimated in-year deficit for of £8.634m for 2025/26. Based on revised funding allocations and updated expenditure

projections, the forecast in-year deficit has now increased by £2.301m from £8.634m to £10.935m for 2025/26 resulting in a revised cumulative deficit of £9.753m. The adverse position is forecast to increase with an in year 2026/27 forecast deficit of £13.747m; leading to an overall deficit balance of £23.500m being carried forward into 2027/28.

3.3 The Senior Finance Manager presented Table 2 – **Analysis of Movements since June 25 Schools Forum** which highlights movements in income and expenditure which attributed to the increased deficit. This included additional pressures within the High Needs Block relating to Special Schools (£0.202m), Post 16 (£0.540m) and Central High Needs (£1.559m).

3.4 The Senior Finance Manager Table 3 - **DSG Summary by Funding Block** which summarised the movement by the 4 funding blocks that comprise the DSG. It showed the in-year surplus or deficit for each of the four blocks for 2024/25 to 2026/27 and the total cumulative impact on the DSG, arriving at a forecast deficit of £23.500m at the end of 2026/27.

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

Response deferred pending clarification with colleagues within the Finance Team.

RESOLVED: i) that the Forum noted the 2024/25 outturn for the Dedicated Schools Grant ; and

ii) that the Forum note the current DSG budget for 2025/26 and 2026/27 and the consolidated forecast position as at 31 March 2026 and 31 March 2027.

4. SCHOOL FUNDING UPDATE 2026/27

4.1 The Senior Finance Manager presented the paper to update members on provisional funding allocations for the 2026/27 financial year through the Schools and Central School Services National Funding Formulae (NFF) following published indicative allocations from the DfE on 17th November 2025.

4.2 The main features of the announcement include:

(a) Total provisional funding for mainstream schools through the schools NFF will total £50.90 billion in 2026 to 2027.

(b) Funding factors used in the 2026/27 national formulae remain the same.

(c) Funding within the Schools Block for 2026/27 now includes funding that was separately allocated in 2025/26 through the Schools Budget Support Grant and National Insurance Contributions grant.

(d) Almost all factor values have increased from 2025/26 to 2026/27. The basic entitlement values, FSM6 values, the lump sum and the minimum per pupil funding values have increased to reflect the rolling in of the grants from 2025 to 2026, as highlighted in (c) above. In addition, a further 2.11% increase has been applied to the basic entitlement; FSM6 values and the lump sum factors.

(e) A 2.11% increase has also been applied to the IDACI, Low Prior Attainment , English as an Additional Language, Mobility, Sparsity and Split Sites factors.

(f) A 1.66% uplift has been applied to the FSM factor in the NFF, in line with inflation forecasts.

(g) Minimum funding levels have been set at £5,115 per pupil in primary schools and £6,640 per pupil in secondary schools.

(h) Premises funding will continue to be given at the local authority level, based on the amounts reported by local authorities in their 2025 to 2026 local funding formulae.

(i) The Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) can be set between 0 % and -0.5% for 2026/27.

(j) For the Central Schools Service Block, the total budget for ongoing responsibilities in 2026-27 is £379m and this includes the roll in of the School Budget Support Grant and National Insurance Contribution grant for centrally employed staff totalling £39m.

4.3 At the date of Schools Forum, the DfE had not yet published details re the High Needs indicative NFF allocations and operational guide but confirmed they would publish the high needs operational guide alongside the High Needs NFF allocations in December.

RESOLVED: That the Forum noted the contents of the report

5. SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS

5.1 The Senior Finance Manager presented the paper to update members the consultation process with regard to the requirement to update the Oldham Scheme for Financing Schools and any revisions therewith.

5.2 Changes to some of the wording in the scheme are called ‘directed revisions’. This means that authorities must incorporate within, or remove from, their schemes the specified wording and no other process is needed in order to make the changes. There are no directed revisions but there has been an LA revision as detailed in 5.3 below.

5.3 SECTION - 6.2
DETAILS - **Circumstances in which charges may be made (to school budget shares)** – We have included an additional circumstance where charges can be made to school budget shares (the cost of an undisputed invoice for energy where a school has entered into an agreement with the Secretary of State for the supply of energy and failed to pay).
REVISION - LA Revision

RESOLVED: That the Forum noted the contents of the report

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

6.1 Proposal to move the next meeting of Schools Forum from 14/01/2026 to 21/01/2026 subject to APT deadline to be confirmed.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 There were no 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 4.35pm).

SIGNED as approved:

DATE:

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Schools Finance Team
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