



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **SCHOOLS FORUM** will be held virtually
**VIRTUAL MEETING ON WEDNESDAY 6 DECEMBER
2023 AT 10.00 AM**

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 28 November 2023

Note: Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting and participate in the meeting virtually, in accordance with the Council's Constitution. If you wish to participate virtually via Microsoft Teams, please contact Democratic Services:
democratic.services@wokingham.gov.uk

The meeting can also be watched live using the following link:
<https://youtube.com/live/qpVJfM5juhM?feature=share>

Please note that other people may film, record, tweet or blog from the meeting. The use of these images or recordings is not under the Council's control.

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

MEMBERSHIP OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM

Schools Representatives	
Maintained Schools	
Carol Simpson	School Business Manager - Colleton Primary (Maintained)
Liz Woodards	School Business Manager - Hawkedon Primary (Maintained)
Nicky Taylor-Dickens	Headteacher – Willow Bank Infant
Amanda Woodfin	Headteacher - Bulmershe School
Academies	
Julia Mead	School Business Manager - St Sebastian's CE Primary (The Keys Academy Trust)
Phil Sherwood	Primary Academy Head - Sonning Cof E Primary (The Keys Academy Trust)
Brain Prebble - Chairman	Primary Academy Head – Rivermead Primary (Bellevue Place Education Trust)
Corrina Gillard	Primary Academy Head – Emmbrook Infant (The Circle Trust)
Derren Gray	Academy Head - The Piggott School (The Agape Multi-Academy Trust)
Andy Hinchliff	Academy Head - St Crispin's School (The Circle Trust)
Jenny Comber	Academy Head - Bohunt School (Bohunt Education Trust)
Shirley Austin	Academy Head - The Forest School (The Forest School Academy Trust)
Debra Briault – Vice-Chairman	Secondary Academy School Representative (The Circle Trust)
Vacancy (x3)	Academy Primary School
Special Schools	
Sara Attra	Special School Head - Addington School
Early Years	
Kerrie Clifford	Nursery Head - Ambleside Centre (Maintained)
Ian Morgan	Early Years Representative
Wokingham Borough Council	
Ian Pittock	Wokingham Borough Council
Ming Zhang	Assistant Director for Education and SEND
Post 16 Education	
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

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.
12		APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence.	
13		MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING To confirm the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 6 November 2023 and the Meeting held on 11 October 2023.	7 - 18
14		DECLARATION OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest.	
15	None Specific	2023/24 REVENUE MONITORING REPORT To receive and consider the 2023/24 Revenue Monitoring Report.	19 - 30
16	None Specific	DSG MANAGEMENT PLAN / SAFETY VALVE UPDATE To receive a verbal update on the DSG Management Plan / Safety Valve Programme.	Verbal Report
17	None Specific	DRAFT 2024/25 SCHOOLS BLOCK BUDGET To receive and consider the Draft 2024/25 Schools Block Budget.	31 - 34
18	None Specific	2024/25 PROPOSED DE-DELEGATED BUDGET To receive and consider the 2024/25 Proposed De-delegated Budget.	35 - 38
19	None Specific	2024/25 DRAFT CENTRAL SCHOOL SERVICES BLOCK BUDGET To receive and consider the 2024/25 Draft Central School Services Block Budget.	39 - 44
20	None Specific	INCLUSION FUNDING To receive a verbal report about Inclusion Funding.	Verbal Report
21	None Specific	FORWARD PROGRAMME To consider the Forum's work programme for the remainder of the academic year.	

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,

Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

Tel

0118 237 8118

Email

luciane.bowker@wokingham.gov.uk

Postal Address

Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham, RG40 1BN

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
SCHOOLS FORUM
HELD ON 11 OCTOBER 2023 FROM 10.00 AM TO 11.13 AM**

Schools Representatives

Carol Simpson	School Business Manager - Colleton Primary
Nicky Taylor-Dickens	Headteacher - Willow Bank Infants
Amanda Woodfin	Headteacher - Bulmershe School
Corrina Gillard	Academy Primary Head - Emmbrook Infant
Julia Mead	Academy Primary rep – CFO – The Keys Academy Trust
Derren Gray	Academy Head - The Piggott School
Andy Hinchliff	Academy Head - St Crispin's School
Shirley Austin	Academy Head - The Forest School
Sara Attra	Special School Head - Addington School

Non School Representatives

Ian Pittock	Wokingham Borough Council
Ming Zhang	Assistant Director for Education and SEND

Councillors present

Prue Bray	Executive Member for Children's Services
-----------	--

Also Present

Luciane Bowker, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist
Jamie Conran, Head of SEND
Emma Shrimpton, Finance Business Partner Children's Services
Katherine Vernon, Schools Finance Manager
Jonathan Wilding, Safety Valve / SEND Consultant

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Brian Prebble was elected Chairman for the 2023/24 academic year.

2 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Debra Briault was elected Vice-Chairman for the 2023/24 academic year.

3 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Jenny Comber, Phil Sherwood and Liz Woodards.

4 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12 July 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Matters arising

The Chairman asked if Ian Morgan had been contacted about Early Years providers representation in the Borough Education Partnership (BEP). Ming Zhang, Assistant Director for Education and SEND would follow this up outside of the meeting.

5 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

6 MATTERS ARISING UPDATE

This item was covered during the discussions of other items in the agenda.

7 SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP REVIEW 2023

This item was presented by Luciane Bowker, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist and Brian Prebble, the Chairman.

An analysis of the number of pupils per schools and the types of schools had been undertaken, which showed that there had been an increase in the number of academy schools.

Schools Forum's membership should reflect the makeup of schools in the borough. As such, it was proposed that the number of maintained primary schools' representatives be reduced to three and that the number of primary academies representatives be increased by three.

It was generally agreed that the total number of 23 members should be retained and there were no other changes being proposed. It was highlighted that Schools Forum lacked a governor representative. Colleagues were urged to make an effort to approach governors with relevant expertise to join Schools Forum.

The Chairman welcomed the new members to Schools Forum, Nicky Taylor-Dickens, Jen Comber and Andy Hinchcliffe. He emphasised the need to recruit a governor representative to Schools Forum.

In relation to academies representation, Councillor Pittock suggested that there should be no over representation by one particular trust, there should be a variety of trusts with representation in Schools Forum.

Shirley Austin agreed with Councillor Pittock's suggestion and also asked that the name of the trust members represent be included in the membership list for clarity.

Upon being put to the vote, members voted unanimously in favour of the new structure.

In relation to the Task and Finish Groups membership, the Chairman asked if members were willing to continue their participation. Those members that were present confirmed that they were willing to continue to work in the Task and Finish Groups. Members of the Early Years Task and Finish Group were not present and would be contacted to confirm their participation outside of the meeting.

In response to a question, it was clarified that the membership structure which was being adopted would continue for the entirety of the 2023/24 academic year.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) The new structure, as described in the report be adopted for the 2023/24 academic year;
- 2) Academy members will have the name of the trust they represent displayed in the membership list;

- 3) The membership of the various Task and Finish Groups will be retained as per the previous year; and
- 4) The Early Years Task and Finish Group members would be contacted to ascertain their participation in this year's work programme.

8 2023/24 REVENUE MONITORING REPORT

Katherine Vernon, Schools Finance Manager presented the 2023/24 Revenue Monitoring report. She introduced Al Moore, Finance Business Partner who would be working with schools' finance going forward.

Since the last report there had been an increase of £2m in the deficit, this was a movement caused by the High Needs Block (HNB). The reasons for the increase were outlined in the report.

Of note was the number of alternative provision for pupils still in mainstream schools who still required a special school place. There was an increase in the number of pupils that had to be placed in out of borough provisions and independent schools and two new expensive (Education Otherwise Than at School) EOTAS packages. In addition, the income received by the DfE was reduced due to the import/export adjustment.

The report also highlighted risks and opportunities, included in the Safety Valve programme. It was positive to note that the new Oaktree School had now opened and it had taken 25 Wokingham children, avoiding the need to send them to out of borough provisions. Also, the new Addington satellite school was due to open after the October half term and two new SEND schools were being planned to open in 2026. All those measures would increase local special school capacity.

In relation to the Early Years Block, the government had increased the funding by £0.44 for 3-4 year olds and by £2.59 for 2 year olds from September 2023. 100% of this additional funding will be passed to settings.

The clawback in the Early Years provider reserve fund had been much less than anticipated, and the difference would be passed on to settings this term.

There had been no variances in the Schools Block and Central Services Block.

Councillor Bray, Executive Member for Children's Services highlighted the fact that there was indication from the government that the HNB deficit would have to be addressed in three years (despite the fact that this principle had not been applied in previous years). This was a difficult challenge, and one that had to be managed by schools and the Council together.

RESOLVED That the 2023/24 Revenue Monitoring report be noted.

9 2024/25 DSG BUDGET UPDATE

The 2024/25 Designated Schools Grant (DSG) Update report was presented by Katherine Vernon.

The DfE advised Wokingham Borough Council at the end of July 2023 what the primary and secondary units of funding for 2024/25 would be. The service was working on models of funding with this information.

There was a requirement to move closer to the National Funding Formula (NFF), as such there was less scope to move the budget locally to support schools. For example, in the past the lump sum had been kept artificially high to support smaller schools, and this was becoming more difficult.

The report showed a comparison of the allocation for last year's with the next year. There had been an increase in the allocation for all blocks.

Carole Simpson asked for information about the recent reports in the media that had said that the government had produced wrong numbers to local authorities.

Katherine Vernon explained that from information received to date that it was the Minimum Per Pupil Funding that had gone down, not the other numbers as reported in the media. The tables contained in report (page 45 of the agenda) had been produced before this announcement. A new tool had been received to calculate the difference, it was anticipated that there would be a variance of 1% up or down for different schools.

Derren Gray asked if it was the least funded schools, those on the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) that would be affected the most by the drop in the Minimum Per Pupil Funding? Katherine Vernon confirmed that this was the case, however she pointed out that they would be affected by only 1% or less.

Carole Simpson expressed concern that 1% was a large number for a school already running on a deficit budget. Katherine Vernon explained that everyone would still see an increase of 5% overall on average (rather than 6%). Carole Simpson stated that although this was an increase, costs had gone up.

Councillor Bray clarified that this was 1% of the increase, not the overall amount.

The Task and Finish Group had been working on models which assumed:

- Keeping the MFG at maximum allowable of 0.5%
- Not applying caps on gains, as there is no cap in the NFF
- The Free School Meals factor could be increased to £300

There results of the consultation were not yet ready for sharing, but there was an overall 80% agreement to the principles applied with the formula.

The disapplication request for the all-through school had to be submitted every year, and this would be actioned again this year.

As per Schools Forum request, Officers were looking at ways to help schools with falling roll numbers. This would be discussed with the Task and Finish Group and the findings would be presented to the December meeting.

Katherine Vernon asked schools to return the results of the October census as soon as possible to enable Officers to calculate the income for next year.

From September 2024 the Early Year's free entitlement was going to extend to 9 months up to 2 year-olds. It was not certain what the new rate was going to be. The Early Years Task and Finish Group would work on modelling this later in the spring term.

A HNB Task and Finish Group would be set up for November to work on next year's budget.

RESOLVED That the 2024/25 Budget Update report be noted.

10 DSG MANAGEMENT PLAN / SAFETY VALVE UPDATE

Ming Zhang presented the DSG Management Plan / Safety Valve Update report.

During the presentation he made the following points:

- A two stage survey with schools had been carried out about the proposal to transfer 1% from the Schools Block to the HNB;
- The assumption of this transfer was part of the Safety Valve agreement with the DfE;
- There was a risk that the DfE may not continue its support with the Safety Valve programme, should this transfer not be agreed;
- There had not been a high number of responses received from the survey, however the results showed that schools were concerned about the potential negative effect of a 1% transfer in their own finances;
- The vast majority of secondary schools were in favour of the 1% transfer, but the majority of primary schools were against it;
- Schools had expressed that they understood the pressures and the reason for the request but were concerned about their financial situation. They asked that alternative solutions be sought;
- The Safety Valve programme had been agreed by the DfE with the assumption that there would be a 1% transfer from the Schools Block to the HNB, and a contribution from the Council. The DfE reviewed the programme every three months and they could withdraw from the agreement if the 1% transfer was not agreed;
- If the HNB deficit was not eliminated, through joint effort, it could escalate to £56 in the next five years, and the negative consequences to all involved would be enormous;
- A pragmatic solution needed to be found, and this challenge was to be addressed in partnership with schools, the local authority and health;
- In view of the fact that schools were unlikely to agree to a 1% block transfer, the possibility of reaching a compromise with a smaller contribution was being considered.

Jonathan Wilding, Safety Valve/SEND Consultant explained that since the publication of the agenda, conversations with colleagues had taken place which indicated that Schools Forum was unlikely to vote against the schools' consultation survey results. It was now understood that this option was not acceptable to schools, mainly because of affordability issues.

Taking into account the above mentioned issues, the local authority was reviewing the proposal and would be asking for 0.5% Schools Block transfer. It was believed that a bit more dialogue with schools was needed to secure schools' support before a decision could be made. It was suggested that an extraordinary Schools Forum meeting be set up in early November to decide this matter.

Councillor Bray explained that the local authority was asking for 1% transfer because that was the expectation placed on the local authority by the DfE (not because the local authority thought that schools could afford it). The Safety Valve programme included a £28m contribution from Council tax, £20m from the DfE to write off debt (this £20m could

only be used to write off debt) and the 1% transfer from the Schools Block for the next five years.

Councillor Bray expressed frustration that this situation had been caused by historical insufficient funding, Wokingham was the lowest funded local authority in the country. However, the DfE did not take this fact into account.

Councillor Bray went on to explain the potential consequences of the collapse of the Safety Valve programme. She explained that in three years' time the Council could be in a position to have to declare S114 if the Council was asked to pay the HNB deficit. Should that happen, commissioners would be sent in, and all the statutory services would stop, including all the help given to schools. Also, assets would have to be sold off, staff would have to be reduced, and the Council tax would have to go up.

She emphasised that the local authority was fully aware of the financial struggle that some schools were facing. However, the proposal would improve the SEND offer for the future, to the benefit of all schools.

Ming Zhang emphasised that it was important to demonstrate to the DfE that the schools and the Council were working in partnership to find a solution to this challenge.

Derren Gray believed that the Council contributed £1m towards Central Services, he asked if those services would be stopped or be significantly reduced if the Council declared S114?

Katherine Vernon confirmed that the Central Services Block did not fully cover the cost of the services provided, the Council covered the gap. She offered to find out the exact number for a better understanding of the implication of having the fund withdrawn. Derren Gray stated that having this information would help schools make an informed decision.

Carol Simpson stated that she understood the situation and agreed with the principles of the proposal. However, there were schools which had significant difficulties with their budgets and could not manage with less money.

Ming Zhang stated that there were 24 schools in the borough with MFG, and they were protected.

The Chairman stated that careful consideration should be taken, as the proposal would affect the next five years.

Katherine Vernon explained that there was a disparity in the system, in that some schools carried forward a surplus and others were in deficit; there was money in the system as a whole, but not where it was needed.

Emma Shrimpton, Finance Business Partner Children's Services stated that Officers were working with schools that were in financial difficulties to help them to find solutions. It was important, where possible, to identify challenges early to avoid going into a deficit position.

Carole Simpson stated that Katherine Vernon had met with her school and there had been no further suggestions to find a solution. The problem was the way the school was funded, the school had been on MFG for a number of years. Carole Simpson expressed

serious concern and stated that the school had to provide a minimum number of staff to teach the children.

Nicky Taylor-Dikens stated that her school was not under MFG but had been in deficit almost every year. They had just undertaken a re-structure and reduced the number of staff. She pointed out that infant schools needed a higher ratio of staff to children due to the children's age. The excel spreadsheet that she had received had asked her school for 1.4%, more than the 1% being discussed. She could not afford to accept this reduction in funding for her school. She also did not believe that Officers would be able to find ways to reduce the school's budget. She pointed out that there were some schools with large carry forward sums and this situation was not fair in her opinion.

Ming Zhang offered to meet with Nicky Taylor-Dickens and discuss her school's situation outside of this meeting. Nicky agreed and invited Ming to visit her school.

Councillor Pittock pointed out that in a S114 scenario, there would be no extra curriculum activities available for children, and less support for families in the borough, and he worried that schools would have to deal with the additional stress of children coming to school in not the best possible frame of mind to learn. He understood the financial struggles being faced by schools but urged schools to consider the 0.5% transfer proposal as there was no other solution to this funding problem. He worried about the consequences of not reaching an agreement.

Corrina Gillard stated that due to pay raises she had had to find an additional £44k (which had not been budgeted for) this year in her budget, and as a result had had to lay off staff. She had a significant number of children with SEND needs in her school, and she worried that if she had to further reduce the number of staff to meet 1% or 0.5%, she would lose staff as they would not be able to cope with the work. She believed that the situation was desperate for many schools in the borough.

Ming Zhang offered to meet with Corrina Gillard outside of the meeting.

Councillor Bray stressed that she understood the schools financial struggles, as she had been a school governor for over 20 years. However, the measures being proposed would help the situation long term, by offering the support needed to SEND children. She stated that the situation would become worse if a solution was not agreed collectively.

Councillor Bray acknowledged that there had been a history of mistrust from schools towards the Council. She explained that this money would not be used to pay debt, but to invest in services which would benefit schools. She hoped to rebuild the schools' trust and asked schools to consider the 0.5% transfer proposal which would be discussed at the extraordinary meeting. It was really important to reach an agreement and to work together.

The Chairman spoke on behalf of primary schools and stated that schools understood the proposal, however there was an immediate need to provide for the education of children with a sufficient number of staff.

It was proposed and agreed by Schools Forum members that an extraordinary meeting would be set up either on 6 or 8 November 2023 to discuss the proposal of a 0.5% transfer from the Schools Block to the HNB. In the meantime, further dialogue with schools about

this proposal would be undertaken. *Subsequently the meeting was set up for 6 November 2023 at 10am via Teams.*

Carole Simpson stated that some schools were in a position of having large amounts of carry forward funds, more than what used to be considered acceptable. She asked if this was being considered?

Katherine Vernon explained that this had been considered, however the Council could only direct a clawback from maintained schools, any clawback from academies would have to be determined by Schools Forum.

Shirley Austin urged caution and felt uncomfortable with the suggestion of clawing back funds from schools. She believed that it was unfair to penalise the schools that had worked hard to achieve a balanced budget.

Ming Zhang agreed that careful consideration should be taken. The Chairman stated that the focus should be on considering the request for 0.5% transfer.

In relation to the question raised earlier about having an independent Early Years provider representative in the BEP, Ming Zhang stated that it should read Borough Education Partnership, not *Berkshire* as written in the agenda papers. He informed that this appointment had not yet been made, but he would be looking to find the right representative to join BEP.

RESOLVED That an extraordinary Schools Forum meeting to discuss and decide the proposal of 0.5% Schools Block transfer to the HNB would be set up in early November 2023.

11 SCHOOLS FORUM FORWARD PLAN 2023/24

The Schools Forum Forward Plan of work for 2023/24 was noted.

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
SCHOOLS FORUM
HELD ON 6 NOVEMBER 2023 FROM 10.00 AM TO 10.13 AM**

Schools Representatives

Carol Simpson	School Business Manager - Colleton Primary (Maintained)
Brian Prebble	Primary Head - Rivermead Primary - Vice Chairman (Bellevue Place Education Trust)
Liz Woodards	School Business Manager - Hawkedon Primary (Maintained)
Amanda Woodfin	Headteacher - Bulmershe School (Maintained)
Julia Mead	School Business Manager - St Sebastian's CE Primary (The Keys Academy Trust)
Phil Sherwood	Primary Academy Head - Sonning Cof E Primary (The Keys Academy Trust)
Derren Gray	Academy Head - The Piggott School (The Agape Multi- Academy Trust)
Andy Hinchliff	Academy Head - St Crispin's School (The Circle Trust)
Jenny Comber	Academy Head - Bohunt School (Bohunt Education Trust)
Shirley Austin	Academy Head - The Forest School (The Forest School Academy Trust)
Debra Briault	Secondary Academy School Representative (The Circle Trust)
Sara Attra	Special School Head - Addington School
Iain Thomas	Pupil Referral Unit Head – Foundry College
Kerry Clifford	Nursery Head – Ambleside Centre

Non School Representatives

Ian Pittock	Wokingham Borough Council
Ming Zhang	Assistant Director for Education and SEND

Also Present

Luciane Bowker, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist
Jamie Conran, Head of SEND
Al Moore, Finance Business Partner
Katherine Vernon, Schools Finance Manager
Jonathan Wilding, Safety Valve and SEND Consultant

12 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Corrina Gillard.

13 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

14 2024/25 DSG SCHOOLS BLOCK BUDGET UPDATE

Katherine Vernon, Schools Finance Manager presented the 2024/25 DSG Schools Block Budget Update report.

Katherine Vernon informed that the income to be received per Primary Unit of Funding (PUF) and Secondary Unit of Funding (SUF) had been reduced since this was last reported to Schools Forum. The report contained details of the changes. The final

allocation would be confirmed with the October census figures and reported to the January meeting for sign off. Provisional figures would be reported to the December meeting.

Schools Forum was requested to vote on the request for dis-application for the all-through school, prior to its submission to the DfE. Schools had been consulted about this proposal and were in support of the request for dis-application for the all-through school.

Upon being put to the vote, Schools Forum members voted unanimously in favour of the request for dis-application for the all-through school.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) The Schools Block Budget update be noted; and
- 2) The request for dis-application for the all-through school be approved.

15 REQUESTED TRANSFER OF 0.5% DSG SCHOOLS BLOCK TO THE HIGH NEEDS BLOCK 2024/25

Ming Zhang, Assistant Director for Education and SEND explained that a consultation had been carried out with schools, requesting schools support to the proposal of a request for a 0.5% transfer from the DSG Schools Block to the High Needs Block (HNB) for 2024/25.

Ming Zhang thanked school leaders for their support in reaching a proactive solution to the challenges faced in relation to the HNB.

Jonathan Wilding informed that 58% of all schools had responded to the survey, and 92.5% of schools were in favour of the new proposals. The feedback from headteachers was that the new formula was now more affordable for primary schools.

Upon being put to the vote, Schools Forum members voted unanimously in favour of the requested transfer of 0.5% from the Schools Block to the HNB.

During the voting, the following comments were made:

- Members asked that an annual report be presented to Schools Forum, detailing how the 0.5% is being used and what impact this has had;
- Members asked what would happen to those schools that were already in deficit, what would be the impact for those schools?
- Katherine Vernon explained that further analysis was needed to work out how those schools would be affected. This would only be known when the final allocation was confirmed. The current modelling showed that those schools currently in a deficit position were not contributing to the transfer;
- In response to a question Jonathan Wilding stated that cash values would be known in December and shared with Schools Forum then;
- It was confirmed that the cost to schools would not be higher than what had been previously presented.

Councillor Bray, Executive Member for Children's Services wished to thank school leaders for their collective support. It was hoped that improvements would start to make a difference for schools in the near future.

RESOLVED That the requested transfer of 0.5% DSG Schools Block to the High Needs Block for 2024/25 be approved.

This page is intentionally left blank

TITLE	2023/24 Revenue Monitoring Report
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Schools Forum on 6 December 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 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 30th November 2023.

An in-year deficit of £12.5m 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 £19.9m is now projected to 31st March 2024.

The current in-year forecast represents an adverse movement of £382k on the £12.1m deficit reported at October Schools Forum. The movement being:

- £287k increase in the High Needs Block
- £96k increase in the Schools 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 30th November 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 October 2023 meeting of Schools Forum a forecast deficit of £12.1m was reported for the 2023/24 financial year budget, due to continued pressure within the High Needs Block.

04. DSG Forecast as at 30th November 2023

As at 30th November, the DSG forecast for the 2023/24 financial year now reports an in-year deficit of £12.5m. Against the £12.1m previously reported, this represents an adverse movement of £382k.

The movement represents an increase in the High Needs Block forecast, and a small increase in the Schools Block forecast.

05. Key Variances, Risks and Opportunities

The reason for the £382k 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 increase in Growth Fund of £120k and a reduction in spend on Maternity under de-delegation of £24k.

De-delegation - Staff costs

Current forecast is £24k less than budget due to academy conversions.

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 are forecasting an in-year overspend of £316k, a movement of £120k since October Schools Forum, which will leave approx. £68k in reserves to carry forward into 2024/25.

We have updated our estimate of the growth fund requirements for 2024/25 using the MPPL rates confirmed by the DfE in October. This shows that we are anticipating requiring around £1.6m 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 £12.2m.

At the October meeting of Schools Forum an in-year deficit of £11.9m was anticipated, therefore the current forecast represents a £287k 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.

In order to provide a better view of the full year outturn of costs, we are now including a forecast for all those EHCPs that are not yet in the system but will be a cost to the HNB in year. We have estimated these based on our current run-rate of new and ceased plans. As this estimate is based on current performance, this could change if the volume of requests for new EHCPs goes up or down beyond the current rate. Likewise for ceased plans.

Health funding remains a key challenge for the Safety Valve programme to ensure we secure the correct health income for our EHCPs. We have identified £0.8m of EHCP costs which should be funded by health. We expect this number to rise as more work is done to identify all health costs. There is a council wide initiative to unlock the funding block from health.

INCOME

Our income has reduced by £60k which takes into account pupils that are in out of borough special free schools that are now full.

Early Years Block

Small variance due to updated Early Years Pupil Premium Grant, which is off-set by a small decrease in our allocation.

Early Years Funding 2024/25

We are still awaiting our local authority hourly funding rates for 2024 to 2025. The DfE have said they will be made available at the end of November. These will include

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.

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

Contact Katherine Vernon	Service Learning Achievement and Partnerships
Telephone No Tel: 0118 974 6337	Email 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	Aug Forecast £,000	November Forecast £,000	Variance Current Forecast to Previous Forecast £,000
Schools Block	TOTAL Income	(138,780)	-	(138,780)	(138,780)	(138,780)	-
	TOTAL Expenditure	138,780	-	138,780	138,976	139,072	96
	TOTAL Schools Block Net Expenditure	(0)	-	(0)	196	292	96
High Needs Block	TOTAL Income	(28,430)	-	(28,430)	(28,220)	(28,160)	60
	TOTAL Expenditure	36,584	-	36,584	40,109	40,336	227
	TOTAL High Needs Block Net Expenditure	8,154	-	8,154	11,889	12,176	287
Early Years Block	TOTAL Income	(12,615)	-	(12,615)	(13,268)	(13,261)	7
	TOTAL Expenditure	12,615	-	12,615	13,268	13,261	(7)
	TOTAL Early Years Block Net Expenditure	0	-	0	0	(0)	(0)
Central School Services Block	TOTAL Income	(1,039)	-	(1,039)	(1,039)	(1,039)	-
	TOTAL Expenditure	1,039	-	1,039	1,039	1,039	-
	TOTAL Central School Services Block Net Expenditure	(0)	-	(0)	(0)	(0)	-
Total DSG	TOTAL Income	(180,864)	-	(180,864)	(181,307)	(181,240)	67
	TOTAL Expenditure	189,018	-	189,018	193,392	193,708	316
	TOTAL 2023/24 Net Expenditure Deficit	8,154	-	8,154	12,085	12,468	382
Deficit Brought Forward					9,166	9,166	
Expected Safety Valve Agreement Funding from DfE					(1,720)	(1,720)	
Cumulative Net Expenditure Deficit					19,531	19,914	

Schools Block Budget 2023/24

		Aug-23		Nov-23	
Category	Description	A Budget 2023-24 £,000	B Aug 2023/24 Forecast £,000	C Nov 2023/24 Forecast £,000	C - B Variance Current Forecast to Previous Forecast £,000
Individual Schools Budget	Maintained Schools	45,563	44,067	44,067	-
	Maintained Schools NNDR	931	931	931	-
	Academies Growth Apr23-Aug23	815	815	815	-
	Academies	88,949	90,445	90,445	-
	Academies NNDR	592	592	592	-
De-Delegation	Contingencies	-	-	-	-
	Staff costs – supply cover (maternity)	264	264	240	(24)
24	Growth Fund	1,666	1,862	1,982	120
	Transfer to High Needs Block	-	-	-	-
TOTAL Expenditure		138,780	138,976	139,072	96
DSG Allocation		(138,780)	(138,780)	(138,780)	-
TOTAL Income		(138,780)	(138,780)	(138,780)	-
2023/24 Net Expenditure (Surplus) / Deficit		(0)	196	292	96

High Needs Block Budget 2023/24

			A	B	C	C - B
Category		Description	2023/24 Final Budget £,000	2023/24 Aug. Forecast £,000	2023/24 November Forecast £,000	Variance Current Forecast to Previous Forecast £,000
Mainstream	Wokingham	Place Funding - Post-16	162	162	162	-
		Top-up Funding	4,573	5,549	5,477	(72)
		Alternative Provision/Education	432	660	711	51
	Out of Borough	Top-up Funding	203	470	493	23
	Independent	Top-up Funding	500	424	266	(158)
Resource Bases	Wokingham	Place Funding	618	534	534	-
		Empty Place Funding	164	112	112	-
		Top-up Funding	968	1,225	1,242	17
	Out of Borough	Top-up Funding	189	196	229	33
Special Schools 25	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	766	735	(31)
	Wokingham - Oak Tree	Place Funding	160	160	146	(14)
		Top-up funding	400	400	414	14
	Out of Borough	Top-up Funding	1,380	2,395	2,551	156
	Independent & Non-Maintained	Placements	9,957	11,276	11,269	(7)
	Pupil Referral Units	Wokingham	Foundry College	1,879	1,879	1,879
Out of Borough		Top-up Funding	-	64	64	0
Post-16: FE & Colleges	Out of Borough	Top-up Funding	1,599	1,489	1,562	73
Hospital Education		CAMHS Phoenix School	270	274	281	7
		Independent Hospital Education	20	20	20	-
Other		CYPIT	553	590	590	-
		Sensory Consortium	326	326	326	-
		Support for Inclusion	1,430	840	840	-
		Targeted Education (eg tutors, personal budgets, ABA)	776	1,028	1,163	135
		Inclusion Group Funding	150	150	150	-
TOTAL Expenditure			36,584	40,109	40,336	227
DSG Allocation (including Academy Place Funding Recoup)			(27,243)	(27,033)	(26,973)	60
Transfer from Schools Block			-	-	-	-
Supplementary Grant Funding			(1,187)	(1,187)	(1,187)	-
TOTAL Income			(28,430)	(28,220)	(28,160)	60
2023/24 Net Expenditure (Surplus) / Deficit			8,154	11,889	12,176	287

Early Years Block Budget 2023/24

Category	Description	A Initial 2023/24 Forecast £,000	Aug-23	Nov-23	C - B Variance Current Forecast to Previous Forecast £,000
			B 2023/24 Forecast Aug £,000	C 2023/24 Forecast Nov £,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	55	(7)
	Disability Access Fund	52	52	52	-
	EYSG	-	653	653	-
26 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	-
TOTAL Expenditure		12,615	13,268	13,261	(7)
DSG Allocation		(12,615)	(13,268)	(13,261)	7
TOTAL Income		(12,615)	(13,268)	(13,261)	7
2023/24 Net Expenditure (Surplus) / Deficit		0	0	(0)	(0)

Central School Services Block Budget 2023/24

Category	Description	Aug-23		Nov-23	C - B Variance Current Forecast to Previous Forecast £,000
		A Initial 2023/24 Forecast £,000	B 2023/24 Forecast Aug £,000	C 2023/24 Forecast Nov £,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	-
27 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	-
TOTAL Expenditure		1,039	1,039	1,039	-
DSG Allocation		(1,039)	(1,039)	(1,039)	-
TOTAL Income		(1,039)	(1,039)	(1,039)	-
2023/24 Net Expenditure (Surplus) / Deficit		(0)	(0)	(0)	-

This page is intentionally left blank

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

	2023/24	2023/24		2024/25
Primary MPPL	4,405	4,405	Confirmed Primary MPPL	4,610
Secondary MPPL	5,715	5,715	Confirmed Secondary MPPL	5,995

Schools - New classes	MPPL 2023/24	MPPL 2024/25	Funded Number of Places	2023/24			2024/25 Estimate
				Budget	Forecast	Variance	
Pre-existing Secondary commitments from 2022/23							
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>				
Secondary sector places for 2023/24							
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
Secondary Contingency 2023/24							
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	
Secondary sector places for 2024/25							
Additional secondary places (Y7) for 2022/23 - Piggott		5,995	45				149,500
Additional secondary places (Y7) for 2022/23 - St Crispins		5,995	55				182,723
Additional secondary places (Y8) for 2022/23 - Emmbrook		5,995	45				149,500
Additional secondary places (Y9) for 2022/23 - Bulmershe		5,995	15				49,833
Secondary Contingency 2024/25							
Additional secondary places for 2024/25		5,995	90				299,001
Secondary TOTAL				1,287,187	1,318,855	31,668	1,260,373
Pre-existing Primary commitments 2022/23							
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	
Primary sector places for 2023/24							
Farley Hill Expansion (Reception)	4,405		30	73,233	0	-73,233	
Primary sector places for 2024/25							
Farley Hill Expansion (Reception)		4,610	30				76,641
Primary Contingency 2023/24							
Additional primary places (Y6) for 2023/24 - contingency	4,405		30	73,233	73,233	0	
Primary Contingency 2024/25							
Additional primary places for 2024/25 - contingency		4,610	30				76,641
Primary TOTAL				303,393	283,554	-19,839	153,283
Primary plus Secondary Growth TOTAL				1,590,580	1,602,410	11,830	1,413,655
Basic Need: New and recently new (growing schools)							
Alder Grove Primary				63,825	63,825	0	48,300
St Cecilia's Primary (Y3, Y4, Y5/Y6 classes)				196,075	316,075	120,000	165,600
				259,900	379,900	120,000	213,900
Total Expenditure				1,850,480	1,982,310	131,830	1,627,555
In year Growth Funding from Schools Block				1,665,896	1,665,896	0	1,559,518 potentially required for Growth Fund 2024-25
In year Overspend				184,584	316,414	131,830	
Reserves b/f				234,063	384,451		68,037
Projected Reserves c/f				49,479	68,037		-

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		

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 17

TITLE	Draft 2024/25 Schools Block Budget
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Schools Forum on 6 December 2023
WARD	None Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Director, Children's Services - 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 to note the update on the 2023/24 Schools Block Budget.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report provides Schools Forum with the updated provisional income for the 2023/24 Schools Block budget, using the provisional October 2023 pupil data received from schools and the Performance Data Team.

We will consult with schools showing the indicative school budgets in December requesting feedback at the start of next term. This will enable the final school budgets for 2024/25 to be considered by Schools Forum at its meeting in January 2024, prior to submission to the Education and Skills Funding Agency by the January deadline.

2024/25 Draft School Block Budget December 2023

.01 Purpose of the Report

This report provides Schools Forum with an update on the Schools Block.

.02 Recommendations

Schools Forum is asked to note the update on the 2024/25 Schools Block Budget.

.03 Background

The Department for Education (DfE) issued provisional funding arrangements for the 2024/25 Schools Block in the summer, which were then adjusted in October.

Final funding for 2024/25 will reflect final pupil numbers from the October 2023 school census and associated updated pupil data, and is not expected to be confirmed by the DfE until mid to late December.

.04 Updated Provisional Allocation for 2024/25

Modelling undertaken prior to the schools consultation was based on October 2022 census data. While October census information has now been submitted, as some academies do not have a data sharing agreement in place with WBC, we have updated our income projection using provisional census data and pupil numbers shared by schools in September.

The table below shows indicative Schools Block Funding based on provisional census figures and pupil information provided by schools in September.

Final funding for 2024/25 is expected to be confirmed by the DfE at the end of the Autumn term, in line with previous years timetable.

Block	2023/24 TOTAL			2024/25 PROVISIONAL OCTOBER			£ Increase	% Increase
	£ per pupil	Oct 22 census	£	£ per pupil	Draft Oct 23 census	£		
Primary Unit of Funding	4,579	15,719		4,813	15,543			
			71,983,274			74,810,480	2,827,206	3.9%
Secondary Unit of Funding	5,936	10,696		6,272	11,016			
			63,495,841			69,092,022	5,596,181	8.8%
Premises Factors			1,634,877			1,790,045	155,168	9.5%
MSAG			4,555,857			Now in baseline		
Sub-total Schools Block			141,669,849			145,692,546	4,022,697	2.8%
Growth Factors			1,665,896			1,147,963	- 517,933	-31.1%
TOTAL Schools Block			143,335,745			146,840,509	3,504,764	2.4%

.05 Growth Fund

Based on the current 2023/24 forecast, £68k is anticipated to remain at year end within reserve funds held to support growth requirements next financial year.

Growth Fund income has been estimated at £1.1m for 2024/25, however confirmation of funding is not expected from the DfE until December.

Further review of Growth Fund requirements for 2024/25 will continue as further information becomes available. Current forecast anticipates that £1.6m will be required for the Growth Fund for 2024/25.

.06 Disapplication Requests

The majority of schools supported the submission of a disapplication request on behalf of Wokingham’s all-through school. We submitted the disapplication request to the ESFA in November and we have just heard that it has been approved.

After many discussions with our schools, the majority of schools were in support of a transfer of 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block. This was voted on and approved by Schools Forum at the extraordinary meeting held in November. As Schools Forum were in agreement with the transfer, and the transfer requested was not higher than 0.5%, we weren’t required to submit a disapplication request to the ESFA.

.07 Next Steps

Following receipt of census information and updated pupil data from the DfE in early December, the budget model will be updated to incorporate the results of the consultation.

Further consultation will then be undertaken with schools, later in December, showing the indicative school budgets with feedback requested at the start of the new term. Modelling will then be further updated over the school holiday period once final funding levels are confirmed by the DfE.

This will enable the final Schools Block Budget for 2024/25 to be considered by Schools Forum at its meeting in January 2024, prior to submission to the Education and Skills Funding Agency by the January deadline.

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

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 18

TITLE 2024/25 Proposed De-delegated Budget

FOR CONSIDERATION BY Schools Forum on 6 December 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 maintained school members are asked to support the proposed de-delegated item on a line-by-line basis for 2024/25 budget by phases, i.e. primary representatives approve the primary de-delegated and secondary representatives, the secondary items.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The de-delegated services that the Council provides on behalf of schools require to be approved by the maintained schools representative(s) of Schools Forum each year.

This report provides details of the proposed services and support to be approved for 2024/25.

2024/25 Proposed De-delegation Budget December 2023

.01 Purpose of the Report

This report is to seek approval from the maintained primary schools and maintained secondary schools for each proposed de-delegated item, and to agree the basis of cost allocation.

.02 Recommendation

The Schools Forum maintained school members are asked to support the proposed de-delegated item on a line by line basis for 2024/25 budget by phases, i.e. primary reps approve the primary de-delegated and secondary reps, the secondary items.

.03 Background

De-delegated services are for maintained schools only; funding for de-delegated services must be allocated through the formula but can be passed back, or 'de-delegated', for maintained mainstream primary and secondary schools with Schools Forum approval.

For the 2022/23 budget a group was established to review the services that were de-delegated. It was agreed by the group and subsequently the maintained school members of Schools Forum to still de-delegate "Staff costs supply cover" and to keep the un-used amount held in reserves for "Contingencies".

.04 De-delegated items for 2024/25

We are proposing to keep the same services for 2024/25 as were agreed by the Review Group for 2022/23. We have used the same principles to calculate the budget and rate per pupil, while removing those schools that are expected to convert to academy this financial year and on 1st April 2024. The services which the Council are proposing to de-delegate for 2024/25 are:

1. **Staff costs supply cover** (for example, long-term sickness, maternity, trade union and public duties). Please see Appendix A for more information.

Basing the calculation on a 4-year rolling average for maintained schools, the per pupil rate comes out at £27.53 per pupil. For 2023/24 the per pupil rate is £27.06.

2. Contingencies

The contingency is to support schools in financial difficulty not of the school's own making i.e. falling rolls, exceptional circumstances and to fund closing schools that still have a deficit. Schools forum has specifically asked how we support these schools and we are currently building a robust escalation process.

No de-delegation was proposed for 2022/23 or 2023/24, and we held £55k in reserves in respect of funds de-delegated in previous financial years but not drawn down.

Whilst no decision has been made to de-delegate in 2024/25 we are mapping out a clear escalation process to support schools, including the use of reserves and therefore expect in future years we will need to call upon the de-delegation. The escalation process will be shared and agreed at schools forum in due course.

.05 Financial Summary

The proposed de-delegated budget provision for 2024/25 financial year, based on £27.53, per pupil is £251k.

Appendix A

TABLE OF STAFF COSTS SUPPLY COVER

Maternity Leave	
Description	Funding
Teaching Staff	
6 weeks pay	Full pay
33 week maternity pay	Approx. £140 per week
12 weeks Occupational pay	Half pay
Support staff	
6 weeks pay	90% Full pay
13 weeks maternity pay	Approx. £140 per week
12 weeks Occupational pay	Half pay

Paternity Leave – 2 week full pay.

Trade union cover – one full time post, funding to support schools that need to cover trade union duties.

Public duties – supply cover for Jury service.

These costs for maintained schools are charged directly to the Council rather than the school.

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

TITLE	2024/25 Draft Central School Services Block Budget
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Schools Forum on 6 December 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:

1. Note the provisional 2024/25 budget allocation for the Central School Services Block (CSSB) of £1,075,657
2. Note the planning assumption made of a 3% uplift on government arranged licences to £169,258
3. Approve the proposed budget allocation from the remainder of the CSSB as follows:
 - a. Statutory and Regulatory Duties £505,000
 - b. Education Welfare £117,000
 - c. Asset Management £49,000
 - d. Other Ongoing Duties £236,000
4. Approve that any further adjustment required following notification of the final CSSB allocation and licences for 2024/25 will be amended from (a) above

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The Department of Education (DfE) has set a separate block within the Dedicated Schools Grant to support the local authority in delivering educational statutory duties. The grant is a contribution to the total cost of the central statutory services operated by the Council.

The provisional Central Support Services Block allocation for 2024/25 is £1.076m – an increase of £37k (3.6%) on the current year's allocation of £1,039k.

Final allocation for next financial year is expected to be confirmed by the DfE in December, along with confirmation of the government arranged licences to be top-sliced. An assumption of a 3% increase on current licence costs gives £32k additional funding (3.7%) to the LA for 2024/25 in comparison to the current year, which will provide a small contribution to pay and other inflation costs incurred.

2024/25 Draft Central School Services Block (CSSB)

December 2023

.01 Purpose of the Report

This report is to request that Schools Forum support the Council's proposed allocation of the Central School Services Block (CSSB) as contributory funding for the statutory education functions that must be delivered by the local authority for 2024/25.

.02 Recommendations

Schools Forum is asked to:

1. Note the provisional 2024/25 budget allocation for the Central School Services Block (CSSB) of £1,075,657
2. Note the planning assumption made of a 3% uplift on government arranged licences to £169,258
3. Approve the proposed budget allocation from the remainder of the CSSB as follows:
 - a. Statutory and Regulatory Duties £505,000
 - b. Education Welfare £117,000
 - c. Asset Management £49,000
 - d. Other Ongoing Duties £236,000
4. Approve that any further adjustment required following notification of the final CSSB allocation and licences for 2024/25 will be amended from (a) above.

.03 Background

The Department of Education (DfE) introduced a new block in the DSG allocation known as the Central School Services Block (CSSB) in 2018/19, to fund local authorities for the statutory duties they hold for both maintained schools and academies.

The CSSB brought together funding previously allocated through the retained duties element of the former Education Services Grant (ESG) and funding for ongoing central functions, such as school admissions, previously top-sliced from the Schools Block.

The provisional CSSB allocation for 2024/25 is £1.076m, an increase of £37k (3.6%) on the current year's allocation of £1,039k.

The CSSB provides a contribution to the full cost of the statutory services provided by the Council, costing around £2m, and consequently a significant proportion of the cost is funded from general fund budgets raised through local council tax collection.

.04 2024/25 Proposed Budget Allocation

The Council proposes to use the CSSB to fund statutory services largely in line with that approved by Schools Forum for the current financial year.

The cost of the various licences which are determined nationally and allocated centrally to local authorities is not yet known, therefore for planning purposes a 3% uplift on current year costs has been assumed, increasing the cost from £164k to £169k. Based on the provisional CSSB allocation, this cost assumption gives £32k additional funding (3.7%) to the LA for 2024/25 in comparison to the current year, which will provide a small contribution to pay and other inflation costs incurred.

The proposed allocation of the provisional CSSB is included in Appendix A. The figures do not represent the full cost of each service, the table represents an internal allocation of contributions only.

There are many education services offered to schools like educational psychology, various therapies and other services which were previously funded by the Education Support Grant, that the Council continues to provide without any additional funding from the DSG.

.05 Summary

The Central School Services Block (CSSB) covers funding allocated to LAs to carry out central functions on behalf of pupils in both maintained schools and academies.

The provisional Central Support Services Block allocation for 2024/25 is £1.076m, an increase of £37k (3.6%) on the current year’s allocation of £1,039k.

Final allocation for next financial year is expected to be confirmed by the DfE in December, along with confirmation of the government arranged licences to be top-sliced. An assumption of a 3% increase on current licence costs gives £32k additional funding (3.7%) to the LA for 2024/25 in comparison to the current year, which will provide a small contribution to pay and other inflation costs incurred.

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

	Description of Service	Budget 2023/24 £'000	Draft Budget 2024/25 £'000
Statutory & regulatory duties	Director of Children's Services, education staff and planning for the education service as a whole.	187	219
	Revenue budget preparation, preparation of information on income and expenditure relating to education, and external audit relating to education. Authorisation and monitoring of expenditure not met from schools' budget shares. Formulation and review of local authority schools funding formula. Internal audit and other tasks related to the authority's Chief Finance Officer's responsibilities under Section 151 of LGA 1972 except duties specifically related to maintained schools.	117	117
	Health & Safety	12	12
	Standing Advisory Committees for Religious Education (SACREs).	7	7
	Provision of information to or at the request of the Crown other than relating specifically to maintained schools.	150	150
	Education Welfare	Functions in relation to the exclusion of pupils from schools, excluding any provision for education to excluded pupils. School Attendance Responsibilities regarding the employment of children	117

	Description of Service	Budget 2023/24 £'000	Draft Budget 2024/25 £'000
Asset Management	Management of the Local Authority's capital programme including preparation and review of an asset management plan, and negotiation and management of private finance transactions	39	39
	General landlord duties for all buildings owned by the local authority , including those leased to academies	10	10
Other ongoing	Copyright Licences *	164	169
	School Forum servicing	4	4
	School Admission – duties relating to the admissions process	232	232
TOTAL **		1,039,875	1,075,657

* Assumed 3% uplift on current year cost

** Contribution towards total annual cost of statutory services, circa £2m.

