



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **SCHOOLS FORUM** will be held virtually
ON MONDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2023 AT 10.00 AM

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan Parsonage', with a long, sweeping tail.

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 27 October 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/U4B58eef43Y?feature=share>

Please note that other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting. The use of these images or recording 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
Liz Woodards	School Business Manager - Hawkedon Primary
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)
Brian 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	Secondary Academy School Representative (The Circle Trust)
Vacancy (x3)	Academy Primary School
Special Schools	
Sara Attra	Special School Head – Addington School
PRU	
Iain Thomas	Pupil Referral Unit Head – Foundry College
Non-School Representatives	
Early Years	
Kerrie Clifford	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

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.
12		APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence.	
13		DECLARATION OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest.	
14	None Specific	2024/25 DSG SCHOOLS BLOCK BUDGET UPDATE To receive and consider the 2024/25 DSG Schools Block Budget Update report.	7 - 10
15	None Specific	REQUESTED TRANSFER OF 0.5% DSG SCHOOLS BLOCK TO THE HIGH NEEDS BLOCK 2024/25 To receive and consider the Requested Transfer of 0.5% DSG Schools Block to the High Needs Block 2024/25.	11 - 22

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

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 14

TITLE 2024/25 DSG Schools Block Budget Update

FOR CONSIDERATION BY Schools Forum on 6 November 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 Schools Block budget for the 2024/25 financial year.
Schools Forum is asked to vote on the Disapplication request for our all-through school.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The report provides an update on funding information as it is currently available, and results of the consultation with schools and required voting.

SCHOOLS FORUM

DSG Schools Block Budget Update 2024/25

01. Purpose of the Report

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

02. Recommendation

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

Schools Forum is asked to vote on the Disapplication request for our all-through school.

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. The DfE subsequently sent through revised rates in October 2023.

Below is an updated table for Schools Block Funding. Our modelling shows that on average schools will receive an increase in their allocations of 5.5% compared to 2023-24.

Block	2023/24 TOTAL		2024/25 PROVISIONAL JULY		2024/25 PROVISIONAL OCTOBER		£ Increase	% Increase
Primary Unit of Funding	4,579		4,854		4,813		234	
		71,983,274		76,303,327		75,657,543	3,674,269	5.1%
Secondary Unit of Funding	5,936		6,332		6,272		336	
		63,495,841		67,731,243		67,085,034	3,589,193	5.7%
Premises Factors		1,634,877		1,790,874		1,790,045	155,168	9.5%
MSAG		4,555,857		Now in baseline		Now in baseline		
Sub-total Schools Block		141,669,849		145,825,444		144,532,622	2,862,773	2.0%
Growth Factors	1,665,896		tbc		tbc			
TOTAL Schools Block		143,335,745						

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 pupil characteristics from the October 2023 census.

As advised at the last meeting in October, the Minimum Per Pupil Funding amounts were revised by the DfE. They have still increased compared to 2023/24 (see figures below).

	2023/24 MPPL	July	October	Increase %
		2023/24 MPPL	2023/24 MPPL	
Primary	£4,405	£4,655	£4,610	4.7%
KS3	£5,503	£5,824	£5,771	4.9%
KS4	£6,033	£6,389	£6,331	4.9%
Secondary	£5,715	£6,050	£5,995	4.9%

04. Schools Block Consultation

We consulted with schools in September on the principles of the schools funding formula. The results are below. The question with regards to the block transfer will be covered under another agenda item.

		Total	Maintained	Academies	Not stated
Number of WBC Settings		70	31	39	
Number Responded		37	17	18	2
Response Rate		53%			
[A]					
Responses received					
37					
Section 2		Yes	No	Blank	Result
Q2	Do you agree MFG should be set at +0.5%?	34	2	1	Yes - 92%
Q3	Do you agree to use the minimum NFF rates?	33	2	2	Yes - 89%
Q4	Do you agree with setting up a fund for Falling Rolls?	31	5	1	Yes - 84%
Q5	If yes, do you agree that the fund for Falling Rolls should be distributed at a rate per vacant place?	30	1	6	Yes - 81%
Section 3		Yes	No	Blank	Result
Q6	Do you agree with a disapplication for all-through school?	33	2	2	Yes - 89%

The disapplication request for our all-through school needs to be voted on by Schools Forum before we can submit our request to the DfE.

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

TITLE Requested Transfer of 0.5% DSG Schools Block to the High Needs Block 2024/25

FOR CONSIDERATION BY Schools Forum on 6 November 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 for the following:

1. To note the outcome of the stage 3 schools' survey gathering views on the recommendation to support the request of the 0.5% transfer of DSG Schools Block budget to the High Needs Block in 2024/25.
2. 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 0.5% 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.

This was followed by a 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 and showed a clear majority of 68% of schools were against the transfer, (although a majority of secondary schools were in favour).

The outcome of stages 1&2 were detailed in the report to Schools Forum on the 11th October 2023.

At the October meeting Forum members recognised the importance of the vote and requested the following changes:

- That the total requested transfer be reduced to 0.5% of DSG Schools Block.
- That the model for allocating this funding be adjusted to reduce the impact on primary schools and to shift more of the financial impact onto secondary schools.
- That the new model should be presented to all schools again and their views surveyed (recognising that the timescales for this were very tight)
- Forum agreed to hold an Extraordinary meeting on the 6th November to hear the results as to how schools voted regarding the new model and to reach a final decision as to whether to support or reject the requested transfer.

The new model was developed and approved by Friday 13th October and was emailed round to schools with a survey on Monday 16th October.

Schools have been offered an opportunity to meet the Council officers to explain and answer any questions that they may have. Over 20 schools took up the offer mostly during the last week of term for Headteachers and School Business Managers to meet the officers. Lead Member Cllr Prue Bray attended a number of these meetings and information was also presented to the Governor's Forum on Wednesday 18th October.

At the time of writing this report the voting remains open BUT it can be reported that there is now a clear majority (over 90%) in favour of the 0.5% transfer; a detailed breakdown will be provided at the Forum meeting on 6/11/23 but the majority is sufficiently large enough that it will stand regardless of how any remaining votes are cast.

6th November 2023

01. Purpose of the Report

To present the case for the transfer of 0.5% 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 3 schools' survey gathering views on the recommendation to support the request of the 0.5% transfer of DSG Schools Block budget to the High Needs Block in 2024/25.
2. To reach a decision as to whether to support the recommended transfer.

03. Background

This report should be read in conjunction with the last report to Schools Forum regarding the proposed transfer from DSG Schools Block to High Needs Block presented on the 11th October 2023.

At the October meeting Forum members recognised the importance of the vote and requested the following changes:

- That the total requested transfer be reduced to 0.5% of DSG Schools Block for 2024/25; circa £740k.
- That the model for allocating this funding be adjusted to reduce the impact on primary schools and to shift more of the financial onto secondary schools.
- That the new model should be presented to all schools again and their views surveyed (recognising that the timescales for this were very tight).
- Forum agreed to hold an Extraordinary meeting on the 6th November to hear the results as to how schools voted regarding the new model and to reach a final decision as to whether to support or reject the requested transfer.

04. Report

04.i New Funding Model

Following Schools Forum the new model was developed and approved by Friday 13th October.

The updated proposal would see a reduced transfer of a total of circa £740k schools block (0.5% of the total) for 2024/25 and was modelled to reduce the primary phase contribution slightly. Taking this transfer into account every school in Wokingham will receive an increased budget allocation next year totalling 5% across the system – although this ranges between 3.1% up to 6.9% depending on a number of factors.

There are constraints limiting how much flexibility the LA has in determining how this contribution is apportioned between schools; some schools are protected from contributing anything due to minimum funding guarantees. Of those that would contribute the level would depend on a number of factors but the overview looks like this:

Total number of schools	66	
Number of schools gaining	0	0%
Number of schools not contributing (due to protections in place from minimum funding guarantees)	24	36.4%
Number of schools contributing less than 0.5%	32	48.5%
Number of schools contributing more than 0.5%	9	13.6%
Contribution range for primary schools:	Between 0% and 0.28%	
Contribution range for secondary schools:	Between 0.7% and 1.1%	

04.ii Engagement and Dialogue

Schools received individual emails showing the % impact of the new model on Monday 16th October with an attached survey and were asked to respond to Ming Zhang (Assistant Director Education and SEND) as soon as possible; replies were requested by the end of term (Friday 20th October) but the survey remains open until Friday 27th October for late replies.

Meetings were also offered to primary schools at short notice and officers met with over 20 schools mostly during the last week of term to explain the new model and take any queries from Headteachers and School Business Managers. Lead Member Cllr Prue Bray attended a number of these meetings.

Information was also presented to the Governor's Forum on Wednesday 18th October.

04.iii Outcome of Survey and Feedback

At the time of publishing this report the voting remains open BUT it can be reported that there is now a clear majority (over 90%) in favour of the 0.5% transfer; **a detailed breakdown will be provided at the Forum meeting on 6/11/23** but the majority is sufficiently large enough that it will stand regardless of how any remaining votes are cast.

The reasons given for the change of voting are summarised as follows:

- Most schools said they understood the reasons for the request and support the activity that is underway but that the previous request was unaffordable in the current financial climate.
- The significant reduction in the request from primary schools made this easier to accept.
- Some schools indicated that they wanted to see significant improvement in the coming year and that their vote of support next year was very much dependent on this progress being visible by the end of the year.

05. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Given the fact that there is a majority of support from the majority of schools for the proposed improvement measures Schools Forum are asked to approve the 0.5% transfer of Schools Block to High Needs Block for 2024/25 as a commitment to the joint working required to reach a balanced High Needs Block budget by 2029.

Contact Ming Zhang	Assistant Director of Education and SEND
	Email Ming.Zhang@wokingham.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

October 2023 Survey on School Responses to Revised Proposal to Transfer 0.5% Schools Block budget to High Needs Block in 2024/25

Summary Analysis



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

- At their meeting on 11 October 2023, Wokingham Schools Forum considered the requested transfer of 1% of the DSG Schools Block to High Needs Block for 2024/25
- A school survey in September rejected the request for 1% transfer (68% against vs 32% for) – affordability was the main reason given for the rejection particularly for primary phase schools
- As an alternative Schools Forum proposed a reduction in the amount of transfer requested to 0.5% of the DSG Schools Block and asked WBC to devise a funding model that will alleviate the pressure on primary schools.
- Forum asked WBC to consult with schools again on the amended proposals to establish whether this would be more widely supported.
- Wokingham Council ran this survey for schools between Friday 16th - Monday 30th October 2023 accompanied by a series of meetings with headteachers, governors and school business managers
- The survey was responded to by a total of 40 schools – 58% of all local schools
- An Extraordinary Meeting of Schools Forum was called for the 6/11/2023 to hear the findings of this survey and reach a decision on the transfer.

ALL SCHOOLS =	69	100%	
YES VOTES =	37	92.5%	of votes cast
NO VOTES =	2	5.0%	of votes cast
ABSTENTIONS =	1	2.5%	of votes cast
TOTAL VOTES =	40	58%	of all schools voted
VOTES NOT CAST =	29	42%	

- 80% of all secondary schools cast a vote and 100% of these supported the proposed transfer
- 55% of all primary schools cast a vote and 90% of these supported the proposed transfer
- 50% of all special / AP schools cast a vote and 100% of these supported the proposed transfer

20

This is a marked change from the survey in September; school's feedback was that the revised proposal was more affordable for primary schools and many headteachers said that they appreciated that their concerns had been listened to.



	TOTAL SCHOOLS	TOTAL VOTES	% OF SCHOOLS WHO VOTED	VOTED 'YES'	% OF VOTES CAST	VOTED 'NO'	% OF VOTES CAST	ABSTAINED	% OF VOTES CAST
PRIMARY SCHOOLS	55	30	55%	27	90%	2	7%	1	2%
SECONDARY SCHOOLS	10	8	80%	8	100%	0	0%	0	0%
SPECIAL / AP SCHOOLS	4	2	50%	2	100%	0	0%	0	0%
ALL SCHOOLS =	69	40	58%	37	93%	2	3%	1	1%

Detailed breakdown of voting patterns

This page is intentionally left blank