

Minutes of Schools Forum

**Monday 17th January 2022 at 2.30pm
On-line Virtual via Microsoft Teams**

Present: N Toplass (Chair) and J Barry (Vice-Chair)

M Arnull, J Bailey, S Baker, K Berdesha, L Bray, D Broadbent, C Handy-Rivett, D Irish, W Lawrence, S Mistry, E Pate, B Patel and J Topham.

Officers: J Gill, M Jarrett, R Kerr, M Tallents, A Timmins and F Hancock

1/22 **Apologies:**

Apologies were received from D Barton and L Howard.

2/22 **Declarations of Interest**

D Irish declared an interest in Agenda Item No. 5 and would abstain from any votes which affected his school.

3/22 **Minutes**

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 13th December 2021 be approved as a correct record.

The Chair commented that, in relation to Minute No. 56/21, the length of time for the report back to the Forum on the Attendance and Safeguarding Team appeared excessive.



Dedicated School Grant Allocations and Draft School Budgets 2022/23

The Forum received a report which informed members of the funding allocations for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and the draft school budget information for 2022/23 in accordance with recommendations and decisions which had been voted on at the previous Forum meeting (13th December 2021). The budget information could change, subject to approval from the Department of Education (DfE) and / or decisions that would be taken at Cabinet on 12th January 2022.

The report allowed school governing bodies and academy boards to start their financial planning for 2022/23 and to make appropriate structural and educational adjustments to meet the needs of young people within the constraints of their resource allocations.

DSG Allocations 2022/23

The Department for Education (DfE) had announced the DSG allocations for 2022/23 and the table below detailed the allocations by block: -

DSG Block	Allocation prior to Adjustments	Adjustments	Allocation after adjustments
	£m	£m	£m
Schools	308.463	(2.961)	305.502
Central School Services	2.283	0	2.283
High Needs	61.267	(3.130)	58.137
Early Years	23.387	0	23.387
Total	395.400	(6.091)	389.309

A comparison of the funding and the pupils from 2021/22 to 2022/23 was as set out below: -

DSG Block (After Adjustments)	2021/22	2022/23
Schools Block allocation	£297.545m	£305.502m



Pupil Numbers	55,511	56,025
Central Schools Services	£2.249	£2.249
Pupil Numbers	55,511	56,025
High Needs Block allocation	£53.666	£58.137
Pupil Numbers in special school	721	832
Early Years Block allocation	£24.877	£23.387
3 & 4 Year old Universal PTE	6,083	5,524
3 & 4 Year old – Additional 15 Hours PTE	1,655	1,592
2 Year old PTE	1,419	1,168
Early Years Pupil Premium (This funding is included within the “Early Years Allocation above”)	£0.262m	£0.308m
Disability Access Fund (This funding is included within the Early Years allocation above.)	£0.088m	£0.118m

The DfE had agreements with the following agencies to purchase a single national licence managed by the DfE for all state funded schools in England.

- Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI)
- Copyright Licensing Agency (CLA)
- Education Recording Agency (ERA)
- Public Video Screening Licence - Filmbank Distributors Ltd. (PVSL)
- Mechanical Copyright Protection Society (MCPS)
- Motion Picture Licensing Company (MPLC)
- Newspaper Licensing Authority (NLA)
- Performing Rights Society (PRS)
- Phonographic Performance Limited (PPL)
- Schools Printed Music Licence (SPML)

The arrangement covered academies as well as maintained schools and the ESFA deducted the charge from the DSG. The charge for Sandwell for 2022/23 was £0.284m (excluding VAT).



The 2022/23 Early Years Block allocations were indicative, and had been based on Schools, Early Years and Alternative Provision censuses data from January 2021. The final allocations for each of these funding streams would be based on five-twelfths of the January 2022 census numbers plus seven-twelfths of the January 2023 census numbers.

The High needs block allocations were provisional figures and would be updated in the year. The import / export adjustment would be updated in the summer term 2022 to reflect the latest data from the January 2022 schools census and the RO6 of the 2021 to 2022 Individual Learner Record (ILR). The DfE would make further adjustments in April 2022 to the place funding deductions for the academic year 2022 to 2023 to reflect the outcome of the 2022 to 2023 place change notifications process and to reflect further academy conversions.

Schools Budgets 2022/23

The Schools Block funding that had been distributed through the main funding formula was £304,201,538. This had been calculated as follows: -

Description	£
Schools Block DSG	305,501,538
Less Pupil Number Growth Contingency	(1,300,000)
Schools Block DSG Available to Distribute	304,201,538

The school funding model had been submitted to meet the DfE deadline of 21st January 2022 for review and final confirmation of the budgets.

Proposed Formula

The table below listed the factor rates for the local authority formula to be applied to school's budgets for 2022/23. As set out in section 2.1 of the report, the rates could change subject to decisions by the DfE and or the Cabinet meeting to be held on 12th January 2022.



Item	Primary	Secondary
Primary : Secondary Ratio	1	1.29
Basic Entitlement (AWPU)	3,512	4,977
Free Schools Meals	To be checked by the DfE and confirmed with DCS and S151 Officer	
Free School Meals – Ever 6		
IDACI Band E	£77	£350
IDACI Band D	£485	£676
IDACI Band C	£551	£771
IDACI Band B	£602	£855
IDACI Band A	£630	£900
Prior Attainment (Low Cost, High Incidence SEN)	£1,225	£1,776
EAL (2 years)	£846	£1,227
Lump Sum	£129,057	£129,057
Split Site	£129,057	£129,057
Rates	Actual	Actual
PFI	Actual	Actual
MFG	To be checked by the DfE and confirmed with DCS and S151 Officer	

M Jarrett advised that this item had been submitted to Cabinet on 12th January 2022, and the proposals had been agreed. However, there was also a statutory call in period for scrutiny, 5 clear days, which was due to expire on 18th January. If this decision had not been called in within this timeframe, the figures would be published accordingly.

Agreed that: -

1. the DSG Allocations for 2022/23, and the content of the draft school budgets 2022/23 which is based on the principles as voted for at schools forum, be noted.
2. It be noted that these allocations may change, subject to approval by the DfE and / or decisions taken at Cabinet on 12th January 2022.
3. The final funding model has been submitted to the Department for Education to meet the final deadline date of



21st January 2022 and the authority should receive confirmation of the budgets shortly thereafter.

5/22

Pupil Number Growth Funding and Pupil Number Growth – Additional Needs Funding – Up to March 2022

The Forum received a report which detailed the provision of information to enable Members to make a decision on the allocation of pupil number growth funding and additional needs funding to schools experiencing significant pupil growth.

The requests were linked to school improvement priorities through the need to provide education funding for young people entering our school system where a school did not have sufficient funding in reserve to accommodate pupil increases. The funding would ensure there was sufficient resource in each school to meet the needs of such pupils.

The budget for Pupil Number Growth Funding for 2021/22 had been set at £1.091m and the authority had received a positive recoupment adjustment of £0.605m together with a surplus balance of £1.117m brought forward from 2020/21. In addition, there was also total funding available of £2.813m. Expenditure as at 31st December 2021 was £2.266m which gave a current underspend of £0.547m.

The ‘Pupil Number Growth – Additional needs fund’ carried forward a balance of £111,474 from 2020/21, with no spend to date in 2021/22.

As set out in 2021/22 School Budget Information - Table G: “Pupil number growth contingency- general process for significant pupil number increases”; in relation to mid-year admissions and where the school had a minimum net increase of 30 pupils over the previous October census, the authority would automatically calculate the funding for schools meeting this criteria and so there would no longer be a requirement for schools to complete an application form in such instances.



The increase in pupil numbers had been confirmed via the October 2020 and October 2021 census.

The details for each school were as set out below:

Ormiston Forge Academy

Description	Numbers/£
Change in Pupil Numbers	55
Additional funding if approved	£79,839

Based on the pupil number growth criteria the school would be entitled to £79,839 based on 55 pupils receiving 50% of the secondary AWPU rate of £4,977 September 2021 to March 2022.

Bristnall Hall Academy

Description	Numbers/£
Change in Pupil Numbers	48 (Funding already received for 30)
Additional funding if approved	£26,129

Based on the pupil number growth criteria the school would be entitled to £26,129 based on 18 pupils receiving 50% of the secondary AWPU rate of £4,977 September 2021 to March 2022.

George Salter Academy

Description	Numbers/£
Change in Pupil Numbers	54 (Funding already received for 50)
Additional funding if approved	£5,807

Based on the pupil number growth criteria the school would be entitled to £5,807 based on 4 pupils receiving 50% of the secondary AWPU rate of £4,977 September 2021 to March 2022.

Pupil Number Growth Funding – Additional Needs

The following table listed those schools entitled to “Additional Needs” funding. The total costs calculated using the normal



process was £173,761; however, there was only £111,474 total funds remaining. The allocations had therefore been pro-rata to the available funding as set out in the table below: -

School	IDACI Funding (£)	EAL Funding (£)	Total (£)
Ormiston Forge	0	6,015	6,015
George Salter	0	1,900	1,900
Gospel Oak	11,301	10,561	21,862
Q3 Tipton	0	25,645	25,645
Shireland Collegiate	0	6,429	6,429
Priory Primary	26,571	1,836	28,407
Sacred Heart	0	2,849	2,849
St Matthews C of E	0	18,367	18,367
Grand Total	37,872	73,602	111,474

A Forum Member queried what the trigger point was for additional funding.

R Kerr advised that it was for those schools who went above any PAN increases, between the two most recent census years.

Agreed (unanimously) that the following funding payments be authorised, as set out below: -

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(D Irish abstained from the votes on this item in relation to Shireland Collegiate)

6/22 Special Educational Needs High Needs Block 2021/22 November 2021 Monitoring Report

The Forum received a report which provided Members with the High Needs Block (HNB) monitoring position as at 30th November 2021, projected to 31st March 2022.

HNB Budget 2021/22

The HNB grant for 2021/22 as reported to Schools Forum on 13th December 2021 was £53.555m.

The anticipated in year surplus as previously reported to Forum in December 2021 was £1.408m. This had now been revised to an in-year surplus of £1.735m.

The balance bought forward as at 1 April 2021 was £0.597m surplus.

Appendix 1 to the report, showed the 2021/22 High Needs Block budget allocation, the actual expenditure as at 30 November 2021 and the variance from budget.

The Variances were detailed below: -

Variation 1



Out of borough placements, other associated costs, showed a £5k pressure.

- There was a saving of £20k in room hire costs for the delivery of support to students that were awaiting a school roll. During COVID these had been delivered virtually and from September 21 normal face to face delivery had resumed.
- There was a pressure of £25k in respect of support costs for pupils placed in out of borough maintained and academy, mainstream and special schools.

Variation 2

There had been an increase in EHCP assessments which had resulted in a projected overspend of £514k on the delegated funding provided to mainstream schools and academies. Sandwell Community School; Additional funding of £200k had also been included here, to be prudent, to fund pupils placed at SCS requiring top up that was not included in the funding already allocated. SCS had funded 180 places at £10k per place plus Top Up for 80 places for permanent exclusions. This area was currently under review by a Task and Finish Group.

Variation 3

High Point had opened on 1 September 2021. It had initially been thought that the place element would have to be met through the HNB. The DFE had clarified in July 2021 that this would be funded directly with no impact on Sandwell's HNB. This had resulted in a saving of £221k.

Variation 4

An amount of £480k from the Early Years Grant had been used to offset the early support for pupils in private provider settings and those in mainstream early years settings. The support was often continued for 1 - 2 terms when pupils accessed reception whilst the assessment for an EHCP was concluded. An additional sum of £70K had been allocated in this financial year bringing the overall funding contribution to £550k. Table 1, below, detailed the



anticipated shortfall in the early years funding contribution to the HNB.

	Spend to 30 November 2021 £000	Anticipated Outturn to 31 March 2022 £000
Mainstream Settings	472	520
Private Provider Settings	328	478
Total	800	998
EYS Grant Contribution		550
Shortfall		448

Questions had been raised at the SEND Consultation Working Group regarding the level of grant contribution and the possibility that this could be increased going forward.

Variation 5

The total variances equated to a saving of £372k across 9 service areas. These were 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 6

Preventing Secondary Exclusions Team had not been appointed to, so there was a saving of £199k in 2021/22. This had been part of the SEND Consultation and it had been agreed at Schools Forum on 8th November 2021 that this would be used to fund the reintegration officer posts currently funded by schools through the exclusion levy. This would not impact on the HNB until next financial year, so this would remain a saving in 2021/22.

Variation 7

Alternative Provision had been budgeted at £843k in December 2020. Based on the leavers in July 2021 and the close monitoring of placements by the Alternative Provision Panel, the saving was currently predicted to be £499k. This had been revised from



previous monitoring reports and showed a higher saving. This would continue to be monitored closely.

Variation 8

SEN Developments was showing an underspend of £760k. This budget head currently covered independent appeals and reports, and any funding agreed that did not clearly fit onto any other budget head. The variance was predominantly the HNB balancing figure of £440k, which was the difference between the calculated budgets as at 1st April 2021 and the HNB Grant initial settlement 2021/22 and a favourable amendment to the Grant of £315k.

Variation 9

There was a favourable variance of £191k against the Children with Disabilities Team contribution. The HNB had previously contributed £95,800 to the CWD Team and questions had been raised previously about what this contribution was for. As the contribution had not been required in 2020/21 but was accrued, this had now been reversed and the funding had been transferred back into the HNB. It had also been reported that this funding would not be required in 2021/22 or any subsequent years.

Variation 10

There was a favourable variance of £97k against the Non-Statutory SEN contribution from the HNB due to staff turnover.

Focus Provision, Special School and PRU Place Funding

The data on Focus Provision, Special School and PRU occupancy against commissioned places had not had any significant changes to the data presented at the previous Schools Forum meeting.

An update of Focus Provision and Special School occupancy would be provided at the next meeting on 14th March 2022.

A separate report would also be provided at the next meeting on PRU funding, occupancy and commissioned places as requested by Schools Forum on 13th December 2021.



The Chair referred to Variation 8, which covered '*independent appeals and reports, and any funding agreed that did not clearly fit onto any other budget head*'. As this was a wide a varied heading, he requested a breakdown of what was covered within this budget head for the next meeting. J Gill agreed to provide this information at the next meeting.

In addition, the Chair referred to the budget heading added to the School Improvement budget. He queried if this would impact on the High Needs block in anyway. J Gill replied that, to the best of her knowledge, this would not impact on the High Needs Block.

A Forum Member requested if additional information / training could be provided in relation to funding for SEN to help Members have a better understanding of how it worked / was implemented. This was especially important for new Members to the Forum as the financial side of matters was varied and complex.

The Chair advised that there was an item on the agenda which would deal specifically with training needs and that this request would be picked up under that item.

A Member, in referring to variation 4, queried what the plans were with the Early Years Grants considering the current position with shortfall.

R Kerr advised that this particular issue related to both the High Needs and Early Years blocks. Officers would need to undertake a detailed analysis to better understand the situation and to formulate an appropriate strategy.

Agreed that the contents of the report be noted.

7/22

Director of Children's Services – Verbal Update

M Jarrett reminded the Forum that the DfE had confirmed its cessation of the School Improvement Grant Fund which would be reduced to 50% in 2022/23 and then to 0% in 2023/24. Ongoing



conversations with both Primary and Secondary Schools would be required to ascertain any mitigations which could be required.

In addition, he advised on the latest position with SEND Transportation. A report had been submitted to Cabinet on Wednesday 12th January 2022 in relation to this matter. It was proposed that the 'mini-competition / tender' part of the DPS which was currently in place, would cease and the current provision extended accordingly until the end of the summer period (i.e. no break in service). Running in parallel to this process would be a new procurement exercise to build a framework for services required on SEND Transport going forward.

The Chair sought assurance that the current service providers were aware of these proposals, as they could be inclined to 'walk away' and secure longer-term contracts elsewhere.

M Jarrett advised that as soon as the statutory Scrutiny Call-in period had expired (on 18th January), all of the contractors would be written to and advised of the proposals to extend contract until the summer. Depending upon feedback received, mitigations would be put in place to ensure continuity of service.

8/22 Schools Forum Member Training – Verbal Update

The Clerk advised that, following a request made by the Chair / Vice-Chair, it was intended that training for Forum Members be established to help support Members in their role on the Forum.

In consultation with the Chair / Vice-Chair, separate training dates would be agreed, outside of the agreed Forum Meeting dates, in the near future. Members would be consulted to help shape the areas to be covered by the training. Details would be circulated to all Members in due course.

9/22 AOB

The dates of future Forum meetings were noted, as set out below:-



14 March 2022
20 June 2022

**The Next Meeting of Schools Forum: 14th March 2022 @
2.30pm.**

Location: TBC.

Meeting ended at 3.22pm

Contact: democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk

