

# Agenda Schools Forum

**Monday 11 December 2023 at 2.30 pm  
in the Council Chamber - Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

**1 Election of Chair**

To elect the Chair of Schools Forum for a period of two years.

**2 To note the new Maintained and Academy Primary Representatives and the new Early Years Partnership Representative**

To note Alison Gilbert as the new Maintained Primary Representative, Rob Reed and Joe Farmer as the new Academy Primary Representatives and Claire Spooner as the new Early Years Partnership Representative.

**3 Apologies for Absence** 11 - 12

To receive any apologies for absence.

**4 Declarations of Interest** 13 - 14

Members to declare any interests in matters to be discussed at the meeting.

**5 Minutes** 15 - 22

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2023 as a correct record.



6 **Schools Funding Consultation 2024/25 – Response Results** 23 - 36

To consider the Schools Funding Consultation 2024/25 – Response Results.

7 **Dedicated Schools Grant Budget Monitor Report 2023/24** 37 - 40

To consider and note the Dedicated Schools Grant Budget Monitor – Period 7 report.

8 **High Needs Block Budget Monitoring** 41 - 46

To consider the High Needs Block Budget Monitoring report.

9 **Special School in Financial Difficulty** 47 - 54

To consider the creation of the Special School in Financial Difficulty Fund to be funded from High Needs Block.

10 **Future Meeting Dates**

All meetings are in person at the Sandwell Council House.

- 15 January 2024
- 18 March 2024
- 1 July 2024

11 **AOB**

**Shokat Lal**  
**Chief Executive**  
Sandwell Council House  
Freeth Street  
Oldbury  
West Midlands

**Distribution**

N Toplass (Chair)

J Barry, M Arnull, S Baker, D Barton, E Benbow, L Bray, D Broadbent,  
J Farmer, G Faux, K Featherstone, Flowers, A Gilbert, C Hadley, C Handy,  
K Hazlewood, W Lawrence, L Mason, S Mistry, L Moore, R Reed, C Spooner,  
D Steen, J Topham and Union

Contact: [democratic\\_services@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk)

## Schools Forum Distribution to Members:

<b>Body / Number of positions on Forum</b>	<b>Nominated Member</b>	<b>Nominated Substitute</b>
<b>Head Teachers Advisory Forum – Maintained Primary Schools (5)</b>	Sally Baker Jamie Barry Wendy Lawrence Vacancy Seema Mistry	Lynne Paino Alison Connop Sarah Penny Nomination awaited Kelly Duff
<b>School Governors – Maintained Primary Schools (2)</b>	Deborah Steen Elaine Benbow	Nomination awaited Nomination awaited
<b>Head Teachers Advisory Forum – Maintained Secondary Schools (1)</b>	Christina Handy-Rivett	Mike Smith
<b>School Governors – Maintained Secondary Schools (1)</b>	Dawn Broadbent	Nomination awaited
<b>Special School (Maintained) (1)</b>	Oliver Flowers	Nomination awaited
<b>Pupil Referral Unit (Maintained) (1)</b>	Kate Hazelwood	Nomination awaited
<b>Academies Primary (3)</b>	Ms L Bray Vacancy Vacancy	Nomination awaited Nomination awaited Nomination awaited
<b>Academies Secondary (6)</b>	Mark Arnull James Topham Leigh Moore George Faux Lisa Mason Keziah Featherstone	Nomination awaited Nomination awaited Nomination awaited Nomination awaited Nomination awaited Nomination awaited
<b>Special Academies</b>	Neil Toplass	Nomination awaited
<b>Trade Union (1)</b>	Darren Barton	Phil Jones
<b>Early Years Partnership (1)</b>	Vacancy	Nomination awaited
<b>14-19 Provider (1)</b>	Claire Hadley	Mark Salter

## Schools Forum: Voting Blocks (Who can vote and on what?)

<b>Primary Maintained Block</b>	<b>Voting</b>
	Can vote on all business except secondary school de-delegation.
<b>Headteachers</b>	
Sally Baker	
Jamie Barry	
Alison Gilbert	
Wendy Lawrence	
Seema Mistry	
<b>Governors</b>	
Deborah Steen	
Elaine Benbow	

<b>Secondary Maintained Block</b>	<b>Voting</b>
	Can vote on all business except primary school de-delegation.
<b>Headteachers</b>	
J Christina Handy-Rivett	
<b>Governors</b>	
Dawn Broadbent	

<b>Special Block</b>	<b>Voting</b>
Oliver Flowers	Can vote on all business except primary and secondary school de-delegation and education functions.

<b>Academies Block</b>	<b>Voting</b>
Lucy Bray (Primary)	Can vote on all business except primary and secondary school de-delegation and education functions.
Rob Reed (Primary)	
Joe Farmer (Primary)	
James Topham (Secondary)	
Mark Arnull (Secondary)	
Leigh Moore (Secondary)	
George Faux (Secondary)	
Lisa Mason (Secondary)	
Keziah Featherstone (Secondary)	

## Schools Forum: Voting Blocks (Who can vote and on what?)

### Continued...

<b>Special Academies (1)</b>	<b>Voting</b>
Neil Toplass	Can vote on all business except primary and secondary school de-delegation and education functions.

<b>Pupil Referral Unit</b>	<b>Voting</b>
Kate Hazelwood	Can vote on all business except primary and secondary school de-delegation and education functions.

### **NON-SCHOOL MEMBERS**

<b>Early Years Partnership</b>	<b>Voting</b>
Claire Spooner	Can vote on all business except primary and secondary school de-delegation and education functions.

<b>Trade Union</b>	<b>Voting</b>
Darren Barton NUT	Can vote on all business except primary and secondary school de-delegation and school funding formula.

<b>16-19 Provider</b>	<b>Voting</b>
Claire Hadley	Can vote on all business except primary and secondary school de-delegation and school funding formula.

## **Schools Forum: Quorum**

- (a) A meeting will only be quorate if 40% of the total active membership is present (Voting Members Only). Where a nominated substitute member is in attendance on behalf of a duly appointed member, he/she shall be included in the number of persons present for the purposes of determining if a quorum has been achieved.
- (b) If the meeting is inquorate, it will be able to proceed but cannot legally take decisions (E.g. Election of a Chairperson, or a decision relating to funding conferred by the funding regulations). An inquorate meeting can respond to authority consultation and give views to the authority. The authority can take account of such views

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## Schools Forum

### Apologies for Absence

To receive any apologies for absence from the members of Schools Forum.



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## Schools Forum

### Declarations of Interest

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



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## Minutes of Schools Forum

**Monday 6 November 2023 at 2.30 pm  
in the Council Chamber, Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

**Present:** N Toplass (Chair)  
J Barry (vice-chair), M Arnull, S Baker, E Benbow, G Faux,  
K Featherstone, O Flowers, C Handy, K Hazlewood,  
W Lawrence, L Mason, L Moore, M Pickup (substitute) and  
J Topham.

**Officers:** Michael Jarrett (Director of Children's Services and  
Education) – (Attended Virtually)  
Julie Andrews (Assistant Director - Education Services)  
Elaine Taylor (Finance Business Partner)  
Connor Robinson (Democratic Services Officer)

**In Attendance:** Councillor Hackett (Cabinet Member for Children, Young  
People and Education)  
Phil Jones (Union Representative)

### 41/23 **Election of Chair**

Nominations had been sought for the position of Chair of Schools Forum for a period of two years. No nominations had been received. Neil Toplass indicated he was willing to Chair for the duration of the meeting.

**Resolved** that Neil Toplass is elected Chair for the duration of the meeting.



42/23 **To note the new Academy Secondary Representatives**

The Forum noted Leigh Moore, George Faux, Lisa Mason and Keziah Featherstone as the new Academy Secondary Representatives.

43/23 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from D Broadbent, D Steen, S Mistry and K Duff (Substitute Member).

44/23 **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

45/23 **Minutes**

The Director of Children’s Services and Education addressed Forum virtually and updated them on a number of issues and concerns Forum had raised regarding the High Needs Block monitoring report. It was accepted that the Local Authority had failed to produce the High Needs Block monitoring report this academic year. Work had been undertaken to address the staffing issues and the Council was confident that a report would be produced for the December meeting. To prevent a similar situation occurring in the future work was underway to ensure multiple officers were trained and confident in compiling and producing the report.

Phil Jones addressed Forum around concerns members had expressed over the use of Union Facilities Time. Forum heard that schools needed to be supported and the funding mechanism allowed the support to be delivered. While individuals paid their subscriptions, this was not sufficient to employ a local representative and therefore the de-delegated funding was required to employ the service. It was also recognised that the service provided was predominantly accessed by the primary schools.





Concerns were raised over the adequacy of the service provided. In response it was noted that all but one policy document on the website had been updated and that if members had had difficulty accessing resources it may be due to the online resources moving to a new platform. All Unions recognised by the Council were funded through the Union Facilities Time and the percentage of the funding allocated to them was dependent on union membership.

**Resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2023 be approved as a correct record.

46/23

## 2024-25 Schools Funding Consultation

Forum considered the 2024/25 Draft Schools Funding Consultation document to be issued to schools and academies.

The Consultation Document for schools for 2024/25 included seven questions.

Question one - would ask schools to indicate the preferred model in calculating school funding for 2024/25:

- Option one – Minimum Transition
- Option two – Accelerated Transition
- Option three – National Funding Formula Factor Values

Description	NFF FACTOR VALUES 2024/25		NFF FACTOR VALUES 2023/24		SMBFC FACTOR VALUES 2023/24		Difference Between NFF v SMBFC 2023/24		MODELLING OPTION 1 1 - (4 X 90%)		MODELLING OPTION 2 1 - (4 X 80%)		MODELLING OPTION 3 NFF	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	4 - 2 - 3	4 - 2 - 3	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
<b>EXAMPLE</b>	<b>£1,050.00</b>	<b>£1,000.00</b>	<b>£600.00</b>	<b>£400.00</b>	<b>£600.00</b>	<b>£400.00</b>	<b>£400.00</b>	<b>£400.00</b>	<b>£690.00</b>	<b>£730.00</b>	<b>£1,050.00</b>			
Primary (Years R-6)	£3,562.00	£3,394.00	£3,394.00	£3,661.82	£3,661.82	£3,661.82	(£267.82)	£3,803.04	£3,776.26	£3,562.00				
Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9)	£5,022.00	£4,785.00	£5,184.44	£5,184.44	£5,184.44	£5,184.44	(£399.44)	£5,381.50	£5,341.55	£5,022.00				
Key Stage 4 (Years 10-11)	£5,661.00	£5,393.00	£5,274.34	£5,274.34	£5,274.34	£5,274.34	(£118.66)	£5,557.05	£5,566.07	£5,661.00				
<b>Additional Needs Funding</b>	<b>Primary amount pp</b>	<b>Secondary amount pp</b>	<b>Primary amount pp</b>	<b>Secondary amount pp</b>	<b>Primary amount pp</b>	<b>Secondary amount pp</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>
FSM	£490.00	£490.00	£480.00	£480.00	£216.20	£216.20	£263.80	£263.80	£252.84	£252.84	£278.96	£278.96	£490.00	£490.00
FSM6	£820.00	£1,200.00	£705.00	£1,030.00	£319.49	£587.35	£385.51	£442.65	£473.77	£802.69	£511.59	£845.88	£820.00	£1,200.00
IDAC1 Band F	£235.00	£340.00	£230.00	£335.00	£32.11	£47.16	£197.89	£287.84	£57.02	£81.12	£76.89	£109.73	£235.00	£340.00
IDAC1 Band E	£285.00	£450.00	£280.00	£445.00	£106.43	£377.71	£173.57	£67.29	£128.94	£389.66	£146.14	£396.17	£285.00	£450.00
IDAC1 Band D	£445.00	£630.00	£440.00	£620.00	£498.71	£693.19	(£58.71)	(£73.19)	£497.84	£695.87	£491.97	£688.55	£445.00	£630.00
IDAC1 Band C	£485.00	£690.00	£480.00	£680.00	£562.12	£789.22	(£82.12)	(£109.22)	£558.91	£788.30	£550.70	£777.38	£485.00	£690.00
IDAC1 Band B	£515.00	£740.00	£510.00	£730.00	£611.03	£869.84	(£101.03)	(£139.84)	£605.93	£865.88	£595.82	£851.87	£515.00	£740.00
IDAC1 Band A	£680.00	£945.00	£670.00	£930.00	£661.32	£939.44	£8.68	(£9.44)	£672.19	£953.50	£673.06	£952.55	£680.00	£945.00
EAL	£590.00	£1,585.00	£580.00	£1,565.00	£579.34	£924.84	£0.66	£640.16	£589.41	£1,009.86	£589.47	£1,072.87	£590.00	£1,585.00
Low Prior Attainment	£1,170.00	£1,775.00	£1,155.00	£1,750.00	£1,240.97	£1,810.11	(£85.97)	(£60.11)	£1,247.37	£1,829.10	£1,238.78	£1,823.09	£1,170.00	£1,775.00
Mobility	£960.00	£1,380.00	£945.00	£1,360.00	£112.88	£163.55	£832.12	£1,196.45	£211.59	£303.90	£294.30	£422.84	£960.00	£1,380.00
Lump Sum	£134,400.00	£134,400.00	£128,000.00	£128,000.00	£135,044.95	£135,044.95	(£7,044.95)	(£7,044.95)	£140,740.46	£140,740.46	£140,035.96	£140,035.96	£134,400.00	£134,400.00

NB: rounded to meet minimum values shown on the AFT Factor Value Limits worksheet



In relation to question one, the options were presented with an assumption that the Council would allocate £1.60m for the Growth Fund and that Schools Forum and all schools would support the top-slice of the Schools Block to fund the Attendance service to £0.512m.

There was also an assumption that the De-delegated and Education Functions options proposed by Officers would also be accepted.

The Finance Business Partner confirmed that all three options would be shared with schools and Forum was being asked to agree the questions not the outcome.

Question two – would ask if schools agreed (yes/no) to the use of the Brought Forward of a £0.282m to set the Pupil Number Growth Fund at £1.60m?

At the end of the 2022/23 financial year there was a Pupil Number Growth (PNG) Funding carry forward of £0.282m. The PNG required for 2024/25 was estimated to be £1.90m and so it was proposed that the growth funding be set at £1.6m (rounded) within this consultation.

Question three – would ask if schools would agree (yes/no) to the introduction of a Falling Rolls Fund?

Two Falling Rolls Fund modelling options had been presented to the Forum at their meeting of 2 October 2023. The criteria detailed in Option 2 for allocating this fund had been approved.

Forum questioned why schools were being asked to agree to the establishment of the Falling Rolls Fund since Forum had agreed to the proposal at the previous meeting. Some Forum members questioned why Forum had been asked to make a decision originally if the question was going to be posed to schools. Some Forum members thought the question would allow for an understanding of how schools think of the decision to establish a Falling Rolls Fund.



Question four – would ask if schools agreed (yes/no) to the top slice of £512,000 from the Schools Block to the Central Schools Services Block to fund the Attendance Team?

The Attendance Service was a legitimate function that could be funded from the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) and was a statutory service from the Council for all schools.

Question five – asked if schools agreed (yes/no) with the indicative allocation of the Central Schools Services Block funding proposals? (For each proposal).

<b>CSSB1</b>	Statutory/Regulatory/ Education Welfare/Asset M	<b>£1,801,593</b>
<b>CSSB2</b>	Schools Forum	<b>£3,000</b>
<b>CSSB3</b>	Admissions Services	<b>£452,600</b>
<b>CSSB4</b>	Historical Commitment - Pensions Administration	<b>£93,376</b>
	<b>TOTAL CSSB (Provisional - Updated Decemb</b>	<b>£2,350,569</b>
<b>CSSB5</b>	Safeguarding & Attendance (ALL Schools)	<b>£512,000</b>

The provisional 2024/25 funding allocation for the CSSB was announced in July 2023 by the DfE and was £2.350m. This was made up of £2.257m of on-going responsibilities and £0.093m of historic commitment.

Question six – for maintained schools only - asked if schools agreed (yes/no) with the dedelegated proposals.

There were five de-delegated proposals to be considered by maintained schools:

<b>DD1</b>	Health and Safety Licenses and Subscriptions	<b>£5,800</b>
<b>DD2</b>	EVOLVE Annual Licence Fee	<b>£7,300</b>
<b>DD3</b>	Union Facilities Time	<b>£159,000</b>
<b>DD4</b>	School Improvement Services	<b>£150,000</b>
<b>DD5</b>	Schools in financial difficulty	<b>£100,000</b>
	<b>TOTAL DD</b>	<b>£422,100</b>

Question seven - for maintained schools only - asked if schools agreed (yes/no) with de-delegated proposals.



There were two Education function proposals to be considered by maintained schools.

<b>EF1</b>	Education Benefits Team	<b>£134,000</b>
<b>EF2</b>	Children's Clothing Support Allowance	<b>£33,000</b>
<b>EF3</b>	Safeguarding & Attendance	<b>moved to CSSB5</b>
	<b>TOTAL EF</b>	<b>£167,000</b>

The Finance Business Partner confirmed that an online briefing session would be held to allow schools to drop in and answer any questions.

It was agreed that the consultation deadline should take into account the primary and secondary partnership meetings and allow for schools to raise any issues or concerns they have on the consultation.

The Finance Business Partner confirmed that the spreadsheet detailing the financial implications to schools of the models option in question one would be accessible via a link within the virtual office.

**Resolved that:**

- (1) Schools Forum approve the 2024/25 Draft Schools Funding Consultation questions one – five;
- (2) Maintained schools approve the 2024/25 Draft Schools Funding Consultation questions six and seven.

47/23

### **Special School in Financial Difficulty**

Forum members were reluctant to consider the creation of the Special School in Financial Difficulty Fund to be funded from High Needs Block, due to the lack of information on the current High Needs Block expenditure.



**Resolved** that Special School in Financial Difficulty report be deferred to a future meeting to allow for a detailed High Needs Block Monitoring report to be produced and presented to Schools Forum.

#### 48/23 **Constitution Working Group Appendix**

The Forum Constitution and membership structure had updated and agreed in June 2023. An additional appendix had been created to set out the details around how Working Groups of the Forum would be organised and facilitated.

The appendix reflected DfE guidelines plus suggestions that will allow the Local Authority to facilitate Forum Working Groups effectively.

Forum asked that provision be allowed for more than one Working Group to be in operation at any one time. The Democratic Services Officer confirmed that the change would be made, however, administrative support would be required from schools and the Education Service.

**Resolved** that approval is granted to the Working Group Appendix to be added the constitution.

#### 49/23 **Future Meeting Dates**

The Forum noted the future meeting dates:-

- 11 December 2023
- 15 January 2024
- 18 March 2024
- 1 July 2024



Forum members considered the establishment of a number of Working Groups as they related to SEND provision and the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) and Private Finance Initiatives (PFI).

While the Working Group on SEND provision would benefit from additional information on current service workstreams and High Needs Block monitoring, Forum members stressed the importance of BSF/PFI and the need to take action.

**Resolved** that the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) and Private Finance Initiatives (PFI) be established.

Meeting ended at 4.24pm

Contact: [democratic\\_services@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk)



## Report to Schools Forum

**11 December 2023**

<b>Subject:</b>	Schools Funding Consultation 2024/25 – Response Results
<b>Director:</b>	Director of Childrens Services, Michael Jarratt
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Finance Business Partner, Elaine Taylor elaine_taylor@sandwell.gov.uk

### 1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That Schools Forum makes a recommendation on the direction of the 2024/25 schools funding guided by the responses to the proposals outlined in the 2024/25 Schools Funding Consultation Document and Appendix 1.
- 1.2 That Schools Forum decides on the central funding for pupil growth.
- 1.3 That Schools Forum decides on the movement of the funds from the Schools Block to the Central Schools Services Block.
- 1.4 That Schools Forum consider the individual comments received in the consultation and agree on a way to take this forward.


### 2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 The Schools Forum Regulations 2012 requires that the Schools' Forum meets regularly and is consulted by the local authority concerning the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The Schools block is one of the four blocks of funding within the Dedicated Schools Grant.



2.2 The Schools' Forum is requested to define the funding setting processes for all schools and academies within the borough for the next financial year. Given national government announcements on future funding for schools, this process will assist schools in preparing strategic plans, ensuring schools are able to create viable budgets, staffing and curriculum plans. All decisions will affect the amount available to be delegated directly with schools and focus on what funding is centrally retained to protect services and schools.

### 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p><b>Best start in life for children and young people</b>          Delegated grant funding in support of children and schools providing suitable provision within schools in the community and being able to support that readiness and long term promotion of becoming good citizens within the community.</p>
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### 4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 The 2024/25 Schools Funding Consultation document was issued electronically to schools on 10th November 2023 on circular 124 and asked 7 questions.

4.2 The details of these questions and the responses can be found in Appendix 1.

4.3 The table below compares responses from the previous 4 years:

	Primary	%	Secondary	%	TOTAL	%
<b>2020-21</b>	56/94	60%	9/18	50%	65/112	58%
<b>2021-22</b>	60/95	63%	10/20	50%	70/115	61%
<b>2022-23</b>	43/94	46%	10/20	50%	53/114	47%
<b>2023-24</b>	55/94	59%	6/20	30%	61/114	54%
<b>2024-25</b>	55/94	59%	10/20	50%	65/115	57%





4.4 Meetings to explain the overriding principles contained within the consultation document were held with the following stakeholders:

- Association of Sandwell Governing Bodies – 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023
- Joint Executive Group – 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023
- Joint Union Panel – 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023
- Primary Headteachers Partnership (Microsoft Teams meeting) – 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023
- Secondary Headteachers Partnership – 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023

4.5 Schools Forum will be aware that as Local Authorities are directed to move closer to the National Funding Formula the amounts stipulated in the modelling options for 2024/25 were to be treated with caution and this was explained at the above meetings.

4.6 It was made clear that there were assumptions within the modelling options in question one which would make it very difficult to give any certainties over funding for 2024/25 and these are set out below:

- The modelling assumed a growth fund of £1.6m
- The modelling assumed £0.512m transfer of funding from the Schools Block to the Central Schools Services block
- The data modelled used the October 22 census data
- The MSAG grant would be rolled in to DSG for 2024/25

4.7 The anonymised comments received from schools in relation to the consultation are included in Appendix 2. Most of these responses were concerns around Facilities time, Composition of Schools Forum, Children's clothing eligibility (how it disproportionately favours secondary schools) and Health & Safety.



## Trade Union Response

- 4.8 The authority consulted with the Joint Union Panel and received a joint response on behalf of Sandwell NAHT, Unison and NEU as follows:

*“We prefer the minimum transition option as we believe this offers schools more time to adapt to the medium-term budget changes that are on the way. This route would seem to offer the greatest protection for jobs in the short-term by allowing schools greater time to consider ways to adjust to the forthcoming changes. Schools will respond on an individual basis in their returns to the more specific questions, very much dependent on their interactions with certain services*

## Proposed Schools Funding 2024/25

- 4.9 The views of all stakeholders will be taken into consideration in relation to the consultation and the authority will consider the recommendation of School forum, but ultimately setting the Schools Budget next year, is a local authority decision.

## 5 Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	As at 2023/24 the Sandwell’s Schools Formula was substantially different to the National Funding Formula (NFF). By 2027/28 all schools will be funded in the same way and so there will be a period of change on the way resources are allocated as we move closer to the NFF.
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	The School and Early Years Finance Regulations 2023 set out the funding arrangements for the 2024 to 2025 funding period. These regulations make provision for the financial arrangements of local authorities in relation to the funding of maintained schools and providers of prescribed Early Years provision in England. The schools’ forums (England) regulations 2012 govern the constitution and conduct of meetings of the Schools Forum and determine those matters on which the local authority must or may consult the schools’ forum and those in respect of which the schools’ forum can make decisions.
<b>Risk:</b>	There is a risk that as we have to move closer to the NFF that schools may see a reduction in their funding.



	Schools and their Governing Bodies are responsible for setting an annual balanced budget, however they have another 3 years to incorporate these changes into their strategic plans.
<b>Equality:</b>	There are no Equality Implications
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	There are no Health and Wellbeing Implications
<b>Social Value:</b>	There are no Social Value Implications
<b>Climate Change:</b>	There are no climate change implications
<b>Corporate Parenting:</b>	There are no Implications for Corporate Parenting responsibilities

## 6 Appendices

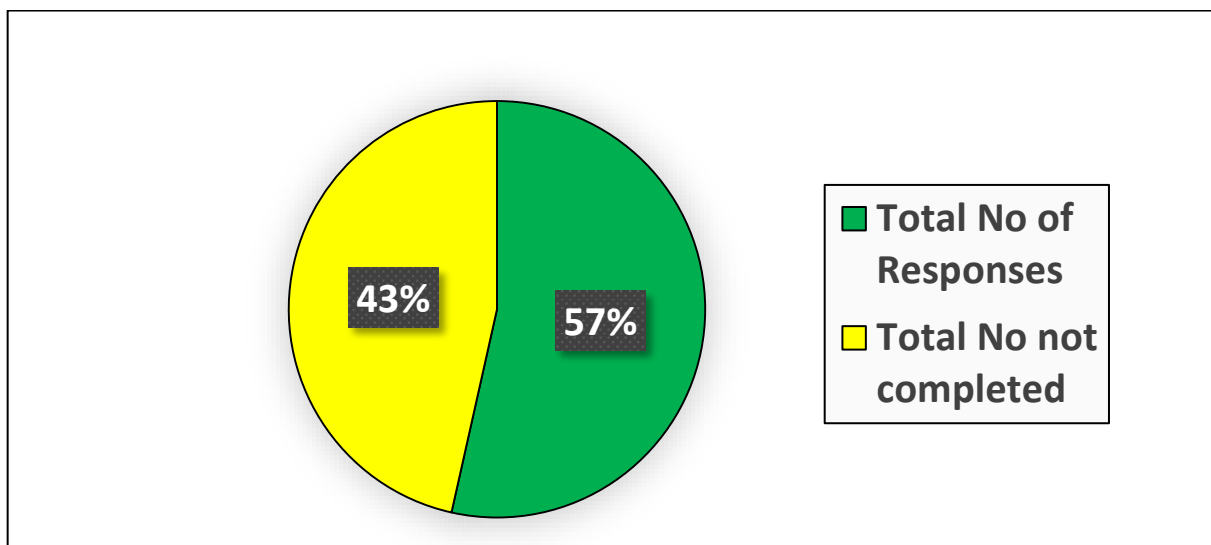
Appendix 1 Consultation Questions & Summary Responses  
Appendix 2 Comments Received from the Consultation

## 7. Background Papers

The Consultation Document was circulated at the previous meeting and communicated to schools on circular 124.



## Overview of Responses



### Question 1 (voting - ALL members)

Please indicate the option you prefer to use for calculating schools funding for 2024/25? There were 3 possible responses which were:

- OPTION 1 - Minimum transition
- OPTION 2 - Accelerated transition
- OPTION 3 – National Funding Factor (NFF) values

Q1: Overall Responses	Total	%
OPTION 1 - Minimum Transition	51	78%
OPTION 2 - Accelerated Transition	5	8%
OPTION 3 - National Funding Formula Factor	9	14%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100%</b>



Q1: Detailed Responses	Total	%
<b>Minimum Transition</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100%</b>
Primary	47	92%
Secondary	4	8%
<b>Accelerated Transition</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>
Primary	3	67%
Secondary	2	33%
<b>National Funding Formula Factor Values</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100%</b>
Primary	4	44%
Secondary	5	56%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Question 2 (voting - ALL members)

Do you agree to the use of the Brought Forward of £0.282m to set the Pupil Number Growth Fund? There were 2 possible responses which were:

- YES
- NO

Q2: Overall Responses	Total	%
YES – Utilise the Brought Forward	56	86%
NO – Do NOT use the Brought Forward	9	14%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100%</b>



Q2: Detailed Responses	Total	%
<b>YES - Utilise the B/F</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100%</b>
Primary	47	84%
Secondary	9	16%
<b>NO – Do not utilise B/F</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100%</b>
Primary	8	89%
Secondary	1	11%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Question 3 (voting – ALL members)

Do you agree to the introduction of a Falling Rolls Fund (FRF)? There were 2 possible responses which were:

- YES
- NO

Q3: Overall Responses	Total	%
YES – Agree with the introduction of a FRF	44	68%
NO – Do NOT agreed with the introduction of a FRF	21	32%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100%</b>

Q3: Detailed Responses	Total	%
<b>YES – introduce a FRF</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100%</b>
Primary	38	86%
Secondary	6	14%
<b>NO – Do NOT agree with a FRF</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>
Primary	18	82%
Secondary	4	18%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100%</b>



## Question 4 (voting - ALL members)

Do you agree to the top slice of £512,000 from the Schools Block to the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) to fund the Attendance Team? There were 2 possible responses which were:

- YES
- NO

Q4: Overall Responses	Total	%
YES – agree to £512k top slice	57	88%
NO – Do NOT agree to £512k top slice	8	12%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100%</b>

Q4: Detailed Responses	Total	%
<b>YES – agree to £512k top slice</b>	<b>57</b>	
Primary	47	82%
Secondary	10	18%
<b>NO – do NOT agree to £512k top slice</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>100%</b>
Primary	7	100%
Secondary	0	0%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Question 5 (voting - ALL members)

Do you agree with the indicative allocation of the CSSB?

Q5: Responses	YES	NO
CSSB1 – Statutory & Regulatory /Welfare and Asset Man	57	8
CSSB2 Admissions Service	57	8
CSSB3 Historical Commitment Pensions Administration	57	8
CSSB4 Schools Forum	57	8



### Question 6 and 7 (voting - Maintained Sector members only)

Please indicate YES / NO if you agree with the De-delegated and Education Functions Proposals? There were 2 possible responses which were either Yes or No to each of the proposals.

#### De-Delegation

Q6: Responses	YES	NO
DD1 Health & Safety Licences	43	8
DD2 EVOLVE	50	1
DD3 Union Facilities Time	33	18
DD4 School Improvement	44	7
DD5 Schools in Financial Difficulty	31	20

#### Education Functions proposals

Q7: Responses	YES	NO
EF1 Education Benefits Team	45	6
EF2 Children's Clothing Support Allowance	32	19





## Appendix 2

### Any Other Comments – Comments Received

#### Comment 1

Health & Safety - I have said no as this de-delegated amount seems to support a service that is required/utilised more by secondary schools than it is primary. I have never been sent any access to CLEAPPS from the LA (despite asking) so cannot see how my school benefits from that. We pay separately for H&S support as the de-delegated spend doesn't cover all our requirements as a school.

Facilities Time - I have said no to this as I believe that the facilities arrangements need review. I would be happy to de-delegate a smaller amount of money or would be happier de-delegating if I understood arrangements between unions/how much of this money is used by each union. However, as it stands, I do not believe it is the right amount to de-delegate.

Schools in Financial Difficulty - I have said no as all schools have a responsibility to manage their budget. I have taken strategic and prudent decisions to ensure my school doesn't go in to deficit. I agree we should have a falling rolls fund for those occasions where a roll falls significantly but I do not believe budget (which could be used for children at my school) should be used to support schools where leaders have not taken appropriate action to manage their budget.

Children's Clothing Allowance - I do not feel that this significantly supports primary families as the funding can only be used when children are joining Reception at primary level (whereas it can be used for each year group in secondary). Furthermore, there is new uniform guidance now from the DfE so schools should be making individual efforts to ensure uniform is affordable and that second hand uniform can be purchased. Therefore, if all schools were doing as they should, this grant would not be necessary."

#### Comment 2

Although, we agree to union facilities time, we have concerns that academies, that do not fund this, will still benefit e.g. with the policies that are written.

It would be better if the CSSB was divided up, and schools could vote on each element.

#### Comment 3

As a Primary school we feel strongly that we should move slowly towards the National Funding Formula and this will always be our preference.



## Comment 4

Can we please consider the split between how much is de-delegated from primary schools for:

- uniform allowance i.e. can we access this for all years and not just Reception?
- H&S services- can a formula be considered that is weighted for secondary needs that primary schools simply don't have?
- as a school with a falling roll, I cannot express how difficult it is to budget for this- recruitment, retention and even down to classroom furniture is always a challenge- knowing there is some form of criteria to enable schools to access this would allay concerns and even redundancies. This year we did not appoint a teacher and have had to get long term supply to save future redundancies.

## Comment 5

Please note that in answering Q2 we chose to answer No as we don't believe there is a bulge of pupil, so would question the need for a growth fund at all.

Please could we have an estimate of the amount top sliced from our school in respect of the Admissions & Appeals Service (I can't see any details in annex A1 for this service at all) and also if we chose to take this service in house in the future would we still be top sliced for the service, should it be agreed at Schools Forum, or can we choose to opt out?

Thanks

## Comment 6

This has been completed in consultation with the Chair of Governors, the School Business Manager and the Head Teacher.

## Comment 7

We would like to know more about the Falling Rolls funding and the criteria to be eligible, as well as the formula to work this out. We generally agree though so have ticked yes.

## Comment 8

In response to question 6 and where the response has been no- Health & Safety: Seems to be a service for secondary schools rather than primary, rather than all schools.

Facilities time: This seems a lot of money to set aside for this, given we know little of how much uptake there is for this.

Schools in financial difficulty: All should be responsible for managing their budget. If falling numbers are an issue, this would then be utilised from the falling roll fund.



Children's clothing allowance: Seems to be a service for secondary schools rather than primary, rather than all schools.

## Comment 9

1. The reconstitution of the school's forum has resulted in an increase in secondary membership, greatly favouring secondary school pupils over primary school pupils.
2. Q3, more information is really required to give a reflective answer.

## Comment 10

Union facilities time

It's time for schools to receive much greater detail regarding the number of maintained schools that are benefiting and whether the cost to academies is equitable and fair. In many ways we deserve an SLA because an increasing amount of school time is spent trying to schedule meetings, with delays often subject to union availability. This increasingly is causing stress and wellbeing for the staff involved, when the delay is purely down to union rep availability.

Falling roll fund

Further information required, as there is no detail as to where the funding would come from.

Concern about the unfair re-constitution of school forum, where maintained primary are disproportionality under represented compared to academies. I'm also concerned the only communication regarding this comes from my Budget Officer (TF); who diligently share LA changes that appear to disadvantage and potentially break rules and regulations regarding the forum constitution. Can I request that Headteachers receive clarity re this at the next HT partnership meeting?

## Comment 11

Question 2 - Comment: DSG Outturn report 2022/23 overspend of £0.575m. No report presented for 2023/24 yet so figure unknown

Question 3 - Comment: There are no figures provided, making it very difficult for schools to decide.  
Also no mention where the funding would come from.

Question 6 - School Improvement £50K increase since 2022/23 - explanation needed for this increase.  
It says 3 core visits per term but this should be per year.

Schools in Financial Difficulties – high balance already carried forward. LA should know which schools will finish the current year in deficit, therefore a true figure should be known

Question 7 Children's Clothing Support Allowance – Reception only/Secondary each year group can benefit. Primary schools also now driving forward initiatives such as pre loved uniform.

## Comment 12

The Governing Body of Highfields and myself would like to express our frustration as to our inability to comment appropriately when the numbers presented in the document do not reflect what we believe to be the reality of the situation. It is also frustrating that the deadlines set, do not facilitate Heads with the



opportunity to discuss this in greater depth in either our learning communities or through Primary Partnership.

### Comment 13

Whilst I agree with the Falling Rolls Fund given our current situation, there was no mention as to where the money would be sourced from and how much this might be.

### Comment 14

Q3 - We support this in principle, but feel we cannot answer yes, until we are informed how much this fund will require.

Q5 - We feel that as Pension Admin is a statutory duty, the full cost of this needs to be included in CSSB.

Q7 - Clothing allowance, as a Primary School, our pupils only benefit from this in the first year of school when they start in Reception, it does not support our needy families in other year groups, we support these families by using donated used uniforms, and do not restrict the use of branded school logo uniforms.

### Comment 15

We have answered yes to question 2 but can you please confirm that the B/fwd balance does not include the PNG money owed to OSCA and Forge for 5 months, April to Aug 2023. can this be investigated please.

### Comment 16

Please note we have said yes to question 2 but can you please confirm that the balance carried forward does not include pupil growth amounts for April to August 2023 owed to Ormiston Forge and Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy, Can this be resolved urgently,

### Comment 17

Q3. Difficult to answer. No costings provided.

DD1 - Do not use as a Primary School.

DD4 - Unsure if £150,000 or £100,000. Wasn't clear at the meeting. Conflicting answers.

EF2 - Not as beneficial to Primary Schools as Secondary Schools.



## Report to School Forum

**11 December 2023**

<b>Subject:</b>	2023/24 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Budget Monitor – Period 7 (31 <sup>st</sup> October 2023)
<b>Director:</b>	Director of Children and Education Michael Jarrett
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Elaine Taylor (elaine_taylor@sandwell.gov.uk)

### 1 Recommendations


1.1 The Schools' Forum is requested to note the report.

### 2 Reasons for Recommendations




2.1 The Schools Forum Regulations 2012 requires that the Schools' Forum meets regularly and is consulted by the local authority concerning the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), including budget and various related matters.

2.2 The Schools' Forum is requested to comment and note the contents of the report in relation to 2023/24 DSG Budget monitor for period 7.

### 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p><b>Best start in life for children and young people</b> Delegated grant funding of High Needs in support of children with <b>early identification of SEN</b>, and to ensure they are ready <b>for school</b>, and schools being ready for children and families including suitable provision within schools in the community and being able to support that readiness and long term promotion of becoming good citizens within the community.</p>
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	Delivery of programmes that specifically address language development within the borough, working with schools and families.
	<b>Strong resilient communities</b> Enhancement of existing green spaces, by creating new places to play and commitment of planting a tree for every child <b>starting school</b> up to 2030.
	<b>Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods</b> Ensure new quality homes being driven by our inclusive Economy principles benefit local people but communities having access to suitable <b>good schools</b> , health services and local amenities.
	<b>A strong and inclusive economy</b> Delivery of new major <b>education facilities</b> and aspiration for <b>SEN children and young people</b> to achieve own goals working with education providers in ensuring good jobs.

#### 4. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

- 4.1 The DSG is forecasting an in-year surplus of £1.593m at the end of period 7 (October 2023). When added to the surplus at the end of 2022/23 (of £5.560m), the overall position is a forecast surplus of (£7.153m). Table 1 below is a summary of the overall DSG position. Explanation of major variances (surplus or deficit) are highlighted in the rest of this section whilst detailed budget monitor is as shown below.
- 4.2 This report should be read in conjunction with the HNB budget monitoring report presented separately to the school's forum at this meeting.

**Table 1: Summary DSG Position at the end of Period 7 (October 2023) (£'000)**

Block	Bal b/f 2022/23	Allocation	Forecast	Variance (Surplus/Deficit)	Forecast bal c/f 2023/24
Schools Block	216	151,221	151,221	0	216
High Needs Block (HNB)	(5,759)	67,309	65,836	(1,473)	(7,232)
Early Year's Block (EYB)	(18)	25,490	25,370	(120)	(138)
Central Schools Services Block	(1)	2,307	2,307	0	(1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(5,560)</b>	<b>246,327</b>	<b>244,734</b>	<b>(1,593)</b>	<b>(7,153)</b>



## 5.1 Schools Block – Break even

The Schools Block is forecast to breakeven in this financial year.

## 5.2 High Needs Block (HNB) £1.473m surplus

The HNB is forecasting a surplus of £1.473m at the end of Period 7 (October 2023). This is due to the inter-play of the following issues.

Out of borough placements, show a £0.404m savings. The main reasons for the savings are the number of pupils being placed in independent schools.

The total variances, in SEN & Support for Inclusion Services, equate to a saving of £189k across 10 service areas. These are mainly due to staff turnover, maternity leave, opting out of the LA superannuation scheme and full-time budgeted posts covered by staff on reduced hours and the inclusion of 2023/24 pay awards

SEN development is showing an underspend of £0.760m. It holds the HNB surplus balancing figure of £1.200m.

## 5.3 Early Years Block (EYB) £0.12m surplus

The current EYB budget is set at £25.4m as per the latest DSG (July 2023) allocation. It is anticipated, based on the current budget there will be an in-year underspend of £0.12m

There has been a decrease in 2-year old pupils for the Summer term when compared to previous years and an increase in 3 and 4-year old pupils. Using previous years data trend, it is forecast to show an breakeven position against the March 2023 DSG allocation. It is also anticipated that the Disability Access Fund will show an underspend of £0.12m



## 6. Schools

- 6.1 Schools financial position are not usually reported until the end of the financial year. Therefore, detailed position will be available when the provisional outturn report is prepared sometime in Spring 2024.

## 7. Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	As presented in this document.
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	The schools' forums (England) regulations 2012 govern the constitution and conduct of meetings of the forum. The schools finance (England) regulations 2012 determine those matters on which the local authority must or may consult the schools' forum and those in respect of which the schools' forum can make decisions. These regulations make provision for the financial arrangements of local authorities in relation to the funding of maintained schools and providers of prescribed Early Years provision in England.
<b>Risk:</b>	None
<b>Equality:</b>	None
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	None
<b>Social Value:</b>	None
<b>Climate Change:</b>	None
<b>Corporate Parenting:</b>	None

## 8. Appendices

None

## 9. Background Papers

None.





## Report to School Forum

**11 December 2023**

<b>Subject:</b>	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) 2023/24 High Needs Block Budget Monitoring (Period 7)
<b>Director:</b>	Director of Children and Education Michael Jarrett
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Pat Harvey Patricia_Harvey@Sandwell.gov.uk

### 1 Recommendations

1.1 The Schools' Forum is requested to note the report.

### 2 Reasons for Recommendations

2.1 The Schools Forum Regulations 2012 requires that the Schools' Forum meets regularly and is consulted by the local authority concerning the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), including budget and various related matters. The High Needs block (HNB) is one of the four blocks of funding within the DSG.

2.2 The Schools' Forum is requested to comment and note the contents of the report in relation to the 2023/24 HNB budget monitor for period 7 (end of October 2023).



### 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p><b>Best start in life for children and young people</b>          Delegated grant funding of High Needs in support of children with <b>early identification of SEN</b>, and to ensure they are ready <b>for school</b>, and schools being ready for children and families including suitable provision within schools in the community and being able to support that readiness and long term promotion of becoming good citizens within the community.          Delivery of programmes that specifically address language development within the borough, working with schools and families.</p>
	<p><b>Strong resilient communities</b>          Enhancement of existing green spaces, by creating new places to play and commitment of planting a tree for every child <b>starting school</b> up to 2030.</p>
	<p><b>Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods</b>          Ensure new quality homes being driven by our inclusive Economy principles benefit local people but communities having access to suitable <b>good schools</b>, health services and local amenities.</p>
	<p><b>A strong and inclusive economy</b>          Delivery of new major <b>education facilities</b> and aspiration for <b>SEN children and young people</b> to achieve own goals working with education providers in ensuring good jobs.</p>

### 4 HNB Budget 2023/24

4.1 The gross 2023/24 HNB allocation is £71.499m, taking account of recoupment (£4.190m) by the Department of Education (DfE) for academies, free schools and post-16 commissioned places, leaves a net sum **£67.309m**. This includes £0.125m additional grant received since the last report to School Forum, as details in table 1 below.



Table1 - High Needs Block 2023/24			
	£'m	Period 7 forecast £'m	Outturn £'m
Allocation	£71.499	£71.499	£0
<i>less recoupment</i>	<i>-£4.190</i>	<i>-£4.190</i>	£0
LA allocation	<b>£67.309</b>	<b>£65.836</b>	<b>-£1.473</b>

- 4.2 Forecast spend at the end of period 7 (October 2023) is £65.836m which represents £1.473m surplus.
- 4.3 Appendix 1 shows the 2023/24 High Needs Block allocation, the 2023/24 Forecast outturn, the monetary and percentage variance from the budget, and the movement from last report in August 2023 (period 5).
- 4.4 The overall cumulative reserve balance of the HNB, as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 is £5.759m. Adding the in-year surplus to this balance gives us a forecast cumulative surplus at the end of the year of £7.232m.
- 4.5 The variances are explained below as detailed in appendix 1:

#### **Variation 1 – Independent Schools £404k surplus**

Out of Borough placements forecast £404k underspend against budget. This is primarily due to children and young people with SEN in Sandwell requiring suitable specialist provision and shortage of suitable SEN places, therefore out of borough settings are currently used in support and to fulfil our statutory responsibilities.

#### **Variation 2 – Pupil ‘Place Plus’ Funding £7k surplus**

Surplus from Special Free School provision (of £12k) reduced by pressure across individual ‘place-plus’ funding (*place funding and top up*) paid to Focus provisions. This is the assumption all settings will be full due to an increase in Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) which has resulted in an overspend of £5k on the delegated funding provided to Focus Provisions.

#### **Variation 3 – SEN Support Services £15k surplus**

The £15k variance equates to a small saving within staffing budgets due to maternity leave, opting out of the LA superannuation scheme and full-time budgeted posts covered by staff on reduced hours.



#### **Variation 4 – Support for Inclusion £122k surplus**

The total variances equate to a saving of £122k across 8 service areas. These are mainly due to staff turnover, maternity leave, opting out of the LA superannuation scheme and full-time budgeted posts covered by staff on reduced hours.

#### **Variation 5 – SEN Developments £760k saving**

Earmarked budget in support of development of new provision and expansion in SEN places planned for 2023/24. There was slippage in 2022/23 and the same is anticipated in 2023/24 and budget will be earmarked, ringfenced and carried forward to next financial year.

#### **Variation 6 – Other SEN Funding £12k pressure**

Due to increases in demand, there is forecast pressure of £7k on Service Level Agreement (SLA) for Speech and Language Therapy (SALT), Physiotherapist and Occupational therapist. £5k additional recharge for IT services.

#### **Variation 7 – Exclusion and Integration £52k surplus**

Forecast saving of £52k due to staff vacancy.

#### **Variation 8 – Additional High Needs Grant £125k**

As per latest published DSG allocations, additional High Needs block funding earmarked towards future projects to be discussed with the LA and School Forum.

#### **Variation 9 – High Needs block (HNB) underspend £1.473m**

The in-year forecast underspend for 2023/24 for the HN block is £1.473m including additional grant funding of £0.125m based upon current expenditure and data analysis as at period 7 (31 October 2023).

## **5 Implications**

<b>Resources:</b>	As presented in this document.
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	The schools' forums (England) regulations 2012 govern the constitution and conduct of meetings of the forum. The schools finance (England) regulations 2012 determine those matters on which the local authority must or may consult the schools' forum and



	those in respect of which the schools' forum can make decisions. These regulations make provision for the financial arrangements of local authorities in relation to the funding of maintained schools and providers of prescribed Early Years provision in England.
<b>Risk:</b>	None
<b>Equality:</b>	None
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	None
<b>Social Value:</b>	None
<b>Climate Change:</b>	None
<b>Corporate Parenting:</b>	None

## 6 Appendices

Appendix 1 – High Needs Block Outturn (period 7) 2023/24

## 7. Background Papers

None.



Appendix 1  
HIGH NEEDS BLOCK 2023/24 FORECAST OUTTURN

	BUDGET ALLOCATION 2023/24 £	SPEND as at 31/10/23 LEDGER REPORTS £	FORECAST END OF YEAR OUTTURN £	VARIANCE FROM BUDGET £	% VARIANCE FROM BUDGET	VARIANCE REF IN REPORT	COMMENTS	Predicted Outturn 20/08/23 (P7) £	Movement from Previous Report (P5) £
<b>1 Out of Borough Placements</b>									
Independent schools	10,371,000	5,514,918	9,967,426	-403,574	-3.9%	1	Lack of Provision in Borough has meant more Independent Placements are being made at approx 3 per week with slippage.	-593,900	190,326
OLA Maintained & Academy Schools	1,823,000	-804,217	1,823,000	0	0.0%		OOB placements in OLA maintained and academy mainstream and special schools now reflects Phase transfers	0	0
Alternative Providers	340,000	136,576	340,000	0	0.0%		This is for Pupils with EHCPs that attend NTAS and Trageted Provision which are tuition services	0	0
Other associated costs	40,000	0	40,000	0	0.0%		Room hire for the support of Students receiving NTAS support while awaiting a school placement	0	0
	<b>12,574,000</b>	<b>4,847,277</b>	<b>12,170,426</b>	<b>-403,574</b>				<b>-593,900</b>	<b>190,326</b>
<b>2 Pupil Top up &amp; Place</b>									
Mainstream Schools	13,421,400	-	13,421,400	0	0.0%		Top up funding above notional budgets in schools	0	0
Focus Provisions	3,499,533	-	3,504,200	4,667	0.1%		Assumes full occupancy	4,667	0
Special Schools	20,016,800	-	20,016,800	0	0.0%		Special school place plus top up funding	0	0
Primary PRU	572,000	-	572,000	0	0.0%		Pupil Referral Unit - Primary provision	0	0
Secondary PRU	2,772,100	-	2,772,100	0	0.0%		Pupil Referral Unit - Secondary provision	0	0
High Point Free Special School	1,397,267	-	1,385,600	-11,667	-0.8%		Increase in pupil numbers from Sept 2022	-11,667	0
Elm Tree Free Special School	778,400	-	778,400	0	0.0%	2	Special Free school	0	0
Early Years Private Providers	730,000	477,338	730,000	0	0.0%		This is offset by support from EYS funding	0	0
Early Years Grant	-480,000	-	-480,000	0	0.0%		EYS income/grant	0	0
Other Support	205,000	139,751	205,000	0	0.0%		Other	0	0
Post 16 Colleges & Specialist Providers	3,058,700	246,309	3,058,700	0	0.0%		Post16 demand usually in total by January 24	0	0
Alternative AWPU Prov	270,000	12,400	270,000	0	0.0%		AP AWPU	0	0
Recoupment	-1,564,800	8,910	-1,564,800	0	0.0%		This is recoupment of top up for OLA pupils placed in Sandwell Schools. The increase is due to an increase in OLA pupils placed in Sandwell schools.	0	0
	<b>44,676,400</b>	<b>884,709</b>	<b>44,669,400</b>	<b>-7,000</b>				<b>-7,000</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>3 Albright Education Centre</b>	1,608,600	-23,450	1,608,600	0	0.0%		SEMh and Medical provision (in-borough)	0	0
<b>4 SEN Support Services</b>	559,000	255,900	543,600	-15,400	-2.8%	3	Maternity Leave, staff turnover and reduced hours and other associated expenditure following COVID	-15,400	0
<b>5 Support for Inclusion</b>									
Lace	419,000	235,025	405,831	-13,169	-3.1%		Full time Budgeted post but post holder reduced hours	-17,900	4,731
Inclusion Support	1,182,500	637,068	1,177,000	-5,500	-0.5%		Staff turnover	-5,500	0
Sensory Support Team	974,600	505,347	958,100	-16,500	-1.7%	4	Staffing turnover	-16,500	0
CCD Team	544,500	335,811	580,600	36,100	6.6%		Staffing turnover	16,100	20,000
Early Years Admin	765,600	322,197	682,000	-83,600	-10.9%		Materniy Leave and 0.5 vacancy	-83,600	0
Preventing Primary Exclusions team	237,500	82,984	204,100	-33,400	-14.1%		Staff turnover	-33,400	0
SEMh Team	696,900	362,723	702,500	5,600	0.8%		Full time Budgeted posts but post holders reduced hours	5,600	0
Fair Access Reintegration Officers	164,400	71,671	153,000	-11,400	-6.9%		Vacant post	-11,400	0
	<b>4,985,000</b>	<b>2,552,824</b>	<b>4,863,131</b>	<b>-121,869</b>				<b>-146,600</b>	<b>24,731</b>
<b>6 SEN Developments</b>	1,802,967	108,676	1,043,467	-759,500	-42.1%	5	Initial Surplus on calculation of budgets was £630K and additional grant received of £370K	-759,500	0
<b>7 Other SEN Funding</b>									
Central Recharges	508,500	0	508,500	0	0.0%		Corporate recharges	0	0
OT & Physio & SALT SLA	73,100	40,495	80,100	7,000	9.6%		Demand led budget	7,000	0
Equal Pay other SS	50,400	0	50,400	0	0.0%		Earmarked budget	0	0
Mediation	30,000	2,906	30,000	0	0.0%		Mediation budget	0	0
Hospital Recoupment	30,000	3,178	30,000	0	0.0%	6	Hospital provision and recovery	0	0
Medical Malpractice	15,000	0	15,000	0	0.0%		Medical budget	0	0
ITT Staff Contribution	25,000	0	30,000	5,000	20.0%		Recharges	5,000	0
Joint Commissioning Sensory Pilot	72,500	15,394	72,500	0	0.0%		JCS Pilot	0	0
	<b>804,500</b>	<b>61,973</b>	<b>816,500</b>	<b>12,000</b>				<b>12,000</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>8 Exclusions &amp; Reintegration</b>	172,900	73,736	121,200	-51,700	-29.9%	7	Vacant post	-51,700	0
Additional grant	125,942	0	-	-125,942	-100.0%	8	Additional grant 23/24 as per published tables		-125,942
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>67,309,309</b>	<b>8,761,644</b>	<b>65,836,325</b>	<b>-1,472,984</b>	<b>-2.2%</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>Forecast underspend (p7) HNBlock</b>	<b>-1,562,100</b>	<b>89,116</b>
check	67,309,309	8,761,644	65,836,325	-1,472,984			check		
	0	0	0						



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## Schools Forum

11 December 2023

### Special School in Financial Difficulty

**This report is for decision**

#### **1. Recommendations:**

That Schools Forum members:

- 1.1 Approve the creation of the Special School in Financial Difficulty Fund (SSFDF) to be funded from High Needs Block.
- 1.2 Approve that SSFDF will not exceed £500,000.
- 1.3 Approve that SSFDF be topped up every year if it is less than £500,000.
- 1.4 Approve the set-up of an ad-hoc working group to consider the request from a Special School and make recommendation back to the Forum.

#### **2. Purpose**

- 2.1 The purpose of the SSFDF is to support Special and AP schools showing financial difficulty.
- 2.2 The fund will work by providing cashflow support (additional fund) to Special and AP schools that the Schools Forum approves to be the case.
- 2.3 The balance of SSFDF shall not exceed £500,000 at beginning of every financial year.
- 2.4 The amount of cashflow support shall be limited to £100,000 and £150,000 for primary (including AP) and secondary schools respectively.
- 2.5 A school (or AP) can only be funded from the SSFDF once in 3 financial years.

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**3. Reasons for these proposal**

- 3.1 Maintained mainstream schools, through de-delegation of their schools' budget, have created a Schools in Financial Difficulty Fund.
- 3.2 This fund provides bridging support, in form of cash flows, to schools showing financial difficulties whilst they work with the local authority (LA) to overcome/mitigate the financial pressure.
- 3.3 Special Schools (both maintained and academies) have no similar support whenever there are signs of, or when they are in, financial difficulty.
- 3.4 Special Schools are exclusively funded from the High Needs Block (HNB) of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).
- 3.5 The SSFDF is not a permanent financial fix for special schools (and AP) showing financial problem. But is a mechanism to provide temporary cashflow reprieve whilst these schools work with the LA and/or ESFA to overcome the problem.
- 3.6 Once a school has been considered and approved for this support, it cannot access the SSFDF for another 3 financial years.
- 3.7 Based on the last report presented to Schools Forum, the HNB is currently underspending and can afford to set-up this fund in 2023/24.
- 3.8 The fund will be topped-up every year to the £500,000 maximum (during the budget setting process). If no school has been supported in a particular year, there will be no need to top-up the fund.
- 3.9 The Schools Forum can decide at any point, to increase or reduce the size of the SSFDF fund as well as vary the maximum amount that can be paid to each phase of special school/AP as suggested in paragraph 2.4 above.
- 3.10 The Schools Forum can also decide to discontinue the use of this fund at any point in the future. This must however take account of any request that is undergoing the process of being approved.
- 3.11 The SSFDF will only be made available to those special schools (and AP) that were unsuccessful in securing support from the DfE



plans to support Academies and Maintained schools (once it becomes operational<sup>1</sup>).

#### **4. Process for Application and Approval**

4.1 Schools showing financial difficulty that requires urgent cashflow support will contact the Finance team within Children's and Education department. The issue should be well known to the finance team and the request should not come as a surprise.

4.2 Finance team will send an application form for the school to complete. See Appendix A below for sample.

4.3 The finance team will thereafter present the case before Schools Forum and request that a working group be set-up to consider the request and report back to the Forum. In exceptional situation, the finance team can contact the Chair (and if they are not available the Deputy Chair) to request that the ad-hoc working group be set up ahead of the next Schools Forum meeting.

4.4 The ad-hoc working group will comprise of:

- 2 or 3 members of the Schools Forum one of whom must be a special/AP head or governor.
- 2 or 3 co-opted heads from special school/AP.
- LA officers including one representative each from SEND, SEN finance & education finance (in attendance and to support).

4.5 The working group will submit its report with recommendation to the Forum.

4.6 The Schools Forum will thereafter approve, reject or amend the recommendation of the working group.

4.7 The finance team will thereafter inform the school of Schools Forum decision.

#### **5. Request to set up Ad-hoc Working Group**

5.1 If the above proposal is accepted. We hereby request that Schools Forum set-up an ad-hoc working group to consider the request from Orchard School.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/additional-support-for-schools-in-financial-difficulty-in-2023-to-2024#:~:text=Details,themselves%20in%20particular%20financial%20difficulties.>

- 5.2 The working group composition should be in accordance with the suggested process in section 4 above.

Elaine Taylor, Finance Business Partner – Children’s Services

Date: 06/11/2023

Contact Officer: Elaine Taylor

Email: [elaine\\_taylor@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:elaine_taylor@sandwell.gov.uk)

**SCHOOLS FORUM: Funding Support Application Form for Special School in Financial Difficulty**

School Name	
Chair of Governors	
Chair of GB Finance	
Chair of GB Staffing	
Overview of reasons why the school is applying for support	
Final outturn Previous financial year.	
Budget In-year deficit Current financial year	
List actions already undertaken in current and previous years to reduce in-year deficit (produce on a separate sheet if helpful)	
Will school return to surplus/balanced position within 3 years? (Yes/No)	
If yes. List further action and savings required to return to a balanced budget position within three years	

If no. What actions/opportunities is being explored by school to reduce deficit and/or generate surplus?	
Have the school applied to use DfE/ESFA support for Schools in Financial Difficulty (if yes, please include outcome of that request)	
Funding Support Requested (Amount £)	
How will the support funding be used and what will be the impact of the funding?	

**Information required to be attached to this request form**

- The school budget summary of expenditure for the current financial year.
- The school budget summary expenditure plan for next financial year.
- Staffing structure chart showing all posts and any affected by any proposed restructuring plans
- The full deficit recovery plan signed by Chair of Governing Body and agreed by Finance officers.
- Request for support from DfE/ESFA and outcome.

**Process**

- School to financially manage in year deficit to best of their ability leading up to financial close down including using all financial reserves available from previous years
- School to contact Council Finance Department and work together to agree a deficit recovery plan
- School to contact HR and agree restructuring plans (if this is required)
- Once end of year closedown figures have been finalised and the deficit recovery plan is agreed the school can apply to Schools Forum for Financial assistance.

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- An ad-hoc working group of the Schools Forum will review the submission and make a recommendation to Schools Forum.
- Schools Forum votes on the recommendation from the working group at the next available meeting.
- Schools which are successful in their bid to School Forum will receive funding as agreed to support their recovery plan.

**Schools Forum: Working group representatives**

- 2 or 3 members of the Schools Forum one of which must be a Special School Head/Governor.
- 2 or 3 co-opted heads from special school/AP.
- LA Finance Officer/SEN Finance Officer
- LA School Improvement Officer
- LA ILS/SEND representative
- Democratic Services support or someone to clerk the meeting

The working group may request attendance from the school (finance officer and/or leadership team) to represent it and present the case for support funding.

FOR SCHOOL FORUM USE -----

**School Forum Assurances Questions**

Has all information been submitted as required? Yes/No

Comment:

Has the school taken sufficient steps in year to manage their in-year deficit? Yes/No

Comment:

Are plans to reduce expenditure in the future robust and will they deliver the required savings to achieve a balanced budget within 3 financial years? Yes/No

Comment:

Is the proposed use of the support funding a reasonable and prudent use of resource? Yes/No

Comment:

Working group recommendation

*N.B. A Yes recommendation can only be given where the bid has met all four criteria.*

Recommend bid: YES/NO      Amount \_\_\_\_\_

Comment:

Chair of Working Group \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_