

Schools Forum Agenda

28th September 2020 at 2:30 pm
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams
(Open to the Public and Press)

1. Apologies

To receive any apologies for absence

2. Declaration of interest

Schools Forum members to declare any interest in matters to be discussed at the meeting.

3. Minutes

To confirm the minutes of the meeting(s) held on 13th July 2020 as a correct record.

4. Pupil Referral Unit Balances 2019/20 – Report to be tabled

5. De-delegated, centrally retained impact and balances report

6. Financial Transparency Consultation – Government response

7. Scheme for financing LA schools (Fair Funding Scheme)– Update

8. School Resource Management Advisors – Covid 19 Support

9. Covid-19 Catch up premium

10. Schools funding 2021/22 – National funding formula

11. SEN and High Needs Block – Period 5 Monitoring report

Next Meeting:

9th November 2020; Virtual Meeting



Schools Forum Distribution to Members:

Head Teachers Advisory Forum - Primary Schools (6)

Ms L Gillam, Mr G Linford, S Ramsay

Head Teachers Advisory Forum – Secondary Schools (4)

Mr P Shone, Mr A Burns, Mr D Irish, M Arnull

Head Teachers Advisory Forum – Special School (1)

Mr N Toplass

School Governors (4)

Mr B Patel, Ms. C. Gallant, Mr J Smallman, Ms L Howard

Trade Union (1)

Mr. D Barton

Early Years Partnership (1)

Mr Z Padda

14-19 Provider (1)

Ms J Bailey

Pupil Referral Unit (1)

K Morgan

Contact: democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk

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Schools Forum

13 July 2020 at 2.30pm

Present: D Irish (Chair)
N Toplass (Vice Chair)
P Shone, S Ramsay, G Linford, B Patel, J Smallman, K Morgan, D Barton, J Bailey

Officers: C Ward, R Kerr, J Gill, A Timmins, S Lilley, M Tallents, A Patel

Also present: J Kellas, D Maher

21/20 Apologies:
C Gallant, C Walsh, L Gillam, L Howard.

22/20 Declarations of Interest

None

23/20 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

24/20 Schools Forum Members Attendance

Members received a record of Schools Forum attendance for June 2019 – March 2020.

Members were advised that there was one maintained school Governor vacancy and three primary block Head Teacher vacancies.



Schools Forum – 13 July 2020

Agreed that:-

- 1) B Patel to refer the School Governor vacancy to the next meeting of the Association of Sandwell Governing Bodies in September, and C Ward would also to refer the matter to next meeting of the Secondary Partnership to enable the appointment of a Governor representative.
- 2) C Ward to ensure that appointments to Schools Forum was on the agenda for the next meeting of the Primary Partnership.

25/20

Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

Nominations for the appointment of Chair and Vice Chair to Schools Forum for the next academic year were received, seconded and voted on.

Agreed that:-

- 1) As of September 2020, the Chair of Schools Forum would be
– D Irish;
- 2) as of September 2020, the Vice Chair of Schools Forum would be
– N Toplass.

26/20

School Balances 2019/20 and Budget Plans 2020/21

Schools Forum received a report outlining the balances held by schools at the end of 2019-20 and the projected balances for 2020-21.

The total schools balances as at the end of 2019-2020 compared to the position at the end of 2018 – 19 was summarised as follows:-

	2018-19 £m	In Year Movement £m	2019-20 £m
Budget Share	21.838	0.048	21.886
Capital	1.348	(0.504)	0.844
Other Funds	0.687	(0.094)	0.593
Total	23.873	(0.550)	23.323

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Three schools had closed with a deficit budget share, Brickhouse Primary, Newtown Primary and Stuart Bathurst.

No schools had converted to academy status during 2019/2020.

The deficit at Brickhouse Primary was small and the authority would be working with the school to manage the situation.

Newtown Primary and Stuart Bathurst had converted to academy status on 1st April 2020 with deficit balances. The authority believed that the deficit balances were not final balances as there were still additional charges being received. Department for Education (DFE) guidance on the Treatment of surplus and deficit balances when maintained schools convert to academies remained with the Local Authority, to be funding from its core budget. The contingency provision, agreed by schools' forum would be used to fund the deficit.

The authority planned to report on the final balances of the schools at the next Forum meeting.

The projected balances for 2020-21 as indicated by the budget plans received from schools were reported to Schools Forum and R Kerr explained the criteria for the red, amber, green rating.

- Thirty-one primary schools were projecting to hold balances above 10% and seven primary schools were projecting to hold balances below 1% at the end of 2020-21.
- No secondary schools were projecting to hold balances above 8% and two secondary schools were projecting to hold balances below 1%.
- One special school was projecting to hold balances above 10% and no special school was projecting to hold balances below 1%
- Four schools projected a deficit balance at the end of 2020-21, Brickhouse Primary, Hampstead infants, Hateley Heath and Warley infants. The authority would be, where appropriate, working with these schools to review and agree a licensed deficit plan. The following needed to be taken into consideration:
 - Hateley Heath would be converting to academy status during the year;
 - Warley infants would close in August and amalgamate with Bleakhouse and a new overall budget would be set.

The Chair asked if there was an action plan in place for those schools with a red rating.

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Officers advised that the Finance section was to consider the balances and would work with the School Improvement advisors to support the schools to manage these balances going forward.

N Toplass indicated that the large carry forward for Shenstone school related to how planned places allocation had been made. He also queried the process used for pupil placement planning in respect of SEN and the discrepancy at Westminster school.

M Tallents explained that due to the increase in the High Needs Block, school's data and information was being considered to support planned places. Some vacancies had been carried forward due to the introduction of SEMH in primary settings. Places would still be needed as other special schools were getting full. In respect of the planned places at Westminster, this was due to EVOLE strategy and the increase in filling post 16 places would be gradual.

It was requested that a separate report in respect of the Pupil Referral Units be brought to a future meeting.

Agreed that Schools Forum note the contents of the report.

27/20 High Needs Block Outturn 2019/20

Schools Forum received a report in respect of the High Needs Block 2019/20 outturn position and data on the commissioned places in specialism provision against occupancy.

The final High Needs Block Grant settlement for 2019/20 was £40.883m.

The balance brought forward as at 1 April 2019 was £0.059m surplus, an additional £0.31m transferred in during 2019/20.

The in-year deficit on the High Needs Block as at 31st March 2020 was £0.619m and the balance as at 31st March 2020 was £0.561m deficit which would be met from 2020/21 High Needs Block Grant.

The main variances were as follows:

- Out of Borough Placements £0.211m overspend;
- Pupil Top up and place funding £0.711m overspend, following new in year admissions, new assessments and an increase in the number of pupils staying on into post 16 placements in mainstream and special schools;

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- Alternative Provision £0.719m overspend. The Alternative Provision Panel's held since 1 September 2019 had controlled the number of pupils allocated alternative provision places and had been helpful in maintaining the previously predicted overspend;
- Special Educational Needs developments £0.554 underspend was being used to offset any pressures in other areas within the High Needs Block.

The transfer to Children with Disabilities was not actioned in 2019/20 and the Service Level Agreements with Health were reduced.

The Focus Provisions average occupancy during 2019/20 was approximately 87%, and the number of places commissioned, and the current vacancies and reserved places were shown in the appendix to the report.

The special schools were over occupancy throughout the financial year and in year adjustments were made for additional occupancy.

Sandwell Community School, Primrose Centre and Albright were either at capacity or slightly over capacity at 30th March 2020.

Agreed that Schools Forum noted the contents of the report.

28/20

High Needs Block Quarter 1 Budget monitoring 2020/21

The HNB Current Grant for 2020/21 was £48.583m and it was anticipated that the in-year surplus 30 June 2020 projected to 31st March 2021 was £1.160m.

The balance brought forward as at 1 April 2020 was £0.561m Deficit. The increases in staffing and provision agreed by School's Forum in December 2019 had been built into the budget figures.

The main variances were as follows:-

- SEN Support Services - £99k underspend was due to staff Vacancies;
- Support for inclusion - £559k underspend was due to staff vacancies and Preventing Secondary Exclusions Team which was still under discussion.
- SEN Developments £497K underspend – This budget head, currently independent appeals and reports, and funding agreed that did not clearly fit onto any other budget head. It also held a balancing figure of £521k which was the difference between the calculated budgets as at 1 April 2020 and the HNB Grant initial settlement 2020/21.
- Exclusions & Reintegration - £36k underspend.

The Focus Provision average under occupancy was 13% this would continue through to the end of the summer term 2020, then it appears to increase,

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however this would reduce following the phased transfer and finalisation of the Education Health Care Plans with effect from Autumn term 2020.

There were currently 2% vacancies across the four special schools; The Pupil Referral Units had not been included in the report, however the SYNERGY systems showed they were at full capacity.

A further report would be brought to a future meeting of Schools Forum. It was expected that there would be an increase in funding from central government in future years. Information in respect of the next years grant was expected around December.

Agreed that Schools Forum noted the contents of the report and note the data provided on the commissioned places and occupancy for special provisions as at September 2019.

29/20

Early Years Block Outturn 2019/20

Schools Forum were informed of actual expenditure incurred for the Early Years Block in 2019/20. The allocation for 2019/20 was £23.933m. The actual grant allocation income received was £24.163m because of an early adjustment; the net effect of which was £0.230m.

The actual expenditure incurred during 2019/20 was as follows:

Service Area	Budget 2019/20 £,000	Actual Expenditure £,000	Variance £,000
Early Learning 2 year olds	4,312	4,120	(192)
Early Years - PVI	10,082	9,764	(318)
Early Years - Schools	8,013	7,778	(235)
EY – Pupil Premium	237	221	(16)
SEN Inclusion Fund	480	480	0
Disability Access Fund	76	17	(59)
Central Services	963	938	(25)
Total	24,163	23,369	(845)

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The Department for Education would adjust the 2020/21 allocation based on the January 2020 Early Years census figures. The DfE normally notify the authority of this adjustment in the month of July.

Many Providers had found it difficult to manage finances during the pandemic they would welcome that any underspend in the 2, 3 and 4 year-old funding could be redistributed to providers in the near future.

Agreed that Schools Forum noted the contents of the report.

30/20

Central Schools Services Outturn 2019/20

Schools Forum was advised on the actual expenditure incurred for the Central School Service Block, centrally retained and the de-delegated budgets in 2019/20.

The Central Schools Services Block expenditure was as follows:-

Service Area	Budget 2019/20 £,000	Actual Expenditure £,000	Variance £,000
School Forum	3	0	3
Pension Administration	264	264	0
Stat/Regulatory/Education Welfare/Asset Management	977	977	0
Admissions & Appeals	453	456	3
Copyright Licenses	311	311	0
Total	2,008	2,008	0

The Pupil number growth allocation agreed by Schools Forum was £2,269m. The academies adjustment for 2019/20 was £0.538m giving total funding available of £2.807m. The actual expenditure of this budget was £2,429m Giving an underspend of £378,000.

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The expenditure for the de-delegated budgets was as follows:-

Service Area	Budget 2019/20 £,000	Actual Expenditure £,000	Variance £,000
Special Advisory Teachers	414	414	0
Preventing Primary Exclusion	153	153	0
Health & Safety Licenses	13	12	(1)
Evolve Annual License	6	6	0
Union Facilities Time	202	121	(81)
School Improvement	100	100	0
Schools in financial difficulty	250	125	(125)
Total	1,138	931	(207)

A further report would be presented at the next meeting of the School Forum to discuss how to deal with the carried forward balances.

D Barton queried the underspend in respect of Union facilities time and asked for a more detailed breakdown. It was suggested that it could be due to the Covid -19 Pandemic and invoices not being submitted in time to meet closedown deadlines. The matter would also be discussed at the next meeting of the Joint Union Panel.

Agreed that Schools Forum noted the contents of the report and a further report would be brought to Schools Forum Meeting on 28th September 2020, setting out the impact of the delegated budget expenditure with recommendations on the use of any carry forwards.

31/20

Schools Forum – Draft Forward Plan 2020/21

A draft forward plan was presented by R Kerr, this was based on normal deadlines for submitting information to the DfE. The Local Authority had not received information in respect of who would be responsible for the funding formula for 2021/22, DfE guidance last year stated that they were preparing to introduce the National Funding Formula as soon as possible, however it was not known if the Pandemic had any impact on the DfE timetable.

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Agreed that Schools Forum noted the contents of the draft forward plan and acknowledged that members would be notified of any necessary changes.

32/20

Any Other Business

P Shone asked if there was any update on catch-up funding from the Government.

C Ward advised that guidance from the Government had stated that it would start allocating this funding from September. The Local Authority expected the information would be received around mid-August. The authority would pursue this with the DfE.

R Kerr referred to the Fair Funding consultation, discussed at the March meeting of Schools Forum and was sent to schools in March for responses to be returned by 10th April 2020. Understandably there had been no responses received due to the lockdown period. The consultation would be re-issued to schools and the deadline for responses was 16th September 2020. Responses would be reported at the meeting of Schools Forum in September.

Agreed that the Local Authority would re issue the consultation documents and report on the responses received at the meeting of Schools Forum in September.

The Next Meeting of Schools Forum 28 September 2020 @ 2.30pm

Meeting ended at 3.36pm

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Agenda Item 5

Schools Forum

28th September 2020

**De – Delegated, Education Functions and Centrally Retained
Outturn 2019/20**

This report is for decision

1. Recommendations:

That Schools Forum members approve the following:

- 1.1 The union facilities underspend of £81k be carried forward and used to offset the late submission of claims/contributions caused by the disruption encountered because of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 1.2 The Schools in financial difficulties underspend of £125k be carried forward for use in 2020/21.
- 1.3 The pupil number growth underspend of £378k be used to reduce the Pupil number growth budget proposal for 2021/22.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 To inform members on the actual expenditure incurred for the Central School Services Block, centrally retained and the de-delegated budgets in 2019/20 together with the impact reports.
- 2.2 For forum member to decide on the use of any carry forwards.

3. Report Details

- 3.1 As set out in the report to school's forum on 13th July 2020 and as part of a previous Budget Consultation process, schools requested that more detailed information is presented to Schools Forum regarding the use of de delegated and centrally retained

budgets. The following information has also been collated from Lead Officers: -

De-delegated Budgets

Table 1 – De-delegated Budgets

Service Area	Budget 2019/20 £,000	Actual Expend iture £,000	Variance – £,000
Special Advisory Teachers	414	414	0
Preventing Primary Exclusion	153	153	0
Health & Safety Licenses	13	12	(1)
Evolve Annual License	6	6	0
Union Facilities Time	202	121	(81)
School Improvement	100	100	0
Schools in financial difficulty	250	125	(125)
Total	1,138	931	(207)

Special Advisory Teacher

- 3.2 This Service provides a team of teachers and learning support staff who work with schools to support young people with Complex Communication Disorders and a part time Speech Therapist who supports the CCD Team and works directly with pupils in Focus Provisions for language and communication difficulties.
- 3.3 The budget has been fully utilised in providing this service.

Preventing Primary Exclusions

This funding is used to support a team of 6 staff who work directly with children who are at risk of exclusion. The budget has been fully spent, especially in the light of a prolonged staff absence and cover provided.

Health & Safety Licenses and Subscriptions

- 3.4 The various licences and subscriptions provide of information and support to schools covered by this proposal, to help ensure that statutory duties under health and safety legislation are met.

- European Education Consultants (EEC) H&S Risk assessment and self-audit software
- In the line of Fire e-learning package (ATF Solutions)
- CLEAPSS: subscription to the national school science and design and technology advisory body.

Appendix 1 provides detailed information on the service provided.

EVOLVE Annual Licence Fee

- 3.5 This licence allows the authority to use the computerised Educational Visits system for maintained schools and those that pay for a service level agreement. Refer to Appendix 2 for more detail.

Union Facilities Time

- 3.6 Funding was distributed to unions to meet statutory requirements. Appendix 3 provides detail on the service provided.

School Improvement

- 3.7 Core visits were undertaken to all maintained schools over the year.
- 3.8 Termly meetings take place with a Headteacher advisory group to consult on the core visit process and paperwork. Appendix 4 provides more details.

Schools in financial difficulties

- 3.9 The fund is used to support schools that have out turned with a deficit and are unable to set a balanced budget for the new financial year. The fund can also be used to cover the deficits left by schools that have converted to an academy via the sponsored route.
- 3.10 The maximum funding any school can receive is £125,000. Refer to Appendix 5 for more detail.

Pupil Number Growth Contingency

- 3.11 The Pupil number growth allocation agreed by Schools forum was £2.269m. The DfE make an adjustment for pupil number growth funding paid to academies for the period April to August of the

previous financial year. The academies adjustment for 2019/20 was £0.538m giving total funding available of £2.807m.

Table 2 – Pupil Number Growth Funding

Service Area/budget Description	Budget 2019/20	Actual Expenditure	Variance
	£,000	£,000	– £,000
Pupil number growth	2,807	2,429	(378)

- 3.12 Table 3 details the actual expenditure incurred during 2019/20 regarding the use of the Central School Services Block and the de-delegated budgets

Table 3 – Central School Services Block

Service Area	Budget 2019/20	Actual Expenditure	Variance
	£,000	£,000	£,000
School Forum	3	0	(3)
Pension Administration	264	264	0
Stat/Regulatory/Education Welfare/Asset Mgt	977	977	0
Admissions & Appeals	453	456	3
Copyright Licenses*	311	311	0
Total	2,008	2,008	0

*Copyright Licenses costs are paid for directly by the DfE from the Dedicated Schools Grant and the amount paid to the authority is adjusted accordingly.

Education Functions £446,000

- 3.13 Table 4 details the actual expenditure incurred during 2019/20 regarding the use of the Central School Services Block and the de-delegated budgets

Table 4 – Education Functions

Service Area	Budget 2019/20 £,000	Actual Expenditure £,000	Variance £,000
Education Benefits Team	172	172	0
Children's Clothing Support	30	30	0
Safeguarding and Attendance	244	244	0
Total	446	446	0

- 3.14 Refer to Appendix 6 for more detailed information on the outcomes achieved for 2019/20.

Conclusion

- 3.15 Union Facilities – The underspend of £81k is significant and is largely due the delay by some of the union bodies submitting their claims for the agreed contributions because of disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The balance should therefore be carried forward to take account of this.
- 3.16 Schools in Financial Difficulties – The underspend of £125k should be carried forward to be available in 2020/21.
- 3.17 Pupil Number Growth Fund – The underspend of £378k should be carried forward to be used to reduce the Pupil number growth budget proposal for 2021/22.

4. Recommendations

That Schools Forum approve the following:

- 4.1 The union facilities underspend of £81k be carried forward and used to offset the late submission of claims/contributions caused by the disruption encountered during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic.

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- 4.2 The Schools in financial difficulties underspend of £125k be carried forward for use in 2020/21.
- 4.3 The pupil number growth underspend of £378k be taken in account to reduce the Pupil number growth budget proposal for 2021/22.

Rosemarie Kerr, Principal Accountant – Schools

Date: 23/09/2020

Contact Officer: Rosemarie Kerr

Tel No: 0121 569 8318

DE-DELEGATED/EDUCATION FUNCTIONS OUTTURN 2019-20	
Impact report	
Title of the Budget	Health and Safety Licences and Subscriptions
Lead Officer:	Andy Timmins
2019-20 Funding:	£27,438
A brief outline on how the funding was used, and the service impact to maintained schools. (E.g. KPI's, service statistics, etc.)	
<p>Funding calculations for the various licences / subscriptions are a mix of per pupil for some elements, and a flat rate per school establishment in others, with a support element (salary costs) to administer the associated functions. The various licences and subscriptions provide a valuable source of information and support to the large number of schools covered by this proposal, to help ensure that statutory duties under health and safety legislation are met.</p> <p>European Education Consultants (EEC) H&S Risk assessment and self-audit software</p> <p>The risk management module of the system provides schools with access to risk assessment frameworks covering all aspects of the school environment and activities, both curricular, and non-curricular. In using the information provided by such a system, school can be more confident that their risk assessments are 'suitable and sufficient', as required by law. The self-audit function provides a benchmark to ensure schools are compliant in the areas assessed, and to aid improvement and maintenance of H&S standards overall within the school.</p> <p>In the line of Fire e-learning package (ATF Solutions)</p> <p>The nature of the training being an e-learning package allows the training to be undertaken at a time to suit the school. The undertaking of this training by all staff in the school environment contributes to meeting statutory duties under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (RRFSO) which requires all staff to receive fire safety training. Awareness of fire safety matters, gained amongst all staff through the completion of the training, supports the schools' overall fire safety management efforts.</p> <p>CLEAPSS: subscription to the national school science and design and technology advisory body.</p> <p>CLEAPSS guidance documents, chemical data, and example risk assessments are just a few examples of resources available to aid schools in ensuring that activities in the areas of design & technology and science are managed in a safe manner. As a service utilised by schools nationwide, wider guidance on matters such as keeping animals in schools is of relevance and invaluable assistance to schools in the primary phase as well as secondary schools. A helpline run by qualified staff in a variety of disciplines provides additional support to schools as required throughout the school year.</p>	

DE-DELEGATED/EDUCATION FUNCTIONS OUTTURN 2019-20**Impact report**

Title of the Budget	EVOLVE Annual licence fee
Lead Officer:	Richard Oakes
2019-20 Funding:	£6,100
A brief outline on how the funding was used, and the service impact to maintained schools. (E.g. KPI's, service statistics, etc.)	
<p>To renew the licence for the LA and all schools to access the computerised EVOLVE system supporting the safe and effective management of Educational Visits; and fulfilling the Council's H&S duty in respect of its employees, and those in their care.</p>	

DE-DELEGATED/EDUCATION FUNCTIONS OUTTURN 2019-20	
Impact report	
Title of the Budget	Union Facilities Time
Lead Officer:	Andy Timmins
2019-20 Funding:	£202,000
A brief outline on how the funding was used, and the service impact to maintained schools. (E.g. KPI's, service statistics, etc.)	
<p>Facilities Funding was distributed between the unions represented on the Joint Union Partnership in line with the 2016 agreement on facilities time</p> <p>Facilities funding enables the local authority to negotiate directly with trades unions on behalf of all maintained schools. This means individual schools do not have to spend time being involved in a similar process on their own. As a result, this saves both, significant time and money, allowing more to be achieved in the long run.</p> <p>Joint Union Partnership continues to play a key role in reviewing and updating a range of key policies and guidance documentation including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disciplinary • Management of Absence • Grievance • Redundancy • Model Pay Policy • Appraisal • Leave of Absence <p>Facilities funding enables local union representation to work with the LA on a number of other matters for all maintained schools. This work has included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A single Managing Allegations policy in conjunction with LADO • School Complaints Procedure • Social Media guidance for schools • A policy for supporting employees from malicious behaviour • A Workload Charter (in conjunction with JEG) • Place planning and school expansions • Maintaining an overview of the way the Apprenticeship Levy is being used • School Amalgamations • Academy conversion • Physical Intervention/Restraint policy • Redundancies • Drugs, Alcohol and Substance misuse policy <p>Unions meet regularly with LA Health and Safety representatives via the Central Safety Committee to both monitor a range of things and create additional support</p>	

packages. This has included work on an updated Educational visits policy, development of a new Stress policy and guidance, work on zero tolerance and the monitoring of incidents and absence statistics.

Facilities funding also ensures local casework can involve a local rep, who, unlike regional reps, will usually be available at short notice and have good local knowledge. This frequently enables issues to be resolved more quickly and effectively.

The number of meetings that union officials attend is significant with twice termly JUP meetings, 3 Health and Safety Committee Meetings per year as well as a significant number of side panel committees. This is in addition to the numerous meetings phone calls and preparation needed to cover individual casework.

Throughout the current pandemic unions have been meeting remotely with the LA on a regular basis. Initially, this was daily and is now three times a week. This has provided an important forum to discuss immediate concerns in a timely manner, allowing for quick resolution of issues.

DE-DELEGATED OUTTURN 2019-20 Impact report	
Title of De-Delegated Budget	School Improvement Services
Lead Officer:	Andy Timmins
2018-19 Revised Funding :	£100,000
A brief outline on how the funding was used, and the service impact to maintained schools. (eg KPI's, service statistics, etc)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core visits were undertaken to all maintained schools over the year. • Termly meetings take place with a Headteacher advisory group to consult on the core visit process and paperwork. Feedback from this group confirms that headteachers are happy with the current process. <p>Monitoring of visits and visit reports confirmed the following strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant evidence of high quality evaluative writing in many reports • Helpful comments included in many reports which support school improvement. • Reports indicate a wealth of activities taking place in termly visits, which support school improvement. • Reports confirm that activities that are relevant and appropriate to individual schools • Clear evidence of effective preparation, that SIA's know their schools well and discussion is focused on relevant key priorities • Discussions provide appropriate challenge as well as support to develop practice. <p>Ofsted Reports included following comments on Sandwell School Improvement Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local authority makes regular checks on the school's development. It has provided effective support through a period of change. • The school, and especially the new leaders, have received good support and challenge from Sandwell local authority. Local authority officers have a good understanding of the school and have provided appropriate advice and guidance. Their work with new leaders, including governors, is helping to secure further improvements in the school. 	

- The local authority works effectively alongside the school to provide advice and support, after the previous inspection when the school was judged to require improvement.
- The support provided by the local authority is helping to move the school forward. The headteacher particularly values the support of the local authority school improvement adviser. Governors like to be present when the adviser visits. This way they can see for themselves what still needs to improve. The adviser has an accurate and objective view of the school and provides appropriate challenge.
- Support from the local authority has been effective. Leaders have appreciated the support that the authority has provided for teaching and learning. The local authority responded well to the autumn term monitoring inspection by increasing the leadership capacity for the spring term.
- Due to concerns about falling standards, the local authority has rightly intervened to check on the school's work and provide appropriate, intensive support. You and your leaders have been, and continue to be, receptive to this support and challenge. As a result, the rate of improvement has gathered pace and weaknesses are being addressed with a greater sense of urgency than in the past

DE-DELEGATED/EDUCATION FUNCTIONS OUTTURN 2019-20**Impact report**

Title of the Budget	Schools in Financial Difficulty and deficits on closing schools
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Lead Officer:	Andy Timmins (Chris Ward Previously)
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2019-20 Funding:	£250,00
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A brief outline on how the funding was used, and the service impact to maintained schools. (E.g. KPI's, service statistics, etc.)

A bid for £125,000 was received from the headteacher and governors of Round Green Primary School. A panel made up of members from School's Forum voted to agree the full amount of the submission and £125,00 was awarded to the school.

A further bid was received from Stuart Bathurst Catholic High School. The panel again made up from members of School's Forum considered the submission but decided not to award the funding but invited the school to resubmit with a request for additional information.

A second submission was made by the school but it was not presented to panel as the school converted to an academy before the bid could be considered.

There is therefore a carry forward of £125,000 into the next financial year

DE-DELEGATED/EDUCATION FUNCTIONS OUTTURN 2019-20**Impact report****Title of the Budget****Free School Meals Eligibility Checking /
administration Service****Lead Officer:****Sue Moore/Joy Djukic****2019-20 Funding:****£172,000 / £30k School Clothing Scheme****A brief outline on how the funding was used, and the service impact to
maintained schools. (E.g. KPI's, service statistics, etc.)**

The Education Benefits Team has continued to provide this service to all Sandwell maintained schools and has **secured £15 Million in Pupil Premium funding.**

- FSM eligibility is determined and instant eligibility checks done for schools/families, removing requirement for benefit evidence to be produced.
- Education Benefits have checked all FSM claims to ensure continuous auditable eligibility for schools. Updates are issued weekly, using secure data transfer systems, of new, protected and discontinued eligibility to FSM's - 160,000 eligibility checks have been completed for eligible families.
- Claims that are not eligible are continually checked so that if circumstances change the school/family are automatically notified of eligibility with no need for the family to re-apply
- There are no renewal/checking system for schools to administer and no need for families to reapply as claim continues until pupil leaves school if parent/carer remains in receipt of eligible benefits.
- Weekly updated eligibility lists have been provided to schools, along with full lists of eligible pupils for census dates.
- An on-line application process has been developed to improve the timescales from application to meal take up.
- All applications are processed same day in most cases.
- Schools benefit from the increased FSM applications which have been generated by the following initiatives :
 - **School Clothing Scheme** now generates FSM applications for those families who apply for clothing vouchers and do not have a current live FSM's claim. (438 New FSM apps 18/19 generating £559,000 in Pupil Premium for Sandwell's schools)
 - Continued **awareness campaign and promotion** of FSM's at events throughout the Borough and schools

- **Universal FSM's for all KS1 pupils** – systems developed to enable eligibility checks on all KS1 pupils to ensure that all Pupil Premium pupils can be identified and eliminating the need for them to apply once they are no longer eligible to receive a Universal meal.
- **New systems developed** to enable continuous checking of those not eligible so that schools are aware of eligibility as soon as their circumstances change and no need for families to re-apply.
- All protection dates calculated and transferred to schools re the roll out of Universal Credit Benefits Scheme
- All application methods compliant with GDPR requirements

Schools Forum

28th September 2020

Financial Transparency of local authority maintained schools and academy trusts – Government Consultation Response

This report is for information

1. Recommendations:

That Schools Forum members:

- 1.1 Note the contents of the report.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 To provide school forum with an update on the government response to its's consultation on "Financial transparency of local authority maintained schools and academy trusts".

3. Report Details

- 3.1 The Department for Education (DfE) ran a consultation on "Financial transparency of local authority maintained schools and academy trusts" from 17th July to 30th September 2019.
- 3.2 The consultation outlined the current financial transparency arrangements for maintained schools and academy trusts and put forward a number of proposed changes.
- 3.3 There were 255 responses to the consultation. Most of the responses were from Mainstream schools or academies (97) and Local Authorities (86).
- 3.4 The questions were:
- **Issue 1:** Making public where LAs are failing to comply with deadlines for completing assurance returns and financial collections

3.5 **Proposal 1**

We propose to publish the names of LAs on GOV.UK who fail to comply in any financial year with 3 or more deadlines from the following collections:

1. School Financial Value Standard (SFVS)
2. Dedicated Schools Grant CFO assurance statement
3. Consistent Financial Reporting
4. Section 251 Budget
5. Section 251 Outturn

- **Issue 2:** Strengthening DSG annual assurance returns

3.6 **Proposal 2a**

We propose to collect the number of schools with suspended budgets and notices of financial concern through the existing DSG assurance statement signed by the LA CFO at the end of the financial year.

3.7 **Proposal 2b**

We propose to add a new section to the DSG assurance statement that captures the amounts that LAs have recovered from investigating fraud.

Issue 3: Maintained schools are not required to provide LAs with three-year budget forecasts

3.8 **Proposal 3**

We are proposing a directed revision of the schemes for financing schools to make it a requirement for maintained schools to provide LAs with three-year budget forecasts.

Issue 4: Strengthening Related Party Transaction arrangements in maintained schools

The arrangements for reporting Related Party Transactions (RPTs) in maintained schools are not as stringent as those in academy trusts. In particular, since April 2019, all academy trusts have had to seek approval from the ESFA for RPT payments of more than £20,000 and all transactions below £20,000 must be declared. The consultation put forward 3 alternative proposals (4a, b, c) for strengthening arrangements for reporting RPTs in maintained schools.

3.9 **Proposal 4a**

We propose to make schools append a list of RPTs to their response to the new question in the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) about their arrangements for managing RPTs. In addition, we would insert additional columns into the CFO Assurance Statement, to request the number of RPTs and value for each to be disclosed.

3.10 **Proposal 4b**

We propose to amend the scheme for financing schools to require schools to report all RPTs, or RPTs above a certain threshold, directly to the LA.

3.11 **Proposal 4c**

We propose to amend schemes to require schools to seek permission from the authority to enter RPTs above a threshold

Issue 5: Maintained Schools internal audit is too infrequent

3.12 **Proposal 5**

We propose to make a directed revision to the scheme guidance to require that every maintained school be subject to internal audit at least every 3 years.

Issue 6: Strengthening arrangements to help schools that are in financial difficulty

3.13 **Proposal 6a**

We propose to make a directed revision to the scheme for financing schools requiring schools to submit a recovery plan to their maintaining authority when their deficit rises above 5%.

3.14 **Proposal 6b**

We propose to collect information on the number of recovery plans in each LA through the DSG annual assurance return from the CFO

3.15 **Proposal 6C**

We propose to formalise the approach to working with LAs and include a request for high level action plans from some LAs:

- Data-sharing and monitoring: share published data on the school balances in each LA - highlighting the number and proportion with a revenue deficit of over 5% - and the available support from the Department. Share published data with LAs on their schools'

financial, educational performance and pupil/school characteristics.

Timing: after publication of the next Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) data

- Targeted monitoring and support: use of the above data and evidence-based requests from LAs for school resource management advice and challenge from the Department. We will ensure support is focused where it is most needed.

Timing: at any time during the year

- Action plan and increased monitoring: Request high level action plans from LAs in which the number or proportion of school revenue deficits over 5% is above a certain level. We would review the thresholds each year, but an example might be LAs that had more than 10 schools or more than 10% of their schools with revenue deficits of over 5% in the previous year. We would consider contextual information - such as the school balances in the LA in previous years - when deciding the LA action plans required.

Timing: at any time during 2021 after the publication of the CFR data

Issue 7: There is not enough transparency when it comes to reporting high pay for school staff

3.16 **Proposal 7**

We propose that all LA maintained schools should be required to publish annually on their websites the number of individuals earning over £100K in £10K bandings.

Issue 8: There is not enough transparency when it comes to reporting income and expenditure.

3.17 **Proposal 8**

We propose that all LA maintained schools should be required to publish annually on their websites their latest Consistent Financial Reporting statement of income, expenditure and balances.

3.18 **Further to the consultation, The DfE will implement the following proposals:**

- **Proposal 1:** They will publish names of LAs on gov.uk if they fail to comply with deadlines for returns to the Department.
- **Proposal 2a:** They will collect the number of schools with suspended budgets and notices of financial concern through the existing DSG assurance statement signed by the LA Chief Financial Officer (CFO) at the end of the financial year.
- **Proposal 2b:** They will add a new section to the DSG assurance statement that captures the amounts that LAs have recovered from investigating fraud.
- **Proposal 3:** They will make a directed revision to LAs' schemes for financing schools to make it a requirement for maintained schools to provide LAs with three-year budget forecasts.
- **Proposal 4a:** They will make schools append a list of Related Party Transactions (RPTs) to their response to the question in the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) about their arrangements for managing RPTs. In addition, they will insert additional columns into the CFO Assurance Statement, so that the number of RPTs and value for each can be disclosed.
- **Proposal 5:** In light of issues raised by a number of respondents The DfE will not be implementing proposal 5, imposing minimum requirements of a three-year audit cycle. Instead, they will continue to work with LAs to identify how audits can best be made both regular and targeted in the most effective way.
- **Proposal 6a:** They will make a directed revision to LAs' schemes for financing schools, requiring schools to submit a recovery plan to their maintaining authority when their deficit rises above 5%.
- **Proposal 6b:** They will collect information on the number of recovery plans in each LA through the DSG annual assurance return from the CFO.
- **Proposal 6c:** They will formalise the approach to working with LAs and include a request for high level action plans from some LAs.

This will be achieved by:

- Sharing published data on the school balances in each LA.
- Using this data and evidence-based requests from LAs to ensure support is focused where it is needed.
- Requesting high level action plans from LAs in which the number or proportion of school revenue deficits over 5% is above a certain level.
- **Proposal 7:** They will require all LA maintained schools to publish annually on their websites the number of individuals (if any) earning over £100K in £10K bandings.
- **Proposal 8:** The DfE will also implement proposal 8. However, considering the feedback from a number of respondents, they will require LA maintained schools to publish a link to the schools financial benchmarking website, where the Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) statement of income, expenditure and balances is already published, instead of requiring them to publish the CFR statement annually on their own website.

3.19 The DfE recognised that new measures could create additional burdens on Local authorities (Las) and schools. They have stated they wanted to ensure that the benefits of any new measures introduced would outweigh potential burdens on LAs and schools and that any new burdens are not more onerous than those placed upon academies. The consultation asked LAs to outline whether the new measures would constitute a New Burden under the government's new burdens doctrine, and if so, what the cost would be.

3.20 Under the New Burdens policy, the DfE have stated they will compensate LAs for the additional burden that these changes will impose. For 2021-22, this will be done through a direct grant to each LA, in proportion to the number of maintained schools they have. They will work with local government to finalise the overall amount and distribution.

4. Recommendations

4.1 That Schools Forum

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Note the contents of the report.

Rosemarie Kerr, Principal Accountant – Schools

Date: 23/09/2020

Contact Officer: Rosemarie Kerr

Tel No: 0121 569 8318

[ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]

Schools Forum

28th September 2020

Scheme for Financing Local Authority Maintained Schools - Update

This report is for information

1. Recommendations:

That Schools Forum members:

- 1.1 To note the contents of the report.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 To provide school forum with an update on the “Scheme for Financing local authority maintained schools – update”

3. Report Details

- 3.1 Local authorities are required to publish schemes for financing schools (Fair Funding Scheme), setting out the financial relationship between them and the schools they maintain.
- 3.2 In making any changes to their schemes, other than directed revisions, local authorities must consult all maintained schools in their area and receive the approval of the members of their schools forum representing maintained schools.
- 3.3 On the 9th March 2020 the authority brought several proposed changes to the scheme, initially requesting responses from schools by the end of April 2020; however due to the Covid-19 Pandemic this was extended to 16th September 2020.
- 3.4 The authority has not received any responses from schools and will now incorporate the changes detailed in 9th March 2020 report - 9Appendix 1) in Fair funding scheme.

- 3.5 On 17 July, the Department for Education (DfE) published the 'Financial transparency of LA maintained schools and academy trusts' consultation response.
- 3.6 The DfE have updated (5th August 2020) the statutory guidance on schemes for financing local authority maintained schools for the 2020/2021 financial year with the changes within this consultation response that were delayed due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
- 3.7 The DfE have stated that "Due to delays caused by COVID-19, and in order to provide schools with sufficient notice to comply with the new requirements, the changes to Issue 12 of the scheme for financing local authority maintained schools will take practical effect from 1 April 2021".
- 3.8 The changes in this issue of the scheme include the requirement for local authority schemes to include a requirement for schools to submit a 3-year budget forecast each year, and the directive for schools which have a deficit of over 5% to submit a recovery plan to the local authority.
- 3.9 Local authorities may set a lower threshold than 5% for the submission of a recovery plan if they wish. The 5% deficit threshold will apply when deficits are measured as at 31 March 2021.
- 3.10 The changes relating to financing and operating leases (IFRS16) that were due to come into effect on 1 April 2020 have been delayed until 1 April 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A further update to the scheme for financing schools will be published prior to any changes taking effect.

Sandwell Requirement

- 3.11 The authority already has in place the requirement for schools to submit a 3-year budget forecast each year and wants to maintain the requirement that a school submit a deficit recovery plan if they are unable to submit a balanced budget for the forthcoming financial year. This is to ensure the following:
- Schools are undertaking effective financial planning.
 - To support the authority in its assessment of school's financial value standards.

- To support the authority's balance control oversight.

3.12 The authority therefore does not intend to amend the requirement from that currently stated in the Sandwell scheme.

3.13 There are some minor changes as set out in Appendix 1 which will need to be reflected in the Sandwell Scheme for financing schools.

4. **Recommendations**

4.1 That Schools Forum

Note the contents of the report

Rosemarie Kerr, Principal Accountant – Schools

Date: 23/09/2020

Contact Officer: Rosemarie Kerr

Tel No: 0121 569 8318

Appendix 1

Scheme for financing local authority maintained schools (Fair Funding Scheme)

Changes from Issue 11 of this guidance

References below are to the section number in Issue 11 (April 2020) of this guidance.

The DfE have made the following updates to reflect current policy positions and changes in legislation:

- Paragraph 1.1: Issue of the Statutory guidance changed – “issue 11” to “issue 12”
- Paragraph 1.2: Minor change – removed “Currently there are no new directed revisions”
- Paragraph 1.2: Changes made to the guidance – added “The most recent directed revisions are detailed below”

Following consultation that closed on 30 September 2019, the Secretary of State directs that from 1 April 2020 the text below shall be incorporated into the schemes of all local authorities in England.

Section 4.3: Submission of financial forecasts

From the 2021 to 2022 funding year each school must submit a 3-year budget forecast each year, at a date determined by the local authority between 1 May and 30 June.

Local authorities should consider the extent to which such forecasts may be used for more than just confirming schools are undertaking effective financial planning or not. For instance, they could be used as evidence to support the local authority’s assessment of schools financial value

standards or used in support of the authority's balance control mechanism.

Local authorities must inform schools of the purposes for which they intend to use these 3-year budget forecasts: such a forecast may be used in conjunction with an authority's balance control mechanism.

•Paragraph 1.2: Changes made to the guidance – added “Following consultation that closed on 30 September 2019, the Secretary of State directs that the text below shall be incorporated into the schemes of all local authorities in England, however due to coronavirus (COVID-19) the directed revision to follow will only be expected to be enforced from the 2021 to 2022 funding year.”

Section 6.5: Planning for deficit budgets

Schools must submit a recovery plan to the local authority when their revenue deficit rises above 5% at 31 March of any year. Local authorities may set a lower threshold than 5% for the submission of a recovery plan if they wish. The 5% deficit threshold will apply when deficits are measured as at 31 March 2021.

•Paragraph 1.2: Changes made to the guidance “Details of earlier directed revisions are at Annex D, Section 20” is to now read “For details of earlier directed revisions please see Annex D, section 20.”

•Paragraph 4.3: Changes made to the guidance - deleted “The local authority may require schools to submit a financial forecast covering each year of a multi-year period.”

•Paragraph 4.3: Changes made to the guidance - added “From the 2021 to 2022 funding year each school must submit a 3-year budget forecast each year, at a date determined by the local authority between 1 May and 30 June.”

•Paragraph 4.3: Changes made to the guidance - deleted “However, the requirement to submit a financial forecast should not place undue burdens on schools and should be proportionate to need.”

•Paragraph 4.3: Changes made to the guidance - deleted “In requesting such forecasts local authorities should state the purposes for which they intend to use this forecast: such a forecast may be used in conjunction with a local authority's balance control mechanism.”

ILO - UNCLASSIFIED

- Paragraph 6.5: Changes to the guidance - added “Schools must submit a recovery plan to the local authority when their revenue deficit rises above 5% at 31 March of any year. Local authorities may set a lower threshold than 5% for the submission of a recovery plan if they wish. The 5% deficit threshold will apply when deficits are measured as at 31 March 2021.”
- Paragraph 6.5: Changes to the guidance – deleted “The scheme may preclude any planning for deficits, or it may allow schools to plan for deficits only in certain approved circumstances.”

Agenda Item 8

Schools Forum

28th September 2020

School Resource Management Adviser – Covid-19 Support

This report is for information

1. Recommendations:

That Schools Forum members:

- 1.1 Note the contents of the report

2. Purpose

- 2.1 To provide school forum members with information on Covid -19 support on offer to local authorities and schools from central government.

3. Report Details

- 3.1 The DfE approached the authority last year seeking out school's that had requested or had been identified as needing support
- 3.2 The Department for Education (DfE) has approached the authority and offered to support the sector through the challenging period, by offering School Resource Management Advisers (SRMAs) to support schools with financial or resourcing challenges arising from COVID-19. These optional 'resilience visits' can be adapted to the needs of school setting and could be focussed on the schools who feel they require support or on who the authority feel would most benefit from this. The DfE's intention is that these visits, are likely to be conducted virtually with the aim of providing practical help and should not place unnecessary burdens on the authority or schools.
- 3.3 The SRMA will produce a short report which will be shared with the authority and may include practical advice on actions that can be taken to mitigate any negative financial consequences the pandemic has had on schools setting.

3.4 Any school interested in accessing this support should approach the Schools Strategic Finance Unit in the first instance.

4. **Recommendations**

4.1 That Schools Forum

Note the contents of the report

Rosemarie Kerr, Principal Accountant – Schools

Date: 23/09/2020

Contact Officer: Rosemarie Kerr

Tel No: 0121 569 8318

Agenda Item 9

Schools Forum

28th September 2020

Coronavirus (Covid-19) Catch up Premium

This report is for information

1. Recommendations:

That Schools Forum members:

- 1.1 To note the contents of the report.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 To provide school forum members with information on additional government funding to schools dealing with the covid-19 pandemic

3. Report Details

- 3.1 As a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, children and young people have experienced unprecedented disruption to their education.
- 3.2 The government announced £1 billion of funding to support children and young people to catch up; made up of £350 million National Tutoring Programme to provide additional support for those pupils who need the most help; and £650 million to help all pupils make up for lost teaching programme.
- 3.3 The National Tutoring programme comprises 3 parts for the academic year 2020/21.
- A 5 to 16 Programme to make additional tuition available from the second half of the autumn term 2020.
 - A 16 to 19 fund for schools', sixths forms, colleges and all other 16 to 19 providers to provide small group tutoring for

disadvantaged students. Further guidance is to be issued shortly.

- A reception year early language programme (early Years catch-up programme), focused on raising outcomes in speaking and language skills among young pupils whose education has been disrupted by coronavirus.
- 3.4 The Department for Education (DfE) have stated that “Every state funded school which has a reception class will be invited to apply for this support, with priority given to schools with a high proportion of disadvantaged pupils”.
- 3.5 Up to £9 million will be made available to provide schools with training and resources, in order to deliver one-to-one and small-group support for five-year-olds.
- 3.6 Schools need to register their interest by 30 October 2020.
- 3.7 The £650 million of universal catch-up premium funding will be available for all state-funded mainstream and special schools, and alternative provision. It will cover:
- primary, secondary and all through local authority-maintained schools, academies and free schools
 - local authority-maintained special schools
 - special academies and free schools
 - special schools not maintained by a local authority
 - pupil referral units
 - alternative provision (AP) academies and free schools
 - local authority-maintained hospital schools and academies
 - independent special schools
- 3.8 The DfE will provide funding to local authorities for pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans who are educated in independent special schools based on the number of such pupils in their area.

Funding allocation

- 3.9 Schools' allocations will be calculated on a per pupil basis, providing mainstream schools with a total of £80 per pupil in reception through to Year 11.
- 3.10 Special, Alternative Provision (AP) and hospital schools will receive £240 for each place for the 2020/2021 academic year.
- 3.11 The DfE have applied additional weighting to specialist settings, to recognise the significantly higher per pupil costs they face.
- 3.12 This means a typical primary school of 200 pupils will receive £16,000 while a typical secondary school of 1,000 pupils will receive £80,000.
- 3.13 The funding will be provided in 3 tranches; with an initial part payment in autumn 2020, based on the latest available data on pupils in mainstream schools and high needs place numbers in special, AP, hospital schools and special schools not maintained by a local authority.
- 3.14 The DfE will then distribute a second grant payment in early 2021, based on updated pupil and place data. For mainstream schools, the DfE will use the 4 to 15 pupil headcount from the October 2020 census.
- 3.15 For special, AP and hospital schools, the DfE will use:
- 2019 to 2020 academic year place numbers from the published local authority 2019 to 2020 financial year budget returns for local authority-maintained schools
 - the published high needs place numbers for the 2020 to 2021 academic year for academies and special schools not maintained by a local authority
- 3.16 The second grant payment will also take account of the initial part payment made in autumn 2020 so that schools will receive a total of £46.67 per pupil or £140 per place across the first 2 payment rounds.
- 3.17 A further £33.33 per pupil or £100 per place will be paid during the summer term 2021.

4. Recommendations

4.1 That Schools Forum

Note the contents of the report.

Rosemarie Kerr, Principal Accountant – Schools

Date: 23/09/2020

Contact Officer: Rosemarie Kerr

Tel No: 0121 569 8318

Schools Forum

28th September 2020

**The National Funding Formula for Schools and High Needs for
2021/22**

This report is for information

1. Recommendations:

That Schools Forum members:

- 1.1 note the contents of the report based on the “Schools revenue funding 2021/22 - Operational guide” and “The National funding formulas for schools and high needs 2021/22 policy document”

2. Purpose

- 2.1 To provide school forum with an overview on the “Schools Revenue Funding – Operational guidance” and “The National funding formulas for schools and high needs 2021/22 policy document which allows the planning of the local schools funding formula for that year.
- 2.2 The Department for Education (DfE) have acknowledged the essential role that local authorities have played to support education as the country deals with the COVID-19 pandemic. The DfE have therefore made limited changes to the funding arrangements in order to ensure that funding is delivered as smoothly as possible to schools.

3. Report Details

- 3.1 The DfE have published provisional National Funding Formula (NFF) allocations at local authority level for the schools, high needs and central schools services funding blocks for 2021/22. The DfE will use the NFF to calculate the blocks within the dedicated

schools grant (DSG), which will be issued to authorities in December 2020.

Table 1: National Funding Formula - Summary

Block Description	2021/22	2020/21	Change
Pupil Numbers	54,669	53,601	1,069
	£m	£m	£m
Schools funding block (Exc Growth fund)	290.101	265.477	24.624
High Needs Block	55.526	49.496	6.030
Central School Service Block	2.079	1.984	0.095
Total Funding	347.706	316.957	30.749

3.2 The early years block is determined by a separate NFF, guidance will be issued later in the year and provisional allocations will be issued to authorities in December 2020.

3.3 The key changes to the schools NFF in 2021/22 are:

- The incorporation of the 2019 update to the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI), this is to ensure that the deprivation funding through the NFF continues to target schools most likely to need additional funding.
- Funding previously received through the Teachers' Pay Grant (TPG) and Teachers' Pension Employer Contribution Grants (TPECG), including the supplementary fund, to mainstream schools for pupils from reception to year 11 will be allocated through the schools NFF by adding to schools' baselines; by increasing the basic per pupil funding; and by increasing the minimum per pupil funding (MPPLs). This is to streamline the way in which the funding through the grants is delivered, as well as recognise the fact that these grants are part of schools' core funding. The DfE have added an amount to reflect the current grant funding (£180 per pupil for primary schools and £265 per

pupil for secondary schools) onto the age-weighted pupil unit (AWPU)

- Improving support under the NFF for small and remote schools, by increasing the maximum sparsity value from £26,000 to £45,000 for primary schools, and from £67,600 to £70,000 for secondary schools. This change is not relevant to Sandwell schools.
- 3.4 The DfE have stated that each local authority will continue to set a local schools funding formula, in consultation with local schools.
- 3.5 The department have also stated they will be putting forward plans later this year, to move to a “hard” NFF in the future, which will determine school funding allocations directly, rather than local funding formulae. They will work with local authorities and other stakeholders in making this transition and further information on the process will follow in due course.
- 3.6 The key features of the local authority formulae arrangement in 2021/22 are:
- The technical changes to the NFF to include the TPG and TPECG will be reflected in the local funding formula, as far as possible.
 - The incorporation of the 2019 IDACI data will also be used in the local funding formulae.
 - The MPPLs will remain mandatory, at the NFF, including the additional funding for TPG and TPECG.
 - Local authorities can set the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) between +0.5% and +2% per pupil.
- 3.7 Local authorities continue to be able to transfer up to 0.5% of their schools block to other blocks of the DSG, with schools forum approval. In 2021/2022, the total schools block available for such transfers must exclude the additional funding local authorities have been allocated for the TPG and TPECG, thereby guaranteeing that all of this funding remains with schools. A disapplication is required for transfers above 0.5%, or any amount without schools forum approval; this applies to any transfers even if the minister agreed the same amount in previous years.

- 3.8 The authority has considered the issue of transfers between blocks and it does not deem it necessary to request such an action.
- 3.9 Following the cancellation of assessments in summer 2020 due to COVID-19, local authorities will use 2019 assessment data as a proxy in funding formulae for the 2020 reception and year 6 cohort, which will be reflected in the data receive from the DfE in the Authority Proforma Tool (APT).
- 3.10 The DfE have stated that they recognise there will be limitations in the way local authorities are currently able to work due to the COVID-19 situation, but the DfE expect authorities to do their best within the circumstances, to engage in open and transparent consultation with all maintained schools and academies in their area, as well as with their school forum, about any proposed changes to the local funding formula, including the principles adopted and any movement between blocks.
- 3.11 The changes to incorporate 2019 IDACI data or to include TPG and TPECG will not require consultation and the DfE plan to reflect this in the school funding regulations.
- 3.12 The local authority will be required to mirror the additional totals funding added to schools' NFF baselines in schools' baselines used for the MFG calculation in local funding formulae. This is to ensure that schools on the MFG can have their pay and pensions grant funding protected.

DSG Balances

- 3.13 An increasing number of local authorities have been incurring a deficit on their overall DSG account, mainly because of overspends on the high needs block
- 3.14 In 2019/20 local authorities with a cumulative deficit of 1% or more at the end of the financial year were required to submit a recovery plan to the DfE setting out how they planned to manage their DSG spend.
- 3.15 In 2020/21 the DfE have extended the rules under the DSG conditions of grant so any local authority with an overall deficit on its DSG account at the end of 2019/20, or whose DSG surplus has substantially reduced during the year, must co-operate with the DFE by:

- Providing information as requested about its plans for managing the DSG account for the financial year 2020/21.
- Providing information as requested about pressures and potential saving on its high needs budget.
- Meet with officials as requested to discuss the local authority's plans and financial situation.
- Keep school forum members updated about the local authority's DSG account and plans for handling it, including high needs pressures and potential savings.

3.16 DSG management plans will need to be discussed with schools forum and it should set out the local authority's plans for bringing the DSG spend back into balance.

3.17 The DfE expect the chief finance officer and appropriate SEN colleagues to review and sign off the report.

Central School Services Block (CSSB)

3.18 The CSSB provides funding for local authorities to undertake central functions on behalf of maintained schools and academies, made up of two elements:

- Ongoing responsibilities
- Historic commitments

3.19 The DfE has increased the total funding for ongoing responsibilities by 3.8% and for those who receive reduced historic commitments funding by 20%.

High Needs Funding

3.20 The national increase in high needs funding from 2020/21 to 2021/22 will be £730m.

3.21 Local authorities will see increase of a minimum of 8% and gains were capped at 12%.

3.22 The DfE have stated they require local authorities to allocate special schools (maintained and academies) pupil referral units and AP academies, additional high needs funding for 2021/22, on a similar basis as their allocations of the separate teachers pay and

pension grants in 2020/21. The DfE will provide more guidance on this in the High Needs operational guide to be published in September 2020.

- 3.23 The MFG for mainstream school covers their core budget, but it does not cover the high needs top-up funding. That element is not protected because it can change significantly when a single pupil with high needs leaves the school.
- 3.24 Special Schools top up funding however is a much higher proportion of their overall funding than a mainstream school and so it's covered by the equivalent of the MFG for special schools to protect more of their total budget. The DfE have stated they do not expect any special school to receive less per pupil next year on a like-for-like comparison with their pupil cohort this year. Further guidance on this protection will be included in the high needs operational guide to be published in September 2020.

4. Recommendations

4.1 That Schools Forum

Note the contents of the report based on the “Schools revenue funding 2021/22 - Operational guide” and “The National funding formulas for schools and high needs 2021/22 policy document:

Rosemarie Kerr, Principal Accountant – Schools

Date: 23/09/2020

Contact Officer: Rosemarie Kerr

Tel No: 0121 569 8318

Agenda Item 11

Schools Forum

28th September 2020

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS HIGH NEEDS BLOCK 2020/21
AUGUST 2020 MONITORING REPORT

This report is for Information

1. Recommendations:

That Schools Forum members:

- 1.1 Note the contents of the report in relation to the 2020/21 HNB Grant budget monitoring for the period 1 April – 31 August 2020.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 To provide Schools Forum with the HNB monitoring position as at 31 August 2020 projected to 31 March 2021.

3. HNB Budget 2020/21

- 3.1 The HNB current grant for 2020/21 is £48.583m.
- 3.2 Table 1 shows budget for 2020/21, the anticipated outturn as at 31 March 2021 and variance from budget.
- 3.3 The anticipated in year surplus as at 31 August 2020 projected to 31 March 2021 is £0.483m.
- 3.4 The anticipated in year surplus reported to Schools forum for 30 June 2020 was projected to 31 March 2021 as £1.160m.
- 3.5 The variance between the two reporting periods is an increase in pupils placed in independent specialist provision. The balance bought forward as at 1 April 2020 is £0.561m Deficit.
- 3.6 The increases in staffing and provision agreed by Schools Forum in December 2019 have been built into the budget figures.

Table 1 - HNB 2020/21 Budget Allocations

Budget Heading	Budget 2020/21 £000	Anticipated Outturn 31/3/21 £000	Variance from Budget £000
1) Out of Borough Placements	4,929	5,575	646
2) Pupil Top Up and Place Funding	29,433	29,433	0
3) Post 16 Colleges	2,323	2,323	0
4) Hospital PRU	1,073	1,173	100
5) SEN Support Services	1,412	1,301	(111)
6) Support for Inclusion	4,574	4,039	(535)
7) Alternative Provision	1,911	1,941	30
8) SEN Developments	1,099	502	(597)
8) Other SEN Funding	1,677	1,697	20
10) Exclusions & Reintegration	152	116	(36)
TOTAL	48,583	48,100	(483)

3.7 The main variances are as follows:

- Out of Borough Placements –£646K overspend. There have been 25 new placements made following preparation of the budget. At budget setting time an allowance was made for an additional 10 places. An additional £50K has also been included to fund any further placements.
- Hospital PRU - £100K it was agreed by Schools Forum as part of the budget consultation that places would increase in Albright from 40 to 50. This was originally budgeted for under the SEN Developments heading.

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- SEN Support Services - £111k underspend is due to staff vacancies
- Support for inclusion – 535K underspend is staff vacancies and the Preventing Secondary Exclusions Team which is still under discussion.
- SEN Developments £597K underspend – This budget head currently covers independent appeals and reports, and any funding agreed that does not clearly fit onto any other budget head. The additional 10 places allocated to Albright was originally budgeted for here. There has also been a negative adjustment of £24K included in this heading as part of the outturn figure. This will be reflected as an adjustment to the overall HNB Grant on the next monitoring report when the ledger figures have been adjusted. It also holds an initial balancing figure of £521k, which is difference between the calculated budgets as at 1 April 2020 and the HNB Grant initial settlement 2020/21.
- Exclusions & Reintegration - £36k underspend is all related to staffing

4. Other SEN Funding

4.1 Table 2 shows the breakdown of the other SEN funding of £1.677m

Table 2 Other SEN Funding

Description	Budget 2020/21 £000	Anticipated Outturn 31/3/21 £000
Central Recharges	508	508
SLAs with Health	87	87
Equal Pay Claim Special Schools	50	50
Transfer to CWD	96	96
Hospital Tuition	30	50
Mediation	30	30

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Medical Malpractice Insurance	15	15
Non-Statutory SEN Support	770	770
ITT Staff contribution	23	23
Joint Commissioning	49	49
SENDIASS	19	19
TOTAL	1,677	1,697

5. Recommendations

5.1 That Schools Forum note the contents of the report.

Date: 16/09/2020 Contact Officer: Chris Ward Tel No: 0121-569-8338
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