

**SCHOOLS FORUM EARLY YEARS WORKING GROUP  
13 MAY 2026 ON-LINE AT 9:30am  
MINUTES**

Name	Designation/ Representation
Melian Mansfield (MM)	<b>CHAIR.</b> Chair of Pembury House Nursery School
*Gladys Baah-Okyere (GBO)	PVI Settings Rep
Luisa Bellavita (LB)	PVI Settings Rep
Joanna Conroy (JC)	Childminder
Duwan Farquharson (DF)	Willow Director of Business
*Sian McDermott (SMcD)	Nursery Head SF Rep (Rowland Hill & WPNC)
Susan Tudor-Hart (ST-H)	V Chair. School Forum PVI Settings Rep
Melanie Widnall (MW)	Principal Advisor for Early Years
*Cllr Zena Brabazon (ZB)	Lead Member
Ridhwaan Edoe (RE)	Early Years Finance Team
*Lucy Walker-Collins (LW-C)	Primary Head Rep (Stroud Green Primary School)
Rhonda Scott (RS) AHT	Primary Head Rep (Stroud Green Primary School)
*Avril Parker-Roach (AP-R)	Childminder Rep
*Hussain Sofiean (HS)	Strategic Business Lead CYPS
*Lewis Anthony (LA)	Early Years Finance Team
*Muhammad Ali (MA)	Senior Finance Officer – Schools
*Ese Anyia (EA)	Interim Schools Account – Schools
*Jack Newton	Director, Schools and Learning
Akwai Gill	Principal Advisor for EY Haringey
<b>Also Present</b>	
Marilyn Francis (MF)	Governance Officer

\*Absent

## **1. Welcome and apologies**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Sian McDermott and Lucy Walker-Collins
- 1.2 Jane Edwards has left the Council and Jack Newton is her successor, who was absent.

## **2. Draft minutes of the meeting held on the 19 January and 22 January 2026**

The group **approved** the minutes for 19 and 22 January 2026.

## **3. Matters arising other than those encompassed in the agenda**

### **3.1 19 January 2026**

LA to provide an update regarding harder to reach communities to the extent that within the remit of the working party.

### **3.2 22 January 2026**

AG to circulate the most recent Childcare sufficiency strategy and the work undertaken by Daniel Edwards around sufficiency and gaps which formed part of the Local Plan

- 3.3 MW to circulate the GLD modelling tool.

## **4. The £425k Underspend**

This funding is to be spent on

- Vulnerable children
- Children spending an additional year in an early years setting.
- Holiday provision for Under 5's
- LEEP funding agreed £45k
- EY conference agreed £6k.

RE confirmed that the EY Conference £6k has been allocated and the remaining money has not yet been spent.

## **5. Vulnerable Children Pilot scheme**

in January 2026 it was agreed that there should be a one term pilot scheme with the intention of starting in the summer term with a budget cost of £57.5K for the summer.

Following discussions, it was **agreed** to start the pilot from September 2026 with 10 places for 30 hours for 13 weeks for children from 9 months upwards.

The Pilot will be open to all providers, It will take into account a child's location & whether a child is already in a setting.

The potential for funding a case study would be discussed from the underspend of £911K

## **6. Deferred Reception Year Funding**

It was **agreed** to fund £26,871 calculated on the basis of 10 places for 30 hours for 13 weeks but useable flexibly. The costing is for an academic year but what is needed will depend on when a child is born and the number of hours the child is already attending. If not spent it will be reviewed.

It was confirmed that requests are low and this should cover the costs.

AG confirmed that now that the funding has been agreed the application paperwork can be distributed to settings.

## **7. Holiday Provision for under 5's**

The costings of summer holiday provision for 4 or 6 weeks were discussed. It was noted that the length of the provision would have an impact on the balance of funds left to be distributed to providers.

The weeks would have to be managed carefully to ensure that the project stays within the budget. Some settings & children may not want all the places and there has to be a degree of flexibility. Settings should agree the number of weeks and children and stay within budget. Payment will be made through the EY portal.

It was **agreed** to fund 4 weeks, costed on the basis of 30 places for 30 hours with a budget cost of £38K. This would allow flexibility for 2-, 3- or 4-year-olds as the costs for 3- & 4-year-olds are lower.

## **8. Distribution of the remaining balance of the £425K Reserve**

The Chair clarified that after allocation of funds for the various projects discussed the balance of the £425K would be distributed to EY settings.

After discussion about whether this should happen and how this would be achieved it was noted that following the last working party meeting the distribution was agreed in principle at the School's Forum. This should now be actioned to ensure that settings get the funds as soon as possible.

There was discussion as to which settings should receive this distribution, what was fair, whether it should be limited to those settings that were open in 2023/2024 & the practicalities of this.

On the basis that all settings are in need it was **agreed** to continue on the basis already calculated which would enable the funds to be distributed shortly.

Calculated on the basis of 11,147 children this would allow for £250 per setting plus £17.86 per child. Next step would be for this to go to School's Finance for distribution this summer.

## 9. Management of Projects

The funding has to go through School's Finance first and will then be distributed when it has been decided who is leading the projects.

It has not yet been decided who will be leading and managing the various projects but it will probably be AG

**Action:** AG and MW to confirm with JN the management of the three projects and inform RE

RE will manage the distribution of the agreed reserve balance to individual settings which should be paid this summer. The funds will be specified as an additional payment for Early Years in correspondence to enable all settings, including schools, to identify it.

The Chair asked for this to be done as a matter of urgency.

## 10. The Further Underspend of £911K from 2024/2025

The Chair introduced the next underspend which needs to be considered and asked for suggestions.

### 10.1 Vulnerable Children Case study

A case study had been proposed to iron out any glitches in the pilot scheme for Vulnerable children and to review how rapidly a child can go into a setting. A budget figure of £5,750 was discussed. As this was not in the pilot costings It was **agreed** that this could be funded from the £911K underspend.

### 10.2 Extension of the Vulnerable Children's project

After assessment of the pilot continuation of this project could be funded.

Officers confirmed that the final costs will need to be calculated to reflect the change in the pilot from running in the Summer term to the Autumn term. Extension of this project would be Spring 2027 & Summer 2027 which would be costed with an uplift to reflect the new financial year and potential base rate changes.

There was discussion about membership of the panel. It was confirmed that there will not be a new panel as the pre-existing Early Years Inclusion Panel will hear Vulnerable children referrals. There is no requirement that Vulnerable Children have SEND.

### 10.3 Holiday Provision for under 5's

It was **agreed** that after evaluating the summer holiday provision places would be made available for October and February half term, 5 days each holiday and for Easter 8 days.

**Action:** AG to revisit the costings.

### 10.4 LEEP Programme

It was **agreed** to wait until September to reevaluate this.

#### **10.5 EY Conference**

A provisional sum of £10K was discussed.

#### **10.6 Community Interest Group**

It was noted that a sum of £10K had been considered.

#### **11. Further meeting to review £911K underspend for 2024/25 - Agenda items**

The Chair noted that we would need another meeting to discuss these ideas and any further suggestions that any member of the working party has.

**Action** - Next meeting early to mid-June –MM JN & AG to decide on a date.

**Action** - AG to confirm with JN when the proposed use of the £911K underspend has to be presented to School's Forum.

It was noted that when considering use of the £911K the working party should be aware that there will be a further underspend for the academic year 2025/26. The amount is not yet known.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the Meeting at 11:03am