

Croydon Schools Forum

Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 19th January 2026

Members Present:	Jolyon Roberts	Debbie Ryle
	Gill LaRocque	Chris Andrew
Observers Present:	Dermot Mooney	Sarah Hunter
	Dave Harvey	Sue Lenihan
	Dan Bowden	Markie Hayden
	Kate Lanning	Clare Cranham
	Theresa Staunton	Jenny Aarons
	Cllr Amy Foster	Abioye Asimolowo
	Miriam Sechere	Susanna Roe
	Cllr Maria Gatland	Denise Bushay
	Cllr Joseph Lee	Jeni Murphy

Apologies: Maryssa Dako, Karen Steele, Jenny Bartlett, Tyrone Myton, Priya Perera, Shelley Davies, Stuart Collins

Elected Chair: Jolyon Roberts
Elected Vice Chair: Gill Larocque

Clerk: Mori Bates

Item	Detail	Lead/Action
1.	Welcome & Apologies	JR
	Apologies received by MB from MD, KS, JB, TM, PP, SD and SC	
2.	Minutes & Actions – Meeting 8th December ‘25	GL
	Minutes, actions, and matters arising from last meeting 8th December ‘25 Summary of comments made in reference to the previous minutes: 2.1 Continued Action Point: GL queried the figures for Croydon Pupil Referral Units (Line 9 of Appendix A), of which it was agreed a meeting would take place outside of Forum with SD and JB. ACTION: IN PROGRESS 2.2 Continued Action Point: An update was requested in regards to the meeting that took place between the Chair and the headteacher at Archbishop Tenison’s. ACTION: COMPLETED 2.2.1 Update: The Chair confirmed that he had met with the Headteacher who acknowledges Forum’s decision and has voiced appreciation that the proposal was debated and considering.	JB & SD

	2.3 Under 4.1: The Chair queried the alarming increase in the High Needs overspend which was noted in the December minutes as now £34M overspent. Members reported that there had been huge concern about this at the meeting of 8th December too. AA explained that Croydon has around 6,000 EHCPs which creates demand that the existing provision cannot cope with. Nevertheless, the Chair and other members expressed dissatisfaction that the management accountancy seemed to have gone badly awry as in all three previous quarters there was no hint of an impending issue. The Chair agreed to write to the Mayor to draw attention to the dramatic increase in the High Needs Overspend. ACTION: JR	JR
3.	DSG 26/27 & School Funding Formula Factors Review	AA
	3.1 AA presented a paper that covered the DSG 26/27 and the Formula Factors review following the APT being released on the 17th December 2025 with a deadline for submissions of the 22nd January '26. 3.2 1.7 and 1.8 of the paper noted the changes to the rolling in of grants previously awarded separately and that the Schools Budget Support Grant (SBSG) and the National Insurance Contributions (NICs) grant will both be rolled into the NFF for 26/27. It was also reported that there would be a grant for Extension of FSM from September '26 to enable all children in households receiving Universal Credit to receive free school meals. 3.3 Table A showed that the gross 26/27 provisional DSG allocation was £549,869, 615 with a net amount of £536,363,257, indicating a different of £13,506,358. Table A2 illustrated the distribution of funds across the blocks with a comparison with last year. 3.4 It was queried as to whether there has been a national difference in the DSG allocation between this year and last year – if these figures are available. AA agreed to investigate – ACTION AA 3.5 The AWPU is now referred to as 'BEF' (Basic Entitlement Funding) 3.6 Appendixes C to F showed the variations of BEF and MFG percentages, including the effect that such changes would have on the proposed 26/27 school funding. There was originally an option to cap and scale the funding formula, although it was later found to not work for Croydon. 3.7 With the exception of DH who was unable to vote due to illness, there was a unanimous vote, with 11 votes in agreement to proceed with Appendix F. 3.8 Forum expressed appreciation to AA and the Finance team for their work on this paper and for making sure that various options for consideration and review by the Schools Forum were provided for today's meeting on very short notice.	AA

	3.9 Forum noted the recommendations outlined in the paper – with the adjustment that B was correct with the exception of IDACI A and the lump sum.	
4.	Early Years DSG Funding and Options for 26/27	AA
	4.1 JM presented a paper on the Early Years funding options for 26/27, drawing Forum's attention to the summary, recommendations and key changes to note. 4.2 One of the key changes was that a requirement has been made for PVIs to carry out termly census like MNS nurseries are already doing. This is expected to improve funding for 3 & 4YOs. The DfE has anticipated that the census changes may negatively impact the accuracy of 3 & 4YO data for the recorded information. Therefore, to mitigate any arising issues, the DfE have introduced two separate rates for these funding types – a pre adjusted rate and a post adjusted rate. 4.3 Table 3 showed the DfE data on the predicted numbers of children accessing funding in 26/27, showing a decrease in the 3YOs and WF 3YOs with increases in all the other funding types. JM explained that there has been a change in the qualifying criteria for various funding types which has mean that there has been an increase in those that qualify for funding. There was also a recent introduction of funding for WF 2YOs. Q3: JR: The changes being made to reporting census figures to a termly basis – how onerous will this be for providers? A3: JM: There will be forms to be completed prior to the headcount which does create an additional task for both the providers and the LA to carry out. C3: TS: The task will be getting through to all the providers with an emphasis on the importance of submitting accurate census data. 4.4 It was pointed out that if there is an increase in both funding and the needs within the Early Years sector, then the given amount per pupil will reach healthy levels. Q4: JR: Will the figures for the MNS supplementary grant be adjusted post census data submissions? A4: JM: To prevent any clawback, the figures will be recalculated based on the submitted information. 4.5 Last year, the MNS budget was around £1million, and for 26/27, the indicative figure for this supplement is £914,730, of which could be connected to the decrease in 3 & 4YOs. Q5: CllrAF: Are there any increased pressures that might explain the changes over time? A5: JM: Though there has been an increase in the need, we have also been working with the parents and providers to help with any pressures. We can share information on this post-meeting.	

	4.6 The Chair noted that the increase of funding going into the Early Years block clearly accounts for the increase within the sector. 4.7 With the exception of DH who was unable to vote, there was a unanimous vote, with 11 votes in agreement with the preferred option. 4.8 Forum expressed appreciation to JM, DBu and the Early Years team for their work on this paper, given that rates were released late December and the quick turnaround on the paper ready for the working group on the 13th January.	
6.	Working Group Updates	TS/TM/ FR
	6.1 Updates were received from the working groups as followed – minutes to be marked as read: a) Early Years – Working group met and reviewed the Early Years paper presented today b) Schools Block – No meeting took place c) High Needs – No meeting took place	
6.	AOB	ALL
	The next meeting will take place on 2nd March AA indicated there would likely be a Growth Fund paper for 26/27 presented at the next Forum meeting	

Meeting Adjourned: 11:25am
Date of next meeting: Monday 2nd March 2026
F10, Croydon Town Hall