



# WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **SCHOOLS FORUM** will be held virtually  
**ON WEDNESDAY 11 OCTOBER 2023 AT 10.00 AM**

Susan Parsonage  
Chief Executive  
Published on 3 October 2023

**Note:** Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting or participate in the meeting virtually, in accordance with the Council's Constitution. If you wish to participate either in person or virtually via Microsoft Teams, please contact Democratic Services: [Democratic.services@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:Democratic.services@wokingham.gov.uk)

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<https://youtube.com/live/G9JvLljlKkY?feature=share>

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# **WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **Our Vision**

A great place to live, an even better place to do business

## **Our Priorities**

Improve educational attainment and focus on every child achieving their potential

Invest in regenerating towns and villages, support social and economic prosperity, whilst encouraging business growth

Ensure strong sustainable communities that are vibrant and supported by well designed development

Tackle traffic congestion in specific areas of the Borough

Improve the customer experience when accessing Council services

## **The Underpinning Principles**

Offer excellent value for your Council Tax

Provide affordable homes

Look after the vulnerable

Improve health, wellbeing and quality of life

Maintain and improve the waste collection, recycling and fuel efficiency

Deliver quality in all that we do

## MEMBERSHIP OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM

<b>Schools Representatives</b>	
<b>Maintained Schools</b>	
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
Amanda Woodfin	Headteacher - Bulmershe School
Vacancy	Primary School
Vacancy	Primary School
<b>Academies</b>	
Julia Mead	School Business Manager – St Sebastian’s CE Primary
Jenny Comber	Secondary Academy Head – Bohunt School
Derren Gray	Academy representative
Andy Hinchcliffe	Secondary Academy Head – St Crispin’s School
Shirley Austin	Secondary Academy Head – Forest School
Debra Briault	Secondary Academy Representative
Vacancy	Secondary Academy Representative
Vacancy	Secondary Academy Representative
Vacancy	Secondary Academy Representative
<b>Special Schools</b>	
Sara Attra	Special School Head - Addington School
<b>PRU</b>	
Iain Thomas	Pupil Referral Unit Headteacher - Foundry College
<b>Non School Representatives</b>	
<b>Early Years</b>	
Kerrie Clifford	Maintained Nursery Head – Ambleside Centre
Ian Morgan	Early Years Representative
<b>Wokingham Borough Council</b>	
Ian Pittock	Wokingham Borough Council
Ming Zhang	Assistant Director for Education and SEND
<b>Post 16 Education</b>	
Paul Gibson	Headteacher - Maiden Erlegh School



## **Schools Forum Task and Finish Groups Membership**

### **Schools Block**

Derren Gray - Head Piggott School (Chair)

Brian Prebble - Head Rivermead Primary

Corrina Gillard - Head Emmbrook Infant

Chris Coniam – School Business Manager Bulmershe School

Carol Simpson - School Business Manager Colleton Primary

Julia Mead – Chief Finance Officer Keys Academy Trust

Margaret Lucey – School Business Manager All Saints Primary

### **High Needs Block**

Corrina Gillard - Head Emmbrook Infant

Sara Attra - Head Addington Special School

Raj Arava - School Business Manager Foundry College

Debra Briault – Chief Operating Officer Circle Trust

### **Early Years**

Ian Morgan - Director Little Ducklings Day Nursery

Kerrie Clifford - Head Ambleside Nursery

Karen Edwards - Manager Acorns Day Nursery

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
1		<b>ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN</b> To elect a Chairman for the 2023/24 academic year.	
2		<b>ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN</b> To elect a Vice-Chairman for the 2023/24 academic year.	
3		<b>APOLOGIES</b> To receive any apologies for absence.	
4		<b>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING</b> To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 July 2023.	7 - 14
5		<b>DECLARATION OF INTEREST</b> To receive any declarations of interest.	
6	None Specific	<b>MATTERS ARISING UPDATE</b> To receive the Matters Arising Update	15 - 16
7	None Specific	<b>SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP REVIEW 2023</b> To receive and consider the Schools Forum Membership Review 2023 report.	17 - 28
8	None Specific	<b>2023/24 REVENUE MONITORING REPORT</b> To receive and consider the 2023/24 Revenue Monitoring report.	29 - 42
9	None Specific	<b>2024/25 DSG BUDGET UPDATE</b> To receive and consider the 2024/25 DSG Budget Update report.	43 - 48
10	None Specific	<b>DSG MANAGEMENT PLAN / SAFETY VALVE UPDATE</b> To receive and consider the DSG Management Plan / Safety Valve Update.	49 - 70
11	None Specific	<b>SCHOOLS FORUM FORWARD PLAN 2023/24</b> To receive and consider the Schools Forum Forward Plan 2023/24.	71 - 72

**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.

**CONTACT OFFICER**

**Luciane Bowker,**  
**Tel**  
**Email**  
**Postal Address**

Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist  
0118 237 8118  
luciane.bowker@wokingham.gov.uk  
Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham, RG40 1BN

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
SCHOOLS FORUM  
HELD ON 12 JULY 2023 FROM 10.00 AM TO 11.04 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
Derren Gray	Academy Head - The Piggott School
Andy Hinchliff	Academy Head - St Crispin's School
Shirley Austin	Academy Head - The Forest School
Debra Briault	Secondary Academy School Representative
Sara Attra	Special School Head - Addington School
Chris Conian	School Business Manager – Bulmershe School

**Non School Representatives**

Ian Pittock	Wokingham Borough Council
Ming Zhang	Interim Assistant Director for Education and SEND
Ian Morgan	Early Years Representative
Kerrie Clifford	Maintained Nursery Head

**Also Present**

Hayley Rees, Category Manager, Strategy and Commissioning  
Emma Shrimpton, Finance Business Partner Children's Services  
Katherine Vernon, Schools Finance Manager  
Helen Watson, Director of Children's Services  
Jonathan Wilding, Safety Valve / SEND Consultant

**Others Present**

Prue Bray Executive Member for Children's Services

**47 APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was submitted from Paul Miller.

Paul Miller submitted the written statement below with respect to Lynne Samuel's contribution to Schools Forum:

*Lynne brought a new level of professional transparency to the reporting of School Forum finances. She introduced a supportive and collaborative approach to school finance taking time to understand the challenges 'in school'. Lynne actively supported the evolution of the School Forum Task and Finish groups and ensured the recommended outcomes from these groups were well modelled, researched and credible. More recently her detailed analysis of the activities driving High Needs Block expenditures has been instrumental helping Schools Forum understand the reasons for excess expenditures relative to plans, and has underpinned the Borough's application to the government's Safety Valve programme. We will miss her contribution, but wish her every success in the next stage of her career.*

Brian Prebble chaired the meeting.

Schools Forum was informed that Paul Miller had recently resigned from his role with the Circle Trust and consequently had to also resign from Schools Forum.

Brian Prebble made the following statement:

Paul has been a phenomenal chair for Schools Forum. His contribution to Schools Forum has been immense over the years, as member as a vice-chair and finally as a chair. Since taking on the role of chair, he has ensured rigor and effectiveness with Schools Forum meetings, and providing the appropriate support and challenge when needed. Paul has worked in partnership with the finance team to enable a collaborative approach (no more them & us) which resulted in a more transparent approach from the finance team & reports of a higher quality. He is leaving school forum in a significantly stronger position from when he started as chair, and his expertise and knowledge will be sorely missed. I have learnt a lot from Paul, and have thoroughly enjoyed working with him as vice-chair for the past 5-6 years. On behalf of us all, I would like to thank Paul greatly for all his hard work, huge contribution and efforts as chair over the many years he been involved with Schools Forum, but particularly as chair. I wish him all the best for the future.

#### **48 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 March 2023 were confirmed as a correct record, subject to the amendment below, and would be signed by the Chair at a later date.

Amendment: Ian Morgan was in attendance at the 15 March 2023 meeting.

#### **48.1 Matters Arising**

Matters arising were dealt with during the meeting.

#### **49 DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **50 2022/23 REVENUE OUTTURN REPORT**

Katherine Vernon, Schools Finance Manager presented the 2022/23 Revenue Outturn Report.

There had been an overspend of £7.2 million, the previous forecast was £6.8 million and when the Budget was set it was £3.9 million. Together with the brought forward deficit balance of £10 million, partially offset by the £8 million received from the Safety Valve programme, there was now a cumulative DSG deficit of £ 9.2 million.

The report contained details of the schools balances and changes to Schools Block, High Needs Block (HNB), Early Years Block and Central School Services Block.

The following points were highlighted:

- There had been an increase in EOTAS (Education Other Than At School) funding in the HNB, this funding was difficult to predict;
- Early Years Block – there had been an underspend of £50k, which had been kept to support the hardship fund. The final allocation for 2022/23 was expected later in the year.



Corrina Gillard asked if the EOTAS line included alternative provision. Katherine Vernon explained that where there was a placement in a mainstream school and a pupil had alternative provision it was included in the mainstream schools funding section on the report. Alternative provision funding for unplaced children was included under the EOTAS line in the report

**RESOLVED** That the report be noted.

## **51 2022/23 MAINTAINED SCHOOL BALANCES**

Katherine Vernon presented the 2022/23 Maintained School Balances Report.

The following points were highlighted:

- The balances had increased by £1 million from the end of last year;
- Five schools were in deficit;
- Seven schools had balances of less than 5% of their income;
- 15 schools had balances over 10% of their income;

Currently, there was no mechanism to clawback balances, Schools Forum may wish to discuss this at a future meeting.

The Chairman asked what support was in place to help schools not to fall into deficit. Katherine Vernon explained that at the beginning of the year, the local authority offered to speak with schools that were struggling to set a balanced budget. The team had met with four schools. Schools could contact the local authority for help.

**RESOLVED** That the report be noted.

## **52 2023/24 REVENUE MONITORING REPORT**

Katherine Vernon presented the 2023/24 Revenue Monitoring Report.

At the time the budget was set, a deficit of £8.2 million was expected, the deficit was now £10 million. The main movements were £216k increase in the Schools Block and £1.67 million increase in the HNB.

There reasons for the increase were as outlined in the report.

The allocation for independent maintained schools was now shown in a separate line (used to be included in the independent non-maintained schools line).

The local authority was recently informed of an Early Years supplementary grant, this was 44p per hour for three to four year olds and £2.69 for two year old funding, this was a considerable increase. 100% of this increase would be pass on to providers, the details would be discussed at the next Task and Finish Group.

The £50k Early Years Hardship Fund was still available and no-one had claimed it yet.

In response to a question Katherine Vernon explained that £384 of Schools Block reserves was brought forward for Growth, there was £168k left if things happened as anticipated.

**RESOLVED** That the report be noted.

### **53 GROWTH FUND UPDATE**

Piers Brunning, School Place Planning Manager presented the Growth Fund update. The following points were highlighted:

- The growth for 2024/25 would be led by the level of migrations into the borough;
- It was not certain when the high level of migration into the borough would abate, therefore it was necessary to plan for additional places;
- A spend of £1.6 million was expected for 2024/25;
- The Forest School's consultation on potentially becoming co-educational had a positive impact on planning for places;
- At the moment, the need for secondary school rolls continued to grow;
- A capacity analysis was being undertaken to determine the Growth Fund. This was part of the Gold process, this was a series of Task and Finish Groups led by the CEO. The focus of the Gold process now was to determine the growth for 2024 onwards;
- The number of new houses in the borough had an impact in the planning of school places, in particular for primary school children;
- There was the issue of cross border movement. At the moment Wokingham exported more children than imported. Some children went out of the borough to attend grammar schools. If these children were unsuccessful in obtaining a place, this could create a pressure in Wokingham's Growth Fund;
- Historically, there used to be families moving into the area mid-year, requiring primary school places. Now, there were more families moving mid-year requiring secondary school places. This factor created a significant pressure;
- Appendix B of the report contained a breakdown of the projects being funded by the Growth Fund. It was expected that most of the reserves fund would be used in 2024/25, although it was impossible to now for certain what is going to happen in terms of demand in the next few years.

Chris Connian asked for clarification on the 15 additional numbers relating to Bulmershe School. Katherine Vernon explained that 15 additional places had been agreed by the school for 2022/23 and for 2023/24 – the table showed the payment instalments for those places. The funding was for academic years, but the payment was split in 12 instalments to fit the financial year.

Ming Zhang, Assistant Director for Education and SEND stated that the Growth Fund was directly linked to what was happening on the ground. The Growth Fund had to respond to school placement need.

In response to a question, Piers Brunning informed that there was an ongoing process of engagement with secondary schools to manage the demand for school places.

**RESOLVED** That the report be noted.

### **54 DSG MANAGEMENT PLAN & SAFETY VALVE UPDATE**

The DSG Management Plan and Safety Valve Update was presented by Jonathan Wilding, Safety Valve and SEND Consultant.

Currently, there was a consultation with schools about priorities and to update on the progress of the programme to address priorities. This consultation would end on 28 July, and the result of this consultation would be used to refresh plans. Schools would then be

consulted again with new proposals and budgeting matters. The results of this second consultation would be presented to Schools Forum in October.

Schools would be asked to agree to a 1% transfer from the Schools Block to the HNB. It was recognised that this was a higher amount than previously asked for, the broad financial situation justified such a request. This money was not intended to pay for the HNB deficit, it was to fund investment in schools and provision of services which would benefit schools.

It was proposed that the HNB deficit would be paid for by the Safety Valve fund and the Council tax levy.

Following discussions with secondary schools, the local authority was asked to produce a model to mitigate the disproportionate negative effect of the 1% transfer to smaller schools. Schools Forum was being asked to decide if such a model should be developed, in light of the fact that it would take a considerable amount of Officers' time and legal advice to produce it.

In response to a question, Jonathan Wilding stated that having a proposed model to mitigate the impact on smaller schools would potentially help smaller schools to agree to the proposal.

Corina Gillard stated that schools would want to know more details about how the money would be used. In her opinion, schools would be more likely to support the transfer if the proposal contained specific information about how the money would be invested.

Jonathan Wilding stated that the consultation had an accompanying document which contained detailed information about the investment. He re-assured Schools Forum that there were many new and innovative initiatives to fill the gaps, and the project was moving at rapid pace.

Sara Attra informed that she had had technical difficulties in accessing the SEND consultation, she worried that other headteachers may have the same problem and may not be able to read the documents attached to it. Jonathan Wilding agreed to look into this.

Ming Zhang emphasized that it was important to work with schools and identify what the schools' priorities were, and both he and the officers had reached out to individual school leaders to inform the priorities that were being presented to Schools Forum today. The block transfer would be used to spend in these priorities areas as resources being invested back to schools.

Councillor Bray, Executive Member for Children's Services thanked Ming Zhang and Jonathan Wilding for their efforts in engaging with schools. She recognised that in the past schools had not been in favour of transferring 0.5% of the Schools Block to the HNB, it is possible that it had not been properly explained to schools what the money was for. This time, this transfer was crucial to achieve the outcomes set out by the Deficit Management Plan. She added that the smaller schools would benefit the most.

Councillor Bray explained that it was extremely important to work together to tackle the HNB deficit. If this transfer was not agreed, the DfE would not give Wokingham any more money towards the Safety Valve and the plan would fail, and therefore everyone would

fail. She accepted that this decision would be difficult for some schools as budgets were tight. However, there were real risks if the plan failed. She offered to speak to any headteachers who needed more information to understand the situation.

Derren Gray asked what was the definition of 'small' school? Jonathan Wilding explained that this had not been defined, he believed that the fairest way to differentiate would be by numbers on roll. The system did not currently allow for this differentiation, the local authority would have to apply for disapplication, and the methodology was still to be worked out.

Liz Woodward stated that 85% of her school's budget was to fund teachers' salaries. She asked what would happen if schools agreed to the 1% transfer and subsequently there were increases in salaries and schools went into deficit as a result? What support would there be for schools if salary raises were not funded?

Katherine Vernon explained that the local authority passed all the funding received to schools. There was the possibility of developing a mechanism to clawback funds from the schools balance reserves.

Ming Zhang added that it was the local authority's intention to support schools as much as possible, not just financially but with other resources as well.

Upon being put the vote, Schools Forum voted unanimously in favour of asking the local authority to develop a model to support smaller schools in respect of the 1% transfer from the Schools Block to the HNB.

**RESOLVED** That:

- 1) Schools Forum notes the report and current consultation with schools to inform investment in the transformation and improvement of the local SEND system; and
- 2) Schools Forum endorses the proposal to review DSG/Schools Forum guidance to evaluate the possibility of transferring a sliding scale percentage based on school size and intake.

## **55 2024/25 DSG BUDGET PLANNING**

Katherine Vernon presented the 2024/25 DSG Budget Planning report.

The Task and Finish Groups would continue to meet as in previous years. The DSG usually revealed what the rates were going to be for the following year at the end of the summer term. With this information, the models would be worked on over the summer. The Task and Finish Groups would then meet in September to discuss the possible models.

The Early Years allocation would be known in December, and the Task and Finish Group would meet then to discuss it.

The HNB Task and Finish Group would meet in the Autumn.

The report contained a diagram with timescales.

**RESOLVED** That the report be noted.

## **56 2024/25 BUDGET CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS**

This item was discussed in conjunction with item 54.

## **57 BERKSHIRE EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP UPDATE**

Brian Prebble informed that the group had been looking at:

- The progress of the Safety Valve;
- The school improvement offer from the local authority – this had changed to the School Strategic Partnership, in recognition of the fact that it needed to be a school led system when it comes to school improvement;
- Strategic school placement planning; and
- Early Years multi-agency partnership

Brian Prebble stated that the Board had been an improved in partnership working between the schools and the local authority.

Ming Zhang emphasized the importance of engaging with Early Years. He believed that investing in Early Years produced better outcomes in the future.

Ian Morgan asked if there was any representation from independent providers. Ming Zhang stated that this group would be included.

**RESOLVED** That the verbal update be noted.

## **58 FORWARD PLAN**

The Forward Plan of work was noted.

## **59 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Brian Prebble stated that a review of Schools Forum membership would be necessary, in view of the fact that many schools were converting to academy status from September. Some members who currently represented maintained schools would not longer be able to represent that phase of schools.

Additionally, with Paul Miller's resignation from Schools Forum, there was currently no governor or academy trust representative on Schools Forum. Members were encouraged to think about approaching governors at their schools who may have the expertise to contribute to Schools Forum's work.

Luciane Bowker, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist added that the election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman would take place at the next meeting. She asked Members to consider who might like to take these positions.

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# Agenda Item 6

**TITLE** **Matters Arising Update**

**FOR CONSIDERATION BY** Schools Forum on 11 October 2023

**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**

N/A

**SUMMARY OF REPORT**

There are no separate matters arising for this meeting of Schools Forum.

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# Agenda Item 7

**TITLE** Schools Forum Membership Review 2023

**FOR CONSIDERATION BY** Schools Forum on 11 October 2023

**WARD** None Specific;

**LEAD OFFICER** Director, Children's Services - Helen Watson

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

A well proportioned membership will ensure a fair representation of schools in the Borough in Schools Forum, strengthening the decision making process.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That Schools Forum determines its membership to reflect recent changes in schools' status.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

The report contains information about the changes that occurred since the last membership review and offers a proposal for a new membership structure.

## **Background**

Schools Forum undertakes an annual review of its membership, usually at the beginning of each new academic year.

The last membership review took place on 6 July 2022, when Schools Forum decided to retain its current membership structure at that point in time. The current membership structure is as follows:

Maintained Primary Schools – 6 representatives  
Maintained Secondary Schools – 1 representative  
Academy Primary Schools – 3 representatives  
Academy Secondary Schools – 6 representatives

Special Schools – 1 representative  
PRU – 1 representative

Early Years – 2 representatives

WBC – 2 representatives

Post 16 Education – 1 representative

## **Analysis of Issues**

Since the last membership review 4 schools converted to academy status, and a further 8 schools are due to convert in the next few months or in 2024.

Taking into account the total number of pupils per school (as per October 2022 Census):

- In the primary phase there has been an increase of 26% in the number of pupils in primary academy schools.
- 65% of all primary school pupils are attending primary academy schools (was 39% at the time of the last review).
- Most secondary schools in the borough are now academy schools, the remaining secondary maintained school is in the process of becoming an academy.

The guidance indicates that primary schools, secondary schools and academies must be broadly proportionately represented on Schools Forum, based on the total number of pupils registered at them.

The total number of places available in Schools Forum is 23, this number seems to work well and there is no indication that this should be changed. Based on the numbers it is suggested that the number of primary academy representatives be increased by around 25% or 4 members, and that the number of maintained primary school members be reduced by 3. The soon to be redundant secondary school place can be transferred to the primary phase - to a primary academy representative.

In respect to schools' members, the guidance states that there should be at least one headteacher and one governor representative in Schools Forum. Over the last few

years, the participation of governors in Schools Forum in Wokingham has diminished. With the resignation of Paul Miller, there are now no governor representatives on Schools Forum. Schools are urged to approach their governors to recruit volunteers with the relevant knowledge and experience to join Schools Forum.

In respect to the term of office, Schools Forum has historically opted to retain expertise and not limit membership to a specified time. Schools Forum can continue with this arrangement.

See:

Appendix 1 - the current membership list

Appendix 2 – the proposed new structure

Appendix 3 – the official guidance

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION**

***The Council faces unprecedented financial pressures as a result of; the longer term impact of the COVID-19 crisis, Brexit, the war in Ukraine and the general economic climate of rising prices and the increasing cost of debt. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are optimised and 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)	n/a		
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	n/a		
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	n/a		

#### **Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision**

n/a

#### **Cross-Council Implications**

n/a

#### **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.

n/a

#### **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. n/a

#### **List of Background Papers**

n/a
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<b>Contact</b> Luciane Bowker	<b>Service</b> Learning Achievement and Partnerships
<b>Telephone No</b> 0118 2378118	<b>Email</b> luciane.bowker@wokingham.gov.uk



## Schools forums structure

A summary of the structure of schools forums.

21

Category	Schools members	Academies members	Non-school members
Represented groups	<p>Where the local authority maintains the following types of school, they must be represented on the schools forum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary Schools</li> <li>• Secondary Schools</li> <li>• Special Schools</li> <li>• Nursery Schools</li> <li>• PRUs</li> </ul>	<p>At least one academies member must be a representative of mainstream academies, which includes free schools, UTCs and Studio Schools. In addition, there must be one member for each of the following groups (if such exist in the local authority area):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special academies, including free schools</li> <li>• Alternative provision academies, including free schools</li> </ul>	<p>16 to19 providers</p> <p>Early years Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) providers</p> <p>Before considering other groups, the local authority must consider diocesan representation</p>

Category	Schools members	Academies members	Non-school members
Type of member	<p>Within each of the five groups above there could be the following types of member:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headteachers (or their representative)</li> <li>• Governors</li> <li>• Headteachers and Governors</li> <li>• In overall terms there must be at least one headteacher (or their representative) and one governor</li> </ul>	Any	Any
22 Schools forum structure	<p>Schools members and academies members must comprise at least two thirds of the schools forum membership</p> <p>Primary schools, secondary schools and academies must be broadly proportionately represented on schools forum, based on the total number of pupils registered at them</p>	<p>Schools members and academies members must comprise at least two thirds of the schools forum membership</p> <p>Primary schools, secondary schools and academies must be broadly proportionately represented on schools forum, based on the total number of pupils registered at them</p>	
Voting	Only primary representatives can	No voting on de-delegation or the	No voting on de-delegation or the

Category	Schools members	Academies members	Non-school members
	<p>vote on primary school dedelegation Only secondary representatives can vote on secondary school dedelegation All schools members can vote on the scheme for financing schools All schools members can vote on any other schools forum business, including the consultation on the funding formula.</p> <p>Maintained school members can vote on items relating to <a href="#">general duties and retained duties</a>.</p>	<p>scheme for financing schools All academies members can vote on any other schools forum business, including the consultation on the funding formula.</p> <p>Academy members can vote only on <a href="#">retained duties</a>.</p>	<p>scheme for financing schools Only PVI representatives can vote on the consultation on the funding formula.</p> <p>All non-school members can vote on any other schools forum business</p>
Elected by	The relevant sub-group of the relevant type of school e.g. primary school governor representatives are elected by the governors of primary schools, secondary school headteachers are elected by the headteachers of secondary schools.	The relevant proprietors of academies elect for their group, e.g. mainstream academies, special academies and alternative provision academies	Election only applies to the representative for the 16 to 19 providers, who is elected by all eligible 16 to 19 providers

Local authority appointment of members	Only if no election takes place by the agreed date or in the event of a tie	Only if no election takes place by the agreed date or in the event of a tie	Can appoint a 16 to 19 representative only if no election takes place by the agreed date or in the event of a tie.  For all other non-schools members the local authority appoints, but it's good practice to seek nominations from the relevant bodies
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**Other attendees who are permitted to contribute to a schools forum meeting:**

- an observer appointed by the Secretary of State
- the Chief Financial Officer
- the Director of Children's Services
- officers providing financial & technical advice to schools forum
- the Executive Member for Children's Services
- presenters (restricted to the paper they are presenting)
- the Executive Member with responsibility for resources

24



**Total number of members = 23**

<b>Schools Representatives</b>	
<b>Maintained Primary Schools – 3 representatives</b>	
Carol Simpson	School Business Manager - Colleton Primary
Liz Woodards	School Business Manager - Hawkedon Primary (due to convert 01/11/2023)
Vacancy	Primary representative
<b>Maintained Secondary School – 1 representative</b>	
Amanda Woodfin	Head – Bulmershe School – (in the process of converting)
<b>Academies – 7 primary and 6 secondary representatives</b>	
Julia Mead	School Business Manager - St Sebastian's CE Primary
Luke Henderson	Primary Head – Sonning C of E Primary
Brian Prebble	Primary Head - Rivermead Primary - <b>Vice Chairman</b>
Corrina Gillard	Primary Head - Emmbrook Infant
Vacancy	Primary representative
Vacancy	Primary representative
Vacancy	Primary representative
Derren Gray	Academy representative
Shirley Austin	Academy Head - The Forest School
Debra Briault	Academy representative
Vacancy	Secondary representative
Vacancy	Secondary representative
<b>Special Schools – 1 representative</b>	
Sara Attra	Special School Head - Addington School
<b>PRU – 1 representative</b>	
Iain Thomas	Pupil Referral Unit Headteacher - Foundry College
<b>Non-School Representatives</b>	
<b>Early Years – 2 representatives</b>	
Kerrie Clifford	Maintained Nursery Head - Ambleside Centre
Ian Morgan	Early Years Representative
<b>Wokingham Borough Council – 2 representatives</b>	
Ian Pittock	WBC Councillor
Ming Zhang	Assistant Director for Education and SEND
<b>Post 16 Education – 1 representative</b>	
Paul Gibson	Academy Head - Maiden Erlegh School

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Total number of members – 23

<b>Current Structure</b>	<b>Proposed Structure</b>
<b>Schools Representatives</b>	<b>Schools Representatives</b>
<b>Maintained Primary Schools</b> 6 representatives	<b>Maintained Primary Schools</b> 3
<b>Maintained Secondary Schools</b> 1 representative	
<b>Academies</b> 3 primary representatives 6 secondary representatives	<b>Academies</b> 7 primary representatives 6 secondary representatives
<b>Special Schools</b> 1 representative	<b>Special Schools</b> 1 representative
<b>PRU</b> 1 representative	<b>PRU</b> 1 representative
<b>Non-School Representatives</b>	<b>Non-School Representatives</b>
<b>Early Years</b> 2 representatives	<b>Early Years</b> 2 representatives
<b>Wokingham Borough Council</b> 2 representatives	<b>Wokingham Borough Council</b> 2 representatives
<b>Post 16 Education</b> 1 representative	<b>Post 16 Education</b> 1 representative

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# Agenda Item 8

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>2023/24 Revenue Monitoring Report</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Schools Forum on 11 October 2023
<b>WARD</b>	None Specific;
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	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 and the forecast position for the 2023/24 financial year.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

This report provides Schools Forum with an update on the 2023/24 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) forecast, as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023.

An in-year deficit of £12.1m is projected, with the budget pressure continuing to be within the High Needs Block. Taken with the brought forward deficit of £9.2m, and expected Safety Valve funding received in-year, a forecast cumulative deficit of £19.5m is now projected to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

The current in-year forecast represents an adverse movement of £2m on the £10m deficit reported at May Schools Forum. The movement being:

- £2m increase in the High Needs Block

## 2023/24 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 2023/24 financial year, as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023.

### 02. Recommendation

Schools Forum is asked to note the contents of this report and the forecast position for the 2023/24 financial year.

### 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 May 2023 meeting of Schools Forum a forecast deficit of £10m was reported for the 2023/24 financial year budget, due to continued pressure within the High Needs Block.

### 04. DSG Forecast as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023

As at 31<sup>st</sup> August, the DSG forecast for the 2023/24 financial year now reports an in-year deficit of £12m. Against the £10m previously reported, this represents an adverse movement of £2m.

The movement represents an increase in the High Needs Block forecast.

### 05. Key Variances, Risks and Opportunities

The reason for the £2m adverse movement on forecast are set out below, along with further information within each block of the DSG.

#### **Schools Block**

Small variance in forecast due to Growth Fund movement of -£20k.

#### **De-delegation - Staff costs**

Current forecast equals budget. Potential impact with regards to academy conversions expected over the year.

### De-delegation - Contingency

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

### Growth Fund

See Appendix B.

We have asked schools to provide us with their current pupil numbers to enable us to estimate our growth and falling rolls income that will be confirmed by the DfE in December.

We have updated our estimate of the growth fund requirements for 2024/25 using the MPPL rates confirmed by the DfE in July. This shows that we are anticipating requiring around £1.5m from the Schools Block for the Growth Fund and this will be taken forward through the modelling work within the work of the task & finish group.

### **High Needs Block**

The in-year deficit on the HNB is forecast at £11.9m.

At the May meeting of Schools Forum an in-year deficit of £9.8m was anticipated, therefore the current forecast represents a £2.1m adverse movement.

The HNB forecast takes account of current known EHCP top-ups, known September phased transfers, anticipated new plans issued, along with expected impact of the Safety Valve Programme workstreams.

### Mainstream - Wokingham

£30k decrease overall, which is made up of a decrease in mainstream top-ups as pupils move to specialist settings and an increase in AP at mainstream schools, an increase of pupils in out of borough mainstream schools and a decrease of pupils in independent mainstream settings.

### Special Schools – Out of Borough

£585k adverse movement due to additional pupils and increasing costs.

### Independent Mainstream Schools

£887k adverse movement due to increase in pupils placed in these settings.

### FE Colleges

£119k adverse movement due to increase in pupils placed in these settings. We are anticipating a number of plans to be ceased which will reduce this number. Some good news stories where pupils in independent special schools have been able to leave their settings and attend mainstream FE colleges instead.

### EOTAS

£227k adverse movement due to 2 new expensive packages, and 3 increase in package costs from September.

## INCOME

Our income has reduced by £210k which takes into account the import/export adjustment. We export a net number of 199 pupils which is an increase of 45 pupils compared with 2022-23.

## RISKS and OPPORTUNITIES

HNB continues to be in a deficit position, however we are seeing great support from some schools as they accommodate complex children within their settings, but we are still seeing an increase in requests from other settings and parents. Coupled with the increased requests are still seeing the effects of lack of specialist provision, forcing the local authority to continue to make expensive placements. Safety valve projects are on track to deliver but impacts won't begin to be felt until early 24/25 and will incrementally increase from there.

The Safety Valve programme remains under review, and we are continuing to add more measures based on school feedback and data as it emerges.

- Local Special School Capacity
  - Addington Special School expansion – opening in November 16 places for Early Years children.
  - Oak Tree Special School – opened in September with 52 places. 2 places over PAN are both Wokingham pupils.
  - Two New Free Schools – opening in September 2026
- INMSS and EOTAS provision
  - Inflationary uplift on cost of placements contained to ~4% through rigorous commissioning and negotiation with providers, where we are aware neighbouring authorities have agreed to uplifts of ~9%.
  - Increased Health contributions to new placements is being achieved – 3 agreed in most recent period. We are now reviewing the top 25 high-cost placements against CHC criteria to negotiate contributions for existing placements.
  - Delivered consultation training and revising guidance to ensure robust use of INMSS, exhausting all other options first.
  - Completed deep dive of all EOTAS Packages and developed comprehensive action plan.
- Mainstream and Alternative Provision
  - Focused review of those children in mainstream provision with higher costs than anticipated.
  - Acceleration of development of Alternative Provision Strategy and new service model, to respond to increased ad hoc use of provision for children in mainstream provision.



### **Early Years Block**

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

#### **Early Years Supplementary Grant (EYSG)**

The DfE announced in the 2023 Spring Budget that they will be providing additional funding to increase the hourly funding rates for early years providers to deliver the existing early years entitlements for disadvantaged 2-year-olds and 3 and 4-year-olds from September 2023.

For Wokingham we received the following additional hourly funding rates:

3–4-year-olds = £0.44

2-year-olds = £2.59

We have passed 100% of this on as a separate payment to settings. We are expecting the funding to equate to £653k in total for the Autumn 2023 and Spring 2024 terms.

Final local authority hourly funding rates for 2024 to 2025 will be provided in Autumn 2023 in the normal way, including the new rate for all 2-year-olds from April 2024, and for 9 months to 2-year-old funding that comes into effect from September 2024.

#### **Early Years – Provider Reserve Fund**

Contingency of £173k was set aside as part of 2023/24 budget setting, to allow for changes in activity during the year and protect against over allocation on set rates and therefore no variance is reported.

#### **Early Years – Hardship Fund**

£50k has been set aside from 2022/23 to fund any settings that wish to make an application to the Early Years Hardship Fund. To date the Early Years Team have received no applications for this fund.

#### **Early Years – Provider Reserve Fund 2022/23**

We were anticipating a clawback of £188k for 2022/23, but we only had a clawback of £6k. To ensure the 95% pass through rate to settings, we will pay over the difference of £182k to settings in the usual way this term.

### **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** – 2023/24 DSG Revenue Monitoring by Block

**Appendix B** – Growth Fund Forecast 2023-24 and 2024-25 projection

<b>Contact</b> Katherine Vernon	<b>Service</b> Learning Achievement and Partnerships
<b>Telephone No</b> Tel: 0118 974 6337	<b>Email</b> katherine.vernon@wokingham.gov.uk

Appendix A - DSG Forecast Summary 2023/24

				A	B	C	C - B
	Description	2023/24 Budget £,000	Budget Changes £,000	Revised Budget £,000	May Forecast £,000	Aug Forecast £,000	Variance Current Forecast to Previous Forecast £,000
<b>Schools Block</b>	TOTAL Income	(138,780)	-	(138,780)	(138,780)	(138,780)	-
	TOTAL Expenditure	138,780	-	138,780	138,996	138,976	(20)
	<b>TOTAL Schools Block Net Expenditure</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>(20)</b>
<b>High Needs Block</b>	TOTAL Income	(28,430)	-	(28,430)	(28,430)	(28,220)	210
	TOTAL Expenditure	36,584	-	36,584	38,255	40,109	1,854
	<b>TOTAL High Needs Block Net Expenditure</b>	<b>8,154</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8,154</b>	<b>9,825</b>	<b>11,889</b>	<b>2,064</b>
<b>Early Years Block</b>	TOTAL Income	(12,615)	-	(12,615)	(12,615)	(13,268)	(653)
	TOTAL Expenditure	12,615	-	12,615	12,615	13,268	653
	<b>TOTAL Early Years Block Net Expenditure</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Central School Services Block</b>	TOTAL Income	(1,039)	-	(1,039)	(1,039)	(1,039)	-
	TOTAL Expenditure	1,039	-	1,039	1,039	1,039	-
	<b>TOTAL Central School Services Block Net Expenditure</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total DSG</b>	TOTAL Income	(180,864)	-	(180,864)	(180,864)	(181,307)	(443)
	TOTAL Expenditure	189,018	-	189,018	190,905	193,392	2,488
	<b>TOTAL 2023/24 Net Expenditure Deficit</b>	<b>8,154</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8,154</b>	<b>10,041</b>	<b>12,085</b>	<b>2,044</b>
<b>Deficit Brought Forward</b>					<b>9,166</b>	<b>9,166</b>	
<b>Expected Safety Valve Agreement Funding from DfE</b>					<b>(1,720)</b>	<b>(1,720)</b>	
<b>Cumulative Net Expenditure Deficit</b>					<b>17,487</b>	<b>19,531</b>	

Schools Block Budget 2023/24

		May-23		Aug-23	
		A	B	C	C - B
Category	Description	Budget 2023-24 £,000	May 2023/24 Forecast £,000	Aug 2023/24 Forecast £,000	Variance Current Forecast to Previous Forecast £,000
<b>Individual Schools Budget</b>	Maintained Schools	45,563	45,563	44,067	(1,496)
	Maintained Schools NNDR	931	931	931	-
	Academies Growth Apr23-Aug23	815	815	815	-
	Academies	88,949	88,949	90,445	1,496
	Academies NNDR	592	592	592	-
<b>De-Delegation</b>	Contingencies	-	-	-	-
	Staff costs – supply cover (maternity)	264	264	264	-
36	Growth Fund	1,666	1,882	1,862	(20)
	Transfer to High Needs Block	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL Expenditure</b>		<b>138,780</b>	<b>138,996</b>	<b>138,976</b>	<b>(20)</b>
DSG Allocation		(138,780)	(138,780)	(138,780)	-
<b>TOTAL Income</b>		<b>(138,780)</b>	<b>(138,780)</b>	<b>(138,780)</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>2023/24 Net Expenditure (Surplus) / Deficit</b>		<b>(0)</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>(20)</b>

High Needs Block Budget 2023/24

			A	B	C	C - B
Category		Description	2023/24 Final Budget £,000	2023/24 May. Forecast £,000	2023/24 Aug. Forecast £,000	Variance Current Forecast to Previous Forecast £,000
Mainstream	Wokingham	Place Funding - Post-16	162	162	162	-
		Top-up Funding	4,573	5,828	5,549	(279)
		Alternative Provision/Education	432	485	660	175
	Out of Borough	Top-up Funding	203	331	470	140
	Independent	Top-up Funding	500	490	424	(66)
Resource Bases	Wokingham	Place Funding	618	534	534	-
		Empty Place Funding	164	112	112	-
		Top-up Funding	968	1,167	1,225	58
	Out of Borough	Top-up Funding	189	188	196	8
Special Schools 37	Wokingham - Addington	Place Funding	2,822	2,822	2,822	-
		Top-up funding	5,638	5,638	5,638	-
	Wokingham - Chiltern Way	Place Funding	661	661	661	-
		Top-up funding	755	733	766	33
	Wokingham - Oak Tree	Place Funding	160	160	160	-
		Top-up funding	400	400	400	-
	Out of Borough	Top-up Funding	1,380	1,810	2,395	585
	Independent & Non-Maintained	Placements	9,957	10,389	11,276	887
	Pupil Referral Units	Wokingham	Foundry College	1,879	1,879	1,879
Out of Borough		Top-up Funding	-	62	64	2
Post-16: FE & Colleges	Out of Borough	Top-up Funding	1,599	1,370	1,489	119
Hospital Education		CAMHS Phoenix School	270	270	274	4
		Independent Hospital Education	20	20	20	-
Other		CYPIT	553	553	590	37
		Sensory Consortium	326	326	326	-
		Support for Inclusion	1,430	915	840	(75)
		Targeted Education (eg tutors, personal budgets, ABA)	776	801	1,028	227
		Inclusion Group Funding	150	150	150	-
<b>TOTAL Expenditure</b>			<b>36,584</b>	<b>38,255</b>	<b>40,109</b>	<b>1,854</b>
DSG Allocation (including Academy Place Funding Recoup)			(27,243)	(27,243)	(27,033)	210
Transfer from Schools Block			-	-	-	-
Supplementary Grant Funding			(1,187)	(1,187)	(1,187)	-
<b>TOTAL Income</b>			<b>(28,430)</b>	<b>(28,430)</b>	<b>(28,220)</b>	<b>210</b>
<b>2023/24 Net Expenditure (Surplus) / Deficit</b>			<b>8,154</b>	<b>9,825</b>	<b>11,889</b>	<b>2,064</b>

Early Years Block Budget 2023/24

Category	Description	May-23		Aug-23	C - B
		A	B	C	
		Initial 2023/24 Forecast £,000	2023/24 Forecast May £,000	2023/24 Forecast Aug £,000	Variance Current Forecast to Previous Forecast £,000
Early Years Funding Formula	2 year olds	483	483	483	-
	3-4 year olds including Provider reserve fund	10,600	10,600	10,600	-
	Maintained Nursery School	688	688	688	-
Grants	EYPP	62	62	62	-
	Disability Access Fund	52	52	52	-
	EYSG	-	-	653	653
Centrally retained	Centrally retained (2 yr olds)	25	25	25	-
	Centrally retained (3 & 4 yr olds incl EY Inclusion Service contribution)	555	555	555	-
	Centrally retained (Early Years Inclusion Funding) for individual pupils	150	150	150	-
<b>TOTAL Expenditure</b>		<b>12,615</b>	<b>12,615</b>	<b>13,268</b>	<b>653</b>
DSG Allocation		(12,615)	(12,615)	(13,268)	(653)
<b>TOTAL Income</b>		<b>(12,615)</b>	<b>(12,615)</b>	<b>(13,268)</b>	<b>(653)</b>
<b>2023/24 Net Expenditure (Surplus) / Deficit</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>

Central School Services Block Budget 2023/24

Category	Description	May-23		Aug-23	C - B Variance Current Forecast to Previous Forecast £,000
		A Initial 2023/24 Forecast £,000	B 2023/24 Forecast May £,000	C 2023/24 Forecast Aug £,000	
Strategic and Regulation function	Inspection Workshop Equipment Secondary - Health & safety school trips	12	12	12	-
	Finance	117	117	117	-
	Contribution to the Children Director Services	187	187	187	-
39 Other	Capita Contracts	150	150	150	-
	SACRE	7	7	7	-
	Servicing of schools forums	4	4	4	-
	Schools Admissions services	232	232	232	-
	School Asset Management	49	49	49	-
	Education welfare service	117	117	117	-
	Licences for Maintained and academies	164	164	164	-
<b>TOTAL Expenditure</b>		<b>1,039</b>	<b>1,039</b>	<b>1,039</b>	<b>-</b>
DSG Allocation		(1,039)	(1,039)	(1,039)	-
<b>TOTAL Income</b>		<b>(1,039)</b>	<b>(1,039)</b>	<b>(1,039)</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>2023/24 Net Expenditure (Surplus) / Deficit</b>		<b>(0)</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>-</b>

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**Appendix B**  
**2023/24 Growth Fund Forecast and Projection for 2024/25**

	2023/24		2023/24		2023/24		2023/24		Projection	
	Primary MPPL	Secondary MPPL	2023/24	2023/24	Confirmed Primary MPPL	Confirmed Secondary MPPL	2024/25	2024/25	2024/25	2024/25
			4,405	4,405			4,655	4,655		
			5,715	5,715			6,050	6,050		
<b>Schools - New classes</b>	<b>MPPL</b>	<b>MPPL</b>	<b>Funded</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2024/25</b>
	2023/24	2024/25	Number of Places	Budget	Forecast		Estimate			
<b>Pre-existing Secondary commitments from 2022/23</b>										
Additional secondary places (Y7) for 2022/23 - Piggott	5,715		46	104,061	104,061	-0				
Additional secondary places (Y7) for 2022/23 - St Crispins	5,715		100	226,219	226,219	-0				
Additional secondary places (Y8) for 2022/23 - Emmbrook	5,715		30	67,866	67,866	-0				
Additional secondary places (Y9) for 2022/23 - Bulmershe	5,715		15	33,933	33,933	-0				
			<u>191</u>							
<b>Secondary sector places for 2023/24</b>										
Additional secondary places (Y7) for 2022/23 - Piggott	5,715		45	142,518	142,518	-0		101,798		
Additional secondary places (Y7) for 2022/23 - St Crispins	5,715		55	190,024	174,188	-15,836		124,420		
Additional secondary places (Y8) for 2022/23 - Emmbrook	5,715		45	95,012	142,518	47,506		101,798		
Additional secondary places (Y9) for 2022/23 - Bulmershe	5,715		15	47,506	47,506	-0		33,933		
Additional secondary places for 2022/23 - Waingels	5,715		30	0	95,012	95,012		67,866		
<b>Secondary Contingency 2023/24</b>										
Additional secondary places (KS3) for 2023/24 - contingency	5,715		90	285,036	285,036	-0				
Additional secondary places (KS4) for 2023/24 - contingency	5,715		30	95,012	0	-95,012				
<b>Secondary sector places for 2024/25</b>										
Additional secondary places (Y7) for 2022/23 - Piggott		6,050	45					150,872		
Additional secondary places (Y7) for 2022/23 - St Crispins		6,050	55					184,399		
Additional secondary places (Y8) for 2022/23 - Emmbrook		6,050	45					150,872		
Additional secondary places (Y9) for 2022/23 - Bulmershe		6,050	15					50,291		
<b>Secondary Contingency 2024/25</b>										
Additional secondary places for 2024/25		6,050	90					301,744		
<b>Secondary TOTAL</b>				<b>1,287,187</b>	<b>1,318,855</b>	<b>31,668</b>		<b>1,267,993</b>		
<b>Pre-existing Primary commitments 2022/23</b>										
Keep Hatch additional primary places Year 5	4,405		30	52,309	52,309	0				
Keep Hatch additional primary places Year 6	4,405		30	52,309	52,309	0				
All Saints additional Primary Places Y5 and Y6	4,405		30	52,309	52,309	0				
Floreat Montague Park Primary Y6 was Y5			30	0	53,393	53,393				
<b>Primary sector places for 2023/24</b>										
Farley Hill Expansion (Reception)	4,405		30	73,233	0	-73,233				
<b>Primary sector places for 2024/25</b>										
Farley Hill Expansion (Reception)		4,655	30					77,389		
<b>Primary Contingency 2023/24</b>										
Additional primary places (Y6) for 2023/24 - contingency	4,405		30	73,233	73,233	0				
<b>Primary Contingency 2024/25</b>										
Additional primary places for 2024/25 - contingency		4,655	30					77,389		
<b>Primary TOTAL</b>				<b>303,393</b>	<b>283,554</b>	<b>-19,839</b>		<b>154,779</b>		
<b>Primary plus Secondary Growth TOTAL</b>				<b>1,590,580</b>	<b>1,602,410</b>	<b>11,830</b>		<b>1,422,771</b>		
<b>Basic Need: New and recently new (growing schools)</b>										
Alder Grove Primary				63,825	63,825	0		48,300		
St Cecilia's Primary (Y3, Y4, Y5/Y6 classes)				196,075	196,075	0		165,600		
				<b>259,900</b>	<b>259,900</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>213,900</b>		
<b>Total Expenditure</b>				<b>1,850,480</b>	<b>1,862,310</b>	<b>11,830</b>		<b>1,636,671</b>		
<b>In year Growth Funding from Schools Block</b>				1,665,896	1,665,896	0		1,448,634		
<b>In year Overspend</b>				<b>184,584</b>	<b>196,414</b>	<b>11,830</b>				
<b>Reserves b/f</b>				234,063	384,451			188,037		
<b>Projected Reserves c/f</b>				49,479	188,037			-		

**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	287.5		92,575	77,625	62,100	46,575	31,050	35,650
Secondary	575		143,750	106,950	71,300	35,650		

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# Agenda Item 9

**TITLE** 2024/25 DSG Budget Update

**FOR CONSIDERATION BY** Schools Forum on 11 October 2023

**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 budget for the 2024/25 financial year.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

The report provides an update on work informing 2024/25 budget setting, funding information as it is currently available, and next steps.

## DSG Budget Planning 2024/25

### 01. Purpose of the Report

This report provides Schools Forum with an update on work informing 2024/25 budget setting.

### 02. Recommendation

Schools Forum is asked to note the update on the budget for the 2024/25 financial year.

### 03. Funding Allocation for 2024/25

At the end of July 2023 the DfE advised Wokingham Borough Council of our Primary and Secondary Units of Funding for the 2024/25 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 2023.

Block	2023/24 TOTAL		2024/25 PROVISIONAL		£ Increase	% Increase
Primary Unit of Funding	4,579		4,854		275	
		71,983,274		76,303,327	4,320,053	6.0%
Secondary Unit of Funding	5,936		6,332		396	
		63,495,841		67,731,243	4,235,402	6.7%
Premises Factors		1,634,877		1,790,874	155,997	9.5%
MSAG		4,555,857		Now in baseline		
<b>Sub-total Schools Block</b>		<b>141,669,849</b>		<b>145,825,444</b>	<b>4,155,595</b>	<b>2.9%</b>
Growth Factors	1,665,896					
<b>TOTAL Schools Block</b>		<b>143,335,745</b>			<b>tbc</b>	
<b>TOTAL High Needs Block</b>		<b>28,430,327</b>		<b>29,145,904</b>	<b>715,577</b>	<b>2.5%</b>
<b>TOTAL Central School Services Block</b>		<b>1,039,167</b>		<b>1,075,657</b>	<b>36,490</b>	<b>3.5%</b>

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 2023 census.

### 04. Schools Block

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

2024/25 is the second year of official transition to the “direct” schools National Funding Formula (NFF). There are more 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 adopt the new formulaic approach to the split sites factor which affects one Wokingham school.
- Local authorities will also be required to move their local formula factors 10% closer to the NFF values, compared to where they were in 2023/24, 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 each year.
- MFG can be set between +0.0% and +0.5% (In 2023/24 Wokingham’s MFG is +0.5%)
- Minimum Per Pupil Funding has increased (see figures below). The new figures reflect an increase of 2.5% plus the additional of the Mainstream Schools Additional Grant (MSAG)

	2023/24 MPPL	2024/25 MPPL	Increase %
Primary	£4,405	£4,655	5.7%
KS3	£5,503	£5,824	5.8%
KS4	£6,033	£6,389	5.9%
Secondary	£5,715	£6,050	5.9%

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 Task and Finish Group meeting, we found that using the census figures from October 2022 meant that:

- There are 2 versions of the formula that are potentially affordable:
  - using the NFF factor values with Area Cost Adjustment (ACA), and
  - using the minimum allowable NFF factor values
- Assuming:
  - we keep MFG at maximum allowable of 0.5%
  - we have no cap on gains, as there is no cap in the NFF
  - we can increase the FSM factor to £300

We have 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 2023 census.

The funding consultation with schools is currently running. We will give a verbal update of the results of the Principles of the Schools Block funding formula and

disapplication request for our all-through school at the meeting. The response to the 1% block transfer will be covered under another agenda item.

#### 05. **Growth Fund 2024/25**

For the first time in 2024/25, the DfE will allocate funding based on growth AND falling rolls.

For the current year the growth factor allocation is £1.6m for Wokingham. Through budget planning we allocated the total amount locally from the overall Schools Block allocation to the Growth Fund for the 2023/24 financial year.

We have asked schools to supply us with their pupil numbers this term to enable us to calculate what our Growth and Falling Rolls funding is likely to be for 2024/25 which will help us inform our budget planning, particularly given Growth Fund spend for 2023/24 is now forecast at £1.9m.

Wokingham doesn't currently operate a falling rolls fund. The restriction that support could only be provided to schools judged 'good' or 'outstanding' at their last Ofsted inspection will be removed in 2024/25. Whether schools would like the option of a falling rolls fund has formed part of our consultation with schools.

Looking at likely growth requirements for 2024/25, the budget required for next financial year is likely to be around £1.5m if we utilise all of the growth fund which is currently held in reserves.

#### 06. **Early Years Block**

The Task and finish Group met before the summer holidays to discuss the principles around the allocation of the new Supplementary Grant from September 2023. It was agreed that we would distribute 100% to settings as an additional rate alongside the current funding formula.

We have been given provisional figures for the extended 2-year-old free entitlement from April 2024. The funding Wokingham will receive for 2-year-olds will be calculated using a base rate and an amount for additional needs.

From September 2024 the free entitlement will extend to 9 months up to 2-year-olds which the DfE will need to create a new rate for.

We are expecting all the new rates to be confirmed in the Autumn term.

As with other blocks, the Teachers Pay and Pension Grant (TPPG) which has previously been paid separately, will be rolled into the baseline for 2024/25.

From 2024/25 the DfE are expecting to extend the eligibility for Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) and Disability Access Funding (DAF).

The Early Years Task & Finish Group will convene this term and will be kept updated as more information becomes available.

07. **High Needs Block**

As High Needs Block Task & Finish Group was established in the latter stages 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 2024/25 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.

<b>Contact</b> Katherine Vernon	<b>Service</b> Learning Achievement and Partnerships
<b>Telephone No</b> Tel: 0118 974 6337	<b>Email</b> katherine.vernon@wokingham.gov.uk

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**TITLE** Requested Transfer of 1% DSG Schools Block to the High Needs Block in 2024/25.

**FOR CONSIDERATION BY** Schools Forum on October 2023

**WARD** None Specific

**DIRECTOR** Helen Watson

## OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

This report 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 for the following:

1. To note the outcome of the stage 1 schools' survey entitled 'Right Spaces, Right Places'
2. To note the outcome of the stage 2 schools' survey gathering views on the recommendation to support the request of the 1% transfer of DSG Schools Block budget to the High Needs Block in 2024/25;
3. To consider the analysis of the feedback from schools as to the rationale for their decision, and a range of further evidence to support this;
4. To reach a decision as to whether to support the recommended transfer.

## SUMMARY OF REPORT

The report presents the outcome of the schools' consultation regarding the request of the 1% transfer of DSG Schools Block budget to the High Needs Block in 2024/25.

This work builds on an earlier stage 1 consultation in June / July entitled '*Right Spaces, Right Places*' that gathered Wokingham school views of the strategic priorities regarding Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and proposed spending on SEND provision and support. The detailed findings of this consultation are attached as **Appendix 1**, which demonstrated unanimous school support for the strategic priorities identified by the Council and a high level of support for the proposed financial priorities (81% of schools supported the identified priorities for investment).

This was followed by stage 2 consultation gathering views on the recommendation to support the request of the 1% transfer, which ran between 18/09/23 and 2/10/23.

Responses were received from the following proportions of maintained and academy settings:

	Total	Maintained	Academies	Not stated
<b>Number of WBC Settings</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>39</b>	
<b>Number Responded</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>46%</b>	

The survey focused on whether schools were in support of the requested transfer and asked for clarification as to the reasons for votes against the transfer.

The results of this survey are as follows:

Question 1	Yes	No	Blank	Result
Do you support the proposal to transfer 1% of School Block funding (approx. £1.4m) to the High Needs Block for 2024-25 to support the programme in delivering financial sustainability for SEND in Wokingham Borough?	11	25	1	<b>No - 68%</b>

The most common reason identified for rejecting related to financial concerns (76% of schools who gave a reason); either a general concern about other school's budgets or specific concerns regarding individual school's financial position. Of these, many stated that the transfer would result in reductions in support for pupils with SEND.

The report goes on to identify a number of additional key factors for Schools Forum to take into account in making the decision and the significant implications of rejecting this request. Schools Forum may wish to consider additional measures to address these financial pressures on some schools as this could unblock resistance to the otherwise agreed consensus around the need to invest.

In light of these additional key factors the report concludes by recommending an approval of the transfer request despite the findings of the survey.

**11<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

### **01. Purpose of the Report**

To present the case for the transfer of 1% of budget from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block in 2024/25 and to present schools' views of this proposal based on a recent survey.

### **02. Recommendation**

Schools Forum is asked for the following:

1. To note the outcome of the stage 1 schools survey from June / July 2023 entitled 'Right Spaces, Right Places'
2. To note the outcome of the stage 2 schools survey gathering views on the recommendation to support the request of the 1% transfer of DSG Schools Block budget to the High Needs Block in 2024/25;
3. To consider the analysis of voting and the feedback from schools as to the rationale for their decision;
4. To consider a range of other pertinent factors in relation to the 1% transfer request;
5. To reach a decision as to whether to support the recommended transfer.

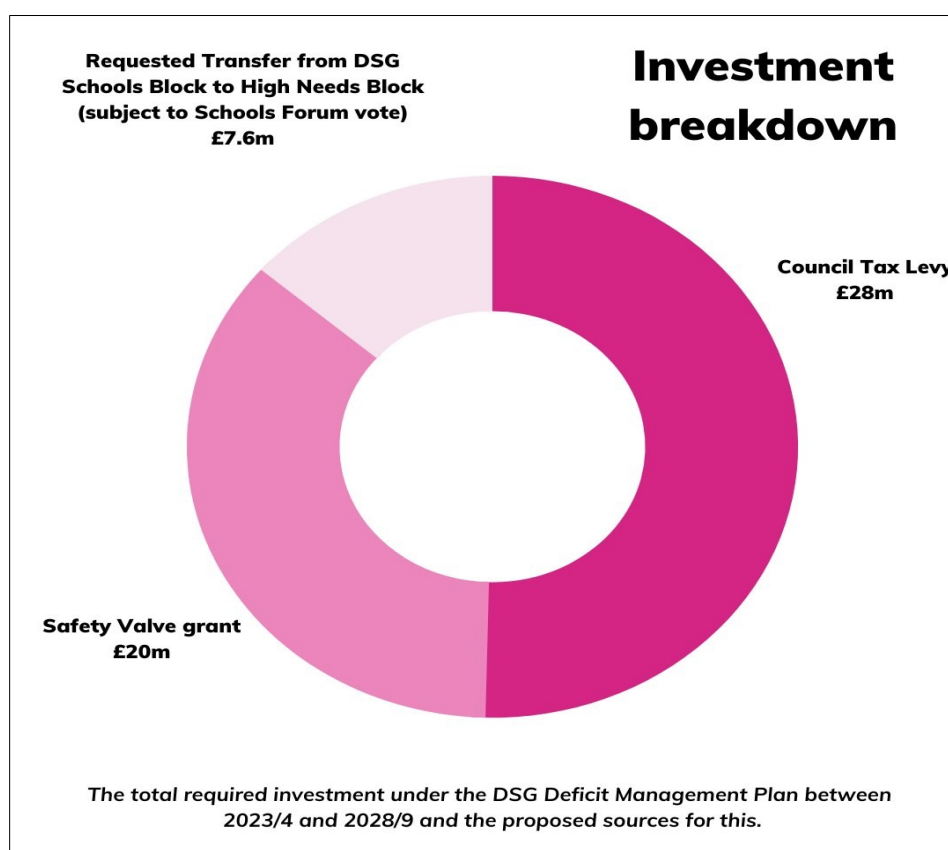
### **03. Background**

Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) has negotiated and agreed a 'Safety Valve' agreement with the DfE. A requirement of the agreement is that WBC reaches a positive in-year balance on its Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) account by the end of 2028/29. In order to deliver this WBC has agreed to implement a Deficit Management Plan that sets out a range of measures and interventions.

There are three sources of funding required to deliver this management plan:

- i. The local authority has created a new **DSG Equalisation Fund** - funded by an additional **1% Council Tax Levy** - to provide a total of circa £28m across the duration of the programme. This funding will clear the remaining cumulative deficit of C£20m as well as contribute to the investment in service improvement measures required.
- ii. **Safety Valve funding from the DfE** is to 'pay off' the cumulative deficit balance at the end of the programme – for Wokingham, this equates to £20.1m. There is no 'new' money being provided by the DfE to deliver Safety Valve to invest in additional services as part of the management plan. Whilst it is recognised that the only way to deliver a balanced High Needs Block is through investing in service improvement, *this money must be found within local resources*.
- iii. The local authority is requesting the **transfer of 1% of the DSG Schools Block** budget annually for the remaining 5-year duration of the programme; this will provide approximately £1.4m in 2024/25 ultimately amounting to a total of £7.1m of High Needs Block budget across the duration of the programme (2024-29). ***This element of the funding will be consulted on with Schools Forum annually, will***

**contribute directly to the required investment in service improvement and will not contribute towards the deficit directly.**



**Figure 1 – WBC Safety Valve Programme - Financial Overview 2023-29**

The cost elements of the plan come to a total proposed investment in the local education sector of more than £14.5 million over the 6 years of the programme (subject to Schools Forum’s decision on the transfer). **Schools Forum are being asked to contribute to specific areas of this programme of work that will be of most direct benefit to schools, and which schools have confirmed are their top priorities for investment.**

### 03.i Additional and New Investment in SEND Services

The key priority areas that schools have identified and that the 1% Schools Block transfer will support are as follows:

- New SEND Support Service & enhanced Specialist Outreach to improve timely access to specialist advice, training and support:
  - Currently recruiting to the Area SENCO position who will lead the new service
  - Investment in additional specialist outreach services from Addington and Foundry College available from September 2023
  - Investing in new speech and language outreach service led by Highwood Primary and jointly funded by Health – launching in October 2023
  - Additional funding for specialist outreach is being invested back into local schools to support peer to peer support and sharing of local expertise and best practice
- The Council’s own investment is also supporting development of increased range of specialist provision, which will alleviate pressure on those mainstream schools who are currently accommodating pupils requiring specialist placements:

- Oak Tree Special School opened September 2023
- Addington expansion at Farley Hill will open after October half term 2023
- Development of new mainstream based SEND provision
- Two new Special Free Schools under development – to open 2026
- Implementing an improved range of early intervention measures in the early years as part of our wider Early Years Strategy – *this will help to address pressure on schools who are reporting increasing number of pupils arriving in reception who are not ‘school-ready’*
- Design and implementation of more robust processes for the commissioning of Independent and Non-Maintained Special School places and high-quality Alternative Provision – *this will help to control spending and quality concerns voiced by many schools.*
- Robustly ensuring consistency of the ‘ordinarily available’ offer across every school – *ensuring equity and consistency as to what every school provide at SEN Support level.*
- Additional investment in the SEND Team – *this will help to improve timeliness and communications.*
- In 2023 re-commissioned S&LT and OT services with additional investment to increase capacity.

## 04. REPORT

### 04.i Stage 1 Schools Survey - ‘Right Spaces, Right Places’

Between 30 June 2023 - 28 July 2023 Wokingham Council ran a survey for schools gathering views on strategic priorities for improvement of the local SEND system to inform development of Wokingham’s new SEND Strategy.

The survey was responded to by a total of 17 schools – 25% of all local schools – made up of 14 primary (25.5% of all primary schools) two secondaries (20% of all secondary schools) and one special school (33% of all special schools). 16 of the 17 respondents confirmed they were headteachers.

100% of respondents confirmed that the identified strategy priorities are relevant and 81% of schools supported the identified priorities for investment. A number of additional priorities were also identified including additional focus on the mental health needs of pupils, which have increased dramatically since the pandemic, highlighting pressures in the early years around the number of pupils arriving in reception with high levels of need and the challenges schools are facing in recruiting staff to carry out roles supporting pupils with SEND. *These issues will be responded to in the next phase of delivery as the programme continues to evolve based on feedback from schools and data regarding impact.*

Broadly speaking the survey confirmed a high level of school support for the current programme of SEND improvement measures whilst also emphasising the urgent pressure to address the identified gaps in provision and support.

## 04.ii Stage 2 School s Survey - Requested transfer of 1% DSG Schools Block budget to the High Needs Block in 2024/25

The stage 1 consultation above was followed by stage 2 consultation, which ran between 18/09/23 and 2/10/23, and gathered responses from the following proportions of maintained and academy settings:

	Total	Maintained	Academies	Not stated
<b>Number of WBC Settings</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>39</b>	
<b>Number Responded</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>46%</b>	

The survey focused on whether schools were in support of the requested transfer and asked for clarification as to the reasons for votes against the transfer.

The results of this survey are as follows:

<b>Question 1</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Blank</b>	<b>Result</b>
Do you support the proposal to transfer 1% of School Block funding (approx. £1.4m) to the High Needs Block for 2024-25 to support the programme in delivering financial sustainability for SEND in Wokingham Borough?	11	25	1	<b>No - 68%</b>

## 04.III ANALYSIS OF THE FEEDBACK FROM SCHOOLS AS TO THE RATIONALE FOR THEIR DECISION

Of the schools who voted against the transfer 17 gave reason as to why, which have been categorised into themes set out below. Some schools gave 2-3 reasons, and these are all included in the analysis below, so the numbers include double counting:

<b>RATIONALE GIVEN FOR REJECTION</b>	<b>Instanc es</b>	<b>As a % of all 17 responses</b>
Financial reasons – affordability and impact on school’s own SEND pupils ( <b>6 of these respondents confirmed they were in support of the proposals but couldn’t afford to contribute</b> )	13	76.5%
Lack of confidence that schools will benefit quickly enough from the support services being proposed	7	41.2%
Raised concerns about why some schools are asked to contribute more than others	2	11.8%
There are better ways of finding efficiencies or raising the money	1	5.9%

8 schools (23%) who voted against the transfer gave no explanation of their rationale.

#### **04.iv OTHER FACTORS TO CONSIDER IN RELATION TO THE REQUESTED TRANSFER**

The single largest reason identified for rejecting the requested transfer (76.5% of all responses given) related to financial concerns about the impact this would have on individual school budgets, threatening to tip some into deficit or worsen the position of a number of schools already in deficit ...however:

- Every school will benefit from increase in funding in 2024/25 such that ***even if the 1% transfer were approved all of Wokingham's schools will be receiving a net increase in funding next year.***
- Wokingham's maintained school balances at the end of the 2022/23 financial year were just under £6.46m and the equivalent figure for Wokingham's academy school balances for 2020/21 (the last publicly available data) shows a total balance of £10.15m, so ***there are resources available within the education system locally.***
- All Safety Valve agreements agreed by the DfE include a contribution from the Schools Block budget. If this is not agreed in Wokingham this would make the area an exception to the general position.
- It is considered likely by WBC Officers that if this request is rejected by Wokingham's Schools Forum, this could lead to the DfE refusing to approve the next Safety Valve funding release of £1.72m due at the end of the 2023/24 financial year.
- Ultimately further refusals for the Schools Block transfer could lead to Wokingham being expelled from the Safety Valve programme with the resulting loss of up to £10.3m outstanding funding to ensure a financially sustainable education system in the borough.
- The loss of this funding could trigger the need for WBC to be forced to issue a Section 114 notice, which is a public acknowledgement that, in the view of the chief financial officer (CFO), the authority's is forecasting a deficit budget; in the worst-case-scenario Commissioners could be sent in to impose change on the local system. We must avoid that outcome by addressing our own problems.
- There is recognition that some schools are under significant financial pressure and for whom this represents a challenging request, but ultimately if the Council has to resolve the financial position with no DfE financial support it is likely to mean cuts to a range of services, which will impact and children and schools.
- In July Schools Forum had asked Officers to appraise options for apportioning a lower share of the 1% transfer to smaller schools. After investigating these options it proved technically almost impossible to target the costs appropriately; existing protections including minimum pupil funding guarantees meant that any methodology had unforeseen and detrimental impacts on some of the schools in need of protection and it was concluded that such an approach could not work.

#### **04.v POTENTIAL MITIGATION FOR SCHOOL'S IN FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES**

- Measures to support schools in financial hardship could be introduced but this would need a high level of support from the majority of schools to be palatable; this is not something the Local Authority can address alone but is something Schools Forum may wish to consider.
- If we were able to address the financial concerns of the schools who highlighted affordability, this could have meant that a majority of schools were in support.

#### **05. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Given the fact that there is a high level of support from the majority of schools for the proposed improvement measures alongside the detrimental effect of failing to fund these

measures we are asking Schools Forum to approve the 1% transfer as a commitment to the joint working required to reach a balanced High Needs Block budget by 2029.

## 06. APPENDICES

**06.i APPENDIX 1 - Stage 1 Schools SEND Survey Outcome Summary - ‘Right Spaces, Right Places’**

**06.ii APPENDIX 2 - Stage 2 Schools SEND Survey Outcome Summary - ‘Support for 1% Transfer’**

<b>Contact:</b>	Ming Zhang - Assistant Director of Education and SEND
<b>Email:</b>	Ming.Zhang@wokingham.gov.uk



# Survey on School Priorities for SEND Services and Support - *'Right Spaces, Right Places'*

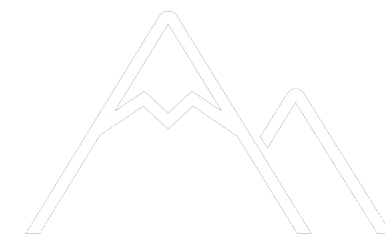
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*Summary Analysis*



**WOKINGHAM**  
**BOROUGH COUNCIL**

- Wokingham Council recently ran a survey for schools between 30 June 2023 - 28 July 2023
- It gathered school's views on their priorities for improvement of the local Special Educational Needs and Disability ('SEND') system and Wokingham's new SEND Strategy that is currently being developed
- It also gathered feedback on school's experience of accessing local specialist outreach services
- The survey was responded to by a total of 17 schools – 25% of all local schools – made up of 14 primary (82% of total) two secondaries (12%) and one special school (6%).
- 16 of the 17 respondents confirmed they were headteachers.



- All respondents confirmed that the Strategy Priorities from 2021 remain relevant – although 19% suggested that Co-production was not a key school priority

Issues and Challenges identified in 2021 Strategy	Remains a significant issue for schools	Not a key priority for schools	Response Total
Growing demand, particularly acute in early years	100% 17	0% 0	17
Insufficient specialist provision	100% 17	0% 0	17
Joint working and joined up delivery needs to be strengthened	100% 17	0% 0	17
Management information needs to improve	94% 16	6% 1	17
Strengthen inclusion in mainstream	94% 16	6% 1	17
EHCP timeliness and quality	94% 15	6% 1	16
Co-production at the strategic level is lacking	81% 13	19% 3	16

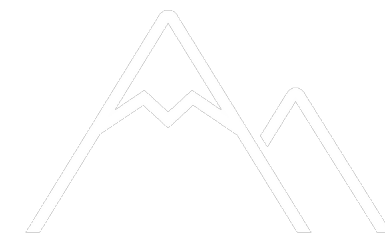
- A number of additional critical challenges were highlighted by schools
- These are either new issues or remain acutely significant for schools
- These are set out on the next slide

- **Complexity of need is increasing** and stretches school's resources and knowledge – particularly in the complexity of mental health difficulties being faced by pupils (and families as a whole), which has been acute in the wake of the pandemic
- These sit below the thresholds for CAMHS but are often too complex for preventative services including the Emotional Well-Being Hub
- There are significant numbers of pupils who have struggled to return to school since the Covid-19 lockdowns – '**Emotionally Based School Avoidance**' is a priority issue for many schools.
- **Limited access to special school places** means that mainstream schools are sometimes supporting very complex cases with increased risk of exclusion
- **Importance of consistency and equality between what schools offer** – every schools need to play an equal part in meeting local needs
- **Limited access to specialist support** – from Educational Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, CAMHS and specialists in Autism and Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties – remains limited
- **Particular challenges in the early years** and in identifying and supporting needs in the PVI sector at pre-school
- **Recruitment and Retention of SEND staff is a key challenge** - and to accessing training for new staff given the high turnover.

- Schools were presented with a range of current and proposed spending priorities
- Schools were asked whether there were the right priorities, whether there were any gaps and asked to rate these in terms of priority levels
- i.e. if there were insufficient resources to do everything which things would schools prioritise, reduce or remove altogether from the list?
- 81% of schools supported the identified priorities for investment
- 36% said there were gaps on the list, which included developing a strategy for recruitment and retention, and ensuring timeliness and accuracy of school's funding; these items will be factored into the SEND Strategy development process
- The Priority list opposite has been colour coded to identify the high, medium and low tiers of school support.
- It should be stressed that the items on the low tier of support may have lower impact on schools; this does not mean they will have a negligible budgetary impact nor a knock-on implication for the SEND system as a whole, but it DOES show where schools themselves want to focus their efforts.

PRIORITY	Prioritise %	Reduce %	Remove %
Increased specialist outreach support	100		
Increased range of specialist provision	94	6	
Implement Early Years Strategy	94	6	
SEND Team capacity	94	6	
Improving Joint Commissioning with health	81	19	
New High Needs Financial Banding system	67	20	13
New SEND support service	62	38	
Commissioning capacity re: Alternative Provision	53	40	7
Data systems	44	44	12
Commissioning capacity re: INMSS	21	64	14
Commissioning capacity re: EOTAS	20	67	13
Improved Local Offer	19	44	38

- There are two clear issues identified in the School Survey that are not addressed through the current programme of improvements:
  - i. Understanding and addressing the identified gap between MHST / Well Being Hub support at the lower tier of mental health support and CAMHS services ... CAMHS is under review locally and we need to ensure the education / SEND system is actively involved in this process
  - ii. Recruitment and Retention of SEND staff were identified as key challenges for schools – we need to explore whether there is more the system-as-a-whole could do to address this challenge in a joined-up way?
- Other issues that were raised are already within scope of the programme as it stands (this will be clearly set out in the SEND Strategy)



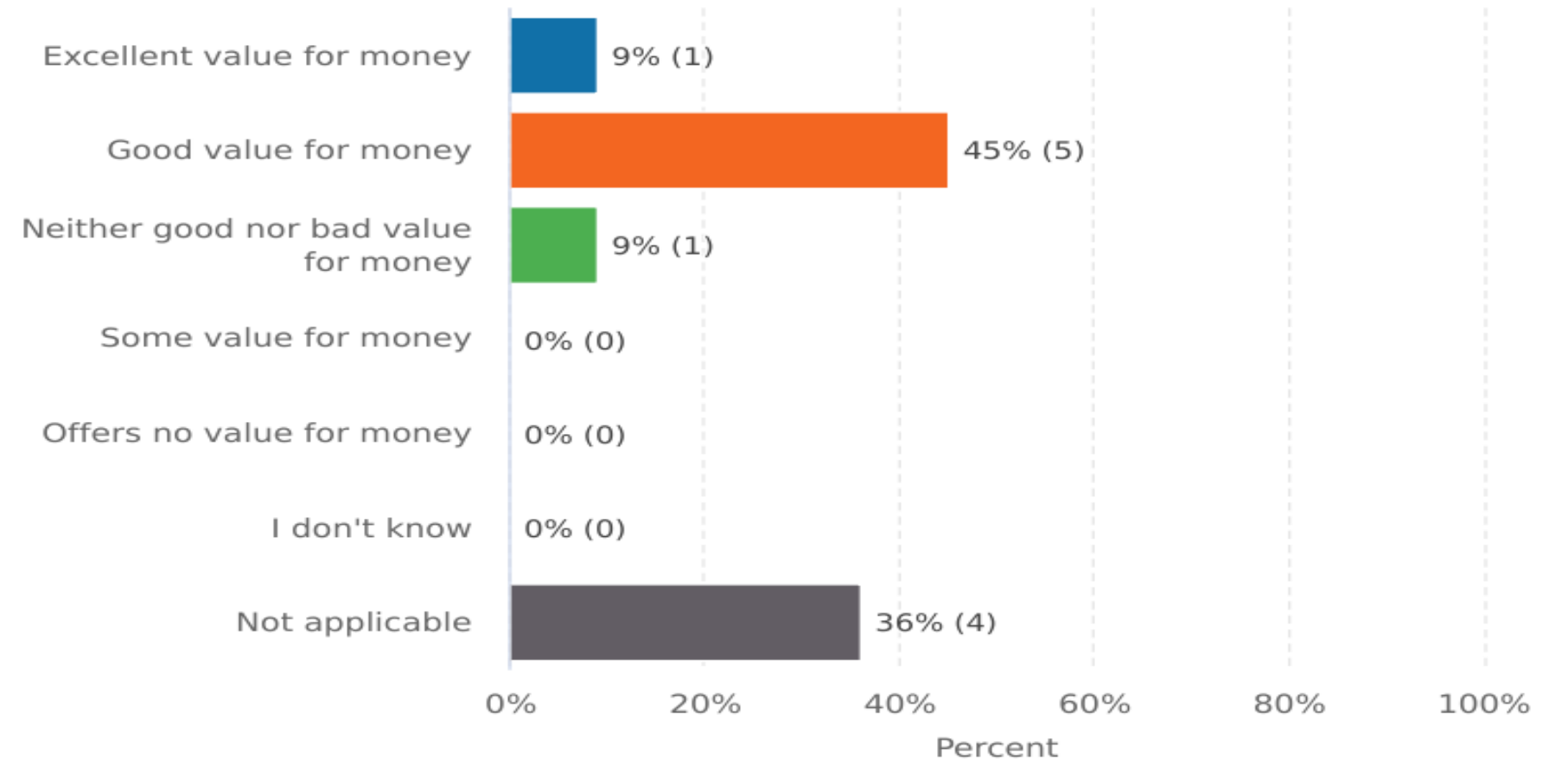
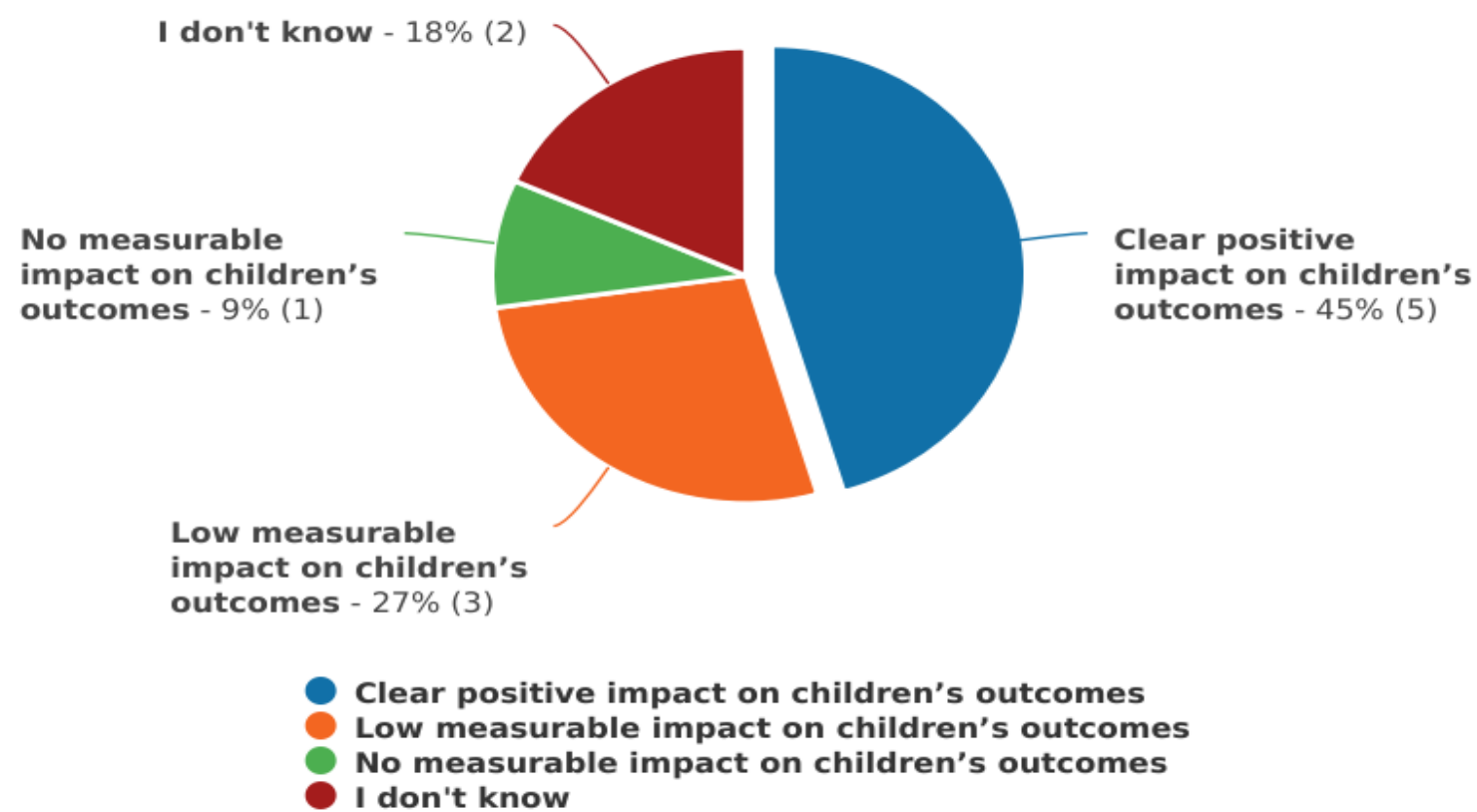
# Survey Feedback on Existing High-Needs-Block-funded Specialist Outreach Services



**WOKINGHAM**  
**BOROUGH COUNCIL**

- 94% of responding schools were aware of AOIS
- 67% of responding schools had accessed AOIS
- 54% of responding schools felt AOIS provided good or excellent value for money – no respondents gave a negative response (36% said ‘not applicable’)
- 100% of responding schools who had accessed AOIS said they would do so again
- There were many compliments regarding the service
- There were also a number of specific suggestions, requests or recommendations that have been passed on to the Service

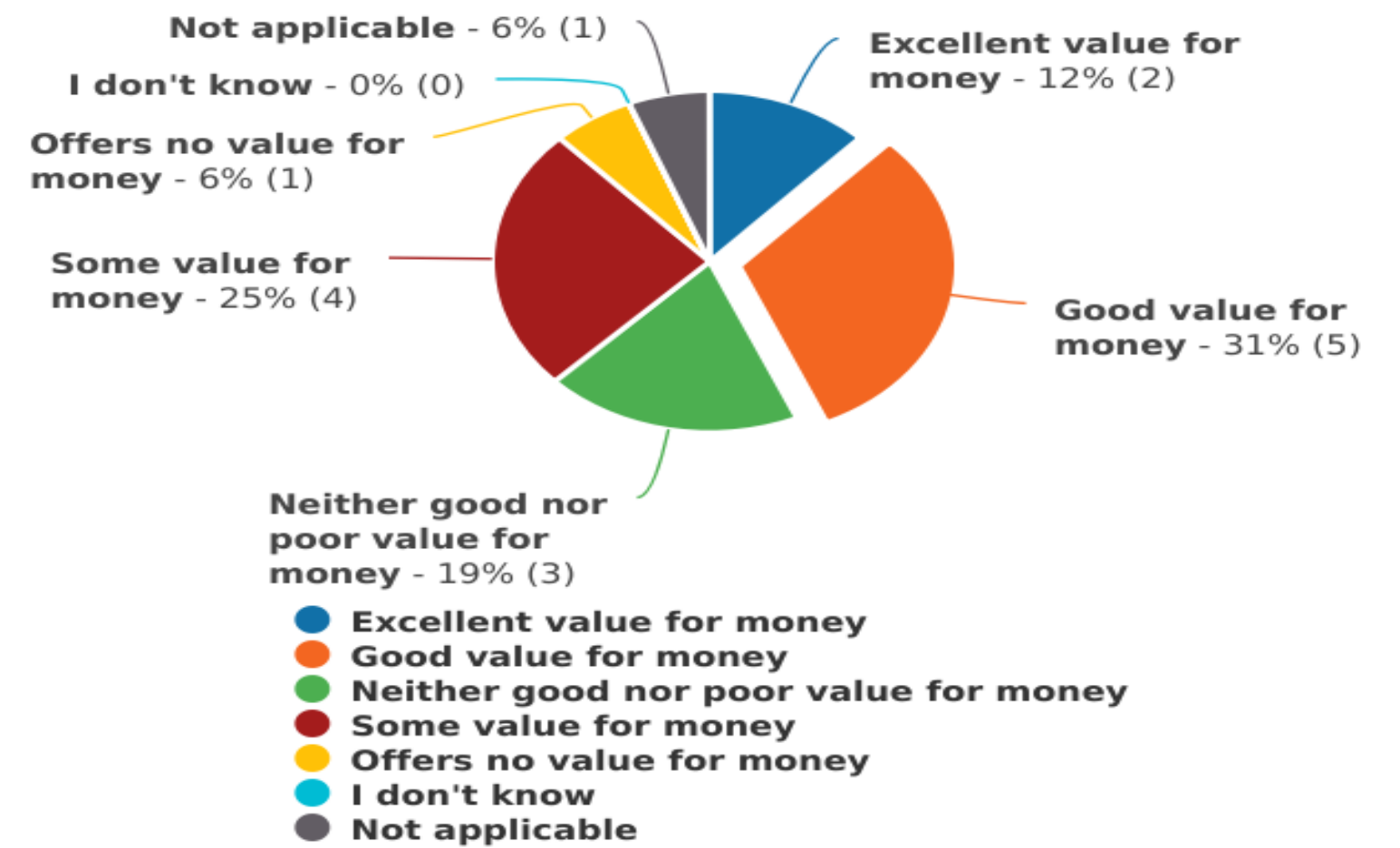
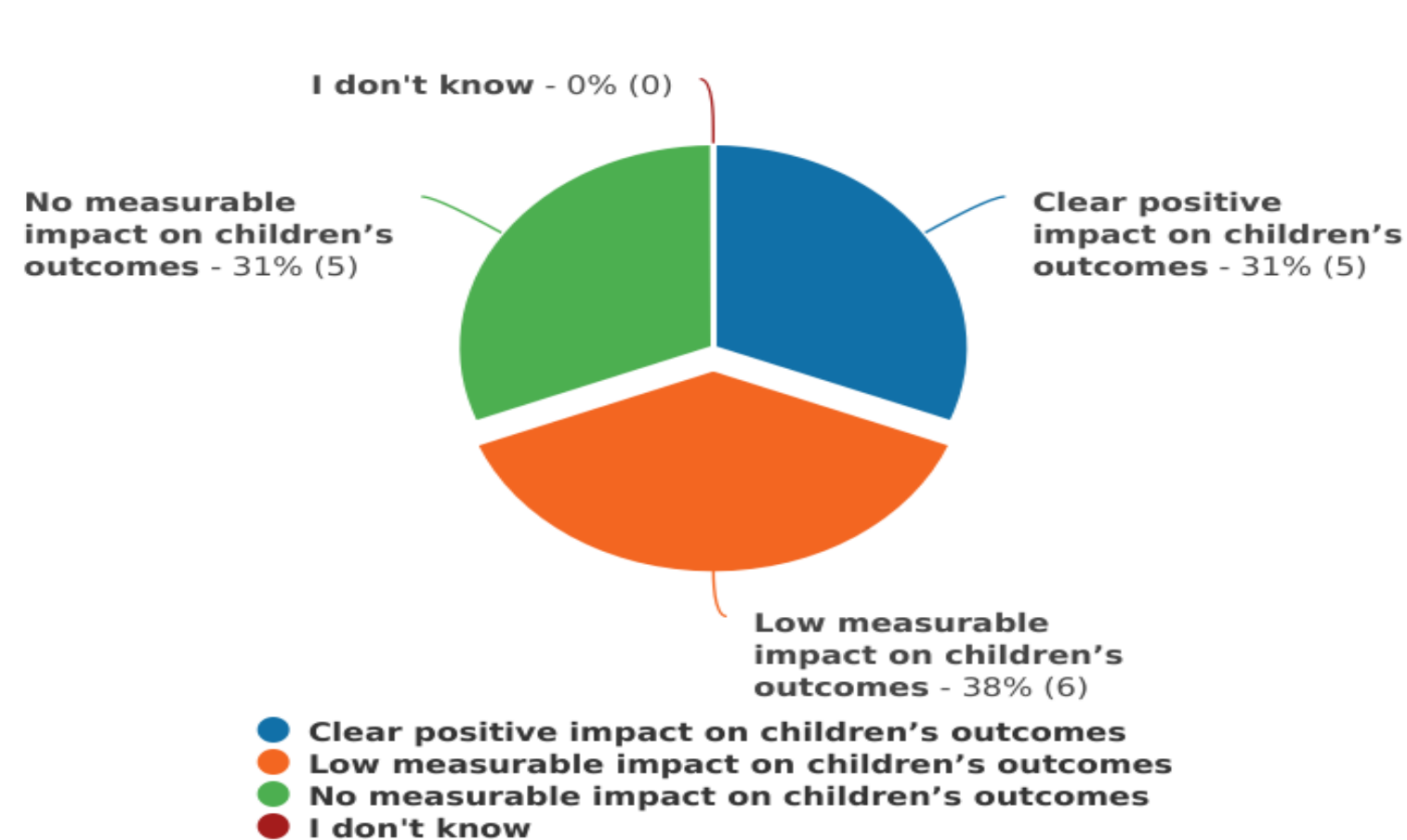
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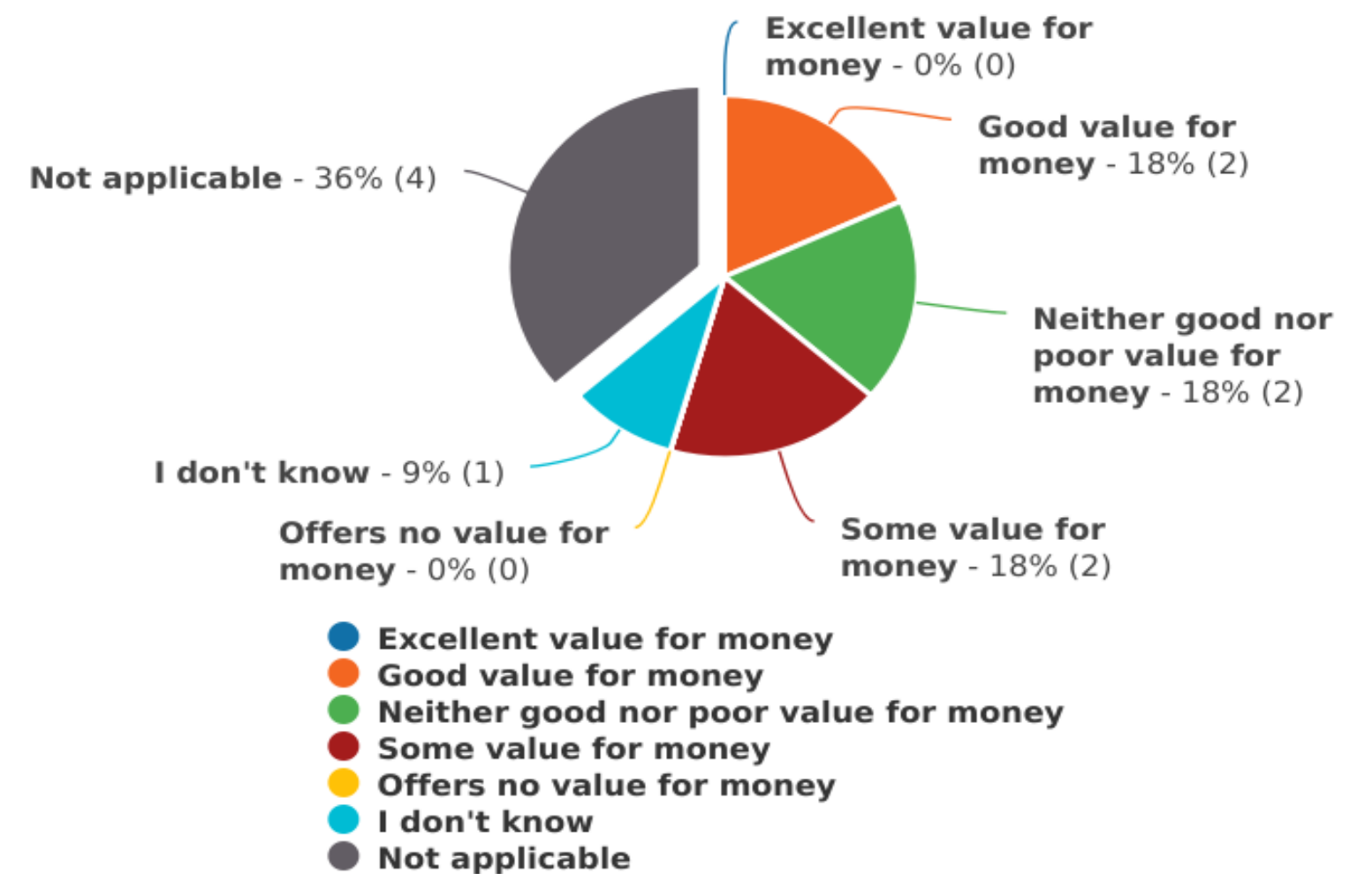
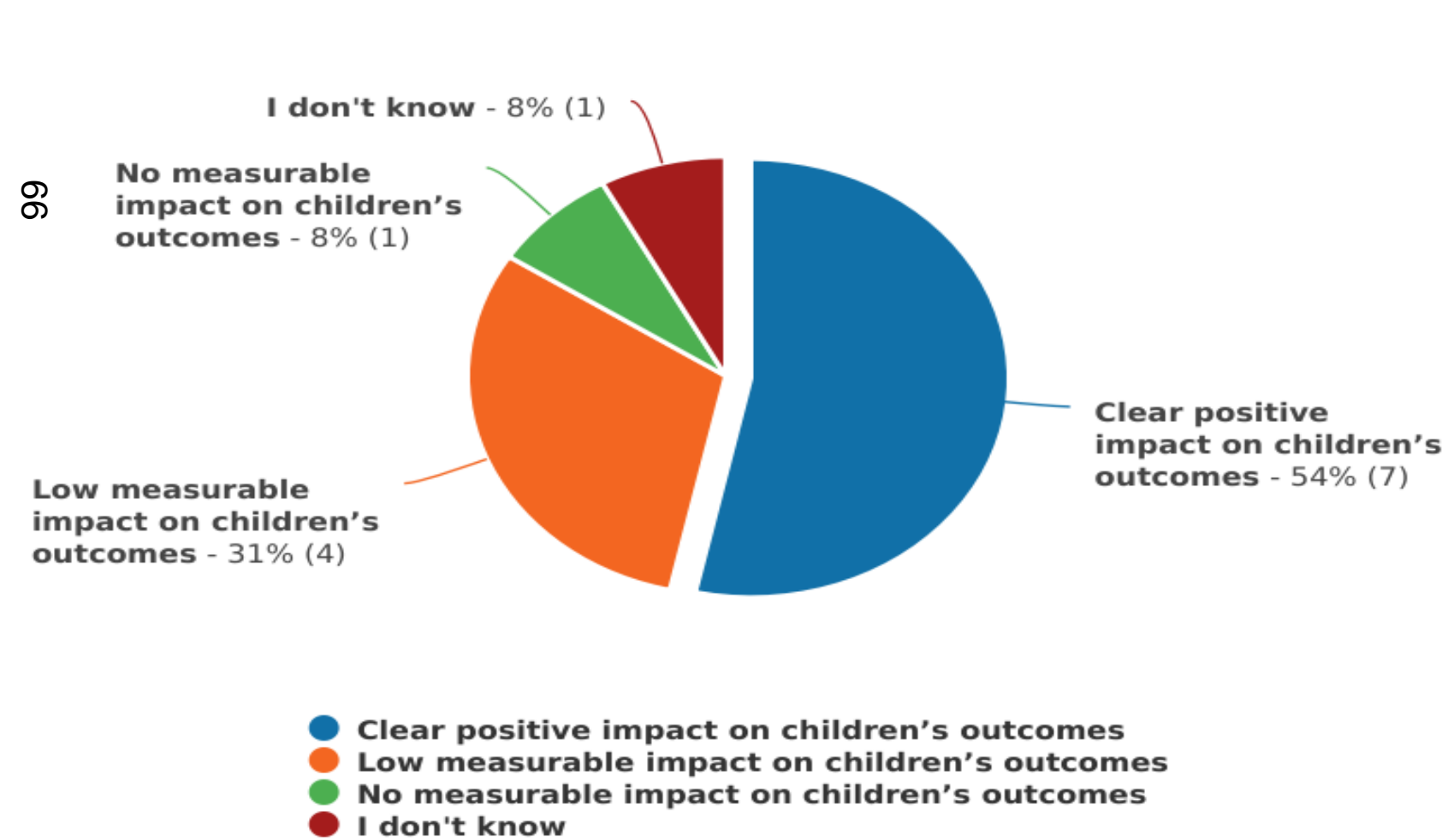


- 100% of responding schools were aware of FCOS
- 94% of responding schools had accessed FCOS
- 43% of responding schools felt FCOS provided good or excellent value for money – one respondents said FCOS offered no value
- 94% of responding schools who had accessed FCOS said they would do so again
- There were a range of comments about the difficulties in supporting pupils with very challenging or violent behaviour in mainstream school and questioning whether this was the right environment. Others were very complementary of the support provided by the Foundry

65





- 82% of responding schools were aware of BSCS
- 93% of responding schools had accessed BSCS
- 18% of responding schools felt BSCS provided good value for money BUT 36% said this was not applicable as the service does not charge (centrally funded for most aspects)
- The service is funded to meet individual pupil's needs as does not provide staff training or development
- 100% of responding schools who had accessed BSCS said they would do so again



# School funding 2023

1. Proposed 1% transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block (and required disapplication request)

1. Do you support the proposal to transfer 1% of School Block funding (approx. £1.4m) to the High Needs Block for 2024-25 to support the programme in delivering financial sustainability for SEND in Wokingham Borough?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		30.56%	11
2	No		69.44%	25
			answered	36
			skipped	1
Summary analysis of the reasons for rejection:				
			Numbers	As a % of all 37 responses
<b>Affordability - Schools state they are struggling to balance their budgets and cannot afford to contribute, even where they agree with the priorities</b>			13	35.1%
<b>Lack of confidence in proposals or access to the support services being offered or proposed</b>			7	18.9%
<b>Agree with proposals for investment in SEND services</b>			6	16.2%
<b>Concerns about lack of equity in schools contributing (some schools are not paying anything towards the 1%)</b>			2	5.4%
<b>There are better ways of raising the money or making efficiencies</b>			1	2.7%
<b>No Reason Given for Rejection</b>			8	21.6%
If no, please state the reason you do not support this (17)				
1	18/09/2023 09:09 AM	I am the Headteacher of a school with a falling roll and, as a result of the area my school is in and the empty places, I have over 15 EHCPs. In my EYFS, I can see another 8 children who are going to need additional support because of significant high needs that I will have to fund out of my dwindling budget. I don't receive any support from the local authority to manage my budget in these conditions other than the statutory funding. I cannot afford to keep my school afloat and give 1% of my budget to the local authority. We have known that there was an issue with the High Needs block for years - action should have been taken sooner. Unfortunately now my school cannot afford to prop the council up when we are barely staying afloat ourselves.		
2	21/09/2023 08:55 AM	This is not a yes or no answer as Hillside does support the proposal but are very concerned that this contribution will force us into a deficit budget and impact the quality of provision and education offered to our children. Hillside does not have any reserves and just about managed to submit a balanced budget this year. We also need to plan for staff pay increases which are only partially government funded. If we had reserves we would have no objection based upon the principles being delivered.		

**1. Do you support the proposal to transfer 1% of School Block funding (approx. £1.4m) to the High Needs Block for 2024-25 to support the programme in delivering financial sustainability for SEND in Wokingham Borough?**

3	21/09/2023 10:37 AM	We are already at a place where we are in a deficit we have children already with greater needs and unless we get some support for this and we are not seeing that at present
4	21/09/2023 15:19 PM	I am really sorry because I understand the reasons for this but I have a large deficit (mostly due to SEND spend) and cannot lose 1%
5	22/09/2023 13:14 PM	There have been requests over the years of schools and to School Forum for 0.5% being transferred and they have not been agreed, with reasons from schools clearly stated why. An increase to 1% will be resisted on similar grounds/reasons. Schools are facing increased challenges in relation to SEND and the capacity within WBC and initiatives in previous years have not supported schools to ease these pressures/challenges. All schools are facing financial challenges, and many of the schools who will face a loss in their budgets through the transfer are already struggling and this will create even further significant challenges to those schools particularly.
6	25/09/2023 10:16 AM	Reduction in school budget is likely to incur a reduction in front line support of children with SEN in school.  High number of EHCPs mean most of SEN notional budget is already spent on topping up the first 6K.  There are other areas of cost saving e.g. I am aware of at least 8 high costing placements with ABA tuition in Wokingham schools. There are also efficiency savings to be had e.g. Active Movement project. Also 10 million pounds has also been lent to another local authority.
7	26/09/2023 13:27 PM	SEND Block funding does not have a positive impact on the pupils we expect it should help. It would be better to open another special school with additional funding.
8	27/09/2023 13:53 PM	As one of the most poorly funded schools in Wokingham and such a tight school budget to manage, with many schools falling into deficit and how quickly this can happen to us again, I cannot support such a chunk of the school budget being taken. Especially without the guarantee that this would bring any benefit to the school. We require more support for SEN children and receive very little support from Wokingham in our management and funding of these children and other children with significant needs. Therefore, we need to see Wokingham action some of the promises made to schools before we would support them taking anymore of our school budget.
9	28/09/2023 08:26 AM	Schools are already in deficit and this further draw on their funding will place additional pressure. Despite all the presentations around this I cannot see how this financing will support schools to better support pupils on the ground with SEN. We are still having to find funding to pay for services such as Foundry to support some of our challenging children and expected to pay 1%. Although this does not impact on my school the lack of funding for children with special needs and the amount of challenge we are having to deal with does drain our resources significantly and I don't believe it is fair or proportionate for other schools to have to fund this shortfall within the local authority without a clear return on the investment.
10	28/09/2023 14:29 PM	After looking at the excel spread sheet that was shared with Head teachers, we are actually down for 1.4% transfer. We already have a in year deficit budget, this would mean we are no longer in a deficit budget but we would have an overall deficit budget. We have a falling role with and currently have 22 spaces in the school which also impacting her budget. We also have a lot of need in the school. We have one child who has special named on her EHCP and requires constant support at all times. We have a child in year 1 who also has 1:1 support at all times which is funded directly from the school budget whilst we await an EHCP. Within our Early years setting we have 3 children requiring substantial support, two of which have EHCP. In our School we have 5 EHCP, we have 3 in progress and another child who will need an EHCP moving forward. The SEN funding we have does not cover the support these children have and as a result we top up from our main budget. We have already gone through a staff restructure to make cuts to our support staff and are running on as few adults as

**1. Do you support the proposal to transfer 1% of School Block funding (approx. £1.4m) to the High Needs Block for 2024-25 to support the programme in delivering financial sustainability for SEND in Wokingham Borough?**

		possible. If we lose more money from our budget we would have to make further cuts which would affect all children in the school. We absolutely can not afford this!
11	28/09/2023 17:33 PM	This is not 1%. For our school it is 1.5% and we need more information about why some schools are not contributing.
12	29/09/2023 08:07 AM	Although this year our school would not have to pay 1%, our neighbouring schools would be hugely affected with some paying significantly more than 1%. While I understand the need to invest in more effective SEN provision for all schools in the borough, taking this money from school budgets, which are in many cases already at breaking point, means that schools will not be able to afford the staff and resources needed to support pupils with SEN in their schools. These new plans will not be in place immediately, leaving schools in an even worse position and impacting the very pupils that should be the target of improved provision.
13	29/09/2023 14:18 PM	There is no service level agreement with schools to guarantee equitable access to the transformation services being offered through this funding. The current proposals do not include improvements linked to staffing recruitment or retention which currently is a major barrier to SEND work in our school. 1% is a significant amount for school budgets when many already currently or shortly project a deficit.
14	29/09/2023 17:56 PM	School budgets are already stretched supporting their own SEND pupils who have very complex needs often requiring 2:1 cover.
15	01/10/2023 10:31 AM	Allocation not appear consistent across schools and how would schools ensure that spend met need of all schools re: SEN equitably?
16	01/10/2023 21:35 PM	Poor management historically - failure to listen and act on advice/opinions/requests from Headteachers.
17	02/10/2023 09:28 AM	Our school budget cannot sustain this; we have no reserves and we are anticipating a deficit budget next financial year.. I am a huge supporter of the objectives currently being worked towards and recognise the importance of the Safety Valve Project. The argument that you are only asking for a small fraction of the total budget to be provided by schools is a valid one but in our school we would have to reduce our SEND support in order to pay this 1%. We are currently struggling to meet our statutory duty to our pupils with EHCPs and the 1% would tip us over.

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# 2023 Survey on School Responses to Proposed Transfer of 1% Schools Block budget to High Needs Block

## *Summary Analysis*



**WOKINGHAM**  
**BOROUGH COUNCIL**

- Wokingham Council ran a survey for schools between 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023 - 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023
- This was the second stage of a two-step process
  - ✓ Stage 1 consultation in June / July gathered school's views on their priorities for improvement of the local Special Educational Needs and Disability ('SEND') system
  - ✓ Stage 2 gathered school's responses on the proposed transfer of 1% of DSG Schools Block budget to the High Needs Block, which was recommended by Wokingham Borough Council
- The survey was responded to by a total of 37 schools – 53% of all local schools





Question 1	Yes	No	Blank	Result
Do you support the proposal to transfer 1% of School Block funding (approx. £1.4m) to the High Needs Block for 2024-25 to support the programme in delivering financial sustainability for SEND in Wokingham Borough?	11	25	1	No - 68%

There was evidence of a significant difference of opinion between primary and secondary phase schools:

- 67% of secondary schools who responded supported the proposed transfer
- 81.5% of primary schools who responded rejected the proposal

*Given that the main reason given for rejecting was financial, this may be a reflection of the relative affordability for larger schools*

74

There were also differences between maintained and academised schools:

- 56% of academies who responded rejected the proposed transfer
- 82.45 % of maintained schools who responded rejected the proposal



<b>RATIONALE GIVEN FOR REJECTION</b>	<b>Instances</b>	<b>As a % of all 17 responses</b>
<b>Financial reasons – affordability and impact on school’s own SEND pupils (6 of these respondents confirmed they were in support of the proposals but couldn’t afford to contribute)</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>76.5%</b>
<b>Lack of confidence that schools will benefit quickly enough from the support services being proposed</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>41.2%</b>
<b>Raised concerns about why some schools are asked to contribute more than others</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11.8%</b>
<b>There are better ways of finding efficiencies or raising the money</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5.9%</b>

**A significant majority of secondary schools supported the proposed transfer whereas an overwhelming majority of primary schools rejected the proposal:**

	Total No. of Settings	No. Responded	Response Rate	Rejection Nos.	Rejection %
PRIMARY	55	27	49.1%	22	81.5%
SECONDARY	10	6	60.0%	2	33.3%
SPECIAL & AP	3	2	66.7%	0	0.0%

76

**A lower proportion of all academies responded compared to maintained schools, but a significantly higher proportion of maintained schools rejected the proposal:**

	Total No. of WBC Settings	Responses	Response Rate	Rejection Nos.	Rejection %
Maintained	31	17	55%	14	82.4%
Academies	39	18	46%	10	55.6%
Not stated		2		1	50%
Total	70	37	53%	25	67.6%

Respondents gave their role within the school as follows:

Executive Headteacher	2
Headteacher / Co-Headteacher	26
Head of School	3
Business Manager / Finance Officer	3
Governing Body	1
Role Not Stated	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>37</b>

## Schools Forum Forward Plan 2023/24

<b>6<sup>th</sup> December 2023</b>	<b>I</b>	2023/24 Revenue Monitoring Report
	<b>I</b>	DSG Management Plan / Safety Valve Update
	<b>D</b>	2024/25 Draft Schools Block Budget
	<b>D</b>	2024/25 Proposed De-delegated Budget
	<b>I</b>	2024/25 Draft High Needs Block Budget
	<b>D</b>	2024/25 Draft Central Schools Services Block Budget

<b>10<sup>th</sup> January 2024</b>	<b>I</b>	2023/24 Revenue Monitoring Report
	<b>I</b>	DSG Management Plan / Safety Valve Update
	<b>D</b>	2024/25 Proposed Schools Block Budget submission
	<b>C</b>	2024/25 Final High Needs Block Budget
	<b>D</b>	2024/25 Draft Early Years Budget
	<b>D</b>	2024/25 Final Central Schools Services Block Budget

<b>13<sup>th</sup> March 2024</b>	<b>I</b>	2023/24 Revenue Monitoring Report
	<b>I</b>	DSG Management Plan / Safety Valve Update
	<b>D</b>	2024/25 Final Early Years Budget

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