



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **SCHOOLS FORUM** will be held virtually
ON WEDNESDAY 12 OCTOBER 2022 AT 10.00 AM

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan Parsonage', with a long, sweeping flourish at the end.

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive

Published on 4 October 2022

Note: This meeting will be held virtually via Microsoft Teams, please contact Democratic Services if you wish to participate virtually. The meeting also can be watched live using the following link: <https://youtu.be/LxupRYHrYMI>

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Our Vision
<i>A great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business</i>
Enriching Lives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champion excellent education and enable our children and young people to achieve their full potential, regardless of their background. • Support our residents to lead happy, healthy lives and provide access to good leisure facilities to enable healthy choices for everyone. • Engage and empower our communities through arts and culture and create a sense of identity for the Borough which people feel part of. • Support growth in our local economy and help to build business.
Providing Safe and Strong Communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and safeguard our children, young and vulnerable people. • Offer quality care and support, at the right time, to reduce the need for long term care. • Nurture our communities: enabling them to thrive and families to flourish. • Ensure our Borough and communities remain safe for all.
Enjoying a Clean and Green Borough
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play as full a role as possible to achieve a carbon neutral Borough, sustainable for the future. • Protect our Borough, keep it clean and enhance our green areas for people to enjoy. • Reduce our waste, promote re-use, increase recycling and improve biodiversity. • Connect our parks and open spaces with green cycleways.
Delivering the Right Homes in the Right Places
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer quality, affordable, sustainable homes fit for the future. • Ensure the right infrastructure is in place, early, to support and enable our Borough to grow. • Protect our unique places and preserve our natural environment. • Help with your housing needs and support people, where it is needed most, to live independently in their own homes.
Keeping the Borough Moving
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and improve our roads, footpaths and cycleways. • Tackle traffic congestion and minimise delays and disruptions. • Enable safe and sustainable travel around the Borough with good transport infrastructure. • Promote healthy alternative travel options and support our partners in offering affordable, accessible public transport with good transport links.
Changing the Way We Work for You
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be relentlessly customer focussed. • Work with our partners to provide efficient, effective, joined up services which are focussed around our customers. • Communicate better with customers, owning issues, updating on progress and responding appropriately as well as promoting what is happening in our Borough. • Drive innovative, digital ways of working that will connect our communities, businesses and customers to our services in a way that suits their needs.
Be the Best We Can Be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be an organisation that values and invests in all our colleagues and is seen as an employer of choice. • Embed a culture that supports ambition, promotes empowerment and develops new ways of working. • Use our governance and scrutiny structures to support a learning and continuous improvement approach to the way we do business. • Be a commercial council that is innovative, whilst being inclusive, in its approach with a clear focus on being financially resilient. • Maximise opportunities to secure funding and investment for the Borough. • Establish a renewed vision for the Borough with clear aspirations.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM

Schools Representatives	
Maintained Schools	
Carol Simpson	School Business Manager - Colleton Primary
Corrina Gillard	Primary Head - Emmbrook Infant
Brian Prebble	Primary Head - Rivermead Primary - Vice Chairman
Liz Woodards	School Business Manager - Hawkedon Primary
Vacancy	Primary representative
Vacancy	Primary representative
Amanda Woodfin	Headteacher - Bulmershe School
Academies	
Ali Brown	Primary Head - Nine Mile Ride Primary
Julia Mead	School Business Manager - St Sebastian's CE Primary
Luke Henderson	Primary Academy Head - Sonning C of E Primary
Ben Godber	Academy Head - Bohunt School
Derren Gray	Academy Head - The Piggott School
Paul Miller	Trustee - The Circle Trust - Chairman
Shirley Austin	Academy Head - The Forest School
Debra Briault	Academy representative – The Circle Trust
Vacancy	Secondary representative
Special Schools	
Sara Attra	Special School Head - Addington School
PRU	
Iain Thomas	Pupil Referral Unit Head - Foundry College
Non-School Representatives	
Early Years	
Kerrie Clifford	Maintained Nursery Head - Ambleside Centre
Ian Morgan	Early Years Representative
Wokingham Borough Council	
Morag Malvern	Wokingham Borough Council
Sal Thirlway	Assistant Director for Learning and Partnerships
Post 16 Education	
Paul Gibson	Head - Maiden Erlegh School

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
1		ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN To elect a Chairman for the 2022/23 academic year.	
2		ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN To elect a Vice-Chairman for the 2022/23 academic year.	
3		APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence.	
4		MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 July 2022.	7 - 16
4.1		Matters arising	Verbal Report
5		DECLARATION OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest.	
6	None Specific	2022/23 REVENUE MONITORING REPORT To receive and consider a report outlining the schools' current financial position.	17 - 30
7	None Specific	2022/23 HIGH NEEDS BLOCK UPDATE To receive and consider a report containing an update on the 2022/23 High Needs Block.	31 - 38
8	None Specific	DSG SAFETY VALVE To receive and consider the DSG Safety Valve report.	39 - 48
9	None Specific	2023/24 BUDGET PLANNING To receive and consider the 2023/24 Budget Planning report.	49 - 54
10	None Specific	2023/24 SCHOOLS BUDGET CONSULTATION	55 - 60
11	None Specific	FORWARD PLAN To consider the Schools Forum Forward Plan for the remainder of the academic year.	61 - 62

Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent

A Supplementary Agenda will be issued by the Chief Executive if there are any other items to consider under this heading.

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
SCHOOLS FORUM
HELD ON 6 JULY 2022 FROM 10.00 AM TO 11.55 AM**

Schools Representatives

Carol Simpson	School Business Manager - Colleton Primary
Corrina Gillard	Primary Head - Emmbrook Infant
Brian Prebble	Primary Head - Rivermead Primary - Vice Chairman
Liz Woodards	School Business Manager - Hawkedon Primary
Ali Brown	Primary Head - Nine Mile Ride Primary
Julia Mead	School Business Manager - St Sebastian's CE Primary
Derren Gray	Academy Head - The Piggott School
Paul Miller	Trustee - The Circle Trust - Chairman
Shirley Austin	Academy Head - The Forest School
Debra Briault	Secondary Academy School Representative
Sara Attra	Special School Head - Addington School

Non School Representatives

Morag Malvern	Wokingham Borough Council
Sal Thirlway	Assistant Director for Learning and Partnerships

Also Present

Piers Brunning, Schools Planning Manager
Ian Gough, Energy Officer
Hayley Rees, Category Manager, Children's & Young People Commissioning
Daniel Robinson, SEND Consultant
Lynne Samuel, Finance Business Partner - Childrens Services
Madeleine Shopland, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist
Katherine Vernon, Schools Finance Manager
Jenny Hooper, Senior SEN Officer
Casey Streat, Energy Projects Assistant

44 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Luke Henderson, Ginny Rhodes and Amanda Woodfin.

45 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16 March 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

45.1 Matters Arising

The Chair indicated that the Executive Member for Children's Services, Councillor Prue Bray, had offered to attend future meetings of the Schools Forum.

Lynne Samuel provided an update regarding the National Funding Formula – Growth Fund and also Falling Rolls. A query had been raised previously through Schools Forum on the National Funding Formula and inequity for maintained schools and academies around Growth Fund. Information reviewed had not suggested a particular issue. However, in order to ensure this was further explored, it was proposed that the issue be further

reviewed as part of the work of the Schools Block Task & Finish Group at the early stages of 2023/24 budget setting.

The Forum was informed that a further consultation had been published on the National Funding Formula which ran until early September([Implementing the direct national funding formula - Department for Education - Citizen Space](#)). Carol Simpson, who had originally raised the query regarding the National Funding Formula confirmed that the new consultation document had referred to her concern. She questioned whether guidance on implications of the questions, particularly around the High Needs Block, would be provided. Lynne Samuel commented that she would look at this once officers had digested the consultation. Carol Simpson confirmed that she was of the view that the issue could be considered by the Task and Finish Group. If schools did not fully understand the implications, it would be difficult to respond. Carol Simpson indicated that the Institute of School Business Leaders had previously provided guidance. It was proposed that a group of Forum members meet online in early September to discuss responding to the consultation. Carol Simpson, Julia Mead, and Derren Gray agreed to be part of this.

With regards to the High Needs Block, a series of online weekly training sessions would be run from mid-August onwards to improve knowledge and information sharing. Colleagues elsewhere in the Council had also expressed an interest in attending and sessions would initially be limited to six attendees to enable greater focus. Dates would be published shortly, and information provided as to how to book on to the sessions. A request had been received from other Council colleagues for a general training session on Schools Finance. Forum members would also be welcome to attend this training.

It was proposed that a Task and Finish Group for High Needs Budget Setting for 2023/24 be established.

In response to a question from the Chairman regarding external Foundry funding and the High Needs Block, Lynne Samuel clarified that there was not a large amount of current income which came into Foundry College from outside the Borough. The predominance of its funding came from the Wokingham High Needs Block. Officers would be meeting later in the week with Foundry to understand how the year's finances were progressing against assumptions made at the budget setting process.

Education Welfare Services and an explanation of how the team was structured and functioned, had been a long standing matter arising. The Chairman requested that this be brought to the Forum's October meeting. Sal Thirlway commented that the White Paper had been issued which made significant changes to the Education Welfare Service, so the October meeting was timely.

Brian Prebble provided an update on falling rolls. The Admissions Working Group had looked at the different formula and whether any schools would meet that criteria. None currently did. The criteria was very strict and a pattern over three years was required. Katherine Vernon added that in order to receive funding it was expected that a school's numbers would get back to normal after a maximum of three years. The Chairman commented that the demographic shift in the Borough was having a detrimental impact particularly on primary schools as the younger population was moving out of the town centre to newer development areas. Sal Thirlway commented that the development of the Admissions Group would help to keep the issue on the agenda. The Chairman asked that

the Admissions Group consider innovative approaches to mitigate what is a growing problem.

46 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

47 ENERGY TEAM PRICING UPDATE

The Forum received an update on energy pricing.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- Ian Gough provided an update on the energy framework and contracts in place. He advised that organisations were in a much worse situation with regards to energy than they had been in the previous year. Very significant price increases had been seen in the energy contracts.
- The Council had just tied into a 2022/23 financial year energy contract that was an increase on electricity of 57% and 199% on gas. However, this was from a very low starting position and was against an energy market place which had gone up by 875% in the final three months of the previous financial year.
- The situation was unprecedented and was likely to persist for some time. It was painting a picture for being more energy efficient and an increasing use of renewable energy. By April 2024 it was anticipated that prices would double again.
- All schools had been contacted via a newsletter regarding the changes.
- The Chairman questioned whether guidelines had been shared with the maintained schools on how they should build their budgets for 2022/23 and 2023/24. Katherine Vernon indicated that schools had been informed and asked to build an increase in energy costs into their budgets. However, figures had since further increased.
- Ian Morgan, representing the Early Years providers, asked whether the nurseries could come under the Council's contract if it was more favourable for them. Ian Gough commented that work was currently being done to formalise the arrangements with subsidiary organisations. He offered to discuss the situation further outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the update on energy pricing be noted.

48 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO SWAG

Sal Thirlway provided an update on the School Admissions Working Group.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- The Group would be chaired by Brian Prebble. It would replace a Task and Finish Group which had been looking at school admission arrangements for the local authority and the Borough.
- Reporting to the Borough Education Partnership, the Group's focus would be expanded to take into account broader issues as they related to sufficiency of pupil places and school capacity. The Group's terms of reference would be amended to reflect this.
- Sal Thirlway advised that in addition to the current membership, two places would be made available to members of the Schools Forum, because of its financial links.
- It was proposed that the membership from the Task and Finish Group that were also members of Schools Forum, carry over; Sara Attra, Ben Godber, Amanda Woodfin, Shirley Austin, and Brian Prebble. Hester Wooller would also join the

Group. Brian Prebble requested an additional primary representative. Corrina Gillard agreed to fill this vacancy.

- The Working Group's objectives were noted.
- Sara Attra proposed that there be a representative from SEND. Jenny Hooper volunteered to fill this vacancy.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Admissions Task and Finish Group be dissolved;
- 2) it be noted that the School Admissions Working Group had been established;
- 3) it be noted that Sara Attra, Brian Prebble, Amanda Woodfin, Shirley Austin, Ben Godber, Carina Godber, Hester Wooller and Jenny Hooper would be members of the School Admissions Working Group.

49 2021/22 REVENUE OUTTURN REPORT

The Forum considered the 2021/22 Revenue Outturn Report.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- Lynne Samuel advised that no changes were expected but the report was still subject to external audit.
- At the time of budget setting, a deficit of £2.6million was anticipated on the DSG for the 2021/22 financial year. Outturn for the year showed a net overspend of £4.2million, representing 2.6% of total DSG income for the year. Together with the brought forward deficit balance, the cumulative DSG deficit at the end of 2021/22 sat at £10.04million.
- With regards to the Schools Block, key movements in the forecast were around Academy recoupment. The final academy recoupment adjustments for the year were £94,000 below that anticipated in the forecast, largely due to timings of business rates adjustments relating to school conversions. There had been no impact on any individual schools.
- There had been an underspend of £84,000 for de-delegation supply cover.
- The outturn on maternity supply cover was £84,000 lower than forecast, with an overall outturn of £316,000 for the year. This was paying for school staff (teaching and support staff) that were on maternity and paternity leave, with forecasting difficult in advance of payroll processing. Consideration was being given as to how mid-year reporting on this issue could be improved. The funding formula in terms of how de-delegated budgets were set for that item, had been amended slightly. The same level of underspend was not anticipated in the future but would be kept under review. Forum members were reminded that a commitment had been made to undertake an annual review of de-delegated items as part of the budget setting process.
- The Chairman questioned how much had been allocated to this year's budget for maternity and sickness in total, considering there was an £84,000 underspend last year. Katherine Vernon indicated that there was £281,000 for 2023/24. Lynne Samuel stated that October was the mid-point of the year. The October meeting revenue monitoring report would include information about actual costs against the budget and assumptions made.
- The final Growth Fund expenditure for the year was in line with that expected in the forecast. Whilst there had technically been an overspend in year, this had been

planned for and the overspend had been funded from brought forward Growth Fund reserves.

- Derren Gray commented that with regards to the Growth Fund, this had come in under the anticipated figure because additional places in primary and secondary had not been actioned. It was clarified that the overspend relative to the in year planned figure was £69,000, which had come out of reserves.
- With regards to the High Needs Block, the outturn on the High Needs Block had reported a £4.3million overspend against allocated funding of £23.4million (18.5%). An increased level of activity had been assumed in the last year but the number of funded EHCP top ups had been significantly higher. Budget setting assumptions were set on a 14% increase in total funded EHCPs over the course of the year, however the increase actually experienced had been almost 30%.
- The proportion of funded EHCP top ups out of Borough had increased from 23% to 28%.
- Lynne Samuel referred to the cost profile in some detail. The complexity of need and activity was driving the pressure.
- It was noted that inflationary requests from independent and non-maintained providers were considered as part of contractual arrangements in place. Requests were reviewed based on cost analysis providers must submit, with uplifts capped in line with the South West SEND Framework that WBC was part of. The contractual inflation impact for Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools was £20,000 for the 2021/22 academic year, which represented around 0.2% of total spend.
- The Chairman asked what assumptions had been taken for inflation on independent and non-maintained schools for 2022/23.
- Lynne Samuel highlighted balances and reserves. The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) Regulations 2020 had altered the way in which local authorities were required to account for DSG deficits. This required the establishment of a new statutorily ring-fenced unusable reserve – the Dedicated Schools Grant Adjustment Account.

RESOLVED: That the 2021/22 Revenue Outturn Report be noted.

50 2022/23 REVENUE MONITORING REPORT

The Forum received the 2022/23 Revenue Monitoring Report which provided an update on the 2022/23 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) forecast, as at 31st May 2022.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- At the time of budget setting a deficit of £4.1million was anticipated on the DSG for 2022/23 largely as a result of ongoing financial challenges within the High Needs Block.
- The current forecast had moved by £400,000 and now projected a deficit of £4.5million.
- The movement represented updated assumptions within the High Needs Block on changes for the new academic year in September, along with increases in activity, particularly for those in Early Years Foundation Stage and entering Key Stage 1.
- The Forum was informed that the cumulative forecast for the DSG now projected a cumulative deficit of £14.5million to 31st March 2023. However, there were significant key risks over and above that, of £1.7million.

- With regards to the High Needs Block, there had been increases in expenditure forecast and also refinement of income forecast which partly offset the cost increases.
- Within special schools there had been an increase in the assumption forecast for Addington because of a number of existing pupils moving banding levels at the point of review. The Council was committed to ensuring the financial sustainability of Addington, recognising it as a vital local provision within the SEND Strategy, and joint work would continue to inform early planning for the 2023/24 financial year and beyond.
- There was a forecast increase of £223,000 for Post 16 full time education colleges due to increasing numbers. Lynne Samuel commented that there were some older individuals within the cohort where costed arrangements for the 2022/23 academic year were not yet known. These had been included in the forecast on the assumption that existing costs would continue to the end of the financial year. There was therefore some scope for this forecast to reduce.
- The Forum considered the key risks to the High Needs Block forecast. There were a number of unplaced pupils for September and a considerable amount of work was being undertaken to resolve this. Some of these pupils had current funded top ups so had been included in the forecast with their current setting and funding arrangements. There was both risk and opportunities around this. However, there was an increasing number of very young children coming through that did not currently have a funding arrangement in place.
- Activity in the SEND service had increased significantly. Current indications from assessment activity were for potentially an additional 30 EHCPs per month. Profiling those across the year at a range of average costs indicated a potential in-year risk not currently included in the forecast of around £1.7million.
- Pupil level information informed the forecast. This process was largely manual and time consuming. Assumptions were then built into this. For the first time at this point in the year, Officers had been able to build in phased transfer information into the forecast from September.
- It was noted that in April 2021 there were 4 Early Years funded top ups in mainstream settings. This had since increased to 46 by April 2022.
- In early June a snapshot showed of 128 individuals within the statutory assessment process, 70 of these were Early Years.
- Growth fund and contingencies was still subject to review as place planning requirements are worked through.
- Derren Gray advised that the figure for Piggott for the Growth Fund forecast for July 2022, should read 46 not 34. He went on to question whether the five twelfths allocation had been paid to the primary and secondary schools and was informed that they had.
- The Chairman suggested that the £1.7million should be shown, either built into the forecast or as a separate line. He asked that the date be added to the header of the tables in future.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report, update on the forecast position for the 2022/23 financial year along with associated risks, be noted.

51 2023/24 BUDGET PLANNING

The Forum was updated on 2023/24 Budget Planning.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- The report provided a high level timeline of budget planning for the next financial year. The Primary Unit Funding and the Secondary Unit Funding figures were anticipated in July.
- An initial meeting would hopefully be held with the Task and Finish Group on the Schools' Block prior to the summer break.
- The principles behind the funding of all four blocks would be presented to Schools Forum, prior to Christmas.
- Katherine Vernon asked that those members of the Schools Block Task and Finish Group present at the meeting, remain members of the Task and Finish Group, which was chaired by Derren Gray. A positive response was received.
- Ian Morgan confirmed he was happy to continue to Chair the Early Years Task and Finish Group. He went on to refer to a Early Years national funding consultation. Officers indicated that they would look into this. The Chairman asked that Kerrie Clifton and Karen Edwards be asked if they wished to continue to be members of the Task and Finish Group.
- It was proposed that a High Needs Task and Finish Group be established to progress early discussion on principles for 2023/24 budget setting. Sara Attra, Corrina Gillard, and Debra Briault agreed to be part of this Group. Iain Thomas indicated that Foundry's Business Manager, Raj Arava, would also participate.
- The Chairman sought clarification of the disapplication of the half percent inter Block transfer and the Local Authority's position on this. Sal Thirlway commented that there would be transparency around the authority's intentions around the disapplication.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

52 HIGH NEEDS BLOCK & SEND IIP UPDATE

The Forum considered the High Needs Block and Send IIP update.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- Sal Thirlway indicated that following the SEND written statement of action revisit, there was one element which was deemed to be not sufficiently progressed; transition arrangements into adulthood. Work had been carried out on an accelerated performance plan regarding this. An action plan covering six key areas had been developed. Work had been carried out with the DFE SEND Advisor and other colleagues as action against each areas was progressed. A review meeting with the DFE and NHS England would take place next week. Sal Thirlway was satisfied that progress was being made.
- The Council commissioned Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy and Physiotherapy for Children and Young People with an Education Care and Health Plan (EHCP) where therapy had been identified in the Education section of the plan.
- Dan Robinson advised that the tender and bids were in for the Children and Young People's Integrated Therapy service. The process had been elongated due to questions asked by the Panel making the decision. He confirmed that this would impact on the start date.
- Officers referred to the Foundry review in detail. The Forum was advised that the review approach in partnership with Foundry College had been progressing well with stage 1 now completed. Through the IIP, with support from commissioning and Foundry a one-year SLA would be in place by early summer. Dan Robinson felt that this would help with budget planning.

- Lynne Samuel added that the budget and funding for Foundry that year had been set jointly, looking at various factors. A commitment was in place for further work with Foundry to further understand the impact of no longer de-delegating the outreach service and moving to a direct charge system. Officers would be meeting with Foundry to discuss progress.
- Iain Thomas added that the first SLA meeting had been held. Foundry had outlined its concerns and he hoped that an SLA would be in place by September.
- The Forum discussed the outreach service.
- Sal Thirlway referred to local provision planning and what was required in the Borough to support the challenges faced.
- The Forum was informed that conversations had been had with the ESFA and the DFE regarding Wokingham's inclusion in the Safety Valve Programme. The programme was offered to local areas which that faced challenges around its High Needs Block. It would be known by September whether Wokingham had been successful in being accepted in the programme.

RESOLVED: That the update on key programme actions and the Safety Valve Programme be noted.

53 MAINTAINED SCHOOL BALANCES

The Forum considered a report regarding Maintained School Balances.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- Overall maintained balances had increased significantly for the second year in a row. Maintained school balances stood at £6m as at 31st March 2022, an increase of £1.26million on those held at the start of the 2021/22 financial year.
- An update on the scheme for financing schools would be brought to the Forum's October meeting.
- Under guidance given to Local Authorities on Schemes for Financing Schools there is a mechanism to claw back excess surplus balances. Wokingham does not currently have this mechanism in place.
- The Chairman commented that it would be useful to receive information regarding the published admission numbers and current roll numbers to understand if challenges were driven by lower pupil numbers.
- The position statement was at 31 March 2022, and as the situation changed, for example rapidly increasing energy costs, this would be kept under review.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

54 SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP REVIEW

The Forum considered a report regarding the Schools Forum membership review.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- Schools Forum was required to undertake an annual review of its membership to ensure that it continued to have a representation that was indicative of the schools' make up in the Borough.
- It was anticipated that All Saints Primary School would become an academy by 1 September 2022, and the number of pupils on roll detailed in the report reflected this change. The only difference from the last academic year, was that one primary school had changed to academy status, which represented 239 pupils.

- It was recommended that for 2022/23 the Forum retain the current phase and type member structure.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the information provided for a decision on its membership for the next academic year be considered by Schools Forum;
- 2) the membership structure as currently established be retained.

55 FORWARD PLAN

The Forum considered the Forward programme.

The Chairman noted that it would have been Ginny Rhodes' last meeting as a Forum member. The Forum requested that their thanks be passed on to Ginny for her contribution over a number of years.

RESOLVED: That the forward programme be noted.

Matters Arising:

1. Group of Forum members to meet with Officers in early September to discuss the National Funding Formula consultation.
2. Education Welfare service – item to be brought to October Forum meeting.
3. Falling rolls - The Chairman asked that the Admissions Group consider innovative approaches to mitigate what is a growing problem.
4. Maternity and sickness - The October meeting revenue monitoring report would include information about actual costs against the budget and assumptions made.
5. Revenue monitoring - The Chairman suggested that the £1.7million should be shown, either built into the forecast or as a separate line. He asked that the date be added to the header of the tables in future.
6. The principles behind the funding of all four blocks would be presented to Schools Forum, prior to Christmas.
7. The Chairman asked that Kerrie Clifton and Karen Edwards be asked if they wished to continue to be members of the Early Years Task and Finish Group.
8. An update on the scheme for financing schools would be brought to the Forum's October meeting.
9. The Chairman commented that it would be useful to receive information regarding the published admission numbers and current roll numbers to understand if challenges were driven by lower pupil numbers.

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TITLE	2022/23 Revenue Monitoring Report
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Schools Forum on 12 October 2022
WARD	None Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Director, Children's Services - Helen Watson

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

This reports forms part of regular reporting to Schools Forum, informing areas of statutory decision making and improving visibility and consultation on wider Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) financial matters.

RECOMMENDATION

Schools Forum is asked to note the contents of the report, update on the forecast position for the 2022/23 financial year along with associated risks.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report provides Schools Forum with an update on the 2022/23 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) forecast, as at 30th September 2022.

An in-year deficit of £5.7m is projected, with the budget pressure continuing to be within the High Needs Block. Taken with the brought forward deficit of £10m, a forecast cumulative deficit of £15.7m is now projected to 31st March 2023.

The current in-year forecasts represents an adverse movement of £1.2m on the previous projection reported to Schools Forum in July, with the main movements being:

- £108k Schools Block
- £1.1m High Needs Block

At the last meeting we flagged a key risk of circa £1.7m being driven largely by a continued increase in the number of EHCPs and complexity of need. The movement in the High Needs Block forecast of £1.1m reflects that risk converting to actual commitments as movements associated with the new academic year are worked through. Further risk remains however as information continues to be reviewed and as yet no evidence of slowing in EHC activity.

2022/23 Revenue Monitoring Report

01. Purpose of the Report

This report provides Schools Forum with an update on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) revenue budget forecast for the 2022/23 financial year, as at 30th September 2022.

02. Recommendation

Schools Forum is asked to note the contents of this report, updated on the forecast position for the 2022/23 financial year along with associated risks.

03. Background

This report forms part of the regular updates to Schools Forum on the anticipated outturn for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), with explanation for significant variances.

At the July 2022 meeting of Schools Forum a forecast deficit of £4.5m was reported for the 2022/23 financial year, due to continued pressure within the High Needs Block. This was an increase of £400k on the deficit anticipated at the time of budget setting.

A further risk of £1.7m was highlighted in relation to the High Needs Block, given the continued rise in the number of EHCPs and provision challenges locally.

04. DSG Forecast as at 30th September 2022

As at 30th September, the DSG forecast for the 2022/23 financial year now reports an in-year deficit of £5.7m. Against the £4.5m previously reported, this represents an adverse movement of £1.2m.

The movement represents the actual changes for the new academic year, plus assumptions within the High Needs Block of increases in activity.

05. Key Variances & Risks

The main reasons for the £1.2m adverse movement on forecast are set out below, along with further information and key risks within each block of the DSG.

Schools Block

In-year pressure on the Schools Block of £255k relates to planned and anticipated use of Growth Fund underspend held in reserves from previous years, and an

anticipated underspend for the de-delegated service for staff cover for parental leave.

Growth Fund

Forecast spend against the growth fund continues to be updated in light of ongoing place planning challenges. The current forecast is an increase in that reported previously but remains within the overall growth fund resources held. Contingency remains in figures of £118k for secondary and £91k for primary for the current financial year. Further detail is provided in Appendix B.

De-delegated Services

Analysis of the spend to date on parental leave reports that £112k was spent in the first 6 months of the year. If costs continue in the same way, there will be an underspend of £57k against the total planned for through the de-delegated model. Costs are however not necessarily linear and this will be kept under review as the year progresses.

£55k brought forward and held on behalf of maintained schools for contingency purposes remains in reserve, with no commitments to date.

High Needs Block

The in-year deficit on the HNB is now forecast at £5.5m, an increase of £1.1m on that previously reported. The increase reflects the continued increase in the number of EHCPs and challenges in sufficiency of local provision.

The HNB forecast takes account of current known EHCP top-ups and phased transfer information as it is currently available for September 2022. The key driver remains an increasing number of EHCPs, and specialist placements out of borough as Wokingham schools are at capacity.

HNB Income

HNB income has been adjusted mid-year to reflect the import/export adjustment updated for the January 2022 census. The import/export adjustment calculates the number of EHCP pupils placed out of borough (export) compared to those from out of borough that are placed in Wokingham schools (import). Due to lack of local provision, Wokingham continues to be a net exporter of pupils. The provisional figure included in our budget was based on the adjustment last year of -£636k, and has been increased by £336k making a total reduction of -£972k.

Wokingham Mainstream Schools

Forecast increase of £248k. This is due to an increase in the number of pupils in Wokingham schools with a funded EHCP. Increases are being seen across Early Years, Primary and Secondary but, as previously reported, the largest proportional increase continuing to be seen in the youngest age group.

Special Schools

Forecast increase of £403k, which reflects:

£115k – increase in funding profile of Addington pupils, including estimation of revenue cost associated with additional class from January 2023

£339k – Increase in both the number pupils funded in INMSS pupils, and the complexity profile for the new academic year with new pupils in higher bands than those leaving
(£52k) – reduction for Chiltern Way for recoupment of pupils placed from out of borough

Top-up funding for a special free school that was originally forecasted under INMSS has now been reflected more accurately under 'out of borough'. While this has not impacted on the overall HNB forecast, it represents a circa £164k (9 pupils) movement between the 2 categories.

Post 16 FE Colleges

Forecast increase of £65k, as a result of increasing pupil numbers beyond that assumed in the previous forecast. 21 pupils left at end of academic year, whereas 30 new pupils started over and above what was assumed in figures.

Key risks to the HNB forecast:

1. Additional activity – figures reported are based on best information available at the half way point of the financial year. As assessment activity shows no sign of slowing it is likely that both the number and cost of funded EHCPs will further increase.
2. Therapy contract – procurement process ongoing and therefore confidential, however with continued increasing activity across the system an increase in costs on previous contracted levels remains a possibility.

Early Years Block

No in-year variance to budget is forecast on the Early Years Block at this time.

Early Years – Provider Reserve Fund

Contingency of £163k was set aside as part of 2022/23 budget setting, to allow for changes in activity during the year and protect against over allocation on set rates. At this early stage of the year the forecast assumes that this will be fully spent or clawed back by the DfE and therefore no variance is reported.

Final Allocation for 2021/22

As previously reported, we were anticipating a clawback of funding in July 2022 for the previous financial year. We actually received additional funding of £206k due to the way the DfE used census data through out the year for calculating our allocation. In March 2022 we reported a reduction in our allocation of £397k, which was partially reversed when our final adjustment was calculated.

Given the challenging financial position across the education system, and that faced by individual providers, proposals for use of the funds will be discussed with the Early Years Task & Finish Group over the coming weeks and reported back to Schools Forum in December.

Central Schools Services Block

No variance or significant risks identified at this time.

06. **Summary**

The attached appendices provide further detail across each of the four DSG blocks.

Appendix A – 2021/22 DSG Revenue Monitoring by Block

Appendix B – Growth Fund

Appendix C – Key Activity Data

Contact:	Katherine Vernon Schools Finance Manager
Email:	katherine.vernon@wokingham.gov.uk

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Appendix A - DSG Forecast Summary 2022/23

				A	B	C
	Description	2022/23 Budget £,000	Budget Changes £,000	Revised Budget £,000	May Forecast £,000	September Forecast £,000
Schools Block	TOTAL Income	(129,842)	-	(129,842)	(129,842)	(129,842)
	TOTAL Expenditure	129,842	-	129,842	129,989	130,097
	TOTAL Schools Block Net Expenditure	-	-	-	146	255
High Needs Block	TOTAL Income	(25,779)	-	(25,779)	(25,996)	(25,660)
	TOTAL Expenditure	29,642	-	29,642	30,340	31,110
	TOTAL High Needs Block Net Expenditure	3,863	-	3,863	4,344	5,450
Early Years Block	TOTAL Income	(11,289)	-	(11,289)	(11,289)	(11,654)
	TOTAL Expenditure	11,289	-	11,289	11,289	11,654
	TOTAL Early Years Block Net Expenditure	-	-	-	-	-
Central School Services Block	TOTAL Income	(995)	-	(995)	(995)	(995)
	TOTAL Expenditure	995	-	995	995	995
	TOTAL Central School Services Block Net Expenditure	(0)	-	(0)	(0)	(0)
Total DSG	TOTAL Income	(167,906)	-	(167,906)	(168,123)	(168,152)
	TOTAL Expenditure	171,769	-	171,769	172,613	173,857
	TOTAL 2022/23 Net Expenditure Deficit	3,863	-	3,863	4,490	5,705
Deficit Brought Forward					10,041	10,041
Cumulative Net Expenditure Deficit					14,531	15,746

Schools Block Budget 2022/23

				A	B	C
Category	Description	Original Budget £,000	Budget Changes £,000	Revised Budget £,000	May Forecast £,000	September Forecast £,000
Individual Schools Budget	Maintained Schools	48,908		48,908	48,908	48,908
	Academies	79,064		79,064	79,064	79,064
De-Delegation	Behaviour support services	0	-	-	-	-
	Support to UPEG and bilingual learners	0	-	-	-	-
	Licences/subscriptions - Capita Contract	-	-	-	-	-
	Staff costs – supply cover (maternity)	281	-	281	281	224
Other Centrally Held	Growth Fund	1,589	-	1,589	1,735	1,901
TOTAL Expenditure		129,842	-	129,842	129,989	130,097
DSG Allocation		(129,842)		(129,842)	(129,842)	(129,842)
TOTAL Income		(129,842)	-	(129,842)	(129,842)	(129,842)
2022/23 Net Expenditure (Surplus) / Deficit					146	255

High Needs Block Budget 2022/23

High Needs Block Budget 2022/23

					A	B	C
Category		Description	Original Budget £,000	Budget Changes £,000	Revised Budget £,000	May Forecast £,000	September Forecast £,000
Mainstream	Wokingham	Place Funding - Post-16	162	-	162	162	162
		Top-up Funding	3,439	-	3,439	3,405	3,654
	Out of Borough	Top-up Funding	224	-	224	220	258
Resource Bases	Wokingham	Place Funding	618	-	618	621	621
		Empty Place Funding	121	-	121	167	167
		Top-up Funding	919	-	919	1,011	992
	Out of Borough	Top-up Funding	423	-	423	224	224
Special Schools	Wokingham - Addington	Place Funding	2,550	-	2,550	2,550	2,634
		Top-up funding	4,161	-	4,161	4,497	4,528
	Wokingham - Chiltern Way	Place Funding	690	-	690	690	690
		Top-up funding	754	-	754	637	586
	Out of Borough	Top-up Funding	1,260	-	1,260	1,374	1,539
	Independent & Non-Maintained	Placements	9,600	-	9,600	9,600	9,775
Pupil Referral Unit	Wokingham	Foundry College	1,763	-	1,763	1,763	1,763
		Foundry College New Operating Model	-	-	-	-	
	Out of Borough	Top-up Funding	-	-	-	-	36
Post-16: FE & Colleges	Out of Borough	Top-up Funding	1,014	-	1,014	1,237	1,302
Hospital Education		Willow House Hospital Education	244	-	244	244	244
		Independent Hospital Education	20	-	20	20	20
Other		Therapies	676	-	676	826	826
		Support for inclusion	354	-	354	354	354
		Targeted Education (eg tutors, personal budgets)	500	-	500	588	588
		Inclusion Group Funding	150	-	150	150	150
TOTAL Expenditure			29,642	-	29,642	30,340	31,110
DSG Allocation			(25,779)		(25,779)	(25,996)	(25,660)
TOTAL Income			(25,779)	-	(25,779)	(25,996)	(25,660)
2022/23 Net Expenditure (Surplus) / Deficit			3,863			4,344	5,450

Early Years Block Budget 2022/23

				A	B	C	C - B
Category	Description	Original Budget £,000	Budget Changes £,000	Revised Budget £,000	May Forecast £,000	September Forecast £,000	Current Forecast to Previous Forecast £,000
Early Years Funding Formula	2 year olds	410	-	410	410	410	-
	3-4 year olds	9,437		9,437	9,437	9,798	361
	Maintained Nursery School	531	-	531	531	531	-
Grants	EYPP	42	-	42	42	60	17
	Disability Access Fund	56	-	56	56	42	(13)
Centrally retained	Centrally retained (2 yr olds)	17	-	17	17	17	-
	Centrally retained - 3 & 4 yr olds incl EY Inclusion Service contribution	533	-	533	533	533	-
	Centrally retained - Early Years Inclusion Funding for individual pupils	100	-	100	100	100	-
	Contingency - Provider Reserve Fund	163	-	163	163	163	-
TOTAL Expenditure		11,289	-	11,289	11,289	11,654	365
DSG Allocation		(11,289)		(11,289)	(11,289)	(11,654)	(365)
TOTAL Income		(11,289)	-	(11,289)	(11,289)	(11,654)	(365)

Central School Services Block Budget 2022/23

Category	Description	Original Budget £,000	Budget Changes £,000	A Revised Budget £,000	B May Forecast £,000	C September Forecast £,000	C - B Current Forecast to Previous Forecast £,000
Strategic and Regulation function	Inspection Workshop Equipment Secondary - Health & safty school trips	12	-	12	12	12	-
	Finance	117	-	117	117	117	-
	Contribution to the Children Director Services	162	-	162	162	162	-
Other	Capita Contracts	150	-	150	150	150	-
	SACRE	7	-	7	7	7	-
	Servicing of schools forums	4	-	4	4	4	-
	Schools Admissions services	232	-	232	232	232	-
	School Asset Management	49	-	49	49	49	-
	Education welfare service	117	-	117	117	117	-
	Licences for Maintained and academies	145	-	145	145	145	-
27 TOTAL Expenditure		995	-	995	995	995	0
DSG Allocation		(995)	0	(995)	(995)	(995)	-
TOTAL Income		(995)	0	(995)	(995)	(995)	0

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Appendix B
2022/23 Growth Fund Forecast
Forecast for October 2022

				Forecast	
				2022/23	
				Primary MPPL	4,265
				Secondary MPPL	5,525
Schools - New classes	MPPL 2022/23	AWPU 2023/24 (actual)	Funded Number of Places	2022/23 Forecast £	
Pre-existing secondary commitments from 2021/22					
Emmbrook Secondary	5,525	-	45	98,414	
Piggott School	5,525	-	25	54,674	
Bulmershe	5,525	-	15	32,805	
Waingels	5,525	-	21	45,927	
			106		
Secondary Contingency 2022/23					
Additional secondary places (Y7) for 2022/23 - contingency	5,525	-	30	39,366	
Additional secondary places (Y8) for 2022/23 - contingency	5,525	-	30	39,366	
Additional secondary places (Y9) for 2022/23 - contingency	5,525	-	30	39,366	
Secondary sector places for 2022/23					
Additional secondary places (Y7) for 2022/23 - Piggott	5,525	-	46	140,841	
Additional secondary places (Y7) for 2022/23 - St Crispins	5,525	-	100	306,177	
Additional secondary places (Y8) for 2022/23 - Emmbrook	5,525	-	30	91,853	
Additional secondary places (Y9) for 2022/23 - Bulmershe	5,525	-	15	45,927	
Secondary sector places for 2023/24					
Additional secondary places (Y7) for 2023/24 - Piggott		-	45		
Additional secondary places (Y7) for 2023/24 - St Crispins		-	30		
Additional secondary places (Y8) for 2023/24 - Emmbrook		-	30		
Additional secondary places (Y9) for 2023/24 - Bulmershe		-	15		
Secondary Contingency 2023/24					
Additional secondary places (Y7) for 2023/24 - contingency		-	30		
Additional secondary places (Y8) for 2023/24 - contingency		-	30		
Additional secondary places (Y9) for 2023/24 - contingency		-	30		
Additional secondary places (Y10) for 2023/24 - contingency		-	30		
Secondary TOTAL				934,715	
Pre-existing Primary commitments 2021/22					
Montague Park (From 01/06/2021 - Year 4 now Year 5)	4,265	-	30	50,647	
Montague Park (from 01/09/2021 - Y6)	4,265	-	30	50,647	
Keep Hatch Y6 (from October 2021)	4,265	-	30	50,647	
Primary sector places for 2022/23					
Highwood - reception class 2022/23	4,265	-	30	70,906	
Primary sector places for 2022/23					
Keep Hatch additional primary places Year 5 (from Sep 2022)	4,265	-	30	70,906	
Keep Hatch additional primary places Year 6 (from Sep 2022)	4,265	-	30	70,906	
All Saints additional Primary Places Y5 and Y6 (from June 2022)	4,265	-	30	101,294	
Alder Grove additional Y6 (1 term only)	4,265	-	30	30,388	
Additional primary places contingency Y5 (from Jan 2023)	4,265	-	30	30,388	
Additional primary places contingency Y6 (from Jan 2023)	4,265	-	30	30,388	
Farley Hill Expansion (Reception)	4,265	-	30	70,906	
Primary additional (Y5) class from January 2023	4,265	-	30	30,388	
Primary sector places for 2023/24					
Additional primary places contingency Y5 (from Sep 2023)		-	30		
Additional primary places contingency Y6 (from Sep 2023)		-	30		
Primary TOTAL				628,021	
Primary plus Secondary Growth TOTAL				1,562,736	
Basic Need: New and recently new (growing schools)					
Montague Park				46,000	
Alder Grove Primary				69,000	
Matthews Green Primary Pre Opening Grant (St Cecilia's) TBC				223,000	
				338,000	
Total Expenditure				1,900,736	
In year Growth Funding from Schools Block				1,589,000	
In year Overspend				311,736	
Reserves b/f				405,546	
Reserves c/f				93,810	
Contingency				209,261	

Basic Need and growing schools methodology
Dis-economy of scale (new classes funded from APT)

	Per pupil funding	Lump Sum	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Primary	250		80,500	67,500	54,000	40,500	27,000	31,000
Secondary	500		125,000	93,000	62,000	31,000		

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Agenda Item 7

TITLE	2022/23 High Needs Block Update
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Schools Forum on 12 October 2022
WARD	None Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Director, Children's Services - Helen Watson

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

This reports forms part of regular reporting to Schools Forum, informing areas of statutory decision making and improving visibility and consultation on wider Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) financial matters.

RECOMMENDATION

Schools Forum is asked to note the update on the HNB and the associated SEND IIP activity.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The report provides Schools Forum with an update on the High Needs Block, SEND Innovation & Improvement Programme and implications for the associated deficit management plan.

1 Background

At the time of budget setting in March 2022, initial projections indicated a £4.4m shortfall on High Needs Block resources for the 2022/23 financial year, with latest figures reporting an increased deficit position at £5.5m, as the number of children and young people in the borough with an EHCP continue to grow.

This report provides an update on the significant programme of work ongoing.

2 2022/23 Financial Position – Key Changes in Forecast

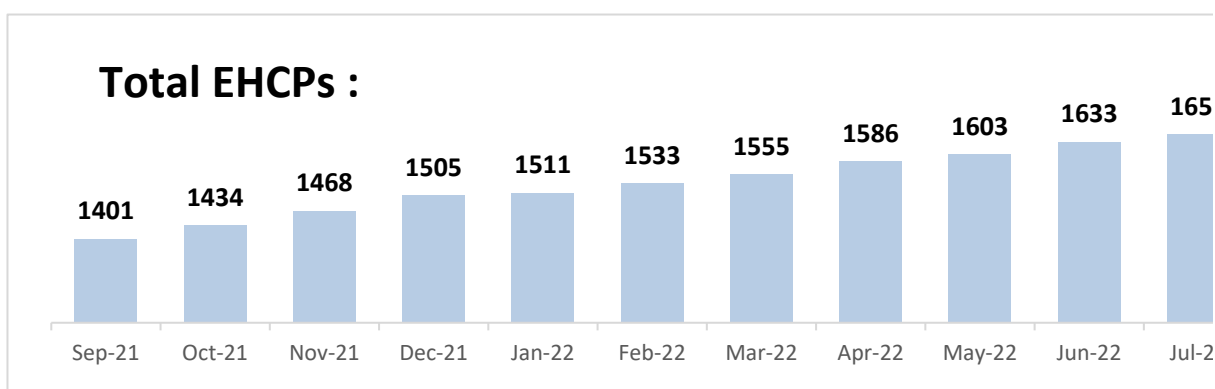
The in-year deficit on the HNB is now forecast at £5.5m, an increase of £1.1m on that previously reported. The increase reflects the continued increase in the number of EHCPs and challenges in sufficiency of local provision.

The HNB forecast takes account of current known EHCP top-ups and phased transfer information as it is currently available for September 2022. The key driver remains an increasing number of EHCPs, and specialist placements out of borough as Wokingham schools are at capacity.

3 Children & Young People with SEND in Wokingham

Levels of demand for support in relation to SEND have increased significantly over the past three years and the number of children and young people with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in Wokingham has risen significantly in recent years. While the main driver of this relates to the extension of duties brought about by the Children & Families Act 2014, this comes at a time when the local population is also on the increase.

As can be seen below, the number of children & young people in Wokingham with an EHCP has risen by over 19% since September 2021 (a single year rise), with the number above 1,670 (as at Aug 2022). The SEND Service are currently seeing around 30 requests to assess per month, with around 95% of those resulting in an EHCP. On the basis of this trajectory, it is predicted that over the coming years the number of children and young people with EHCPs is likely to increase significantly, as is the proportion of the school population with an EHCP.



Needs have continued to grow in relation to certain types of SEND and SEND-related issues, in particular Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), certain types of

Learning Disability (LD) and needs in relation to Social and Emotional Mental Health (SEMH). Practitioners also report that complexity of need is also increasing, as an increasing number of children and young people may require multiple types of support relating to several different types of need. Demand for SEND support in mainstream educational settings below the thresholds required for EHCPs has also grown substantially over the past three years, particularly in relation to SEMH.

As noted above EHC requests are expected to continue to grow. Scrutiny of assessment requests continues to be high and currently appropriate highlighting an increase to be reviewed through the Safety Valve work over the next few months.

4 SEND Innovation & Improvement Programme (*Delivery of HNB related activity*)

As reported to Forum previously, the SEND Innovation and Improvement programme is a large, ambitious programme which in its current arrangement runs until December 2022. Continuous improvement work will be continued beyond December 2022 as part of the Safety Valve programme, but it is anticipated that the partnership and governance arrangements will remain in place.

The SEND IIP delivers the goals and aims of the SEND Strategy through Four Working Groups, which mirror the Priorities set out in the SEND Strategy. These Groups are supported by the Coproduction Task and Finish Group. These arrangements are set out in Appendix A.

Key activity and outcomes undertaken via the SEND IIP Working Groups include:

1. More effective demand modelling and forecasting, to ensure the best possible services are in place to help manage demand in coming years
2. More effective activity and financial reporting, as a result of better systems and information management, and closer joint working between the Children's Services Finance Team and SEND professionals
3. More effective joint commissioning with other agencies including Health partners (e.g. in relation to a range of Integrated Therapies for children and young people such as speech and language, physiotherapy, occupational therapy), and taking advantage of efficiencies and economies of scale from commissioning some SEND services in partnership with other agencies and/or neighbouring local areas - where there is a clear value for money benefit to Wokingham residents
4. Several actions relating to a substantial review of the use of the Independent and Non-Maintained Sector, to reduce dependency on out of borough provision and ensure the best possible value for money is delivered through use of independent and non-maintained provision

5. Implementation of the “Ordinarily Available” project in Wokingham, designed to ensure a common standard of SEND support provision is available across Wokingham schools, and that a greater proportion of Wokingham children and young people with SEND needs have their needs met within local, mainstream education
6. A substantial review of Resource Base provision to ensure a viable financial model is in place to deliver the right SEND support locally to help ensure that SEND needs are met as far as possible in-borough and within mainstream education (this work is aligned with the “Ordinarily Available” project summarised above)
7. The focus in the Strategy on building local provision will also help to drive reductions in the costs of Home to School Transport and Travel Assistance associated with transportation of children and young people with SEND out of borough to access appropriate education placements
8. Review of key funding models used by the local authority to ensure sustainable funding models are in place for key SEND services in the coming years – e.g. a review of the Foundry funding Model, to help strengthen outreach provision, provision for post-16 pupils who require ongoing support, provision for re-engagement of children missing from education, and some specialist provision for primary pupils with SEMH and secondary pupils with ASD, and exploration of the development of on-site Alternative Provision for KS4 pupils in vocational and work-related learning
9. Improvements in local special provision – for example in relation to the new DfE- funded Free School at Winnersh Farm for children with Autism which will serve Reading and Wokingham, which will offer an additional 75 places to Wokingham children and young people

A high-level timeline outlining the work of the IIP is provided in Appendix B.

5 SEND Sufficiency Planning

Work on the SEND Sufficiency project has continued and has included very recent visits to schools with resource bases to inform the development of a report and key proposals.

A sufficiency review (completed in 2021) identified that:

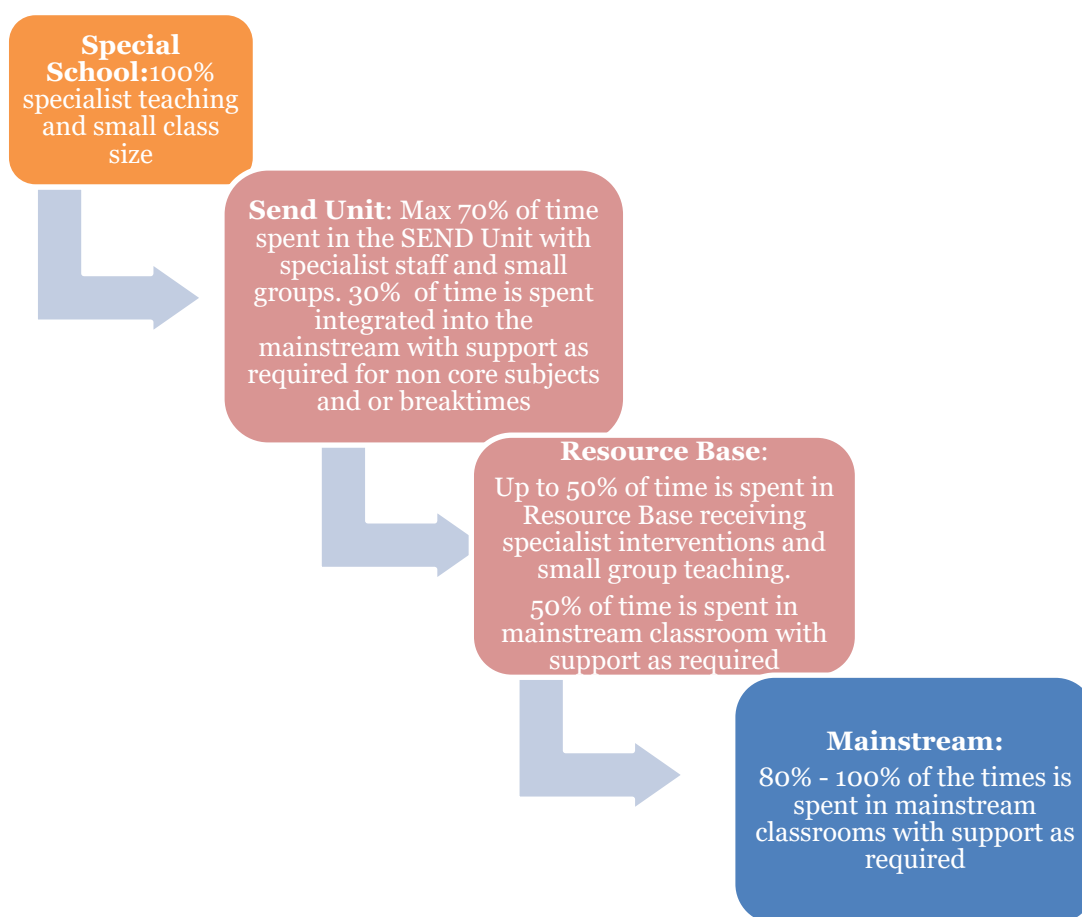
- Due to the significant increase in SEND population seen over the last 3 years there is not enough specialist provision to meet need.
- The number of SEND pupils is projected to continue to grow significantly action needs to be taken to meet the growing demand and ensure that appropriate provision is available locally to meet need and use HNB funding in the most effective way to ensure improved outcomes for CYP with SEND.
- As a result of lack of appropriate provision the LA commissions a disproportionate amount of high cost placements in the independent sector

Key findings of the most recent work (during 2022) have been:

- Places are underutilised in some provision because the needs of children requiring the places is more complex than the existing resource bases were designed for.
- As there has been few detailed service specifications in place, this has caused confusion about what each resource base provides, how it is delivered and managed and this has led to unclear decision making and confusion for families when making choices of schools.
- The LA has had very little strategic involvement in monitoring, shaping and developing the provision in line with the changing need of the SEND population.
- Focus of the SEND Strategy and significant progress is being made in terms of understanding the needs of the SEND population and developing programmes to deliver the specialist provision that is required and responding to the change in demand.
- The operational model of some provision is not in line with the DFE guidance
- The cost of funding empty places at resource base provision which are consistently under number is significant.
- There is a gap in provision for ASD and SEMH pupils in particular with high level of needs, but who would benefit from access to the curriculum for a smaller proportion of time (not specialist provision 100% of the time)
- There is a gap in provision between the resource bases and the special schools in Wokingham with an increasing demand for more complex needs.

A number of proposals based on a continuum of provision (as detailed below), to address the key findings are being finalised, but will look to move from the current model of resource base provision to the continuum of support to better meet demand and needs; explore the creation of new provision (SEND Units), which seek to close the gap between resource bases and special school provision; and implement robust accountability, monitoring and review mechanisms.

Proposals will be presented to Schools Forum at a future meeting. The LA will continue to work with existing schools operating Resource Bases on the development of these proposals.



6. Financial Outlook & Deficit Management Plan

Addressing the challenges on the High Needs Block in the short term is complex, particularly in light of the continuing significant rise in the number of children and young people with an EHCP.

The significant work being taken forward under the governance of the SEND IIP provides a platform for a longer term reduction of out of borough placements, the key to unlocking financial sustainability. Work continues across a range of actions in support of that overall objective.

The LA met with the ESFA on the 6th September to discuss the local financial position, the outline deficit management proposals, and assumptions underpinning longer term financial modelling in advance of formal Safety Valve discussions and this provided an opportunity to discuss modelling assumptions and inform the next stage of that work.

Detailed modelling continues to inform multi-year budget planning as part of the Safety Valve programme and further updates on this will be brought to the next, and subsequent meetings of Schools Forum.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)			
Next Financial Year (Year 2)			
Following Financial Year (Year 3)			

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

Cross-Council Implications (how does this decision impact on other Council services, including properties and priorities?)

Public Sector Equality Duty
Please confirm that due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty has been taken and if an equalities assessment has been completed or explain why an equalities assessment is not required.

Climate Emergency – This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030
Please state clearly what the impact of the decision being made would be on the Council's carbon neutral objective.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

List of Background Papers

Contact Sal Thirlway	Service Learning Achievement and Partnerships
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TITLE **DSG Safety Valve**

FOR CONSIDERATION BY Schools Forum on 12 October 2022

WARD None Specific;

LEAD OFFICER Director, Children's Services - Helen Watson

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

This reports forms part of regular reporting to Schools Forum, informing areas of statutory decision making and improving visibility and consultation on High Needs Block and wider Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) financial matters.

RECOMMENDATION

- Schools Forum is asked to note to the contents of this report.
- Schools Forum welcomes the work that has been undertaken in the development of the proposals.
- Schools Forum is asked to provide support in principle to the contents of the report being taken forward on to next steps.
- That upon feedback on negotiations with schools and the ESFA detailed calculations will be built into budget decisions by Schools Forum going forward as appropriate.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The report provides Schools Forum with an update on actions and plans to reduce the High Needs Block overspend and the overall DSG deficit via participation in the DFE/ESFA Safety Valve programme.

The report sets out the workstreams being proposed into the Safety Valve programme leading to a balanced budget position within the life of the programme (5 years).

High Needs Block Update (Safety Valve) October 2022

01. Purpose of the Report

The report provides Schools Forum with an update on actions and plans to reduce the High Needs Block overspend and the overall DSG deficit via participation in the DFE/ESFA Safety Valve programme.

02. Recommendation

Schools Forum is asked to note and support the contents of this report.

03. Background

Given national pressures in SEND budgets, a national commissioner has been appointed to work with councils, scrutinise the plans to reduce DSG overspends and provide challenge where appropriate and to determine the nature and level of ongoing support to be provided by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) & Department for Education (DfE) in relation to the plan. These arrangements are known as the Safety Valve programme.

The DfE are expanding the programme to work with a larger cohort of local authorities, and are running two rounds of the intervention programme in 2022-23. Wokingham has been selected to take part in the second round of the intervention programme, which will begin formally in October

Wokingham has a profile of significant increase in the number of EHCP's being maintained by the Local Authority over the coming years. (Fig. 1)

Fig. 1

Number of CYP supported by the high needs block (with estimated future projections)									
January	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Under 5	26	27	36	46	72	114	139	162	200
Age 5 to 10	264	277	341	418	480	614	714	836	1,018
Age 11 to 15	317	342	372	412	507	521	557	635	680
Age 16 to 19	225	238	253	278	288	365	425	452	490
Age 20 to 25	35	50	76	116	141	186	231	251	287

Total number by Age Group	867	934	1,078	1,270	1,488	1,800	2,066	2,336	2,675
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Although absolute numbers are small, between 2019 and 2022 there has been an 81% increase in the numbers of children aged up to 10yrs old with EHCPs. Increases in the numbers of children at early curriculum years have potentially significant implications for increased demand for services and support in coming years and thus a projected increase in HNB overspend and the cumulative deficit within the DSG.

Fig. 2

	Current Year	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four	Year Five
		2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M
Cumulative Deficit with no Mitigations	14.9	29	43	66.1	107.7	119.6

Left unchecked, with no mitigations or management of the demand, this spiralling increase will create capacity issues in terms of the delivery of support leading to poor outcomes, increased complaints and tribunals and a clearly unsustainable and untenable budget position. (Fig 2)

04. **Safety Valve Programme**

The safety valve programme has been developed by the DfE and the ESFA to respond to local authorities where the deficit (overspend) is proportionally significant and is the highest level of programme whereby support is being offered. There are other programmes of support for those LA's where the financial issues are not quite as challenging.

As part of the Safety Valve Programme the LA must submit a Deficit Management Plan detailing the current position and future unmitigated trends, and the actions proposed to mitigate those trends and bring the DSG to a balanced budget within the period of the safety valve programme (5 years).

As part of the programme the Commissioner and ESFA will want to see:

- Strategic planning with education and finance colleagues
- A demand management approach to EHCP's
- A focus on Early Intervention
- A clear and appropriate Local Authority SEN support offer
- System wide strategic and operational partnerships (working with schools)

- Thorough and appropriate provision mapping and development

To this end we have developed a DSG Deficit Management Plan which aligns with the SEND IIP Priorities to ensure a coordinated approach to system improvement and DSG deficit management. These priorities are:

Strategic Priority 1: **Improve sufficiency of local provision** across all phases

Strategic Priority 2: **Improve quality of local provision** and facilitate capacity building

Strategic Priority 3: Improve **Engagement and Communication** with key partners

Strategic Priority 4: **Improve data quality, analysis and related information systems to support an evidence-based approach to commissioning** and to support greater accountability

Strategic Priority 5: Improve Transition at All Stages including improvements to Preparation for Adulthood

There are 24 key workstreams being proposed to be delivered during the five-year Safety Valve programme. These are detailed below.

Safety Valve Workstreams

Specialist Provision Development	<p>This workstream purpose is to develop a continuum of SEND Provision to meet local demand to ensure that appropriate provision is available, in the right place at the right time.</p> <p>In 2021 a SEND Sufficiency Review was completed which concluded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Insufficient provision locally to meet the needs of Wokingham Children in the context of increasing demand - Best use is not currently being made of the provision that is funded and currently available locally <p>A comprehensive needs assessment has been undertaken and the development of two new SEND Schools has been identified. An expression of interest has been made to the DFE to bid for round 15 of the SEND Free School Bid.</p> <p>This investment in new special free schools aims to provide children and young people with good quality provision in their local area, which in turn will reduce the time and money spent on transport. Investing in new special free schools will reduce the use of more expensive provision, with a view to delivering a local system which both meets local authority needs and is financially sustainable.</p>
Resource Bases and SEND Units	<p>This workstream seeks to finalise the review into the existing resource base provision, understand the needs of the SEND cohort, identify the gaps in provision locally</p>

	<p>and move from the current model of resource base provision to the continuum of support.</p> <p>There are three key elements of the proposal and recommendation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Re-purpose existing Wokingham resourced provision to better meet demand and needs identified in the needs analysis - Create new type of provision – SEND Units, which seek to close the gap between resource bases and special school provision. - Implementation of robust accountability, monitoring and review mechanisms.
Assessment Centre	<p>The development of an early year assessment centre to align needs with provision is key to managing demand and the need of CYP appropriately. The impact will reach across all provisions specifically Resource / SEND Unit and Special Provisions. With a projected 5% saving on early years cost. Due to the continued growth of the early years EHCA and EHCP numbers this will allow for greater planning and time to assess children effectively.</p>
Universal Banding Mechanism	<p>Develop a clear ‘needs led’ banding model which is implemented consistently across mainstream schools, early years settings and FE colleges, resource bases/units</p>
SEN Support / Inclusion	<p>The development and implementation of a SEND Support Service to focus on K Coded children, Ordinarily Available, and consistency across the local area will impact all settings with a focus on mainstream and link with the transitions project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for the overall assessment, decision making and quality assurance of assigning a K code to a child or young person. - Responsible for the QA of assess, plan, do, review and use of notional SEN Budget across the local area. - Responsible for the support given to schools for teaching and learning practice across the whole age range. - Ordinarily Available - Transitions of K and E coded children - Intervention’s development - Consistency across the local area - Responsible for data and Projection support, advice for the BEP, LAP, and Schools forum in making strategic decision around sufficiency and need. - Run and chair vulnerable learners and early years panel
Transitions	<p>The transition project will map and track all K coded and E coded children. In year one they will take over from the base groups created by the IIP for mapping children with an EHCP and incorporate all K coded children.</p>

	<p>The project team will develop extensive tracking and data systems to manage and project the need. The project team will co-produce all interventions and expectations for transition risks</p> <p>The project team will work collaboratively with the HOS, Headteachers, SENDCO's, Team Manager for SEND, PEP, Health and commissioning for streams of work and delivery for those children that will struggle with change of base that education is held.</p>
Local Offer	<p>Redesign and redevelopment of the Local Offer is a key enabler of better outcomes and reductions in costs. The key idea that underpins this assertion is that strengthening and enhancing the timeliness and effectiveness of information, advice and guidance to families (along the principles of right support, right time) will help reduce the pressure on services, assessments and requests to access costly support.</p> <p>The Local Offer has historically been treated as an online platform which parents and carers can use to find information about support and how to navigate/access services. In the light of feedback from parents and carers, and as a result of substantial ongoing coproduction, the Local Offer is being reimagined and redesigned as a proper support service for families, including a small but efficient contact centre managed by experts in SEND, who will help to ensure families get support appropriate to their needs, rather than getting "stuck in the system" in a way that drives costs to the HNB and does not get families the support they require.</p> <p>The project is being taken forward with full engagement and coproduction with the Parent Carer Forum and SENDIASS service, and will be informed by best practice in the sector and joint working with geographical neighbours. Options to collaborate / jointly commission with other local authorities including geographical neighbours will be explored as part of the project.</p>
Outreach Foundry	Develop the current Outreach Offer at Foundry College to create a fit for purpose service which is fully traded with schools.
Outreach Addington	Develop the current Outreach Offer at Addington to create a fit for purpose service which is fully traded with schools.
Outreach Early Years	Develop an Outreach Offer to create a fit for purpose service which is fully traded with early years settings.
ENF / Vulnerable Panel	Re-organisation of the ENF panel to incorporate wider support for vulnerable children linking to the SEND Support Service and funding for early intervention and support for schools presenting ideas and interventions in

	line with increased inclusion to reduce EHCA and increase confidence
SENDCO Network	<p>Dedicated network for training and development and ongoing changes to promote OA and SEND Support on offer within schools.</p> <p>Model to be developed in line with transitions and SEND Support / Early Years Strategy to create feeder model of SENDCO support from EY - Primary - Secondary and PFA</p>
Panel Decision Making	Review of current panel process in line with new banding model and transitions work linked to SEND Support Service and link to the EY and ENF / VL Panel.
EOTAS	Dedicated focus project on alternatives to EOTAS after two terms and clear intervention and support via AP to reduce long term EOTAS packages and cost
System / Data	Procurement of new and appropriate system to support LAP, SEND, Commissioning and Finance and produce clear data driven evidence to support strategic decisions
INMSS Commissioning and Quality Assurance	<p>Until the local SEND provision is more fully developed, the LA accepts that commissioning from the INMSS sector is going to be necessary and our focus over the next year will be to ensure :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Best value for existing placements (agreeing fees, making sure fees are reviewed annually in line with progress and provision delivered) - Quality Assurance of existing placements in partnership with social care where appropriate to improve LA oversight of placements, outcomes, transition arrangements and annual reviews - Improved partnership working with the Framework group to increase participation of providers on to the south west and south central SEND framework which will improve terms and costs for WBC. - Ensure commissioning processes are robust to ensure best providers are sourced and that contracts are monitored . <p>However it should be noted that at the moment it is a provider led market, demand across the country is high and the LA have little choice when consulting with providers and this therefore can mean providers are less likely to offer competitive rates as they can often fill places many times over. This is also in a context of significant financial challenges in cost of living crisis which is impacting on providers costs again meaning many are requesting high annual uplifts.</p>
Early Years	Strengthening support in Early Years is a key strand of our strategic approach to improving outcomes whilst reducing cost and spend. The Early Years strategy involves developing interventions and preventative

	<p>strategies in the Early Years (EY) which aim to reduce the number of requests for EHCPs by meeting needs more consistently across mainstream settings. This combined with strengthening local provision will also help to reduce dependency on costly Independent and Non-Maintained Sector provision. Greater stability through successful transition from Early Years to school is also likely to reduce the number of placement breakdowns in mainstream settings.</p> <p>Key activities within the strategy designed to improve outcomes whilst lowering cost include better use of data for planning and management of services, financial management and commissioning of provision; strengthening Health engagement to improve joint working and commissioning; provision mapping and EY sufficiency work; continued development of the Ordinarily Available offer in EY and Primary; strengthening EY to Primary transitions; strengthening operational efficiency and decision-making; development of training and outreach support; feeding into development of the Local Offer and strengthening information advice and guidance for families relating to EY support.</p> <p>The EY strategy has been prioritised within the SEND Innovation and Improvement Programme, and Children's Commissioning service. The EY strategy work is integrated with the rest of the SEND Innovation and Improvement Programme activity, Safety Valve delivery and work of the Sufficiency Board to provide suitable governance, accountability and oversight. This will enable us to manage the many interdependencies that exist across EY and SEND, whilst also providing opportunities to plan for future demand sooner and more effectively.</p>
OA Health OT, S<	Pilot work to match the IIP OA work in delivering a review on Health specific OA support in OT and S< specifically
Hidden Therapies Cost	Project in partnership with schools, finance, SEND, Health and commissioning to analyse and look at school budgets being used to support current health delivery.
Commissioning Therapies	Options paper / Project to look at wider commissioning opportunities for better value for money on current therapies need aligned with hidden therapy cost work
SE Joint Working	Project for work with Reading, West Berkshire (and other LA's as appropriate) on shared delivery options linked to SEND
SE Joint Commissioning	Project for work with Reading, West Berkshire (and other LA's as appropriate) on joint commissioning options linked to SEND
SEND Transport	Creation of new role specifically aligned to focus on SEND, Place and Admissions and quality, training and

	work with families and school on preparation for transport and independent travel training.
Place Planning	Project Team / Project Officer to review and recommend working solutions to current place planning issues in mainstream schools, while linking up with SEND place planning needs.

As part of the negotiations with the ESFA and Commissioner, the Local Authority will enter into a formal agreement detailing clear targets relating to the workstreams and projected financial savings in exchange for financial contribution to assist in the reduction of the legacy deficit (which in some Safety Valve authorities has been multiple million pound funding over the course of the programme). Quarterly monitoring will take place and as successful a proportion of the financial settlement agreement will be released to WBC.

05. **Next Steps**

In terms of next steps it is proposed to engage with the Borough Education Partnership, Secondary Federation and Primary Headteachers Association, in order to seek their support and co-production on workstreams.

It is proposed that there be feedback to Schools Forum on schools engagement through these forums, and on negotiations being undertaken with the DfE/ESFA Safety Valve team so that any resultant decision making that needs to happen within Schools Forum going forward.

06. **Summary**

Taking account of deficits brought forward over the course of the Safety Valve programme, and the additional unmet growth each year based on the mitigated trends, the savings to be achieved through delivery of the workstreams delivers Wokingham a balanced budget by the end of the period in 2027/28. Detailed work on savings remains ongoing, and we would anticipate the HNB Task & Finish Group we are establishing for the budget process to help validate / sense check savings opportunities.

This profile of savings over the five years will need to be ambitious, with an equally ambitious range of workstreams but with the clear commitment of those tasked to deliver against them and with the support of the whole organisation, our strategic partnerships and our parent and carers we believe that this provides for the best way in which to deliver the balanced budget required through the Safety Valve programme.

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TITLE	2023/24 Budget Planning
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Schools Forum on 12 October 2022
WARD	None Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Director, Children's Services - Helen Watson

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

This reports forms part of regular reporting to Schools Forum, informing areas of statutory decision making and improving visibility and consultation on wider Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) financial matters.

RECOMMENDATION

Schools Forum is asked to note the update on budget planning for the 2023/24 financial year.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The report provides an update on work informing 2023/24 budget setting, funding information as it is currently available, and next steps.

SCHOOLS FORUM

DSG Budget Planning 2023/24

01. Purpose of the Report

This report provides Schools Forum with an update on work informing 2023/24 budget setting.

02. Recommendation

Schools Forum is asked to note the update on budget planning for the 2023/24 financial year.

03. Funding Allocation for 2023/24

At the end of July 2022 the DfE advised Wokingham Borough Council of our Primary and Secondary Units of Funding for the 2023/24 financial year.

We were also advised of our provisional High Needs and Central School Service Block income. The Growth Factor element of the Schools Block, the final High Needs Block, Central School Services Block and Early Years Block income won't be confirmed until the end of December 2022.

Block	2022/23 TOTAL	2023/24 PROVISIONAL	£ Increase	% Increase
Schools Block	£128,178,750	£133,482,934		
Supplementary Grant	£3,692,470	Now in baseline		
Sub-total Schools Block	£131,871,220	£133,482,934	£1,611,714	1.22%
Growth Factor	£1,663,746	tbc		
TOTAL Schools Block	£133,534,966	tbc	tbc	tbc
High Needs Block	£25,031,284	£27,112,355		
Supplementary Grant	£964,507	Now in baseline		
TOTAL High Needs Block	£25,995,791	£27,112,355	£1,116,564	4.30%
TOTAL Central School Services Block	£995,275	£1,014,682	£19,407	1.95%

The figures used by the DfE for the above are based on the census data from last year. Final funding allocations in December will take into account the pupil numbers and characteristics from the October 2022 census.

04. Schools Block

The Schools Block Task and Finish Group have met twice to date to discuss the funding formula.

2023/24 is the first year of official transition to the “direct” schools National Funding Formula (NFF). There are now requirements on local authorities to move their formula closer to the NFF.

- Only allowed the use of NFF factors in our local formulae. This means Wokingham will need to add a third Deprivation factor to our formula, Free School Meals (FSM)
- Local authorities will also be required to move their local formula factors 10% closer to the NFF values, compared to where they were in 2022/23, unless their local formulae are already so close to the NFF that they are classed as mirroring the NFF. Wokingham has been moving their formula factor amounts closer by a third each year.
- MFG can be set between +0.0% and +0.5% (In 2022/23 Wokingham’s MFG is +1.0%)
- Minimum Per Pupil Funding has increased (see figures below)

	2022/23 MPPL	2023/24 MPPL	Increase %
Primary	£4,265	£4,405	3%
KS3	£5,321	£5,503	3%
KS4	£5,831	£6,033	3%
Secondary	£5,525	£5,715	3%

Over the summer, we modelled funding based on the NFF factor rates, the minimum allowable NFF factor rates and the maximum allowable factor rates.

At the first Task and Finish Group meeting, we found that using the census figures from October 2021 meant that none of the models were affordable using the provisional income in the table in item 03.

We requested that schools supply us with their up-to-date pupil numbers this term, so we could calculate more accurately what our actual likely final settlement will be in December. Having the pupil numbers still doesn’t change the pupil characteristics from last year (for example percentage of deprivation) as these will be taken from the actual October 2022 census, however the information collated indicated a growth in pupil numbers of almost 600 over the past 12 months (around 2.3%).

At the second Task and Finish Group meeting, we found that:

- There are 2 versions of the formula that are potentially affordable:
 - using the NFF factor values, and
 - using the minimum allowable NFF factor values
- Assuming:
 - we keep MFG at maximum allowable of 0.5%
 - we have a cap on gains, the amount to be determined once the model and pupil numbers are clearer.

05. **Growth Fund 2023/24**

The Schools Block funding formula used by the DfE includes an element for growth. For the current year this equated to £1.6m for Wokingham, however through budget planning only £1.5m was allocated locally from the overall Schools Block allocation to the Growth Fund for the 2022/23 financial year.

A review of 2023/24 has been undertaken to inform budget planning, particularly given Growth Fund spend for 2022/23 is now forecast at £1.9m.

Work on the 2023/24 Growth Fund Budget is at an early stage. Using the pupil numbers given to us by schools this term, we were able to estimate that income for growth for 2023/24 will be £1.5m.

Looking at likely growth requirements for 2023/24, the budget required for next financial year is likely to be in excess of income received for the year, based on the current local funding methodology. Work to review growth fund requirements is ongoing, informing affordability options for the 2023/24 financial year and will form part of consultation arrangements with schools.

06. **Early Years Block**

We do not yet have any firm information on Early Years funding levels for the 2023/24 financial year, and previous indicative information suggested a challenging time ahead for EY funding.

However, the DfE undertook a consultation on Local Authorities funding rates (i.e. the income the LA receives before distributing to settings through the formula) that provided illustrative figures on a set of proposals. While the outcome of the consultation is not yet known, should those illustrative proposals be implemented then that suggested a favourable position for Wokingham, with an increase in funding rates.

As with other blocks however, we expect Teachers Pay and Pension Grant (TPPG) which was previously paid separately, to be rolled into the baseline.

The Early Years Task & Finish Group will convene over the coming weeks and will be kept updated as more information becomes available.

07. **High Needs Block**

As previously agreed a High Needs Block Task & Finish Group has been established for 2023/24 budget setting. The group will convene in the coming weeks to review and consider budget setting assumptions and recommendations for the coming financial year.

The group's work will be informed by the longer term financial modelling linked to the DSG management plan and the Safety Valve process to ensure that recommendations made on the budget for 2023/24 are set in the context of the wider work.

08. **Next steps**

Work under each of the task & finish groups will continue over the coming weeks with the aim of having draft budget assumptions for each block reported back to Forum in December.

Consultation arrangements are set out in the separate report on the agenda for this meeting.

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TITLE	2023/24 Schools Budget Consultation
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Schools Forum on 12 October 2022
WARD	None Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Director, Children's Services - Helen Watson

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

This reports forms part of regular reporting to Schools Forum, informing areas of statutory decision making and improving visibility and consultation on wider Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) financial matters.

RECOMMENDATION

Schools Forum is asked to:

- note the budget consultation process and planned timeline, and
- support the outcome of that consultation.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The report sets out the school consultation process for the 2023/24 budget and asks Schools Forum to support the outcome of that process.

Schools Budget Consultation 2023/24

01. Purpose of the Report

The report sets out the proposed consultation process with schools on the 2023/24 budget and asks Schools Forum to support the outcome of that process.

02. Recommendation

Schools Forum is asked to:

- note the budget consultation process and planned timeline, and
- support the outcome of that consultation.

03. Background

The budget setting process has continued to develop in Wokingham over recent years, as colleagues work together to improve transparency of decision making and inclusion of wider stakeholders in the process appropriately.

In line with DfE guidance, and as part of agreed local arrangements, a consultation is undertaken each year with all schools to inform the budget setting process and recommendations ultimately made through the task & finish groups to Schools Forum.

04. Proposed consultation arrangements for 2023/24

To support informed budget planning for 2023/24 the following will be included as part of an all-encompassing consultation with schools:

1. Principles of the Schools Block funding formula
2. Disapplication request for our all-through school re split site funding
3. Proposed 0.5% transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block
4. Notional SEN methodology
5. Growth Fund methodology

The original budget planning timetable assumed that the consultation period would be underway in late September, allowing the results to be fed into discussion at the October meeting of Schools Forum.

Given the particular challenges in the current financial climate, and the complexity of variables being worked through as part of budget setting, the planned timeline has slipped and therefore the consultation timetable has been revised.

The aim is still to ensure that schools have a sufficient period of time to consider responses, supported by appropriate information to ensure they can respond in an informed manner. However, this now necessitates a timeline beyond the date of the October Forum meeting.

Disapplication request(s)

While there are a number of factors for budget setting that can be agreed locally, there are areas where changes to the Authority Proforma Tool (APT) require a disapplication request to the DfE. In previous years for Wokingham, this has included:

- Changes to the funding basis of our all-through school
- Transfer between blocks where this is not supported by Schools Forum

Even where a decision has been supported previously, a disapplication needs to be considered on an annual basis.

The DfE deadline for disapplication requests for the 2023/24 budget is 18th November. As this date is before the next Schools Forum meeting in December, the revised consultation timeline means that a Schools Forum view will be needed in advance of the outcome of the wider schools consultation.

Schools Forum is therefore asked to confirm advance support for the result of the consultation with schools given the following implications:

1. All-through school funding – should a majority of school responses support the continuation of the 2022/23 approach, then the LA will submit a disapplication on that basis
2. Transfer of 0.5% from Schools Block to High Needs Block – should a majority of school responses support the transfer then this can be enacted without a disapplication request being required. Should the majority of schools not support the transfer then a disapplication will be submitted by the LA by the 18th November deadline.

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Appendix A

Timeline for School Budget Planning 2023-24

	JULY			AUGUST			SEPTEMBER			OCTOBER			NOVEMBER			DECEMBER			JANUARY		
ESFA																					
Announcement of pre-16 schools funding and modelling tools																					
Announcement of notional national funding formula allocations																					
Deadline for submitting disapplication requests for response by December																					
Deadline for submitting disapplication requests for response by APT deadline																					
Issue Authority Proform Tool (APT) and pupil number data																					
Announce School Revenue Funding Settlement																					
Deadline for LA to submit APT for validation and approval																					
Foundry Review (ongoing)																					
Check status of De-delegated Services																					
Review funding model still appropriate																					
Proposed Task and Finish Group Meetings																					
Update modelling using October 2022 census data																					
Consultation with Schools																					
Disapplication for All-Through School																					
Principles used to determine School Budgets																					
Consultation on indicative allocations																					
Final budget allocations issued to schools																					
Schools Forum meetings																					

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Schools Forum Forward Plan 2022/23

7th December 2022	I	2022/23 Revenue Monitoring Report
	I	High Needs Block / DSG Management Plan Update
	D	2023/24 Draft Schools Block Budget
	D	2023/24 Proposed De-delegated Budget
	I	2023/24 Draft High Needs Block Budget
	D	2023/24 Draft Early Years Budget
	D	2023/24 Draft Central Schools Services Block Budget
	I	Scheme For Financing Schools
	I	Education Welfare Service

11th January 2023	I	2022/23 Revenue Monitoring Report
	I	High Needs Block / DSG Management Plan Update
	D	2023/24 Proposed Schools Block Budget submission
	C	2023/24 Final High Needs Block Budget
	D	2023/24 Final Early Years Budget
	D	2023/24 Final Central Schools Services Block Budget

15th March 2023	I	2022/23 Revenue Monitoring Report
	I	High Needs Block / DSG Management Plan Update

