

# Notice of Meeting

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## Schools Forum

**Monday 11th March 2024 at 5.00pm**

**At Shaw House Church Road Newbury**

Date of despatch of Agenda: Wednesday, 5 March 2024

For further information about this Agenda, or to inspect any background documents referred to in Part I reports, please contact Jessica Bailiss on (01635) 503124  
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## Agenda - Schools Forum to be held on Monday, 11 March 2024 (continued)

**Forum Members:** Reverend Mark Bennet, Nicolle Browning, Heather Codling, Iain Cottingham, Paul Davey, Jacque Davies, Richard Hand, Michelle Harrison, Keith Harvey (Vice Chair), Richard Hawthorne, Jon Hewitt, Trevor Keable, Jo Lagares, Maria Morgan, Gemma Piper, Chris Prosser, David Ramsden, Lesley Roberts, Campbell Smith, Graham Spellman (Chair), Phil Spray, Charlotte Wilson and Lindsay Wood

# Agenda

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**Agenda - Schools Forum to be held on Monday, 11 March 2024** *(continued)*

**13 Date and format of the next meeting**

*Monday 17<sup>th</sup> of June 2024 at 5pm (virtual/in-person to be confirmed)*

Sarah Clarke  
Service Director: Strategy and Governance

If you require this information in a different format or translation, please contact Stephen Chard on telephone (01635) 519462.



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## **SCHOOLS FORUM**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 19 DECEMBER 2023**

**Present:** Reverend Mark Bennet (Church of England Diocese), Nicolle Browning (Maintained Secondary School Headteacher), Councillor Heather Codling (Executive Portfolio Holder: Children, Education and Young People's Services), Councillor Iain Cottingham (Executive Portfolio Holder: Finance and Corporate Services), Paul Davey (Maintained Primary School Governor), Jackie Davies (Pupil Referral Unit Headteacher), Richard Hand (Trade Union), Keith Harvey (Maintained Primary School Headteacher), Jon Hewitt (Maintained Special School Headteacher), Jo Lagares (Maintained Primary School Headteacher), Maria Morgan (Maintained Nursery School Headteacher), Chris Prosser (Maintained Secondary School Headteacher), David Ramsden (Maintained Secondary School Headteacher), Lesley Roberts (Maintained Primary School Headteacher), Campbell Smith (Academy School Governor), Charlotte Wilson (Academy School Headteacher), Tristan Whiteman (Maintained Primary School Headteacher - Substitute for Melissa Cliffe) and Lindsay Wood (Academy School Headteacher)

**Also Present:** AnnMarie Dodds (Executive Director - Children and Family Services), Melanie Ellis (Acting Head of Finance and Property), Jessica Bailiss (Democratic Services Officer) and Michelle Sancho (Acting Head of Education Services)

**Apologies for inability to attend the meeting:** Melissa Cliffe, Gemma Duff, Michelle Harrison, Richard Hawthorne, Trevor Keable, Gemma Piper, Jane Seymour, Graham Spellman and Phil Spray

#### **PART I**

##### **1 Declarations of Interest**

Due to the nature of the meeting the Chair explained the procedure in terms of Declarations of Interest in line with paragraph 3.7 of the Schools' Forum Constitution.

Jacqui Davies declared that she had an interest in agenda item two due to her school having a surplus balance for 2022/2023. As her interest was a prejudicial and pecuniary interest Jacqui Davies would leave the meeting for the duration of the item and not take part in the vote. Jacqui Davies also declared a further personal interest in the item as she was a Governor at the Downs Foundation, which was one of the other schools with a significant surplus.

Jon Hewitt reported that he had been advised that he had a prejudicial interest in item two due to being from a school with a significant surplus balance. He stated that he was not happy with the advice provided however would leave the meeting for the duration of the item and not take part in the vote in line with the Constitution. Jon Hewitt reported that he was concerned that as a result of his interest there would not be a special school representative present for the meeting.

Chris Prosser reported that he had also been advised that he had a prejudicial interest in agenda item two due to being from a school with a significant surplus. Chris Prosser concurred with Jon Hewitt and was not happy with the advice as it was felt that the matter

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involved all schools and could involve all schools into the future. Chris Prosser stated he would accept the legal advice and leave the meeting for the duration of the item and would not take part in the vote.

### 2 **Scheme for Financing Schools - Claw back mechanism**

Melanie Ellis introduced the report (Agenda Item 2). A consultation was recently undertaken with all schools on the updates to the 2023/24 Scheme for Financing Schools and on the 2024/25 funding formula. At Schools Forum of 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023, the majority of the consultation was approved, but it was agreed that an additional Heads Funding Group and Schools Forum be arranged to discuss the inclusion of a clawback mechanism in the updated Scheme for Financing Schools.

The Heads' Funding Group had met at an additional meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> December and formed the recommendations set out in section 2.1 of the report. Melanie Ellis highlighted that there had been significant discussion on each of the points. It had also been agreed that there should be an opportunity for a counter view to be presented at the Schools' Forum meeting.

Melanie Ellis reported that school surplus balances currently totalled £13.7m and £10.8m of this was held in main school budgets. The table under section 5.3 of the report showed which schools were holding these balances and what they equated to.

Section six of the report provided a summary of the consultation with schools where 13 had voted in favour of a claw back and six against. A summary of comments for and against the claw back were included. Section seven of the report showed how a sliding scale could operate.

The Vice-Chair invited Nicolle Browning to present a counter view to the claw back. Nicolle Browning added that it was a collective view from schools unable to be present at the meeting:

- It was acknowledged that carrying £13.7m of public funding forward across years was unsustainable – the increases in funding to schools had been minimal in recent years and many schools' balances were being significantly eroded. Some schools were maintaining a large carry forward to avoid being in deficit in future years. However, it was understood that these large carry forwards might indicate to the government that all was well with school budgets and the system could absorb further cuts, which was not the case.
- There was an agreement that there needed to be a system whereby balances were brought down to more realistic levels, whilst maintaining sound financial management.
- Some of the schools with surplus balances had very clear plans about how the funding would be allocated and could justify carry forwards.
- If a clawback were to be introduced, this should be for any balances carried forward from 2024/25 into the 2025/26 budget period. This allowed schools to consider their surplus balances and use the funds for the benefit of their pupils for the coming financial year, which was what the money was provided for.
- The broader concern was that if this did not happen it could cause current local authority maintained schools to move to academy status at a faster rate. Academy schools were not placed in a position of facing possible claw back.

David Ramsden noted that the only real difference between the proposal contained within the report and the proposal put forward as part of the counter view, was the date for a claw back. It was felt that there was consensus on other areas including whether a claw

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back mechanism needed to be re-introduced; whether there should be a sliding scale; and whether there was support for head teachers to be able to present plans for how surplus funding would be used to a panel. It was felt that it would be helpful to discuss these areas first. The Vice-Chair agreed this would be a sensible way forward but first invited further comments from the Forum.

Paul Davey queried if the claw back would only benefit maintained schools, or academy schools as well. Melanie Ellis confirmed that only maintained schools would benefit.

Reverend Mark Bennett felt he might need to declare an interest as he was also a Governor at an Academy Trust and more schools might be looking to join trusts due to the claw back. He stated that putting money back into the High Needs Budget would effect all schools because all schools used these services. The Vice-Chair clarified that as Reverend Bennett would not take part in the vote on the item as a non-school member it was acceptable for him to express his view.

Lesley Roberts read out comments that she had received from other headteachers expressing they were opposed to a claw back. In summary, schools that had provided comments were against clawed back funding being used to fund the High Needs Block (HNB) budget. It was felt that the high needs budget was a Local Authority (LA) budget. One view had also stated that there would not be places in high needs schools, which were already funded on a tight budget. It was queried what the impact would be to the LA from further schools converting to academies. It was felt that current actions by the LA were leading more schools to explore academisation.

Keith Harvey asked Michelle Sancho to comment regarding the impact caused by increased schools converting to academies. Michelle Sancho reported that the Council was keen for schools to remain maintained and to continue to be supported by the LA. If further schools converted to academies this would potentially impact on LA services. Michelle Sancho commented however, that many of the academies in West Berkshire had a very positive relationship with the LA and bought back services showing these services were valued.

AnnMarie Dodds provided some clarity on points that had been raised. The HNB was not a LA budget but was a schools' budget, which formed part of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). There was a significant overspend in the HNB, which was controlled by the Schools' Forum. Regarding money going back into the HNB, it had been discussed previously that money would go back to where it came from initially. Funding for special schools came from the HNB and therefore if money was clawed back from special schools it would go back to the HNB. Money clawed back from primary and secondary schools would go back into the schools block.

AnnMarie Dodds explained that the current situation would not alter the way schools were funded, whether maintained or academy, because schools were funded on a per pupil basis. AnnMarie Dodds reiterated that the LA very much wished for schools to remain maintained and had no desire to lose schools to academisation. This however did not make the current funding situation go away in that there was still an overspend on the DSG. West Berkshire was part of the Delivering Better Value Programme (DBVP), which meant the DSG would have to be balanced within the next couple of years. A position needed to be reached where the Schools' Forum agreed a mechanism to balance school budgets.

The Vice-Chair queried that if funding was clawed back from special schools, would it be used to reduce the high needs deficit, which could result in some of the funding going to profit making independent schools. AnnMarie Dodds reported that the HNB included all additional SEN spend including support for schools; places in special schools; and in extreme circumstances funding places in independent special schools because there

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were not enough special school places in West Berkshire. The HNB also funded a raft of interventions provided for schools. AnnMarie Dodds felt it would be disingenuous to assume that the money was exclusively going out of West Berkshire and into the independent sector elsewhere.

AnnMarie Dodds highlighted that when a school converted to an academy, any surplus budget was taken with it. If money was clawed back from special schools at the present time then this would bring the deficit down by about £3m however, there would still be a situation where £6m needed to be found. If academisation took place and funding was not clawed back £9m would need to be found. It was a question of whether the gap should be partially recouped with the surplus balances, or alternatively the Forum could agree to not claw back at the current stage with the knowledge that £9m would still need to be recouped over the next couple of years.

Councillor Ian Cottingham concurred with the points made by AnnMarie Dodds. He stressed that a primary challenge for the new Administration had been balancing the books. He understood that the £9m referred to had accrued over many years and this needed to be paid back over the short term. There was a particular risk of one school converting to an academy and if a claw back mechanism was not introduced by 31st March 2024, a substantial amount of money might be lost. He understood why some headteachers might wish to defer the date of the claw back however, he stressed that the deficit needed to be recouped and urged the Forum to agree to its reintroduction as of 31st March 2024.

The Vice-Chair stated that he had not been aware that a particular school was looking to convert to an academy in the near future.

Maria Morgan queried the timescales that had been referred to in terms of recouping the deficit. AnnMarie Dodds clarified that there had been a statutory override in place on the DSG to date, which meant there had been no penalty related to overspends or any consequence to the Schools' Forum or Council. This override was however, due to be removed at the end of the 2025/26 financial year and would mean that any deficit against the DSG would become the LA's problem. Normally a deficit in the DSG against the HNB doubled yearly and therefore if left unmitigated the deficit could be in excess of £20m by 2026. The LA did not have enough in its budget or reserves to cover this overspend. As the deficit currently stood this would likely result in the LA becoming bankrupt and commissioners taking control of spending. West Berkshire had been placed in the DBVP because it had been identified as a risk. The deficit would need to be recouped over the next two years so that the budget could be balanced. Thought needed to be given to what levers needed to be used to reach a stronger financial position as soon as possible.

The Vice-Chair voiced that he was aware that West Berkshire was not the only LA in the position faced and currently had a lower deficit against the DSG compared to other LAs such as Bracknell Forest, which was similar in size to West Berkshire. He queried what other LAs in a similar position were doing. AnnMarie Dodds reported that LAs with higher deficits had been placed in the Safety Valve Programme, which was the most extreme level of intervention from the Department for Education (DfE). In this programme many decision making powers were removed and there was an expectation of significant actions such as claw back and funding transfers. AnnMarie Dodds recommended looking at percentages rather than numbers as a factor regarding the overspend. Decisions moving forward were what was important in terms of the next few years. No decision was going to be easy and there were no simple solutions.

The Vice-Chair suggested having a non-public meeting in the future looking at the funding situation. AnnMarie Dodds felt that this would be helpful.



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Reverend Mark Bennett noted the discussions that had taken place on funding however, stated that this needed to be balanced with statutory obligations to educate children and provide for them in various ways. He stated that he had not seen clearly benchmarked, the extent to which the grant received enabled these obligations to be met. He felt that this was a necessary piece of work going forward and would increase understanding of the situation faced. Michelle Sancho reported that statutory obligations were met however, because these were met and demands were rising the spend was increasing. A number of invest to save initiatives had been put in place to help reduce costs however, a decision would be required on these areas going forward. The Vice-Chair felt that what was being implied by Reverend Bennett was that if all non-statutory elements were removed from the High Needs Budget, how much would the budget still be overspent. Reverend Bennett agreed and felt it would be useful to see any modelling when decisions were being made.

David Ramsden stated that he agreed with a private meeting being organised to help Forum Members understand the bigger picture. David Ramsden commented that he was in support of the claw back being introduced from 31st March 2024. He acknowledged comments from Officers and Members that the DSG was a schools' budget in a difficult situation. David Ramsden stated that he had been a member of the Forum for many years and many hours of work had been put into trying to pull back the position on the HNB. Subsequently the LA had stepped in and stopped this happening and he had not understood at the time why this had been the case. Care needed to be taken when comments were made regarding the Forum allowing the deficit to grow. AnnMarie Dodds apologised if she had commented unhelpfully on this area causing frustration and appreciated David Ramsden's comments.

David Ramsden stated that he was of the view that a tough decision needed to be made at the current meeting to re-introduce a claw back. He supported comments from AnnMarie Dodds regarding not wanting to lose control of spend to the Department for Education. He wished to avoid being placed further up in the DBVP. If a claw back was not re-introduced and the date of introduction was deferred then the situation would be prolonged. Headteachers would need to trust that a thorough process would be put in place including a quality assurance panel to review surplus balances.

Charlotte Wilson referred to comments earlier in the discussion that cuts and invest to save had been discussed in depth overtime. Impact reports had been continuously requested by headteachers over the years to show what was having an impact and making a difference to children, and it was not felt that this information had been received. Charlotte Wilson asked for assurance from Officers and Members that this information would be received so the Schools' Forum were fully informed moving forward and able to spend money where it was going to make a difference. In response, AnnMarie Dodds stated that over the next 12 months, as part of the next stage of the DBVP, spend against the HNB would need to be looked at in great detail including benchmarking against neighbouring authorities. AnnMarie Dodds stated that she was committed to looking at whether what was being done was making a difference across all aspects of Children's Services and this could therefore be the expected approach. Numerous discussions would be required at the Schools' Forum over the next period regarding how money was being spent and collective decisions would be required over what should continue or stop.

Councillor Cottingham stated that he fully supported a proposal for greater understanding of finances relating to the LA. The LA was currently going through a consultation regarding next years' budget and £14m needed to be found. He understood a preventative strategy approach was being taken for children and families in West Berkshire.

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Paul Davey commented that from a business perspective they were looking at needing to save £6m or potentially £9m over the next two years. He understood that the DBVP could deliver some better value however, was not confident it would deliver the scale of what was required. He thanked AnnMarie Dodds for her openness and honesty about the situation and the clarity provided. He felt the inevitable point was that to recoup the money from the DSG would have a quality impact on education provided and statutory obligations to provide this education. Paul Davey stated he could not identify anything that was being proposed or discussed that would stop this happening. He queried what the priority was in terms of what would be cut first.

In response to Paul Davey's points, AnnMarie Dodds acknowledged that this was certainly a discussion that needed to take place and would need to do so in a closed meeting. AnnMarie Dodds acknowledged the scale of the challenge faced and that there were frustrations around a number of areas however, a point needed to be reached at the current meeting where a decision could be made regarding the single issue of the claw back. A meeting could then take place in January/February regarding the bigger financial picture.

In response to the points raised by Charlotte Wilson, Michelle Sancho reported that reports on the invest to save projects had included impact data. Michelle Sancho acknowledged however, that more could be done going forward in terms of evaluation.

The Vice-Chair queried if the claw back was actioned immediately and money was redistributed back to the HNB, if this money would essentially be filling a black hole. The amount clawed back would be less than the increase in the deficit expected over the next year. AnnMarie Dodds agreed that it would however, flagged the risk that one of the surplus schools had submitted an academisation notice and would therefore take the surplus balance in to an academy trust.

David Ramsden voiced that caution need to be taken when commenting that certain amounts of money would not have an impact on the deficit, as this approach had caused the situation in the first place and needed to be avoided. David Ramsden felt that the claw back needed to be introduced from 31st March 2024. He understood this would not recoup the whole deficit however, would demonstrate that the Schools' Forum was doing what it could to try and mitigate the situation.

The Vice-Chair drew attention to the recommendations under section 2.1 of the report and suggested the Forum vote on those that there was a likely consensus on.

It was proposed and seconded by maintained school members that the Schools' Forum agree recommendation 2.1 (1) *to include a clawback mechanism in the updated SFS*. At the vote with all maintained school members the motion was carried.

It was proposed and seconded by maintained school members that the Schools' Forum agree recommendation 2.1 (3) *that the maximum amount that could be clawed back each year was the amount of school balance in excess of 10% of their budget share. This was subject to leaving the schools with a minimum of £50,000 balance. The actual amount to be clawed back would be recommended by Heads Funding Group after reviewing the commitments on the statement, and taking into consideration the sliding scale in the first year. Schools Forum would then make the decision*. At the vote with all maintained school members the motion was carried.

The Vice Chair sought consideration of recommendation 2.1 (2) regarding the date for a claw back to be re-introduced. He stated that having listened to the points raised and the views of other headteachers he had formed a firm view he would not be able to vote in support of the recommendation to introduce the claw back from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. However, having listened to the points also raised by AnnMarie Dodds he queried if there would be support for further discussing the matter at the next Schools' Forum meeting in

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January. AnnMarie Dodds commented that the matter could be taken forward into the new year if this would be helpful however, felt the Forum would be well placed to make a decision at the current meeting. The consultation with schools had been in support of the recommendation and there had not been a change to the date. The Forum had just voted unanimously in support of recommendation 2.1 (3), which would ensure any commitments on school balance sheets would be taken into account and schools would not suffer a detriment. Melanie Ellis agreed with this view and stated that this was the point of schools providing year-end balance statements setting out any commitments.

David Ramsden was of the view that the decision should not be delayed. He felt that reasons for and against had been discussed in detail and there should be enough quality assurance in place to support heads through careful review of balances.

It was proposed and seconded by maintained school members that the Schools' Forum agree recommendation 2.1 (2) *To apply the clawback based on balances as at 31<sup>st</sup> March each year, less any evidenced commitments, starting from 31.3.24. This would be introduced on a sliding scale for the first year.* At the vote with all maintained school members the motion was not carried.

It was clarified that if the Schools' Forum wished to make an amendment to the recommendation then this would need to be proposed, seconded and voted on. This would need to be followed by separate consideration of any revised recommendation proposed.

The Vice-Chair felt that there were two possible options. Firstly, it could be proposed that the claw back be introduced from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 or alternatively it could be proposed that the minimum claw back percentage in 2024 could be increased, which might capture more support from the Forum.

Lesley Roberts understood why some headteachers did not wish to defer the decision however, it was important to involve colleagues in discussions. Lesley Roberts felt that she would have to vote with the consensus she had noted from other headteachers and the group. It was felt if others had the wider knowledge that had been explained then there might be support for the minimum in 2024.

The Vice-Chair reminded Forum Members that they had been nominated to represent their colleagues' views, similar to the system in the wider Council and Parliament. David Ramsden concurred with this view and highlighted the counter information that had been presented from a wider set of headteachers. David Ramsden felt that if there was a completely different proposal rather than just changing the date then this should go out to consultation. Nicolle Browning echoed that colleagues' views had been well captured in preparation for the meeting.

The Schools' Forum voted in support of amending the recommendation set out in section 2.1 (2). Subsequently it was proposed and seconded by maintained school members that the date for re-introduction of the claw back be changed to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. At the vote with maintained school members the motion was carried.

The Vice-Chair drew attention to recommendation 2.1 (4) regarding where the funds should go once clawed back and it was felt that this decision should be taken in a years' time once the financial situation at that point was known. David Ramsden concurred with this view however, felt it should be reviewed annually where the funding should go when clawed back as circumstances could change radically.

It was proposed and seconded by maintained school members that recommendation 2.1 (4) was not voted on at the current meeting. At the vote with maintained school members this was carried.

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**RESOLVED that:**

- A non-public meeting be set up in the future for Schools' Forum Members to help provide an understanding of the wider financial situation faced.
- Recommendations 2.1 (1) and (3) were approved by the Forum.
- It was agreed by the Forum that recommendation 2.1 (2) should be amended. It was subsequently agreed by the Forum that a mechanism for claw back should be introduced from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.
- It was agreed by the Forum that a vote would not be taken on recommendation 2.1 (4) as set out above.

**3 Date of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the Schools' Forum would take place on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024 at 5pm on Zoom.

*(The meeting commenced 5pm and closed at 6.18pm)*

**CHAIR** .....

**Date of Signature** .....

# DRAFT

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## SCHOOLS FORUM

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 22 JANUARY 2024

**Present:** Nicolle Browning (Maintained Secondary School Headteacher), Councillor Heather Codling (Executive Portfolio Holder: Children, Education and Young People's Services), Councillor Iain Cottingham (Executive Portfolio Holder: Finance and Corporate Services), Paul Davey (Maintained Primary School Governor), Jacquie Davies (Pupil Referral Unit Headteacher), Richard Hand (Trade Union), Jon Hewitt (Maintained Special School Headteacher), Trevor Keable (Academy School Governor), Jo Lagares (Maintained Primary School Headteacher), Maria Morgan (Maintained Nursery School Headteacher), Gemma Piper (Academy School Headteacher), Lesley Roberts (Maintained Primary School Headteacher), Graham Spellman (Chair (Roman Catholic Diocese)) Phil Spray (Maintained Primary School Governor) and Lindsay Wood (Academy School Headteacher)

**Also Present:** Rose Carberry (Principal Adviser for School Improvement), Melanie Ellis (Acting Head of Finance and Property) and Jane Seymour (Service Manager, SEN & Disabled Children's Team) and Jessica Bailiss (Democratic Services Officer)

**Apologies for inability to attend the meeting:** Avril Allenby, Reverend Mark Bennet, AnnMarie Dodds, Michelle Harrison, Keith Harvey, Richard Hawthorne, Lisa Potts, Chris Prosser, David Ramsden, Michelle Sancho, Campbell Smith, and Charlotte Wilson

#### PART I

*The Chair thanked Melissa Cliffe (Maintained Primary Representative), who had stood down from the Forum, for her commitment to both the Heads' Funding Group and Schools' Forum over the last two years. Following discussion with representatives from the Downs Federation regarding the setting being over represented on the Forum, it had been felt that this was the most appropriate action to ensure the membership remained balanced in line with the Constitution.*

*The Chair also thanked Gemma Duff (Maintained Primary Governor Representative), who had needed to stand down from the Forum due to personal reasons.*

*The Chair explained that agenda 10 (Growth Fund Payments 2023/24) was for decision rather than discussion and therefore would be brought forward on the agenda and considered after agenda item 6 (Central Schools Services Block Proposals).*

#### **1 Minutes of previous meeting dated 4th December 2023**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023 were approved a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **2 Actions arising from previous meetings**

All actions from the previous meetings were in hand or completed.

#### **3 Declarations of Interest**

Lindsay Wood declared an interest in Agenda Item 10 regarding the Growth Fund 2023/24 payments, due to being a headteacher of a school that formed part of the

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Newbury Academy Trust. As her interest was a prejudicial and pecuniary interest Lindsay Wood would leave the meeting for the duration of the item and not take part in the vote.

### 4 Membership

Jess Bailiss provided the following Membership updates:

- Primary Head teachers were being consulted to seek a new representative for the Forum, following Melissa Cliffe standing down.
- Maria Morgan's term of office was due to end in April 2024. Maria Morgan had confirmed that she was happy to continue but would consult on this with the new Hungerford headteacher when they were due to start in April.
- Gemma Duff had recently stood down from the Forum and an election would be held shortly for this maintained primary governor position.

### 5 Final Central School Block Budget Proposals 2024/25 (Lisa Potts)

Melanie Ellis introduced the report (Agenda Item 6), which set out the budget proposal for services funded from the Central Schools' Services (CSSB) block of the DSG.

Melanie Ellis reported that there had been a small reduction in the funding compared to last year (£12k).

It had been possible to make a saving as a result of the Capita System moving to the Cloud and this made it possible to balance the block for 2024/25.

Trevor Keable referred to the provision of education data, which had been reduced by 16 percent and queried what implications this would have. Melanie Ellis confirmed that this related to the cost saving from the Capita System and therefore was only a reduction in the cost and not the service provided.

It was proposed and seconded that the CSSB budget for 2024/25 should be agreed. The Chair invited the Forum to vote on the proposal and at the vote the recommendation was approved.

**RESOLVED that:** The Schools' Forum approved the 2024/25 CSSB budget in line with the recommendation in section 2.1 of the report.

### 6 Growth Fund 2023/24 (Melanie Ellis)

*(Lindsay Wood left the meeting)*

Melanie Ellis introduced the report (Agenda Item 10), which aimed to inform the Schools' Forum of payments recommended to be made to schools from the Growth Fund budget in 2023/24. It was noted that one payment was recommended to Trinity School for £105.3k.

Melanie Ellis reported that following the release of the October 2023 census data, applications were invited from schools who felt they might qualify for growth funding. Melanie Ellis reported that only one application had been received, from Trinity School, and as detailed in the report, it had been assessed that the school met the requirements of the fund and it was therefore recommended that the payment should be agreed by the Forum.

Trevor Keable queried what the criteria was for the funding as he noted it was not detailed within the report. Melanie Ellis confirmed that the criteria was quite detailed and had been subject to a previous report, where the criteria for 2024/25 was agreed. Melanie Ellis commented that she would send a copy of the criteria to Trevor Keable.

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It was proposed and seconded that the payment to Trinity School should be agreed as set out in the recommendation in section 2.1 of the report. The Chair invited the Forum to vote on the proposal and at the vote the recommendation was approved.

### **RESOLVED that:**

- Melanie Ellis would forward a copy of the Growth Funding Criteria to Trevor Keable following the meeting.
- The Schools' Forum approved the payment of £105.3k to Trinity School from the Growth Fund.

## **7 Final DSG Funding Settlement Overview 2024/25 (Melanie Ellis)**

*(Lindsay Wood re-joined the meeting)*

Melanie Ellis introduced the report (Agenda Item 7), which set out the final Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocation for 2024-25.

Melanie Ellis reported that the final allocations for the DSG had been received in December 2023. These allocations were set out in the table under section 4.1 of the report and comparisons to the previous year were provided.

Trevor Keable noted the political conversations that had been taking place regarding the amount of money LAs received from central funds and he queried if West Berkshire was acting within this. In response, Councillor Iain Cottingham reported that he had attended a Local Government Finance Conference with the S151 Officer in Westminster and there had been no mention or commitment to extra money being available. The situation facing DSGs had been raised and a number of LAs were facing a deficit. There had been no commitment made that overspends against DSGs, which was prevalent across the majority of LAs in the country, would be called in during 2026. There was a consultation document out currently regarding the flexible use of capital receipts, which was hoped would be a positive move. In conclusion, Councillor Cottingham stated that as far as he was aware there was no extra money available and they were administering in line with the rules of the scheme and central government formula. It was noted that it was an election year.

**RESOLVED that** the Schools' Forum noted the report.

## **8 Final School Funding 2024/25 (Melanie Ellis)**

Melanie Ellis introduced the report (Agenda Item 8), which set out the final school funding formula allocations for 2024/25 for information.

Melanie Ellis reported that the table on page 30 of the agenda pack would be of most interest to schools as it showed the individual school funding allocations for the year ahead. This was subject to political ratification and following this the information would be circulated to schools.

**RESOLVED that** the Schools' Forum noted the report.

## **9 High Needs Block Budget Proposals 2024/25 (Jane Seymour)**

Jane Seymour provided a verbal update on the High Needs Block (HNB) Proposals for 2024/25. Normally, at the current stage of the year, a detailed report would be provided on budget proposals however, further work was required by officers and members of the Heads Funding Group (HFG) on the finer detail of proposals for 2024/25. Jane Seymour confirmed that it would be a deficit budget as expected however, through this further work the aim was to contain the deficit as much as possible. A special meeting of the HFG was due to take place on 7<sup>th</sup> February to begin this work and a full report setting out the HNB

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Budget proposals would be brought to the next Schools' Forum in March. This would include proposals around the invest to save projects, which had been discussed as part of the previous report.

The Chair noted that there was a lot of work and discussion taking place. Trevor Keable queried if there was concern about the result of this process and what it would mean for schools. Jane Seymour reported that schools did not currently need to do anything and did not need to be concerned. The HNB was always an area of concern because a deficit budget had been set for several years and it was increasing. Ways to contain this, in a way that protected children's statutory needs, were being looked at. Further detail would be brought to the next Forum meeting.

**RESOLVED** that the Schools' Forum noted the update.

### 10 **DSG Monitoring 2023/24 Month 9 (Lisa Potts)**

Melanie Ellis introduced the report (Agenda Item 11), which aimed to report the forecast financial position of the services funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), highlighting any under or over spends, and to highlight the cumulative deficit on the DSG.

Melanie Ellis reported that West Berkshire's DSG allocation for 2023/24 was £167m. Some of this went straight to academies and high needs places, and the remaining balance following this was £115.7m. The budget was also set with a £3m efficiency target, which had not been met and therefore still stood as an overspend. There was also an additional overspend in the High Needs Block (HNB) of £1.5m. All other blocks had managed to break even. The table under section 4.5 of the report showed that the deficit balance from 2022/23 was £4.7m with the cumulative deficit expected to increase to £9.5m by the end of 2023/24.

The final table in the report under section 4.9 showed the balances broken down by each block and it could be seen that the Schools' Block had quite a large surplus, which was due to the Growth Fund.

Gemma Piper felt that it was important to note the body of work taking place with the HFG, targeted at deficit management. This work was extremely important and it was very clear what needed to be achieved. Melanie Ellis added that as well as this work taking place by the HFG, West Berkshire was also part of the Delivering Better Value (DBV) Programme, also designed to help reduce the overspend.

Richard Hand queried what the primary drivers were of the huge increase in SEND costs and how the increase compared with other LAs. In response Jane Seymour commented that the key drivers were a combination in the increase in the number of children requiring Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) in mainstream schools (maintained and academies) and also an increase in the number of children needing places in independent non-maintained special schools combined with an increase in the unit cost of external provision. Officers were unable to comment on increases compared to other LAs however, the increase was £9.5m compared to only £1.4m in 2021, indicating it was doubling each year.

Trevor Keable commented that the matter had been discussed recently with the Denefield School SEND Team and it had been found that more parents were undertaking private assessments, which were highlighting detailed needs, which they might not have got if the LA route had been taken. Concern had been expressed that this could be skewing the budget, because increased finances were required for these children and children were often identified as having a greater need compared to those going through the LA route. It was noted that waiting times with the LA were often long.

Richard Hand noted the work taking place however, there did not seem to be much cross LA consultation/discussion regarding one of the primary drivers, which was the costs



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charged by external private providers. He queried if there were any checks and balances on this element as it did not seem like it was being addressed. Jane Seymour reported one way they were trying to address this issue was through increasing local maintained specialist provision, so there was less reliance on independent non-maintained providers. This included the Castle at Theale (opened in 2022), Kennet Valley SEMH opening in September 2024 and there were further new provisions planned as part of the five year SEND Strategy. The other issue was the increase in unit costs and Jane Seymour explained that sometimes these could be justified but other times not and anything that could not be justified was always challenged. The DBV Programme would help with this issue as it would provide increased commissioning capacity to be proactive on this matter and in reviewing the costs of all placements.

Councillor Iain Cottingham commented on the wider issue of children's care plans, which had been debated at the conference he had attended. Regulating care plans had been raised as a way to help tackle the issue.

The Chair noted the complexity of the subject and looked forward to receiving a report with more information in March.

**RESOLVED that** the Schools' Forum noted the report.

### 11 Forward Plans

The Schools' Forum noted the forward plans.

### 12 Date of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Schools' Forum would take place at Shaw House on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024 from 5pm.

*(The meeting commenced at 5.00pm and closed at 5.40pm)*

**CHAIR** .....

**Date of Signature** .....

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### Actions from previous meetings

Ref No.	Date of meeting(s) raised	Item	Action	Responsible Officer	Update
Dec23-Ac1	19th December 2023	Scheme for Financing Schools - Claw back mechanism	A non-public meeting be set up in the future for Schools' Forum Members to help provide an understanding of the wider financial situation faced.	Jess Bailiss	Due to ongoing dicussions/meetings with the Heads' Funding Group, this meeting was cancelled.
Jan24-Ac1	22nd January 2024	Growth Funding 2023/24	Melanie Ellis would forward a copy of the Growth Funding Criteria to Trevor Keable following the meeting.	Melanie Ellis	Completed.

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# Agenda Item 6

## Schools Forum Work Programme 2024/25

	Item	HFG Deadline	Heads Funding Group	SF Deadline	Schools Forum	Action required	Author
	Additional HFG meeting (High Needs Block)	10/04/2024	17/04/2024				
	Additional HFG meeting (High Needs Block)	08/05/2024	15/05/2024				
Term 5	Election of Chair and Vice-Chair 2024/25	29/05/2024	05/06/2024	11/06/2024	17/06/2024	Decision	
	School Balances 2023/24	29/05/2024	05/06/2024	11/06/2024	17/06/2024	Discussion	Melanie Ellis
	Scheme for Financing Schools Consultation 2024/25	29/05/2024	05/06/2024	11/06/2024	17/06/2024	Decision	Melanie Ellis
	DSG Outturn 2023/24	29/05/2024	05/06/2024	11/06/2024	17/06/2024	Information	Melanie Ellis
	Vulnerable Children's Fund - Annual Report for 2023/24	29/05/2024	05/06/2024	11/06/2024	17/06/2024	Information	Nicola Ponton/Beth Cartwright
	Trade Union Facilities Time - Annual Report for 2023/24	29/05/2024	05/06/2024	11/06/2024	17/06/2024	Information	Richard Hand
	Resourced School Funding	29/05/2024	05/06/2024	11/06/2024	17/06/2024	Decision	Jane Seymour
	HNB Deficit Recovery Strategy	29/05/2024	05/06/2024	11/06/2024	17/06/2024	Information	Jane Seymour
	The DfE's Better Value SEND Programme	29/05/2024	05/06/2024	11/06/2024	17/06/2024	Information	Michelle Sancho/Jane Seymour
	Deficit Schools ( <i>standing item</i> )	29/05/2024	05/06/2024	11/06/2024	17/06/2024	Information	Melanie Ellis
	Additional HFG meeting (High Needs Block)	04/06/2024	11/06/2024				
	Additional HFG meeting (High Needs Block)	04/07/2024	11/07/2024				
Term 6	Schools' Forum Membership and Constitution from September 2024	25/06/2024		09/07/2024	15/07/2024	Decision	Jessica Bailiss
	Scheme for Financing Schools 2024/25	25/06/2024	02/07/2024	09/07/2024	15/07/2024	Decision	Melanie Ellis
	Surplus Balances 2023/24	25/06/2024	02/07/2024	09/07/2024	15/07/2024	Discussion	Melanie Ellis
	Deficit Schools ( <i>standing item</i> )	25/06/2024	02/07/2024	09/07/2024	15/07/2024	Information	Melanie Ellis
	DSG Monitoring 2024/25 Month 3			09/07/2024	15/07/2024	Information	Lisa Potts/Michelle Sancho
Term 1	Schools Funding Formula Consultation 2025/26	25/09/2024	02/10/2024	08/10/2024	14/10/2024	Decision	Melanie Ellis
	Draft De-delegations 2024/25	25/09/2024	02/10/2024	08/10/2024	14/10/2024	Decision	Lisa Potts
	DSG Monitoring 2024/25 Month 6			08/10/2024	14/10/2024	Information	Lisa Potts/Michelle Sancho
	Deficit Schools ( <i>standing item</i> )	25/09/2024	02/10/2024	08/10/2024	14/10/2024	Decision	Melanie Ellis
Term 2	Provisional DSG Funding Settlement Overview 2024/25	12/11/2024	19/11/2024	26/11/2024	02/12/2024	Discussion	Melanie Ellis
	Delivering Better Value Programme Update	12/11/2024	19/11/2024	26/11/2024	02/12/2024	Discussion	Jane Seymour
	Final De-delegations 2025/26	12/11/2024	19/11/2024	26/11/2024	02/12/2024	Decision	Lisa Potts
	Update on HNB Invest to Save Projects	12/11/2024	19/11/2024	26/11/2024	02/12/2024	Discussion	Jane Seymour/Nicola Ponton
	School Funding Formula 2025/26	12/11/2024	19/11/2024	26/11/2024	02/12/2024	Decision	Melanie Ellis
	Budgets for Additional Funds 2025/26	12/11/2024	19/11/2024	26/11/2024	02/12/2024	Decision	Melanie Ellis
	Draft Central Schools Block Budget 2025/26	12/11/2024	19/11/2024	26/11/2024	02/12/2024	Discussion	Melanie Ellis
	Draft High Needs Budget Proposals 2025/26	12/11/2024	19/11/2024	26/11/2024	02/12/2024	Discussion	Jane Seymour
Deficit Schools ( <i>standing item</i> )	12/11/2024	19/11/2024	26/11/2024	02/12/2024	Information	Melanie Ellis	
Term 3	Final DSG Funding Settlement Overview 2025/26	19/12/2024	08/01/2025	14/01/2025	20/01/2025	Discussion	Melanie Ellis
	Final School Funding 2025/26	19/12/2024	08/01/2025	14/01/2025	20/01/2025	Decision	Melanie Ellis
	High Needs Block Budget Proposals 2025/26	19/12/2024	08/01/2025	14/01/2025	20/01/2025	Decision	Jane Seymour
	Final Central School Block Budget Proposals 2025/26	19/12/2024	08/01/2025	14/01/2025	20/01/2025	Decision	Lisa Potts
	Growth Fund 2023/24	19/12/2024	08/01/2025	14/01/2025	20/01/2025	Information	Melanie Ellis
	DSG Monitoring 2024/25 Month 9			14/01/2025	20/01/2025	Information	Lisa Potts/Michelle Sancho
	Deficit Schools ( <i>standing item</i> )	19/12/2024	08/01/2025	14/01/2025	20/01/2025	Information	Melanie Ellis
Term 4	Work Programme 2025/26			04/03/2025	10/03/2025	Decision	Jessica Bailiss
	Delivering Better Value Programme Update	18/02/2025	25/02/2025	04/03/2025	10/03/2025	Discussion	Jane Seymour
	Final High Needs Block Budget 2025/26	18/02/2025	25/02/2025	04/03/2025	10/03/2025	Decision	Jane Seymour
	Final Early Years Block Budget 2025/26	18/02/2025	25/02/2025	04/03/2025	10/03/2025	Decision	Lisa Potts
	DSG Monitoring 2024/25 Month 10			04/03/2025	10/03/2025	Information	Lisa Potts/Michelle Sancho
Deficit Schools ( <i>standing item</i> )	18/02/2025	25/02/2025	04/03/2025	10/03/2025	Information	Melanie Ellis	

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## High Needs Block Budget 2024/25

**Report being considered by:** Schools Forum on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024

**Report Author:** Jane Seymour

**Item for:** Decision **By:** All Forum Members

### 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To seek approval for the proposed 2024-25 HNB Deficit budget.
- 1.2 To reach a decision on how the Schools Block transfer of 0.25% in 2024-25 should be used.

### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 To agree the HNB deficit budget for 2024-25.
- 2.2 To agree the use of Schools Block transfer for deficit reduction
- 2.3 To include the current Invest to Save initiatives in the HNB budget for now, with the caveat that their continuation will be reviewed at a later stage alongside other non statutory spend in the HNB. These projects include:
  - 0.4 post in the Early Development and Inclusion Team
  - 1FTE SEMH post
  - £90,000 to maintain I-College placements funded from 2022-23

<b>Is the Schools' Forum required to make a decision as part of this report or subsequent versions due to be considered later in the meeting cycle?</b>	
Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>

### 3. Implications and Impact Assessment

Equalities Impact:	Positive	No Impact	Negative	Commentary

<p><b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?</p>	<p>x</p>			<p>The HNB budget provides services and support to children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) including children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) so the impact on children with disabilities is positive.</p> <p>If decisions need to be taken to reduce or cease any non statutory services, this assessment will need to be reviewed.</p>
<p><b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?</p>	<p>x</p>			<p>Impact will be on children and young people with disabilities aged 0 to 25. See above.</p>
<p><b>Data Impact:</b></p>		<p>x</p>		
<p><b>Consultation and Engagement:</b></p>	<p>Council officers: Jane Seymour, Melissa Perry, Nicola Ponton. There has not been specific consultation with stakeholders about this report, but the revised draft SEND Strategy for 2023-28, which drives HNB priorities and spend, has been thoroughly coproduced with stakeholders.</p>			

#### 4. Introduction/Background

4.1 Setting a balanced budget for the High Needs Block continues to be a significant challenge. The numbers of high needs pupils and unit costs of provision has continued to rise, place funding has remained static despite increasing numbers, and local authorities have taken on responsibility for students up to the age of 25 with SEND in FE colleges without the additional funding to cover the actual cost. The number of children with EHCPs is increasing significantly, despite the threshold for an EHCP remaining the same and being applied robustly. The total number of EHCPs in January 2024 is 1534 compared to 971 in 2019, an increase of 58% in five years.

Year	WBC EHCP Total	% increase	National EHCP Total	% increase
2019	971		353,995	
2020	1034		390,109	
2021	1074		430,697	
2022	1198		473,255	
2023	1322	36%	517,049	46%
2024	1534	58%	Data not yet available	Data not yet available



- 4.2 Up until 2023, the percentage increase in EHCPs in West Berkshire was lower than the national average increase since 2019; 36% increase compared to 46% increase nationally. A comparison with the national level of increase in EHCPs is not yet available for 2024.
- 4.3 The pressure for additional EHCPs has been exacerbated by the Covid pandemic which has caused some children to fall further behind, resulting in more EHC requests. The pandemic has also exacerbated a pre-existing issue with rising incidence of Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA).
- 4.4 Up until 2016-17, West Berkshire was setting a balanced high needs budget. Since then, the budget has been under pressure on an annual basis. A decision was made to set a deficit budget for the first time in 2016/17 and the budget has continued to be overspent each year since that time. The table below sets out the deficit HNB budgets set over the last 8 years:

<b>Financial year</b>	<b>HNB Allocation</b>	<b>Block transfer</b>	<b>Total HNB Deficit Budget set</b>	<b>Difference between budget set and HNB allocation</b>
<b>16/17</b>	-18,118,428	-858,000	21,584,180	2,607,752
<b>17/18</b>	-20,056,233	0	20,312,740	256,507
<b>18/19</b>	-19,958,537	27,000	20,041,180	109,643
<b>19/20</b>	-20,100,067	0	21,748,000	1,647,933
<b>20/21</b>	-21,691,304	-263,285	23,114,920	1,160,331
<b>21/22</b>	-23,631,318	-548,568	25,479,384	1,299,498
<b>22/23</b>	-26,282,076	-300,166	28,241,087	1,658,845
<b>23/24</b>	-28,495,697	0	31,587,958	3,092,261

- 4.5 The pressure on the High Needs Block is a national issue, and many local authorities have significant overspends and have also set deficit budgets. 20 Local Authorities with the highest level of overspend are now part of the Government's Safety Valve Programme. A further 55 Local Authorities are part of the Government's Delivering Better Value (DBV) Programme. There are 3 tranches to this programme; West Berkshire is in the third tranche. The DBV programme started in West Berkshire in late summer 2023. A DBV bid for £999,996 was made in December 2023, with funding expected to be released in April 2024 if the bid is agreed. This is one off funding only for 2024-25, although there may be some flexibility to carry forward funds to 2025-26. The DBV programme is the subject of a separate report to the HFG / Schools Forum.
- 4.6 The Local Authority's statutory duties for children with SEND are effectively open ended in that if a child requires an EHC Plan it must be provided regardless of budgetary constraints. Criteria for initiating an Education, Health and Care assessment are robustly applied by the SEN Panel (which has Headteacher representation). However, despite robust management of demand, the number of children with EHCPs continues to rise. The total number of EHCPs in January 2024 is 1534 compared to 972 in 2019, a rise of 58% in five years. A large proportion of this increase in EHCPs is in specialist placements rather than mainstream schools, which is primarily what is driving the HNB budget pressure.

- 4.7 The creation of more local provision for children with SEMH and autism has alleviated some pressures, as local maintained provision is more cost effective than independent and non-maintained provision. The Castle@Theale provision has 18 children on roll, rising to 24 by September 2024 and to its full capacity of 42 by 2027. Every one of these children would have needed to be placed in a non-maintained or independent special. The new Kennet Valley SEMH/Autism provision will open in September 2024 with 6 children, rising to 12 by 2025. It is expected that a further 12 place primary SEMH provision in the west of the Authority will be established within the next five years based upon identified need.
- 4.8 It is critical that mainstream schools receive support to maintain more children with SEND in mainstream settings. This includes children with SEMH and autism. There has been some success in avoiding specialist placements through initiatives such as Therapeutic Thinking, the enhancement of the Autism Team and the creation of an EBSA Team. The (due to be) refreshed SEND Strategy for 2024-29 is expected to propose further measures to increase capacity in mainstream schools, The DBV Programme will include initiatives to support inclusive practice in mainstream schools. (See Section 5 of this report below)
- 4.9 Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5 in Appendix A show where the predicted 2024-25 costs exceed 2023-24 budgets.
- 4.10 The current position on the HNB budget for 2023-24 and 2024-25 is set out in Table 1 in paragraph 6.1 below. In summary, the total net shortfall in the 2024-25 HNB budget, is **£17,784,394**. This includes a predicted 23/24 overspend of £4,793,622 and carried forward overspends of £5,070,384 from previous years, totalling £9,864,006 in overspends. Without the carried forward overspends, the shortfall in 24-25 would be **£7,920,388**, ie. the predicted budget demand for 24-25 exceeds the HNB allocation by this amount.
- 4.11 The increase in the estimated budget requirement for 24-25 relates mainly to the following costs:
- Independent and non-maintained school placements – increased budget requirement of **£2,068,880**
  - Mainstream EHCP top ups – increased budget requirement of **£1,272,000**
  - Resourced and academy resourced provision top ups – increased budget requirement of **£1,049,410** (including new resourced units at Westwood Farm and Kennet Valley)
  - FE College top ups – increased budget requirement of **£253,000**
  - Castle@Theale planned increase in numbers in 2024 – increased budget requirement of **£531,881**
  - PRU - increased budget requirement of - **£265,080**
- 4.12 Details of the services paid for from the high needs budget and the corresponding budget information are set out in Appendix A, together with an explanation of the reasons for budget increases.

## 5. Impact of Delivering Better Value Programme

- 5.1 The Council has submitted its bid for £999,996 from the Delivering Better Value Programme in 2024-25. Activity within the proposed DBV Programme will focus on four main areas:

### **Financial Sustainability**

The bid includes a SEND strategic Commissioner and SEND commissioning and Placement Officers who will provide more capacity to negotiate and review placement costs in all non-mainstream placements. This work will also involve an EHCP banding review.

### **Gap analysis / promotion of the SEND Local Offer**

This work strand will focus on further gap analysis, building on the SEND Review already undertaken and the DBV diagnostic exercise, to identify any additional gaps which are impacting on the demand for EHCPs and specialist placements. It will also improve the presentation and content of the Local Offer so that schools, parents and other agencies can more easily access information about services which are ordinarily available to them and how to access them.

### **Supporting Inclusive Practice**

There will be three key aspects to this work strand. All of these areas of activity will be coproduced with schools, parents and other agencies:

- Enhancing emotional / mental health support for children in mainstream schools, which has been identified as a gap leading to placement breakdown. One area of focus will be children who are, or are at risk of becoming, emotionally based school avoidant.
- Improving the multi-disciplinary team response to children who require intervention and who may be at risk of placement breakdown, in order to achieve a swifter and more joined up response. Funding will enhance existing support services.
- Improving transition from early years settings to primary school and from primary to secondary school. These transition points have been identified as key triggers for new EHCPs and for specialist placements. We build on existing good practice and develop protocols / expectations for transition, as well as funding which schools will be able to access (without an EHCP) to support transition.

### **Sufficiency Planning**

This work will build on the 2023 SEND SCAP to develop a long-term sufficiency plan to ensure that development including new places in our maintained special schools, new MLD/SLD provisions in mainstream schools and new SEMH/Autism provision will be adequate to meet demand. A data analyst post will support this work.

- 5.2 The DBV Programme will be led by the SEND Strategic Commissioner / DBV Lead, supported by Programme resource.

### 5.3 DBV Impact on HNB Spend

The prediction of spend produced by DBV consultants, Newton, by the end of 24-25, is £36 million, assuming no mitigating action is taken. The actual predicted spend in 24-25 is £35.8 million with existing mitigation already in place.

5.4 Newton estimate that without any additional and significant mitigation the spend by the end of 25-26 would be c.£40 million This would equate to an overspend on the HNB equivalent to 37.2% of the HNB (based on 24-25 HNB allocation).

5.5 Newton estimate that with mitigations (including existing mitigations plus DBV mitigations) the spend will be £37.9 million by the end of 25-26. This will still be higher than the HNB budget, but with a reduced in year deficit of £2.1 million.

5.6 By the end of 27-28 Newton estimate that mitigated spend will be £42.3 million compared to unmitigated spend of £48.7M, representing cost avoidance of £6.4 million.

5.7 The reduction in spend anticipated through the DBV Programme will be achieved through

- More children's needs being met without EHCPs
- More children with EHCPs having their needs met in mainstream schools
- More children with EHCPs having their needs met in local maintained specialist provision rather than in independent and non-maintained special schools.
- Reduced unit costs of specialist placements achieved through commissioning and market management.

## 6. Supporting Information

6.1 The latest estimate of expenditure in the High Needs Block budget for both 2023/24 and 2024/25 is set out in Table 1. The figures are based on current and anticipated numbers of high needs pupils.

<b>TABLE 1</b>	<b>2023/24 Budget £</b>	<b>2023/24 Forecast £</b>	<b>2024/25 Estimate £</b>
Place Funding	6,472,884	6,485,694	6,466,516
Top Up Funding	19,154,710	20,960,580	24,495,604
PRU Funding (top ups only)	1,920,120	2,065,510	2,185,200
Other Statutory Services	2,154,090	2,027,430	2,334,909
Non-Statutory Services	1,664,496	1,573,630	1,712,992
Support Service Recharges	204,160	176,475	213,480
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>31,570,460</b>	<b>33,035,585</b>	<b>37,246,955</b>
HNB DSG Allocation	-28,495,697	-28,495,697	-29,153,266
0.25% Schools Block Transfer	0	0	-335,047
In year overspend	3,074,763	4,793,622	7,920,388
HNB DSG Overspend from previous years	5,070,384	5,070,384	9,864,006
<b>Total cumulative deficit</b>	<b>8,145,147</b>	<b>9,864,006</b>	<b>17,784,394</b>

6.2 Appendix A sets out the detail of the budgets included within the High Needs Block, and the reasons for the pressure on the 2024-25 HNB budget.

## 7. Proposals

7.1 To agree the HNB deficit budget for 2024-25 including the breakdown by cost centre as set out in Appendix A.

7.2 To agree the use of 0.25% Schools Block transfer to reduce the deficit.

7.3 To continue to address the HNB overspend through regular extraordinary meetings of the Heads Funding Group.

## 8. Conclusion

8.1 The HNB continues to be under considerable pressure for the reasons set out in this report, due to increased demand for independent and non-maintained special school placements and increased EHCPs in mainstream schools. The DBV programme will reduce the rate at which HNB spend is increasing but will not bring it in line with the HNB budget. Further work is currently being undertaken to identify ways in which spend can be brought in line with budget by 2028. In the interim, the HFG / Schools Forum is asked to approve a deficit HNB budget as set out in this report.

## 9. Appendices

9.1 Appendix A – High Needs Budget Detail

9.2 Appendix B – Report on Invest to Save Initiatives for HFG / Schools Forum November 2023

## Appendix A

### High Needs Budget Detail

#### 1. PLACE FUNDING – STATUTORY

- 1.1 Place funding is agreed by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and has to be passed on to the institution, forming their base budget. Academy and FE places are included in the initial HNB allocation but the agreed place numbers are then deducted and paid to the institution direct (DSG top slice).
- 1.2 The ESFA will not fund any overall increases to places. If additional places are needed in academies or FE colleges, a request can be made to the ESFA. However, any additional places agreed would be top sliced from West Berkshire's HNB allocation in 2023-24; no additional funding is made available.
- 1.3 As it is not possible to request increased planned place funding for maintained schools, any increase in place funding needed which is over and above the number of places set out below has been allowed for in the relevant top up budgets, creating additional pressure on those budgets. The actual numbers on roll at The Castle and Brookfields Schools (including children from other Local Authorities) are 163 and 230 respectively, a total of 393. West Berkshire children attending The Castle and Brookfields number 155 and 118 respectively, a total of 273.

TABLE 1 - Place Funding Budget	2023/24 Budget			2024/25 Estimated Budget		
	No. of Places	£	Current No. of Pupils	Proposed No. of Places	£	Difference in number
Special Schools pre 16 (90540) –	286	2,860,000	393	286	2,860,000	0
Special Schools post 16 (90546) –	79	790,000		79	790,000	0
Resource Units Maintained – pre 16 (90584)	35	242,000	33	35	242,000	0
Special Schools and PRU Teachers Pay and Pension		324,860	n/a		332,516	0
Resource Units Academies – pre 16 (DSG top slice)	102	630,834	112	97	610,000	-5
Mainstream Maintained – post 16 (90551)	6	36,000	16	6	36,000	0
Mainstream Academies – post 16 (DSG top slice)	30	168,000	32	27	162,000	-3
Further Education	129	774,000		129	774,000	0
PRU Place Funding (90320)	66	660,000	84	66	660,000	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>733</b>	<b>6,485,694</b>		<b>725</b>	<b>6,466,516</b>	<b>-8</b>

## 2. TOP UP FUNDING – STATUTORY

2.1 Top up funding is paid to the institutions where we are placing pupils who live in West Berkshire (we do not pay our institutions top up funding for pupils who live outside West Berkshire). **Table 2** shows the budget and forecast for 2023/24 and the estimate for 2024/25.

TABLE 2 Top Up Budgets	2022/23 Budget		2023/24 Budget			2024/25	Difference 23/24 budget & 24/25 prediction
	Budget £	Outturn £	Budget £	Forecast £ (Month 9)	Over/ (under) £	Estimate £	
Special Schools Maintained (90539)	4,924,490	5,233,228	5,950,060	5,702,270	-247,790	6,218,339	+268,279
Non WBC special schools (90548)	620,810	524,418	430,660	432,620	1,960	215,295	-215,365
Non WBC free schools (90554)	331,700	535,617	536,480	685,870	149,390	618,116	+81,636
Resource Units Maintained (90617)	314,000	317,407	320,630	660,140	339,510	1,095,932	+775,302
Resource Units Academies (90026)	1,000,000	993,556	985,450	1,276,100	290,650	1,259,558	+274,108
Resource Units Non WBC (90618)	180,640	131,516	119,850	105,640	-14,210	105,638	-14,212
Mainstream Maintained (90621)	850,000	1,182,597	1,142,580	1,668,790	526,210	1,821,000	+678,420
Mainstream Academies (90622)	510,000	640,595	548,920	914,950	366,030	1,142,500	+593,580
Mainstream Non WBC (90624)	161,780	169,046	180,000	147,280	-32,720	140,385	-39,615
Non Maintained Special Schools (90575)	1,114,000	875,863	1,177,630	1,091,690	-85,940	1,423,548	+245,918
Independent Special Schools (90579)	4,656,200	3,683,566	5,566,450	5,413,090	-153,360	7,389,412	+1,822,962
Further Education (90580)	1,016,940	1,149,072	1,212,000	1,674,370	462,370	1,465,000	+253,000
Disproportionate HN Pupils (90627)	42,000	86,321	65,000	200,000	135,000	150,000	+85,000
New SEMH Provision at Theale	775,390	765,987	919,000	987,770	68,770	1,450,881	+531,881
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16,497,950</b>	<b>16,288,789</b>	<b>19,154,710</b>	<b>20,960,580</b>	<b>1,805,870</b>	<b>24,495,604</b>	<b>5,340,894</b>

2.2 There will be savings in the budgets for non West Berkshire special schools, non West Berkshire resourced schools and non West Berkshire mainstream schools in 2024-5. The reason for the reduction in costs of non West Berkshire special and

resourced provisions is that we have reduced access to these placements due to increasing demand in the home Authorities.

2.3 There is a saving in the maintained special school budget as The Castle and Brookfields were not able to admit as many new pupils in 2023 as in previous years due to limitations on capacity, although demand remains very high and this has impacted on the mainstream resourced top up budget (creation of new SEND resource at Westwood Farm school) and also on the independent and non maintained special school budgets as some children waiting for special school places have needed to be placed externally.

2.4 However, top up budgets for mainstream schools, resourced schools, independent and non maintained special schools and FE colleges are under pressure for reasons set out below.

2.5 The predictions of cost for specialist placements in 2024-25 take in to account existing pupils, additional known pupils whose needs can no longer be met in local schools, together with some cases which are due to go to the SEND Tribunal. It is not possible to predict all pupils who may need placements in 2024-25.

#### 2.6 **Independent special schools and non maintained special schools**

The demand for independent and non maintained school placements for children with autism and SEMH continues to rise. There is a national shortage of placements of this type which has meant that we have had several children waiting for placements for some time. Recently, four independent schools for children with these needs have opened in the West Berkshire area: Mile House, The Grange, Haywards Farm and Oaklands. This has meant that children who had already been waiting for a place, or who would previously have had to wait for a place, have all been offered placements, which is positive in terms of meeting those children's needs, but has had a significant impact on the budget. Another issue affecting this budget is the shortage of places at The Castle and Brookfields. Most children waiting for a place remain in their mainstream schools, but in some cases it has been necessary to place children in non maintained or independent special schools. An additional factor is the high level of fee increases on independent and non maintained specialist placements.

#### 2.7 **Mainstream top ups (maintained and academies)**

Due to pressures on the HNB, the value of EHCP funding bands for children in mainstream schools has not been increased for several years. This has resulted in a situation whereby the funding no longer delivers the level of support it should deliver and schools either have to supplement the funding from their own budgets or children receive less support than they should. This is increasingly being raised as a concern by Headteachers and parents and it is arguably also contributing to the demand for specialist placements, as EHCPs in mainstream are being under funded. The increase in cost includes a proposed uplift in banding values by 5%, as well as an increase in EHCPs in mainstream schools.

#### 2.8 **Maintained and academy resourced unit top ups**

The costs of resourced provision will be greater in 2024-25 for two reasons, firstly the creation of new resourced provision and secondly the need to review banding values for HI and PD resourced provision. A new SEND Resource was set up at Westwood Farm School in September 2023. This was created because the number of children with very complex SEND reaching statutory school age and requiring places at



Castle or Brookfields exceeded the number of places available. The unit costs of this provision are relatively high as the children have such complex needs. In addition, revenue funding is needed in 2024-25 for the new SEMH/Autism provision at Kennet Valley which opens in September 2024. Initial set up costs for this provision have been built into the budget, in addition to the revenue budget. The revised bandings for HI and PD resourced provisions, previously agreed by HFG and Schools Forum, have also been included in the budget.

### 2.9 Free special schools

The free special schools used by West Berkshire Council are primarily schools for children with autism. These schools tend to be used for children whose needs cannot be met by our own resourced ASD provision in mainstream schools. Fees are generally lower than those of independent special schools.

### 2.10 Further Education

The costs of FE placements for students with SEND in 2023-24 were estimated for budgeting purposes in spring 2023 and an assumption was made that numbers of young people with EHCPs moving in to or remaining at college would reflect patterns in previous years. However, it is not possible to finalise FE numbers until the autumn of each year and this year numbers were higher than anticipated. This has been reflected in the predicted budget for 24-25.

### 2.11 Castle@Theale Secondary SEMH Provision

Castle@Theale costs will increase in 2024-25 as a further 6 pupils will be admitted. However, the provision is very cost effective compared to alternatives in the independent sector and unit costs are continuing to reduce as the provision fills up.

## 3. PUPIL REFERRAL UNITS (PRU) – STATUTORY

3.1 **Table 3** shows the budgets for PRU top ups.

TABLE 3 PRU Budgets	2022/23 Budget		2023/24 Budget			2024/25	Difference 23/24 budget & 24/25 prediction
	Budget £	Outturn £	Budget £	Forecast £ (Month 9)	Over/ (under) £	Estimate £	
PRU Top Up Funding (90625)	830,140	902,512	999,700	1,085,000	85,300	1,139,400	+139,700
PRU EHCP SEMH Placements (90628)	767,020	927,182	920,420	980,510	60,090	1,045,800	+125,380
Non WBC PRU Top Up Funding (90626)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,597,160</b>	<b>1,829,694</b>	<b>1,920,120</b>	<b>2,065,510</b>	<b>145,390</b>	<b>2,185,200</b>	<b>+265,080</b>

3.2 The current year budget was based on the previous year's forecast. Schools Forum agreed to a 50% contribution from schools for pupils that they placed. Heads have requested that this contribution remains. Permanent exclusions are funded 100% by

the High Needs Block less the average pupil led funding contribution recovered from schools. The estimate for 24/25 PRU Top Up Funding is based on the profile of pupils at iCollege in the summer term.

- 3.3 The number of pupils with EHCPs being placed in PRUs is increasing as this can be an appropriate and cost effective provision for some young people if they are not able to remain in their mainstream schools. A new provision for pupils with EHCPs was set up in autumn 2019, The Pod, and a further Pod Plus provision was set up in September 2021. These placements are usually more cost effective than independent and non-maintained special school placements. The budget increase includes provision for additional planned places not funded by the ESFA.
- 3.4 A request for additional funding to increase the number of places available at ICollege was agreed by School Funding Forum for financial year 2023-24, this included extending provision at Pod Plus to 18 at the Parson Down Infant site. In addition, 12 places for an intervention provision for Year 7 & 8 students at The Moorside Centre was agreed. Unfortunately, as premises were unable to be agreed in time for staff recruitment this provision was unable to start until January 2024 leading to an underspend in cost centre 90628.

#### 4. OTHER STATUTORY SERVICES

4.1 **Table 4** details the budgets for other statutory services.

TABLE 4 Other Statutory Services	2022/23 Budget		2023/24 Budget			2024/25	Difference 23/24 budget & 24/25 prediction
	Budget £	Outturn £	Budget £	Forecast £ (Month 9)	Over/ (under) £	Estimate £	
Applied Behaviour Analysis (90240)	167,910	246,773	226,660	284,800	58,140	270,416	+43,756
Sensory Impairment (90290)	243,900	250,722	282,340	260,790	-21,550	296,457	+14,117
SEN Commissioned Provision (90577) Engaging Potential	584,480	622,999	636,220	633,250	-2,970	650,834	+14,614
Equipment for SEN Pupils (90565)	15,000	16,231	15,000	15,000	0	15,000	0
Therapy Services (90295)	323,820	329,133	469,700	494,020	24,320	526,082	+56,382
Elective home Education Monitoring (90288)	29,310	26,123	34,320	36,620	2,300	49,480	+15,160
Medical Home Tuition (90282)	386,090	202,609	388,730	216,330	-172,400	381,690	-7,040
Hospital Tuition (90610)	39,950	34,000	36,180	36,180	0	36,180	0
SEND Strategy (DSG) (90281)	60,740	56,157	64,940	50,440	-14,500	69,230	+4,290
Alternative Provision Co-ordinator	0	0	0	0	0	39,540	+39,540
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,851,200</b>	<b>1,784,747</b>	<b>2,154,090</b>	<b>2,027,430</b>	<b>-126,660</b>	<b>2,334,909</b>	<b>+180,819</b>

#### 4.2 **Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) / Personal Budgets**

4.2.1 This budget historically supported a small number of children with EHC Plans for whom the Authority has agreed an ABA programme. ABA is an intensive intervention programme for children with autism which aims to modify behaviours which are typical of ASD in order to allow children to function more successfully in school and in society. There are now few ABA programmes funded and this budget (which will be renamed) supports mainly the costs of children with EHC Plans accessing other bespoke packages where this is the most appropriate and cost effective way of meeting their needs, including SEN Personal Budgets. This budget needs to increase due to increasing numbers of children with SEN Personal Budgets. However, it should be noted that SEN Personal Budgets can be a very cost effective alternative to non-maintained and independent special schools, in particular for children who are emotionally based school avoiders, for whom they are increasingly being requested by parents.

#### 4.3 **Sensory Impairment**

4.3.1 Support for children with hearing, visual and multi-sensory impairments is purchased from the Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service. This includes support from qualified teachers of HI and VI, audiology and mobility support. The budget will need to be higher next year due to salary increases.

#### 4.4 **Engaging Potential**

4.4.1 Engaging Potential is an independent special school commissioned to provide alternative educational packages for 14 young people in Key Stage 4. Students placed at Engaging Potential are those who have EHC Plans for social, emotional and mental health difficulties and whose needs cannot be met in any other provision. This can include young people who have been excluded from specialist SEMH schools. An in year increase of approximately £33K was agreed to this contract in 22-23 due to costings not having been revised for some years. The contract ended in August 2023, with the option to extend for a further two years. The contract has been extended for two years at an increased cost of £651,899 per annum, reflecting the need for increased staff ratios and enhanced salaries to address retention and recruitment issues. Premises costs have been added to the contract cost. Even at the higher cost for 2024-25, the unit cost of a place at £48,279 represents good value for money compared to other independent schools for SEMH.

#### 4.5 **Equipment for SEN Pupils**

4.5.1 This budget is used to fund large items of equipment such as specialist chairs and communication aids for pupils with EHC Plans. The budget has been reduced a number of times in previous HNB savings programmes and was removed entirely in 2018-19 on the basis that schools would meet these costs. However, this created a pressure for nurseries as they do not have delegated SEN budgets, and for resourced schools which have a disproportionate number of children with specialist equipment needs. It was agreed in 2018-19 that a budget of £10,000 would be made available to meet these needs. In 2019-20 it was agreed that the budget should be increased again to £15,000 as demand for equipment for children in nurseries and resourced schools was increasing. It is recommended that the budget stays the same for 2024-25.

#### **4.6 Therapy Services (Contract with Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust)**

4.6.1 The therapy services budget covers the costs for children with SEND who have speech and language therapy or occupational therapy or physiotherapy written in to their EHC Plans as an educational need.

4.6.2 Therapy services are provided by the Authority solely to children who have the need for a service stipulated and quantified in their EHC Plan. It is a statutory duty for the Local Authority to provide these therapies in these circumstances. The service is commissioned from the Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust.

4.6.3 The HFG / Schools Forum will be aware from previous reports that this service was retendered in April 2023 and is now jointly commissioned with Reading Borough Council and Wokingham District Council. This exercise resulted in an increase in cost due to higher numbers of children with therapies written in to their EHCPs as an educational need (in line with generally higher numbers of children with EHCPs), the need to provide therapies for The Castle@Theale and the need to provide capacity for therapists to assist the Local Authority in defending cases which go to the SEND Tribunal.

4.6.3 In addition, costs in this budget have risen because of the need to provide access to therapies in the new Westwood Farm SEND Resource and in the new SEMH Resource at Kennet Valley.

#### **4.7 Elective Home Education (EHE) Monitoring**

4.7.1 There is a statutory duty for Local Authorities to monitor arrangements for EHE made by parents and ensure that all pupils are receiving suitable education. The EHE monitoring sits within the Education Welfare and Safeguarding Service. The Elective Home Education Officer is 0.6fte.

EHE numbers have not reduced (currently 255 pupils are EHE) and whilst the prediction was that once schools opened post COVID that the numbers would drop, this has not been the case nationally nor locally. To manage these cases effectively, engage with the EHE community more effectively, communicate with schools to prevent off-rolling and ensure that pupils are receiving an effective and suitable education the EHE Officer role must increase to full time. This will cost an additional £24,820

#### **4.8 Medical Tuition Service**

4.8.1 The Medical Tuition Service (previously Home Tuition Service) is a statutory service providing home tuition to children with medical conditions and illness that prevent them accessing full-time school. This budget was increased in 2022-23 due to the need to ensure that the Local Authority's duties towards children who cannot attend school for health reasons are fully met. Savings this year are based on recruitment delays. The increase in provision to meet section 19 pupils falls within this service currently and is also on the rise due to increasing mental health issues for our children and young people and prolonged waiting lists for support. Most cases are related to ASD, anxiety and mental health preventing access to school.

4.8.2 Changes have been made to the way in which we meet demand and reduce costs within the service creating an underspend this financial year. The year has been spent moving casual staff on permanent contracts and assessing need which has changed. With the emphasis on EHCP pupils and highly anxious pupils to support, the work not

only includes 'teaching' but re-engaging and integration, the skills for which have not been within the team. We have recruited a Deputy SENCO who qualifies in March and are buying in Emotional Health support to increase the packages of support available to pupils and encourage reintegration to school.

#### 4.9 Hospital Tuition

4.9.1 The Local Authority is obliged to pay the educational element of specialist hospital placements, usually for severe mental health issues. These placements are decided by NHS colleagues and we have no influence over the placement or duration of stay. As numbers and costs are impossible to predict, it is proposed that the 2024-25 budget remains the same as 2023-24. Between December and April we will be carrying out a piece of work in this area to assess the quality of education provision in our hospital Tier 4 placements and to build better working relationships and ensure value for money.

#### 4.10 SEND Strategy Officer

4.10.1 In 2019-20 the Schools Forum agreed to fund a SEND Strategy Officer for three years initially to support implementation of the SEND Strategy 2018-23. Agreement was given by the Schools Forum in October 2020 that this post could be made permanent in order to attract and retain candidates of a suitable calibre.

#### 4.11 Alternative Provision / EOTAS Coordinator

4.11.1 It is proposed that an additional post of Alternative Provision / EOTAS Coordinator is funded in 24-25 (part year costs shown from September 2024) in order to reduce pressure for specialist placements for children who have ceased attending school due to EBSA. Currently EBSA is a key driver of spend on independent specialist placements. This post would provide capacity to set up and oversee alternative packages of education where this is an appropriate alternative to a specialist placement. In many cases a package of support would meet with parental preference, potentially meet the child's needs better than a school placement and could be considerably more cost effective. The only current barrier to such arrangements is lack of capacity to organise packages and ensure they are suitably monitored.

### 5 NON-STATUTORY Services

5.1 **Table 5** details the non-statutory service budgets for 2023-24, predicted outturn, and estimates for 2024-25.

5.2 The table shows the budget for these services in 2024-25 assuming that the services continue and there are no changes to staffing levels. However, consideration is currently being given to funding of non statutory services by officers and members of the Heads Funding Group. Should decisions be made to reduce or cease any non statutory services, the 2024-25 HNB budget will be adjusted accordingly.

5.3 Table 5 currently includes ongoing funding for the "invest to save" initiatives agreed in 2022-23 and rolled forward in to 2023-24, for an additional 0.4 teacher in the EDIT Team, an additional SEMH practitioner and extra I-College places. These projects will be considered as part of the review of non statutory services.

<b>TABLE 5</b>	<b>2022/23 Budget</b>		<b>2023/24 Budget</b>			<b>2024/25</b>	
<b>Non Statutory Services</b>	<b>Budget £</b>	<b>Outturn £</b>	<b>Budget £</b>	<b>Forecast £ (Month 9)</b>	<b>Over/ (under) £</b>	<b>Estimate £</b>	<b>Difference 23/24 budget &amp; 24/25 prediction</b>
Language and Literacy Centres LALs (90555)	135,740	187,553	161,690	161,690	0	171,840	+10,150
Specialist Inclusion Support Service (90585)	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	0	50,000	0
PRU Outreach Service (90582)	61,200	61,200	61,200	61,200	0	61,200	0
Cognition and Learning Team(90280)	334,140	328,257	346,350	351,350	5,000	363,830	+17,480
ASD Advisory Service incl HLTA Support (90830)	235,640	215,356	233,190	237,190	4,000	248,800	+15,610
ASD Fund - Additional support (90830)	52,690	52,690	52,690	52,690	0	52,690	0
Therapeutic Thinking post (90372)	55,900	52,457	58,590	42,000	-16,590	69,330	+10,740
Vulnerable Children (90961)	179,400	178,980	179,400	124,400	-55,000	179,400	0
Early Development and Inclusion Team (90287)	62,505	60,273	64,040	65,600	1,560	68,950	+4,910
Dingley's Promise (90581)	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	0	35,000	+5,000
Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) (WBC led)	123,840	123,879	134,840	125,250	-9,590	139,240	+4,400
Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) (school led)	110,966	99,864	110,966	110,966	0	110,966	0
<b>Invest to save projects. 2022-23</b>							
0.4fte additional support EDIT team	26,390	26,390	26,390	26,390	0	28,186	1,796
0.4fte additional support Speech and Language	31,324	7,665	23,660	12,290	-11,370	0	-23,660
SEMH Practitioner	41,490	14,497	41,490	32,620	-8,870	43,560	2,070
Extension of i-college	90,000	0	90,000	90,000	0	90,000	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,621,225</b>	<b>1,489,061</b>	<b>1,664,496</b>	<b>1,573,630</b>	<b>-90,866</b>	<b>1,712,992</b>	<b>48,496</b>

## 5.4 Language and Literacy Centres (LALs)

5.4.1 The LALs provide 48 places per year for Year 5 students who have persistent difficulties with literacy and need an intensive programme delivered by a teacher qualified in specific literacy difficulties.

5.4.2 The increase proposed to the LAL budgets relates to increases in salary costs.

## 5.5 Specialist Inclusion Support Service

5.5.1 This service provides outreach support from West Berkshire's special schools to mainstream schools to support the inclusion of children with learning and complex needs in their local mainstream schools.

5.5.2 This budget has been subject to reductions in the previous financial years with the special schools providing the service absorbing the cost.

## 5.6 PRU Outreach

5.7.1 The PRU Outreach Service offers consultancy / outreach support mainly to students who have been attending the iCollege and are starting to attend a mainstream school. Schools may request outreach for any pupil causing concern but it is dependent on capacity.

## 5.7 Cognition and Learning Team

5.7.1 The Cognition and Learning Team (CALT) provides advice, support and training to mainstream schools to help them to meet the needs of children with SEN. Staff are experienced SENCOs with higher level SEN qualifications.

5.7.2 Many primary schools are reliant on this service to supplement their own SEN provision and expertise, especially schools where the Head has to act as SENCO or where there is an inexperienced SENCO.

5.7.3 This is a partially traded service. All schools receive a small amount of free core service, but the majority of support now has to be purchased by schools.

5.7.4 The additional cost represents teachers' salary increases, pension and NI.

## 5.8 Autism Team

5.8.1 The Autism Team provides advice, support and training for mainstream schools on meeting the needs of children with Autism. The purpose of the service is to enable children with autism to be successfully included in mainstream schools wherever possible.

5.8.2 The context for this service is vastly increasing numbers of children with ASD diagnoses and mainstream schools having more and more difficulty meeting the needs of these children. The majority of our placements in non-West Berkshire special schools, independent special schools and non-maintained special schools are for children with autism.

5.8.3 The increase in cost represents teachers' salary increases, pension and NI.

## 5.9 Vulnerable Children

5.9.1 The Vulnerable Children Fund is a budget used to help schools support their most vulnerable pupils on an emergency, unpredicted or short term basis.

5.9.2 The budget was gradually reduced from £120K over a number of years. This has always been a well used resource that helps schools support vulnerable pupils with complex needs.

5.9.3 It was agreed in 2020-21 that this budget would be increased, as an invest to save initiative, in order to support the roll out of Therapeutic Thinking in West Berkshire schools. This increase was further extended in 2021-22 and 2022-23 and was agreed as a permanent addition to the HNB budget, along with the Therapeutic Thinking post.

## 5.10 Early Development and Inclusion Team

5.10.1 The service comprises of 1.8 teachers who are specialists in early years and SEND. Children under 5 who are identified by Health professionals as having significant SEND are referred to this service. Staff initially visit children in their homes (if they are not yet in an early years setting) in order to promote their educational development and model strategies and resources for parents to use to support their child's progress.

5.10.2 EDIT teachers also assist with the transition to early years settings and schools, providing support and training for staff to help them to meet the child's needs, and continuing to visit for a period of time to provide ongoing support and advice. They also help to coordinate support which the family is receiving from other professionals.

5.10.3 The service has been reduced in size in recent years from 3.4 to 1.8 staff. The service has a waiting list due to increased demand and reduced capacity.

5.10.4 An additional 0.4 post was agreed as an invest to save initiative in 2022-23 and carried forward to 2023-24. The impact of the additional resource is covered in Appendix B.

## 5.11 Dingley's Promise

5.11.1 Dingley's Promise is a charitable organisation which provides Ofsted registered early years education for children under 5 with SEND in West Berkshire, Reading and Wokingham. It is the only specialist early years SEND setting in the private, voluntary and independent early years sector in West Berkshire. It provides an alternative to mainstream early years settings, where experience and expertise in SEND can vary greatly. Parents are able to take up their early years entitlement at Dingley's Promise, rather than at a mainstream early years setting, if they wish. However, Dingley's Promise are only able to claim the standard hourly rate for providing the early years entitlement as mainstream settings, in spite of offering specialist provision, higher ratios and more one to one support.



- 5.11.2 In 2017-18, the service was running at a loss and there was a risk it would cease to be viable in this area without some Council funding. It was agreed in 2018-19 that a grant of £30,000 would be made to Dingley's Promise in order to maintain the service in this area.
- 5.11.13 Dingley's Promise has made a request for additional resources due to ongoing viability issues as a result of reduced charitable income and some large grants coming to an end. Their annual running costs are £240,000 and they receive £100,000 in income from the Council including early years place funding, funding for one to one support for individual children and the £30,000 annual grant from the HNB. The balance of £140,000 has to come from fund raising. The organisation has reported reduced ability to achieve income through fund raising as well as an anticipated reduction in income in 2024-25 due to a large Children in Need grant coming to an end. The West Berkshire centre is running at a loss and effectively being subsidised by centres in other areas.
- 5.11.14 Dingley's Promise have negotiated with the Greenham Trust that if the Council increases its grant, Greenham Trust will match fund the increase and the existing £30,000 grant. This has been verified by Greenham Common Trust who have committed to taking this to their board for approval in March 2024.
- 5.11.15 It is therefore proposed that the grant is increased from £30,000 to £35,000. This will trigger £35,000 in match funding from the Greenham Trust, increasing Dingley's Promise's income in 2024-25 by £40,000 in total. Dingley's Promise provides an essential service in West Berkshire for children under five with very complex needs. If the service ceased to be viable, there would be an increase in demand for maintained special school places, which are already in short supply, and there could be increased pressure for non maintained / independent special school placements.

## **5.12 Invest to Save projects**

- 5.12.1 Invest to Save projects in 2022-23, rolled forward to 2023-24, included a 0.4 FTE post in the EDIT Team, the early years training project, an SEMH practitioner and PRU places. The impact of these projects has been set out in a previous report to the HFG / Schools Forum. See Appendix B.
- 5.12.2 These projects have been included in the budget but It is proposed that their continuation is considered as part of the review of funding of non statutory services.

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## Invest to Save initiatives 2022–23 Update

**Report being considered by:** Schools' Forum on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023

**Report Author:** Jane Seymour / Nicola Ponton

**Item for:** Decision **By:** All Forum Members

### 1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To provide an update on the Invest to Save initiatives agreed in 2022-23 and seek permanent funding within the HNB.

### 2. Recommendation

1.1 That permanent funding in the HNB is agreed for the 0.4 EDIT teacher, the additional 1.0FTE SEMH worker and the additional I-College places agreed as invest to save initiatives in 2022-23.

Is the Schools' Forum required to make a decision as part of this report or subsequent versions due to be considered later in the meeting cycle?	
Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>

### 3. Implications and Impact Assessment

Equalities Impact:	Positive	No Impact	Negative	Commentary
	<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?	x		
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?	x			See above
<b>Data Impact:</b>				None
<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>	Karen Bartlett, Learning Support Services Manager			

## 4. Introduction/Background

4.1 In 2022-23 the Schools Forum agreed four Invest to Save initiatives:

- Additional 0.4FTE post in Early Development and Inclusion Team (EDIT) £26,390
- Early years SEND training project £31,324
- Additional 1FTE SEMH worker £41,490
- Additional I-College places £90,000

4.2 The early years training project, “Through my Eyes” has been very successful, but ongoing funding is not being sought from HNB. The project has secured funding through the Thames Valley Early Years Best Practice Hub.

### 4.3 Additional 0.4 post in Early Development and Inclusion Team

4.3.1 The EDIT Team consists of 1.8 teachers. An additional 0.4 was agreed as an invest to save project, giving a staffing complement of 2.2FTE from April 2022. It was not possible to recruit the additional staff member until September 2022 and therefore it was agreed by the HFG / Schools Forum that funding would be rolled forward in to 2023-24 pending evaluation prior to the 2024-5 budget being set.

4.3.2 A report is attached as Appendix A outlining the impact of the additional 0.4 EDIT teacher.

4.3.3 As set out in Appendix A, the additional 0.4 post was used as follows: 0.3FTE (1.5 days per week) was used to reduce waiting times for input from EDIT and to provide tailored transition support for children in their final year prior to transition to primary school. 0.1FTE (0.5 days) was used to provide a targeted service to children in FS1 without the need for a referral from a health professional.

4.3.4 The additional 0.3FTE capacity resulted in waiting times for children in their final year before primary school reducing from 3 months to 1 month. Waiting times for younger children have reduced from 6 months to 3 months.

4.3.5 For children in their final year before primary transition, the additional capacity has allowed EDIT to work with the setting and school to carry out detailed transition planning. This includes EDIT advising the early years setting on strategies and monitoring progress, a meeting with the family, any necessary referrals to other agencies being made and the setting producing, with support from EDIT, a pupil profile including key information and strategies which have been successful to pass on to the primary school.

4.3.6 A total of 50 primary transition children were supported by EDIT during the 2022-23 academic year. Of these, 46 had an EP report in place before starting primary school. 35 had an EHCP in place before starting primary school and 9 had an EHC assessment under way.

4.3.7 The enhanced service has been successful in ensuring that the numbers of children with complex SEND arriving in primary school without having received any intervention or having been referred to other agencies (where this was needed) has reduced.

4.3.8 The additional 0.1 capacity has allowed settings to make direct referrals to EDIT for children in FS1 who were causing concern. A total of 26 children have been referred to the new targeted support service. The EDIT teacher has visited the settings, given advice on strategies and resources to use and has directly modelled strategies with children. 100% of settings reported that they found the visits helpful and had learned new strategies for supporting children with complex needs. Comments from participating settings are included in Annex A. It was noted by some settings that they found the intervention particularly helpful given the waiting times for other services such as CAMHs and speech and language therapy. 15 of the children referred in this way went on to the EDIT caseload for ongoing support. 11 children were not referred on to the EDIT caseload and settings reported being confident to meet their needs. It is possible that without this intervention children may have been put forward for EHCPs.

4.3.9 The targeted service has helped to identify children not otherwise known to the EDIT Team who, where needed, will now receive support from EDIT including support for a successful transition to mainstream school. It has also ensured that some children causing concern to settings were able to have their needs met by the setting without the need for an EHC assessment.

4.3.10 The HFG / Schools Forum are therefore asked to consider making the additional 0.4 FTE post a permanent post funded from the HNB.

#### **4.4 Additional 1FTE SEMH Worker**

4.4.1 During the Academic year 2022 – 2023, West Berkshire was able to offer each of our 10 Secondary schools an SEMH Practitioner for 1 day a week to support pupils who were at risk of exclusion. This support was provided by 2 fulltime SEMH practitioners, one provided from the Invest to Save funding and one from Supporting Families. The second SEMH practitioner resigned to take up a role at a SEMH school for the end of September 2023. She will be replaced by a fixed term practitioner in December 2023.

4.4.2 From Sept 2023 the SEMH Practitioner provided by the Supporting Families programme is working in secondary schools to deliver 1 to 1 intervention for pupils at risk of exclusion or on Managed Moves, with a focus on Supporting Families pupils.

4.4.3 The SEMH Practitioner joining the team in December 2023 will have a focus on Transition from Primary to Secondary and will provide one to one interventions across Key stages 2 and 3. The transition of year 6 pupils to year 7 has been highlighted as a crucial area of support by both primary and secondary schools

4.4.4 In order to review the impact of the SEMH practitioners, a survey was sent to all 10 secondary schools to ascertain the impact and effectiveness of the practitioners during 2022/23. Responses were received from 9/10 schools which included all 3 maintained schools and 6 academies. 75% of responding schools rated the support they received from the Exclusion and Reintegration Practitioners as very good or excellent and 87.5% said that based on their experience for 2022/23 they were very or extremely likely to reengage with the service. 100% of schools indicated that they would like to continue working with an SEMH practitioner to support their pupils and 77.78% indicated that they would like to increase this provision.

4.4.6 Schools report the Impact of the intervention on exclusion figures as follows: 66.67% of responding schools noted that suspensions reduced for individual students during the

intervention period. This reduced to 55.56% after the end of the intervention period.

Feedback from schools includes:

‘Students and staff both gave really positive feedback about the support they received from the SEMH practitioner.’

‘Students (and staff) benefit from this provision because there is an opportunity for an objective ear to listen and share insight - to the student and staff working with them. This also has an impact on parental perception. An external intervention sends the message that we value the student and are investing in them.’

4.4.7 The HFG/ Schools Forum are therefore asked to consider making the additional SEMH practitioner role permanent, funded from the HNB, as the responding schools indicated that they valued the work carried out by the SEMH Practitioners. The schools confirmed that they had sufficient students to work with the practitioners and that SEMH Practitioners had a positive impact on students they worked with and suspensions and permanent exclusions decreased.

## 4.5 Additional I-College places

4.5.1 In addition, £90,000 was allocated to increase the provision at I-college. This funding has been used to create an additional 12 places at “Intervention” for 1 term at a cost of £64,176 for half a year. The additional funding will be used to cover the cost of pupils requiring more than SEMH band 1 funding. It is crucial that this level of additional funding remains while the LA reviews what alternative provision is needed in light of increased suspension and exclusion and highly dysregulated behaviours.

## 5. Proposals

5.1 It is proposed that all three invest to save initiatives set out above should be incorporated in to the HNB budget and funded on a permanent basis.

## 6. Conclusion

7.1 Early intervention, improving support for children with SEND in the early years and increasing support for schools to meet the needs of children with SEND, particularly children with SEMH, have all been identified as priorities in the draft SEND Strategy for 2023-28. These initiatives are all consistent with the SEND Strategy and will reduce pressure on the HNB by

- reducing EHCPs in the early years
- improving early intervention for children under 5 and at primary transfer and therefore possibly reducing placement breakdown / the need for specialist placements
- reducing secondary exclusions and demand for specialist placements
- Increasing the capacity of I-College to meet needs locally and cost effectively

## 8. Heads’ Funding Group Recommendation

8.1

## 9. Appendices

Appendix A – Report on impact of additional 0.4 post in EDIT Team

## Appendix A

### Impact Report for EDIT additional 0.4 FTE 2022-23

#### Context

EDIT is an early intervention service for children with additional needs (those likely to fall within the definition of SEN/D). Advisory teachers from the service work in partnership with parents and carers, early years practitioners, and a range of health and social care professionals to promote a child's learning and development.

The work may include:

- Visits to the child's educational setting and/or family home
- Identification of a child's strengths and difficulties
- Advice and support to parents and carers on how best to help their child
- Liaison and joint-working with the range of professionals who may be involved in supporting the child
- Training and advice to pre-schools, nurseries and schools
- Support to schools over the child's move into Foundation/Reception classes
- Advice to parents and settings during assessment processes relating to Education, Health and Care Plans.

Prior to the additional temporary funding:

Up until March 2022 the capacity of EDIT was 1.8 FTE. This was covered by 4 advisory teachers including a shared co-ordinator role.

In April 2022 there were 116 children referred to EDIT, an increase of nearly 30% from the previous April when there were 91 referred. With the existing capacity of the team, we feared that children would not be seen in a timely manner for support for their transition to school, and that younger children would have to be 'held' on caseload lists until they were older, meaning that very little early intervention could take place. In addition to this, early years settings were contacting us with numerous queries and anxieties about children presenting with additional needs who were not yet known to any health or educational support service.

An application was made to the Heads Funding Group for additional funding to increase the capacity of the team on a temporary basis for one year, April 2022-April 2023. This was approved, and 2 further days were added to the team, bringing capacity to 2.2FTE (temporary).

#### Current situation

Between April 2022 and April 2023, 130 children were referred to EDIT, a more than 40% increase since the April 2021-22. Also, as evidenced by the high number of children seeking Special School places for Sept 2023, the complexity of children's needs appears greater than it was before.

The temporary EDIT additional days were used between April 2022-3 (see below in **Project Purpose and Method**) to support children at Targeted Support, Early Intervention, and School Transition levels.

## Current Proposal

1. To make permanent the extra 2 (0.4 FTE) EDIT days.

## April 2022-April 2023

### Project Purpose and Method

Two additional days of funding (0.4 FTE) were requested for the year April 2022-23 in order to ensure that fewer children started primary school without identification, support or intervention.

As a consequence of the additional temporary funding:

- All children went straight onto caseload.
- Timescales for allocating and seeing children who were new referrals were reduced to 1 month (from 3 months previously) for children referred in the year before they start school and to 3 months (from 6 months previously) for younger children.
- 1.5 days (0.3 FTE) were allocated to increase caseload capacity and 0.5 day (0.1 FTE) was used for targeted support visits to children not yet referred to EDIT, but with additional needs identified by their FS1 setting (both private, voluntary and independent pre-schools and nurseries and maintained nurseries and nursery classes).

### As a consequence of the additional temporary funding, increased caseload time (1.5 days or 0.3 FTE) was used as follows:

The temporary increase in caseload capacity enabled EDIT to divide casework into two levels, prioritising children in the year before they start school:

#### Level 1: Early Intervention Support, ages 0-3

As a consequence of the additional temporary funding, younger children on EDIT caseload have received support within 3 months of referral, an improvement on the previous situation of within 6 months. This type of support has focussed on home visits, strategies and interventions that parents and early year's settings can implement.

#### Level 2: School Transition Year Support

As a consequence of the additional temporary funding, older children (children in the year before starting school) have received support within one month of referral, an improvement on the previous situation of within 3 months. The additional funding has given EDIT the time to ensure that a planning meeting (Plan) takes place for each child at their early years setting attended by both parents and staff. This is followed by support where needed to carry out agreed actions (Do), and an assessment of what has been working well for the child (Review) in the summer term which forms part of the child's transition arrangements. This has worked best for children who have had a whole year in School Transition Year Support. Where children have been referred with one term/two terms remaining before starting school, the process has necessarily had to be truncated.

Working collaboratively with settings and parents, **EDIT School Transition Year Support aims:**



- To support children with SEND, in their transition year from nursery to school.
- To ensure the child starts school with an EDIT report and strategies.
- To ensure the child is referred to the appropriate Health and education professionals (e.g. EP/Salt/CAMHS/paediatrician as needed).
- To support the Early Years setting in making an EHCP request, where this is appropriate.

### **The School Transition Year Plan, Do, Review Process**

The additional temporary funding has enabled the EDIT advisory teachers to initiate a full cycle of a 'plan, do, review' process for children due to transition to school in the September 2023 (except in the case of very late referrals to EDIT). The initial planning meeting (*'plan'*) has involved the EDIT teacher observing the child in their early years environment and gaining further information from the SENCo and the child's key person, as well as their parents. Then, EDIT advisory teachers have recommended specific strategies and approaches for staff to implement, as well as discussing what type of SEND support and provision the child may require in order to be successfully included in school when they transition to FS2 in the following year.

Early Years settings have then implemented the actions and strategies agreed at the initial planning meeting (*'do'*), and EDIT advisory teachers have monitored progress and offered support as necessary.

Currently, during this summer term, transition to school meetings are taking place. EDIT Advisory Teachers are encouraging early years settings to discuss (*'review'*) all areas of the child's progress, strengths and needs. The additional temporary funding has enabled the EDIT advisory teachers to develop a Pupil Profile that settings are currently being encouraged to complete, which details the strategies that have worked well with the child and sums up key points that school staff will need to be aware of as the child joins FS2.

### **As a consequence of the additional temporary funding, Targeted Support Visits (0.5 days) were initiated.**

The additional temporary funding allowed EDIT advisory teacher (JG) to support children not yet referred to EDIT, but with complex needs identified by their FS1 setting (both private, voluntary and independent pre-schools and nurseries and maintained nurseries and nursery classes). Half a day per week was allowed for this (0.1FTE).

This type of targeted support work had never been done by EDIT before. Referrals for EDIT work have previously only been taken following a developmental assessment of need by a health professional or EP, whereas the targeted support visits gave early years settings the chance to request EDIT advice for children not yet referred to EDIT. Feedback on this initiative has been excellent (see **Outcomes and Data Collection**)

The usual process for a targeted support visit is as follows:

1. A setting contacts the EDIT or early years team for specific advice about the inclusion of a child not referred to EDIT.
2. The setting is asked to briefly outline the child's difficulties on a form, and to give details of age, name, key worker and agreement from parents that the child can be visited.

3. A visit is arranged. As capacity is a 0.5 day (0.1 FTE) settings may have had to wait a few weeks for a date. No-one has waited for more than three weeks.
4. JG visits, bringing all appropriate toys and strategies based on the information provided.
5. The child is observed and there is discussion with the SENDco and/or key worker. EDIT toys and strategies are then used to engage the child and demonstrate to key staff members how they can address the areas that staff have asked for support with.
6. A brief report is written and sent with relevant information and advice sheets or other online resources.

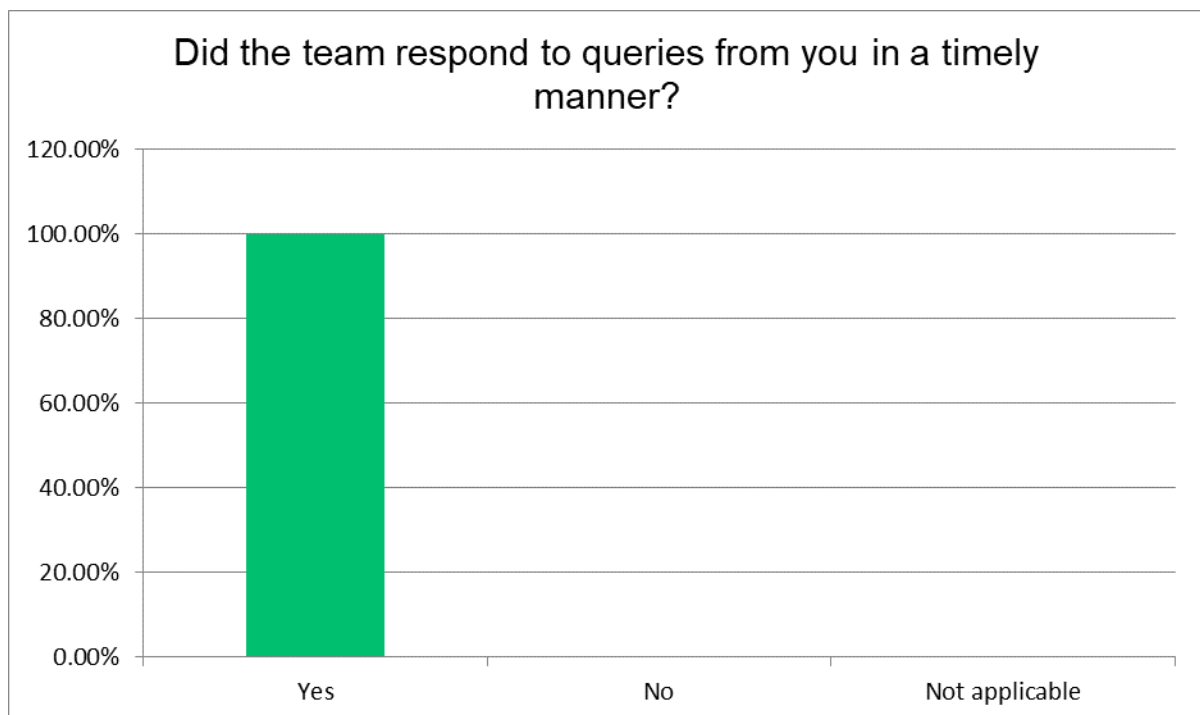
## Outcomes and Data Collection

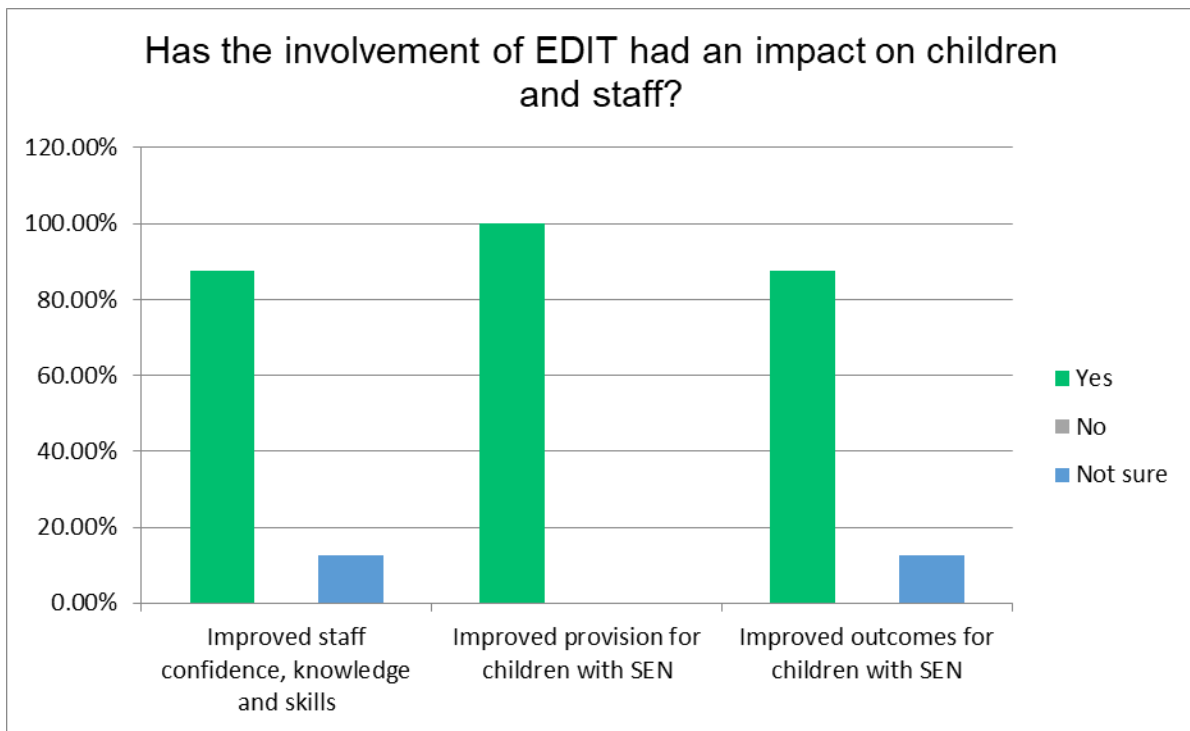
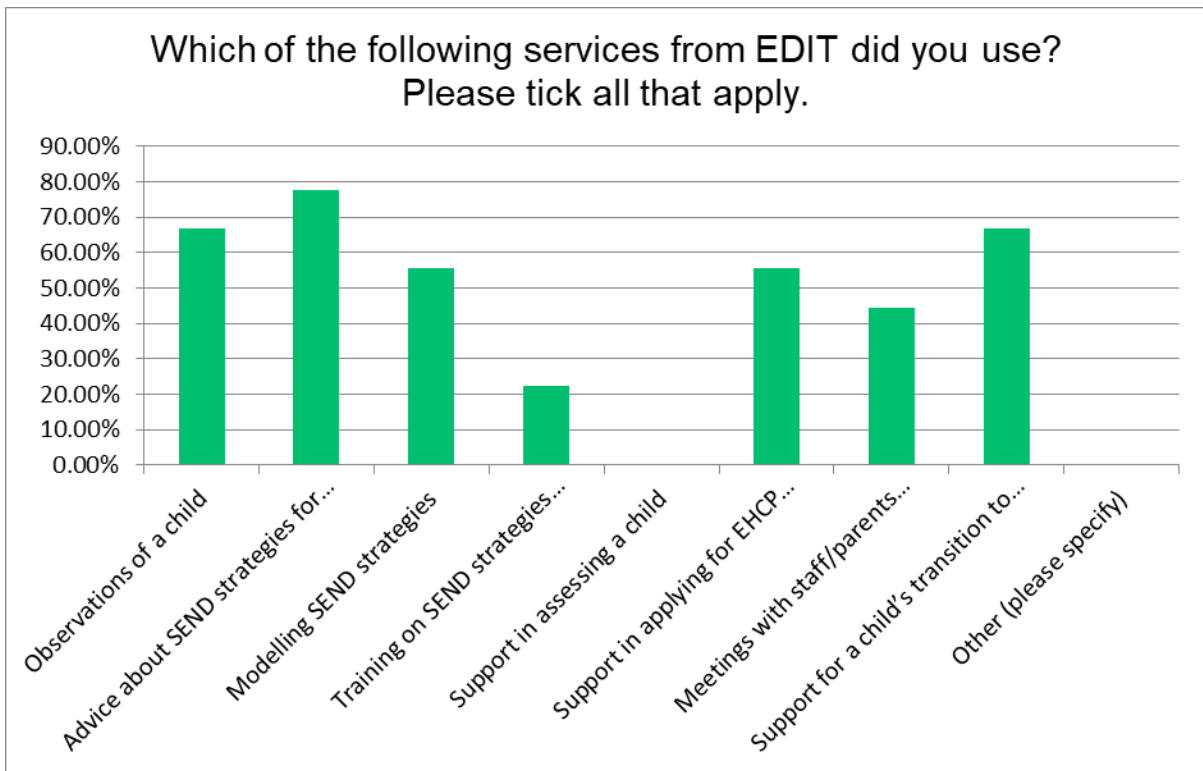
### Quantitative data

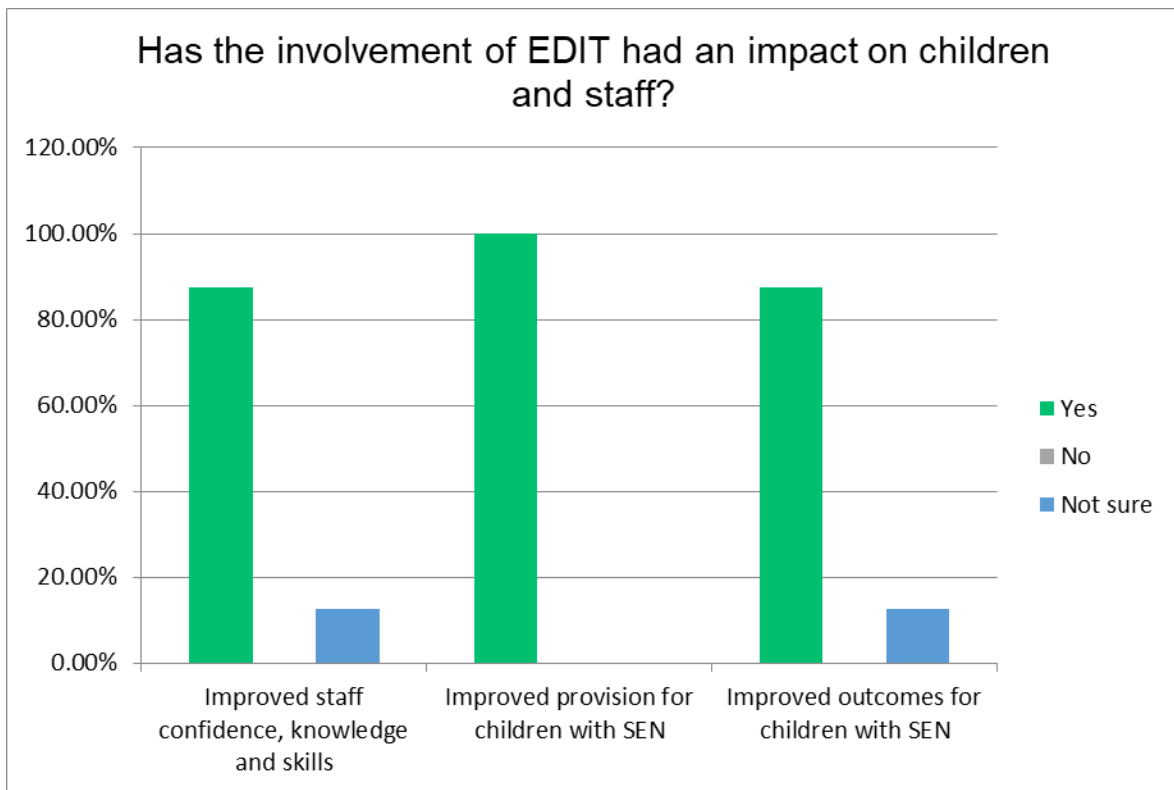
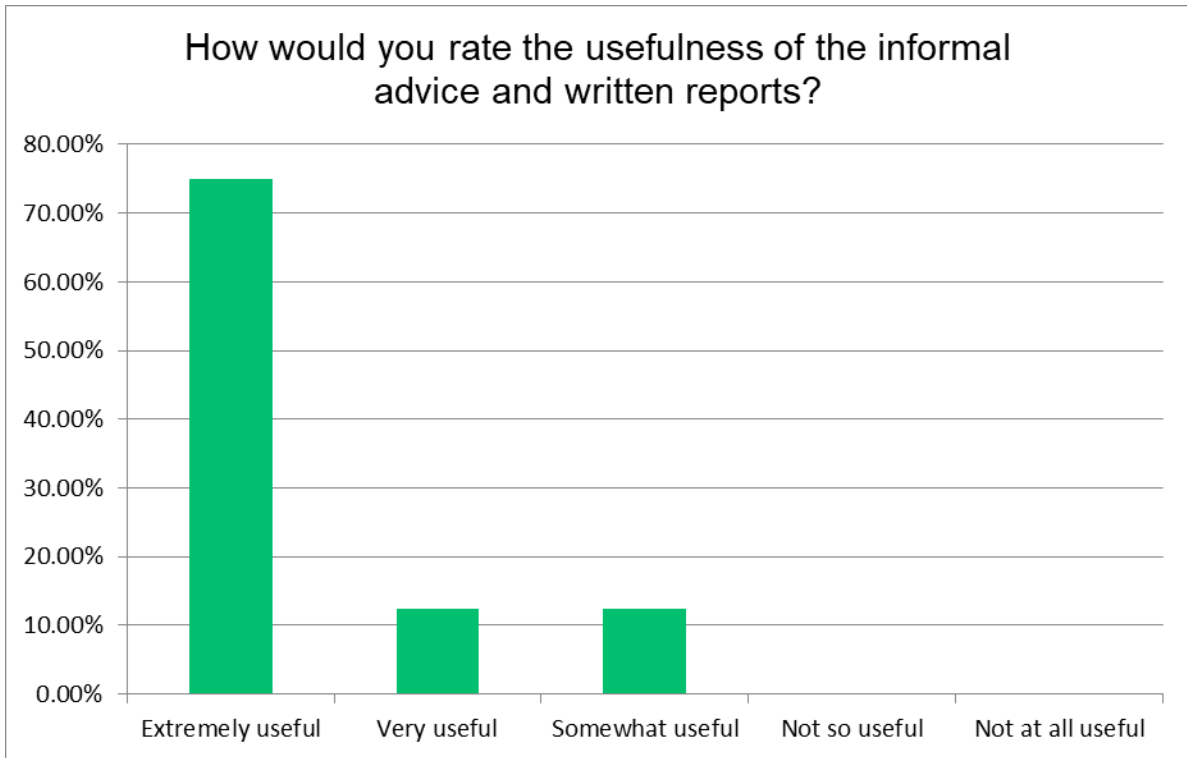
*\*Data has been measured from the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022 as EDIT were managing 0.5 FTE of staff absence between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022.*

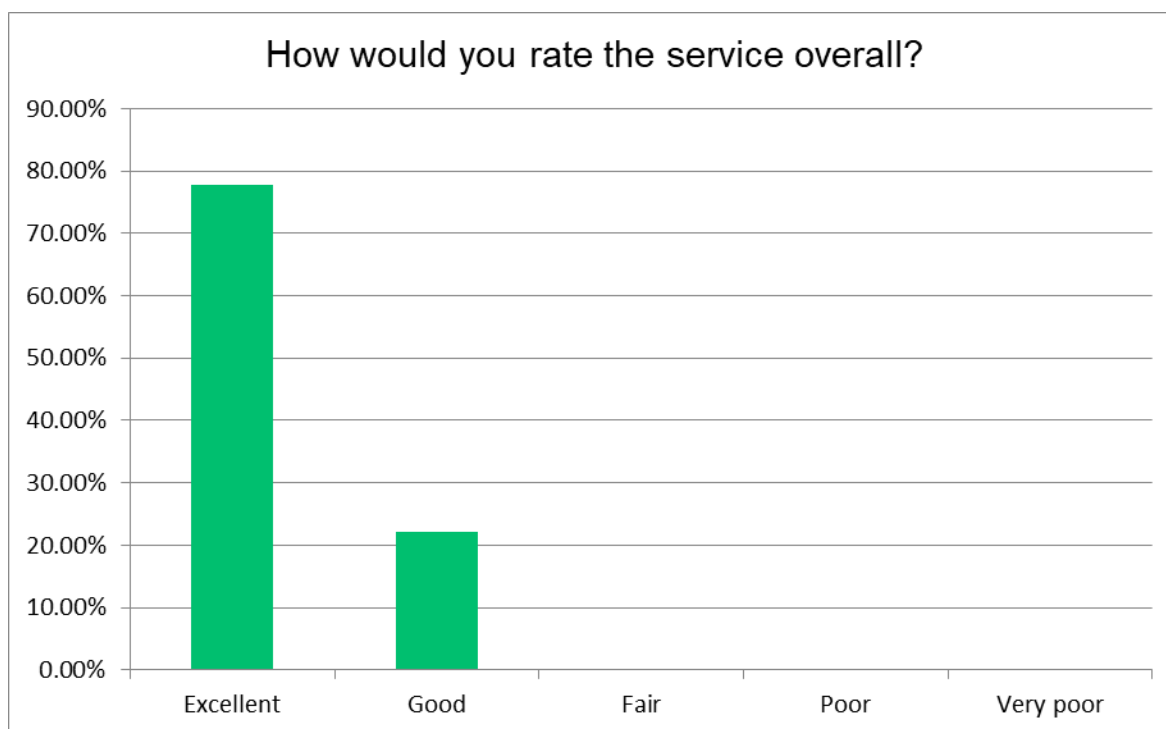
1. The additional temporary funding enabled a 1.5 FTE increase in EDIT capacity for children on EDIT **Caseloads**:
  - From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022, all children went straight onto caseload and there have been no children on the waiting list.
  - From 1<sup>st</sup> June\* 2022 the following has been met:
    - 100% of new referrals were seen within 1 month (reduced from 3 months) for children referred in the year before they start school
    - 100% of new referrals were seen within 3 months (reduced from 6 months) for younger children.

### From Survey Monkey Results (July 2022/ Dec 2023):









School Transition Year <b>School Start Sept 2022</b>		
	All EDIT Advisory Teachers	%
Total number of children on School Transition Support <b>(School Start Sept 2022)</b>	50	
Total number of children who had an EP report before starting school	46	92%
Total number of children who had EHCPs by time they started school. Or in progress	35 9	88% overall

**NB** our next data capture will be taken in Dec 23, as EDIT currently ceases involvement with children after their first term of FS2, in the December of each year.

The additional temporary funding enabled a 0.5 FTE allocation of EDIT time to be spent on our new **Targeted Support Visits:**

27 visits were made during the period April 2022 to April 2023. This amounts to 22 settings that have had additional contact with an EDIT advisory teacher. 6 of these visits have been to maintained nursery schools or classes attached to Primary Schools and have taken place since the service was mentioned in the SEND newsletter in the Spring Term. It has had additional impact beyond the children referred, as staff can apply those strategies with other children.

The following strategies were implemented:

Strategies	Number of pupils supported
PECS	13
Attention Autism stage 1	11
Workstation	18
Intensive Interaction	20
Supporting speech and language: Communication temptation and sabotage, use of visual strategies, match+1, colourful semantics	21
Makaton	2
Developing Play Skills	21
Supporting attachment needs	1

## Qualitative data

### Caseloads:

The extra capacity provided by the additional funding has enabled us to make significant improvements to School Transition Year Support. The comments below give examples of EDIT's impact for Early Years settings and schools.

Lisa worked with nursery setting to ensure pupil received appropriate support prior to transition to primary. This included resubmitting EHCP application so that he had strongest chance of much need support in Foundation Stage. During the first term (and in Summer holidays), she maintained a dialogue with nursery and the school, offering advice to the school via email on several occasions, in place of a visit due to limited availability due to being a much stretched service.

*Vanessa provides realistic support suggestions and can see from a school perspective what is possible*

Lisa has been extremely helpful in supporting the named child's transition into school and providing us with guidance on how to access funding and support.

*The support we received to provide access to support for our young person was very informative, practical and helped us to move forward in the way we support him. A follow up session was requested to enable new staff to be trained. This was, again, very practical and tailored to the needs of the child and the staff working with him.*

We received a high level of practical support both before starting and during the first term.

*Very helpful especially for the transition of child to reception from a different nursery. Always helpful and provided signposting when needed.*

Expand the team and funding! The number of pupils in nursery and FS setting requiring additional early support is increasing which is putting a strain on Primary settings as many children are not getting access to the support they need in time prior to starting! This means primary settings are not fully prepared for needs coming in and pupils aren't given an appropriate transition.

*We feel it would be really beneficial if the support from the EDIT lasted for the first year of school.*

**Targeted Support Visits:**

The following outcomes were achieved through the targeted visits:

- Increased staff confidence
- Reduced anxiety and negative behaviour
- Support for children’s speech, language and communication
- Improved staff knowledge of suitable interventions and resources to support children with SEND in their settings
- Increased level of engagement in learning
- Support to enable settings to keep more complex pupils in mainstream early education

Settings were required to complete an evaluation following a targeted visit, below is a summary of the evaluations that were received:

Question	Very Helpful	Helpful	Moderately helpful	Not helpful
I found this EDIT Targeted Support Visit	100%	0%	0%	0%

Question	Yes	No
The EDIT Targeted Support Visit addressed the difficulties that I had requested help for	100%	0%
The Edit Targeted Support Visit has given me some strategies to incorporate into my practice	100%	0%

<b>If you would like this service to continue to be offered, please let us know why:</b>
Yes, Jo has always given us valued support and strategies to use with the individual children we feel need extra support.
Jo visited us in the setting after I requested a targeted visit for a child displaying delays in all areas of learning and development in comparison to his peers of a similar age. I was able to observe Jo using some of her strategies and resources with this child and was provided plenty to support him going forward. As a result of this visit I was able to confidently introduce a 'work station' which I am pleased to say the child now initiates time at, although we are still working on it being joint attention. We are using some PECS, although this remains initiated by myself, but the child has started using my hand to initiate support and help when required by placing my hand over objects he requires help with or leading me to areas. We have also requested an EP as recommended by Jo and are looking to request an EHCP.
The early year’s sector is currently facing many challenges, including being underfunded and yet we have a big influx of children requiring additional support. Visits like these help to identify those children who require additional support and enables us to implement strategies, refer to other professionals and provide the children and their families with the support required for the rest of their educational journey. It concerns me that children will be starting school not equipped, which will then place more pressure on schools who are also facing funding challenges.
We appreciated the speed between when the referral was made and Jo was able to come in and visit - even though we had to delay slightly due to nursery Christmas events. For families experiencing exceptionally long waits to see other specialists (CAMHS and SALT) it provides clear guidance and early help. The form allowed us to

<p>complete the relevant detail and highlight our key concerns alongside those of the family.</p> <p>During the visit the staff felt Jo was approachable and realistic in terms of what could be adapted to support the child and she modelled the recommended strategies. As a result, the staff member has been able to up-date the child's PEP targets and plan for their next steps. We have arranged to meet with the family to share the strategies next week.</p> <p>The final report was sent out soon after the visit and provided additional materials to support with planning and introducing strategies such as the work station approach. Where a larger resource was used (the CYPIT SALT booklet for EY) relevant pages were highlighted in the report.</p> <p>I feel this is an excellent service and extremely beneficial for staff and families. It supports easy access to expertise with detailed support. I do hope the funding continues - it will be a service we would access in the future, as needed.</p>
<p>This was valuable to us as a Nursery to see activities in practice and modelled. It has been really beneficial.</p>
<p>It is really helpful to see someone else do the different strategies as just reading them isn't the same as seeing them in action. Learning new and different strategies for different children to meet their individual needs is really helpful as is getting the support to fill out and gain information (2 children supported).</p>
<p>Jo's support gave us some new ideas on how to focus on our child's anxiety around separation from a parent. This meant that we could put some procedures in place to support the child on her next session which worked really well for both the parent and child. The parent valued the contact with Jo and I have a clearer idea of next steps in working towards school transition for the child next September (2 children supported).</p>
<p>As a pre-school, we are facing more and more challenges in regards to children with SEND, in terms of increased numbers of children with SEND and also with the needs they have as individuals. We have minimal support from the local authority, and our main source of support is from EDIT. Jo was able to not only talk about different strategies and tools to use with the child I am working with but, she was also able to demonstrate these to me, and show me what to do when these strategies didn't go according to plan. EDIT are an invaluable source of support, practically and emotionally as working with children with SEND can be emotionally challenging!</p>
<p>Jo has been so helpful. It was nice just to be able to speak to her about what we have been doing and where to go next.</p>
<p>It is helpful to learn different strategies according to the child's needs and good to see the strategies demonstrated.</p>
<p>This has greatly helped when planning and executing ideas for our 2 children, it has also helped with the planning sheets within rooms to ensure that the activities are being fulfilled and has inspired me to look into all of the strategies and select those which are best for the children. It was a great insight and very useful (2 children).</p>
<p>We found the visit from Jo useful to offer new strategies and ideas for supporting our SEND child/ren. This has given us (SENCO and 1:1) extra confidence and knowledge in completing necessary paperwork and we are now able to put together an appropriate package of support for a specific child.</p>
<p>As an add on...I would really appreciate the EYISF application form to have a couple of examples under the areas of need and strategies being used as whilst we know what we are doing and what we need, we are still finding it hard to translate that into the table!</p> <p>Moving forward, we would really appreciate a termly visit from the EDIT team to informally discuss our children with additional needs and any advice or support that may be offered to support them within the universal provision and/or with targeted support whether funded or not. This ensures the children in our care are getting the best and most appropriate support for their needs.</p>
<p>Many thanks again for your support visit and advice (2 children).</p>
<p>The advice is useful, informative and of great support to us as settings and families. The guidance has enabled us to navigate the system appropriately to receive help more quickly and meet the needs of the child.</p>
<p>I found this visit from Jo really helpful and informative. She gave some really helpful tips and advice to help the child.</p>
<p>This is an excellent service which enables the practitioner to support the child early on, who wouldn't necessarily</p>



meet the criteria/ evidence for a full SEN referral however still require support. Jo shared some excellent resources and tips, which we wouldn't have access to so readily. The support is invaluable and is exactly what is needed to support Early Years settings particularly.
I feel it is a great service to offer support and ideas/strategies to settings to enable them to support individual children.
Yes, I would like to see this service continue. In the past I have found it very challenging to gain support for children with significant barriers to their learning. This together with the SALT drop-in Team meetings, can have a huge impact on my confidence to teach and support these children. I cannot stress enough how invaluable I believe this support is.

### Targeted Support: Key Findings and Discussion

- The impact of the additional temporary funding was positive for all settings receiving a targeted support visit.
- **15** children not referred to EDIT at the time of their targeted support visit have been referred as a result of advice received on that visit. These children will receive full school transition support prior to starting school.
- **11** children have not been referred: settings appear confident in working with them following the visit (and can request a further targeted support visit as needed). A request for an EHCP is not anticipated.
- Where EHC assessment requests might not be appropriate, these have been avoided in at least **11** cases.
- In the **15** cases where an EHC assessment request may be appropriate, the setting will be supported in the process through EDIT referral and subsequent involvement. More information and evidence will also be made available to panel from the targeted support notes and subsequent EDIT involvement, thus supporting panel's decision-making process.
- **15** more children will be supported as they transition to school through being taken onto caseload as a result of a targeted support visit.

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## Early Years Budget 2024/25

**Report being considered by:** Schools' Forum on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024

**Report Author:** Avril Allenby & Lisa Potts

**Item for:** Decision **By:** All Forum Members

### 1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To set out the proposal for the Early Years budget 2024/25, which is based upon the recommendations of the Early Years Funding Group.

### 2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Early Years DSG budget for 2024/25 to be set at the level detailed in the budget model and agreed. Thus increasing the 3 & 4 year old rate, the 2 year old rate, the quality rate and deprivation along with an increase in the SEN Inclusion Funding.

2.2 That there remains a focus on deficit recovery and lowering of the pass-through rate.

Is the Schools' Forum required to make a decision as part of this report or subsequent versions due to be considered later in the meeting cycle?	
Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>

### 3. Implications and Impact Assessment

Equalities Impact:	Equalities Impact:			Commentary
	Positive	No Impact	Negative	
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		

<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		
<b>Data Impact:</b>		X		
<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>	Early Years Funding Group			

#### 4. The funding rate Framework for 2024/25

4.1 At the Spring Budget 2023, the government announced increases in rates for providers from September 2023 – March 2024 as shown in the table at 4.3.

4.2 Further to this, the government also announced the 30 hours entitlement will be extended in stages from April 2024 to children aged nine months to three years by 2027/28. The new entitlements will be rolled out in stages –

- From April 2024, all working parents of 2 year olds can access 15 hours per week
- From September 2024, all working parents of children ages 9 months up to 3 years can access 15 hours per week.
- From September 2025, all working parents of children aged 9 months to 3 years old can access 30 hours free childcare per week.

4.3 Grant funding rates from central government to West Berkshire Council are shown in the table below:

	<b>2023 to 2024 EYNFF rate (April to March) (£ per hour)</b>	<b>2023 to 2024 effective combined rate (September to March) (£ per hour)</b>	<b>Local authority rates for 2024 to 2025</b>
3&4 year old funding rate (per hour)	£5.32	£5.86	£6.21
2YO Funding Rate (per hour)	£6.67	£8.84	£8.66
Under 2YO Funding Rate (per hour)			£11.75
DAF (per child)	£828.00	£881.00	£910.00
Early Years Pupil Premium (per hour)	£0.62		£0.68

4.4 The funding rate for 3 to 4 year olds includes 6p per hour for Teachers pay and pensions.

4.5 It is important to point out that the additional funding to support teacher pay and pensions was previously allocated through a grant directly to schools along with their allocation for the rest of the teaching staff in their school.

- 4.6 Local Authorities are required to set an average funding rate for providers for 3 and 4 year olds which is at least 95% of the authority's funding rate. This minimum funding level is referred to as the pass through rate.
- 4.7 An SEN Inclusion fund continues to support our young children with SEN.

## 5. Forecast Outturn for 2023/24

- 5.1 The figures in the forecast below are based on actual hours for the 2023/24 year, with a small contingency to allow for any final changes in the Spring 2024 hours.
- 5.2 There is a forecast overspend of £794k on the delegated funds, which is mainly due to the rate changes in the form of the supplementary grant received for September 2023 – March 2024.
- 5.3 The centrally managed funds have a forecast saving of £36k, which is mainly due to a lower uptake of the Disability Access Fund than we were funded for and a small underspend in the SEN Inclusion Fund.
- 5.4 The initial budget allocation was based on January 2022 census, based on the current census we are due to receive £88k additional funding from the DFE, but final figures won't be known until July 2024.
- 5.5 The 2022-23 funding adjustment of £166k is the adjustment from the prior year.
- 5.6 The table below shows the forecast outturn for 2023/24 :

	2023/24 Budget Set £	2023/24 Forecast £	2023/24 Variance £
<b>Funds Delegated to Early Years Providers</b>			
PVI Providers (90036)	6,202,254	6,678,226	475,972
Nursery classes in Mainstream Schools (90037)	2,016,594	2,138,774	122,180
Maintained Nursery Schools (90010) (including MNSS lump sum)	931,085	1,028,904	97,819
2 Year Old Funding (90018)	724,257	824,739	100,482
Pupil Premium Grant (35%) and deprivation funding (65%) (90052)	218,933	216,144	-2,789
<b>Total Delegated Funds</b>	<b>10,093,123</b>	<b>10,886,787</b>	<b>793,664</b>

<b>Centrally Managed Funds</b>			
Central Expenditure on Children Under 5 (90017)	339,480	341,867	2,387
Early Development Intervention Team (EDIT) (90287)	64,040	65,070	1,030
SEN Inclusion Fund (90238)	108,000	90,000	-18,000
Disability Access Fund (90053)	43,060	22,000	-21,060
SSRs	77,730	77,730	0
<b>Total Centrally Managed Funds</b>	<b>632,310</b>	<b>596,667</b>	<b>-35,643</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>10,725,432</b>	<b>11,483,454</b>	<b>758,021</b>
Early Years DSG Block Funding In Year	-10,654,355	-10,742,069	-87,714
Early Years Supplementary Grant (re rate increase Sept 23 - Mar 24)		-710,703	-710,703
<b>In year overspend (under spend)</b>	<b>71,077</b>	<b>30,682</b>	<b>-40,396</b>
Early Years funding adjustment		166,303	166,303
Early Years DSG Block Overspend from previous year	1,080,632	1,051,531	-29,101
<b>FORECAST CUMULATIVE DEFICIT AT YEAR END</b>	<b>1,151,709</b>	<b>1,248,516</b>	<b>96,806</b>

## 6. Deficit Recovery

6.1 The 2023/24 figures show an in-year shortfall of £31k. The deficit recovery plan had forecast that the deficit would have reduced significantly by the end of this year. In real terms, the in-year position is almost balanced, but the deficit hasn't decreased as expected. There has been some analysis of the data to understand the reasons for this:

- (1) With the pass-through rate expected to be 95%, this leaves 5% of the expected income to be allocated to the centrally managed funds. The current position shows that the centrally managed funds are approx. 5.21% of the total expected grant income
- (2) The pass-through rate for 3 to 4 year olds was budgeted to be 98.2%, but based on actual hours it is 98.6%.

## 7. Budget Model for 2024/25

7.1 We are now in the third year of the funding announced in the Spending Review in October 2021. The funding in the financial year 2024/25 is £170 million.

7.2 Therefore, when determining the local rates there are two factors that need to be taken into consideration. The deficit recovery and the new funding from government. The table below shows the local rates in the current financial year, the rates as per deficit recovery and the proposed rates when the new funding is applied using our local formula.

	<b>2023/24 Current Base Rate £</b>	<b>2024/25 Rate as per deficit recovery £</b>	<b>2024/25 Proposed Rate £</b>	<b>Change in rate from 2023/24</b>
3&4 year olds funding rate	5.20	5.13	5.39	0.19
Quality Rate	0.63	0.59	0.60	(0.03)
2YO Funding Rate	8.30	8.16	8.30	0.00
Deprivation	1.72	1.22	1.72	0.00
Under 2's	0.00	0.00	11.16	11.16

- 7.3 The Local Authority is allowed to fund from the grant some centrally provided services, including staffing and IT costs in relation to overseeing the delivery of the free entitlement, sufficiency of places, eligibility checking, and administration of funding payments to providers. However funding for these services is limited by the requirement to set a “pass-through rate” for 3 and 4 year olds which is at least 95% of the authority’s funding rate.
- 7.4 The pass-through rate for 3 & 4 year olds for 2024/25 is at 95.2%. This has reduced by 3% from the prior year. New funding streams are also subject to the 95% pass through rate.
- 7.5 It should be noted that 2019/20 the single base rate was increased to support all providers with the additional costs that have impacted on them over the past two years; rises in the minimum wage and pension costs alongside the introduction of the additional free entitlement to working parents. However this rise has impacted upon the pass-through rate taking it above 100% and has resulted in the overspend position that is being addressed.
- 7.6 The 2024/25 budget is shown below using the rates shown above:

		2024/25 Yr 1 Budget £
<b>Funds Delegated to Early Years Providers</b>		
PVI Providers (90036)		7,218,655
Nursery classes in Mainstream Schools (90037)		2,278,296
Maintained Nursery Schools (90010)		1,140,378
2 Year Old Funding (90018)		900,687
2 Year old working parents		2,745,356
Under 2's		1,886,859
Pupil Premium Grant (36%) and deprivation funding (64%) (90052)		219,584
<b>Total Delegated Funds</b>		<b>16,389,815</b>
<b>Centrally Managed Funds</b>		
Central Expenditure on Children Under 5 (90017)		414,060
Early Development Intervention Team (EDIT) (90287)		68,610
SEN Inclusion Fund (90238)		108,000
Disability Access Fund (90053)		90,090
SSRs		82,458
<b>Total Centrally Managed Funds</b>		<b>763,218</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>17,153,033</b>
Early Years DSG Block Funding In Year		-17,371,331
<b>In year surplus</b>		<b>-218,299</b>
Early Years DSG Block Funding carried forward		1,248,516
<b>OVERALL NET POSITION</b>		<b>1,030,217</b>

## 8. Conclusion

- 8.1 The Early Years Block budget has been set at a level which has seen a realignment of the pass-through rate and reduce some of the deficit budget. While balancing the needs of the local childcare providers and the pressures of the current cost of living issues. Thus providing a viable pass-through rate.
- 8.2 The deficit will be monitored to ensure the overall position of the block is recovering the current shortfall.

## 9. Recommendation

- 9.1 That the Early Years DSG budget for 2024/25 be set at the level detailed in the budget model are agreed. Thus increasing the 3 & 4 year old rate, the 2 year old rate, the quality rate and deprivation along with an increase in the SEN Inclusion Funding.
- 9.2 That there remains a focus on deficit recovery and lowering of the pass-through rate.



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## Mainstream Exclusions and Managed Moves

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**Report being considered by:** Schools' Forum on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024

**Report Author:** Lisa Potts

**Item for:** Discussion      **By:** All Forum Members

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### 1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To set out the process for excluded pupils and those with managed moves.

### 2. Recommendation

2.1 That the report be noted

### 3. Introduction/Background

3.1 When a pupil is permanently excluded and then moves to a new school, or when a pupil moves school on a Managed Move, there is the principal that funding "follows the pupil".

### 4. Supporting Information

4.1 The 'School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations' (paragraph 37 of the 2023 regulations) and 'Schools Revenue Funding Operational Guide' (paragraphs 23 to 24 of the August 2023 version for 2024/25) clearly set out the funding transfers required. These have been used to update the current policy.

### 5. Proposals

5.1 The current policy is shown in Appendix A and has been updated to reflect the most current guidance.

### 6. Appendices

6.1 Appendix A – Exclusion Policy

## West Berkshire Council Schools Funding Transfers for Mainstream Exclusions and Managed Moves (2024/25 version)

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 When a pupil is permanently excluded and then moves to a new school, or when a pupil moves school on a Managed Move, there is the principal that funding “follows the pupil”. This document sets out the following:
- (1) The amount of funding that will transfer in each of these circumstances, and how this is calculated.
  - (2) How the transfer of funding will take place.
- 1.2 Only funding transfers in relation to permanent exclusions are covered by legislation. Managed Moves are a local agreement, set out in the Fair Access Protocol.

### 2. Exclusions

- 2.1 The ‘School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations’ (paragraph 37 of the 2023 regulations) and ‘Schools Revenue Funding Operational Guide’ (paragraphs 23 to 24 of the August 2023 version for 2024/25) clearly set out the funding transfers required.
- 2.2 All West Berkshire academies have provisions in their funding agreements that require the same adjustments as maintained schools. The adjustments, however, will relate to the academy financial year.
- 2.3 The main principals are that:
- (1) Funding should flow **in-year** from the school that has excluded the pupil to the provision that takes responsibility for the pupil.
  - (2) The provisions act **independently** of whether a particular pupil has been on the census in the first place, and whether the school has received funding for them.
  - (3) The amount to transfer is the formula funding relating to the age **and personal circumstances** of that pupil (i.e. all the pupil led factors in the formula), pro rata to the number of **complete weeks** remaining in the financial year from the ‘relevant date’ – the sixth school day following the date of the permanent exclusion.
  - (4) For post-16 pupils the amount to transfer is £4,000, pro rata as above.

## Mainstream Exclusions and Managed Moves

- 2.4 It is acceptable to use the average pupil led funding for the school. Thus, the calculation of the weekly amount to be used in the calculation for a pre-16 pupil would be as shown in the following example:

<b>Current Year Funding Formula</b>	<b>Total Funding</b>
Basic Entitlement	£3,800,000
Low Prior Attainment Funding	£220,000
Deprivation Funding	£84,000
English as an Additional Language Funding	£5,000
<b>Total Pupil Led Funding</b>	<b>£4,109,000</b>
Number of pupils the formula funding is based on	900
<b>Pupil Led Funding per pupil</b>	<b>£4,565.56</b>
<b>Weekly per pupil Amount (divide by 52)</b>	<b>£87.80</b>

The funding formula breakdown and pupil numbers for every West Berkshire school can be found on the WBC school funding web page.

- 2.5 The calculation of the funding is then as shown in the following example (for a pupil excluded on 24<sup>th</sup> November and then starting in a new school from 3<sup>rd</sup> January):

Excluding School		Receiving School (or reinstatement at Excluding School)	
Weekly amount per pupil	£87.80	Weekly amount per pupil	£87.80
Multiply by number of complete weeks remaining in financial year from the relevant date i.e. from 1 <sup>st</sup> December to 31 <sup>st</sup> March (it would be 31 <sup>st</sup> August for an academy)	17	Multiply by number of complete weeks remaining in financial year from date pupil starts in the new school i.e. from 3 <sup>rd</sup> January to 31 <sup>st</sup> March (it would be 31 <sup>st</sup> August for an academy)	12
Amount Removed	£1,492.60	Amount Received	£1,053.60

- 2.6 If the pupil is eligible for pupil premium, the same pro rata funding adjustment is made.
- 2.7 The adjustment is for the **current financial year** only and **cannot be applied to subsequent years**.
- 2.8 If the exclusion takes place after 1 April in a school year where the pupil would normally have left at the end of that school year, the calculation is based just on the number of weeks left until the end of the school year.
- 2.9 The review panel may also issue a Financial Adjustment Order if relevant, which would be an additional adjustment of £4,000.

## Mainstream Exclusions and Managed Moves

2.10 The process for the funding transfer is as follows:

The WBC Exclusion Officer will inform WBC accountancy of the exclusion – this will include the pupil’s name, movements, and relevant dates.

Maintained to Maintained	The LA will transfer funding via journal and inform the relevant schools.
Maintained to Academy	The LA will remove funding from the maintained school via journal and make a payment to the academy (usually with another regular payment).
Academy to Maintained	The LA will invoice the academy and make a payment to the maintained school via a journal.
Academy to Academy	The LA will invoice the excluding academy and make a payment to the receiving academy (usually with another regular payment).

2.11 The reason the funding has to flow via the LA is because the pupil may not always move straight to another school or it may involve a school in another LA. If a pupil goes to a PRU first, the LA receives the funding for this period to go towards the payment of the place at the PRU. The LA is also responsible for payments to (and from) other LAs as per the ‘Education (Amount to Follow Permanently Excluded Pupil) Regulations’ 1999 and 2001.

### 3. Managed Moves

Managed Moves are agreed between the head teachers of two schools. The decision to move a pupil between schools (rather than formally exclude the pupil) will be negotiated directly between Head teachers. At this point, any funding transfers will also be agreed. As per the Fair Access Protocol, the funding transfer will only take place if after the Integration period (usually 6 weeks) the pupil is then formally admitted permanently to the new school. The funding transfer will be backdated to the start of the move.

3.1 For all Managed Moves it is the responsibility of the two schools involved to make the financial arrangements - the receiving school will calculate the amount due and invoice the school the pupil has come from, and the removing school will agree the amount and make the payment. If it is between two maintained schools an internal transfer can be used. The LA will not be involved at all in the transaction.

3.2 Although it will be determined at the meeting or at the time the agreement is made the basis of any funding transfer, it is usually agreed that the funding the removing school has actually received for the pupil will be transferred to the receiving school. This could be subject to different interpretations, with the term “AWPU” commonly used, and with no clear understanding of the relevant dates that drive the funding.

## Mainstream Exclusions and Managed Moves

- 3.3 In the absence of a more specific financial arrangement (e.g. a fixed sum could be agreed between the two head teachers), the following paragraphs will apply.
- 3.4 The average **pupil led** funding for the school the pupil is moving from will be the funding to be transferred – calculated as set out above in paragraph 2.4. If the pupil is eligible for pupil premium grant, this will also be transferred.
- 3.5 The funding to be transferred will be the funding for the pupil that the school has **already received in the current financial year from the transfer date, plus what the school will actually receive in the following financial year if relevant**, so is based on when the transfer takes place within the financial year in relation to the October census. Thus, there are the following two scenarios:
1. For transfers occurring **before** the October census, the pupil led funding is pro rata (for the actual number of weeks) to the end of the financial year (maintained) or academic year (academies), assuming the pupil is then recorded in the receiving school's census in the following October, otherwise scenario 2 will apply.
  2. For transfers occurring **after** the October census, the pupil led funding is as above, **plus** the total pupil led funding for the whole of the following financial year (maintained) or academic year (academies), assuming the pupil was still included in the removing school's previous October census, otherwise scenario 1 will apply.

If in either of these two scenarios the pupil would normally leave at the end of the school year, then the calculation is based on the number of weeks to the end of the school year.

- 3.6 If the transfer is maintained school to maintained school, the calculation is based on the local authority financial year i.e. to the end of March.
- 3.7 If the transfer is academy school to academy school, the calculation is based on the academy financial year i.e. to the end of August.
- 3.8 Transfers between a maintained school and an academy is complicated by the fact that they are operating on two different financial years and funding periods. The principal to be adopted is that a school will not be required to pay more than they have been funded for the pupil, and that a school cannot be double funded. Thus, the maximum a school will transfer out is the amount received for the pupil, and the maximum a school can receive is for the missing funding for the pupil transferred. Therefore, the funding transfer has to be calculated to the end of March in both of these scenarios.
- 3.9 The following provides an example of the calculation for each scenario:

In this example the annual pupil led funding is £4,400 in 2023/24 and £4,500 in 2024/25.

The Census date which drives the funding for the *following* financial year (commencing 1/4/24) or academic year (commencing 1/9/24) is 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

## Mainstream Exclusions and Managed Moves

	<b>Transfer Date of 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023. Pupil included on new school's census on 5<sup>th</sup> October</b>	<b>Transfer Date of 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023</b>	<b>Transfer Date of 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023 but pupil will leave at end of the current academic year</b>
<b>Maintained to Maintained</b>	2/10/23 to 31/3/24 £4,400 x 26 weeks/52 = <b>£2,200</b>	4/12/23 to 31/3/25 £4,400 x 17 weeks/52 £4,500 x 52 weeks/52 = <b>£5,938</b>	4/12/23 to 31/8/24 £4,400 x 17 weeks/52 £4,500 x 22 weeks/52 = <b>£3,342</b>
<b>Academy to Academy</b>	2/10/23 to 31/8/24 £4,400 x 48 weeks/52 = <b>£4,062</b>	4/12/23 to 31/8/25 £4,400 x 39 weeks/52 £4,500 x 52 weeks/52 = <b>£7,800</b>	4/12/23 to 31/8/24 £4,400 x 39 weeks/52 = <b>£3,300</b>
<b>Maintained to Academy</b>	2/10/23 to 31/3/24 £4,400 x 26 weeks/52 = <b>£2,200</b>	4/12/23 to 31/3/25 £4,400 x 17 weeks/52 £4,500 x 52 weeks/52 = <b>£5,938</b>	4/12/23 to 31/8/24 £4,400 x 17 weeks/52 £4,500 x 22 weeks/52 = <b>£3,342</b>
<b>Academy to Maintained</b>	2/10/23 to 31/3/24 £4,400 x 26 weeks/52 = <b>£2,200</b>	4/12/23 to 31/3/25 £4,400 x 39 weeks/52 £4,500 x 30 weeks/52 = <b>£5,896</b>	4/12/23 to 31/8/24 £4,400 x 39 weeks/52 = <b>£3,300</b>

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## Deficit Schools

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**Report being considered by:** Schools Forum on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024

**Report Author:** Melanie Ellis

**Item for:** Information **By:** All Maintained Schools Representatives

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### 1. Purpose of the Report

This report provides details of the most recent financial forecasts received from each of the nine schools with licensed deficit and the two schools that have informed West Berkshire Council they now expect to end the 2023/24 financial year with an unlicensed deficit balance.

### 2. Recommendation

2.1 That the report be noted.

### 3. Introduction/Background

3.1 Schools are permitted to set a deficit budget if they meet certain conditions. This is termed a licensed deficit. The conditions of a licensed deficit are set out in the Scheme for Financing Schools (the legal contract the Council has with schools) and include the following statement, “The recommended length over which schools may repay the deficit, i.e. reach at least a zero balance, with appropriate mechanism to ensure that the deficit is not simply extended indefinitely, is three years. The maximum length of repayment is five years.”

3.2 If the conditions of the license are not met by the school, the Council has the power to issue a Notice of Concern, which ultimately could mean removal of a school’s delegation.

3.3 During the financial year some schools enter an unplanned financial deficit due to circumstances beyond the school’s control. For example higher than budgeted inflationary pay increases, power costs etc., poor Ofsted outcomes that result in unplanned spend. Any school doing so is requested to abide by the conditions of the deficit.

### 4. Forecast year end position as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 (period nine)

4.1 Nine schools submitted a WBC Deficit Budget License Application for the financial year 2023/24, all nine were granted a license.

4.2 Historic information and the planned recovery for the nine schools is shown below:

## Deficit Schools

School - Licensed deficit	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Main School Budget (*includes PPG)	Actual	Actual	Actual	Recovery	Recovery	Recovery	Recovery	Recovery
	Surplus/ (Deficit)	Surplus/ (Deficit)	Surplus/ (Deficit)	Surplus/ (Deficit)	Surplus/ (Deficit)	Surplus/ (Deficit)	Surplus/ (Deficit)	Surplus/ (Deficit)
Beenham Primary School	(£363)	£20,936	(£31,015)	(£3,100)	£348	(£5,149)	£42,185	£50,667
Brimpton Primary School	£21,845	£11,308	(£30,834)	(£19,633)	£15,614	£39,342	£48,597	£54,963
Kennet Valley Primary School	£48,726	£82,901	£50,592	(£5,615)	(£9,123)	£23,496	£84,204	£58,991
Long Lane Primary School *	£13,849	£10,279	(£76,173)	(£23,900)	£18,992	£54,297	£75,777	£98,799
Pangbourne Primary School	£15,341	£3,804	£520	(£47,736)	(£31,651)	£18,257	£83,449	£184,504
Spurcroft Primary School*	(£40,624)	(£79,302)	(£138,281)	(£187,280)	(£88,979)	£11,480	£143,236	£305,081
St Finians Primary School*	(£20,657)	£0	(£33,935)	(£85,968)	(£65,786)	(£22,957)	£5,687	£24,046
St John & St Nicolas Federation*	£66,111	£74,283	£11,214	(£81,777)	(£94,022)	(£43,242)	(£10,187)	£15,579
St Josephs Primary School	£11,678	(£7,173)	(£85,585)	(£69,517)	(£21,648)	£11,684	£28,700	£40,175
<b>TOTAL Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>£115,905</b>	<b>£117,036</b>	<b>(£333,496)</b>	<b>(£524,526)</b>	<b>(£276,255)</b>	<b>£87,208</b>	<b>£501,648</b>	<b>£832,805</b>

### 4.3 The latest forecast information is shown in the table below.

Note: The licence is granted for the deficit on the Main School Budget (MSB) but, for the purposes of completeness, the tables below show the balances on the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) and the Out of Hours Club (OoHC) in addition to the MSB. At the yearend any deficit on PPG and OoHC is transferred to the MSB so increasing the deficit (final column in tables 1a and 1b below). No school is forecasting a deficit on their PPG but three are forecasting deficits on their OoHC.

Table 1a

School- Licensed deficit	Main School Budget (MSB)			Pupil Premium Grant (PPG)			Out of Hours Club (OoHC)			Forecast Deficit on MSB as at P8/P9 after deficits trfd from PPG or OoHC at year end
	2023/24 Budget	2023/24 P8 / P9 Forecast	Variance	2023/24 Budget	2023/24 P9 Y/E Forecast	Variance	2023/24 Budget	2023/24 P9 Y/E Forecast	Variance	
	A	B	B-A=C	D	E	E-D=F	G	H	H-G=I	
Beenham Primary School	(£3,090)	(£18,888)	(£15,798)	£140	£1,826	£1,686	£100	£0	(£100)	(£18,888)
Brimpton Primary School	(£19,650)	(£6,796)	£12,854	£2,900	£193	(£2,707)	£4,970	£7,136	£2,166	(£6,796)
Kennet Valley Primary School	(£5,600)	(£28,614)	(£23,014)	£7,600	£17,400	£9,800	£1,540	(£5,216)	(£6,756)	(£33,830)
Long Lane Primary School *	(£23,900)	(£26,745)	(£2,845)							(£26,745)
Pangbourne Primary School	(£47,760)	(£78,188)	(£30,428)	£0	£3	£3				(£78,188)
Spurcroft Primary School	(£187,330)	(£200,394)	(£13,064)				£0	(£9,937)	(£9,937)	(£210,331)
St Finians Primary School	(£85,990)	(£87,846)	(£1,856)				£3,220	£5,646	£2,426	(£87,846)
St John & St Nicolas Federation	(£81,710)	(£88,546)	(£6,836)	£6,420	£454	(£5,966)	£4,190	(£5,528)	(£9,718)	(£94,074)
St Josephs Primary School	(£83,750)	(£134,882)	(£51,132)	£410	£484	£74	£0	£0	£0	(£134,882)
<b>TOTAL Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>(£538,780)</b>	<b>(£670,899)</b>	<b>(£132,119)</b>	<b>£17,470</b>	<b>£20,360</b>	<b>£2,890</b>	<b>£14,020</b>	<b>(£7,899)</b>	<b>(£21,919)</b>	<b>(£691,580)</b>

N.B Year end deficits on Pupil Premium Grant and Out of Hours Clubs are automatically transferred to the main school budget at year end

\* P8 forecast used due to unplanned absence of staff

Figures in red parenthesis indicate a deficit balance.

4.4 One of the nine schools now forecasts a smaller deficit at the end of the year than licensed, the remaining eight expect to exceed their licence deficit figure, with the total increased deficit totalling £132k. One of the nine was unable to submit a forecast at the end of period nine, so the period eight figure (as of 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023) was used to populate table 1a.

4.1 Each of the schools in table 1a were asked to provide a deficit recovery progress statement to the Heads Funding Group to include whether the school's current forecast for 2023/24 is in line with the budget set and the reasons and value of significant variances.

4.2 During the financial year an additional two schools have reported they expect to end 2023/24 with an unlicensed deficit balance (table 1b).



## Deficit Schools

Table 1b

School - Unplanned deficit	Main School Budget (MSB)			Pupil Premium Grant (PPG)			Out of Hours Club (OoHC)			Forecast Deficit on MSB as at P8/P9 after deficits trfd from PPG or OoHC at year end
	2023/24 Budget	2023/24 P9/P10 Y/E Forecast	Variance	2023/24 Budget	2023/24 P9/P10 Y/E Forecast	Variance	2023/24 Budget	2023/24 P9/P10 Y/E Forecast	Variance	
	A	B	B-A=C	D	E	E-D=F	G	H	H-G=I	
Hermitage Primary School	£14,070	(£25,917)	(£39,987)	£4,250	£256	(£3,994)	£480	£85	(£395)	(£25,576)
Theale Primary School	£0	(£65,333)	(£65,333)				£0	£3,145	£3,145	(£65,333)
<b>TOTAL Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>£14,070</b>	<b>(£91,250)</b>	<b>(£105,320)</b>	<b>£4,250</b>	<b>£256</b>	<b>(£3,994)</b>	<b>£480</b>	<b>£3,230</b>	<b>£2,750</b>	<b>(£90,909)</b>

N.B Year end deficits on Pupil Premium Grant and Out of Hours Clubs are automatically transferred to the main school budget at year end

Figures in red parenthesis indicate a deficit balance.

## 6. Conclusion

6.1 The total school deficits over the last three years are shown in Table 2 below.

All Schools	Actual			Forecast
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
<b>Main School Budget</b>				
Total deficit	(£78,088)	(£171,692)	(£424,542)	(£779,344)
Number of schools in deficit	5	6	8	11
Average deficit	(£15,618)	(£28,615)	(£53,068)	(£70,849)

6.2 School balances continue to be impacted by Covid -19, this is most noticeable where some schools previously relied on income generated by Out of Hours Club schools to balance their budgets, demand has failed to return to pre covid levels and schools continue to try to recover from this during 2023/24.

6.3 In addition to inflationary and other increases to costs, unplanned falling pupil numbers and a reported growing number of children presenting with additional needs are creating increasing budgetary pressure in schools.

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## Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring Report 2023/24 – Month Ten

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<b>Report being considered by:</b>	Schools Forum on 11 <sup>th</sup> March 2024		
<b>Report Author:</b>	Lisa Potts		
<b>Item for:</b>	Information	<b>By:</b>	All Forum Members

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### 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To report the forecast financial position of the services funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), highlighting any under or over spends, and to highlight the cumulative deficit on the DSG

### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the report be noted.

### 3. Introduction/Background

- 3.1 The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is a ring fenced specific grant which can only be spent on school/pupil activity as set out in The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2023. The Local Authority and Schools' Forum are responsible for ensuring that the DSG is deployed correctly according to the Regulations. Monitoring of spend against the grant needs to take place regularly to enable decision making on over spends/under spends and to inform future year budget requirements.
- 3.2 There are four DSG funding blocks: Schools Block, High Needs Block, Early Years Block and Central Schools Services Block. The funding for each of the four blocks is determined by a national funding formula.

### 4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The 2023/24 Dedicated Schools Grant allocation is £167.8m. This includes £52m which funds Academies and post-16 high needs places which is paid direct by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to schools. The DSG budget for 2023/24 has been built utilising the remaining grant of £115.7m
- 4.2 The schools block is ring fenced but the Local Authority can transfer up to 0.5% of the funding out of the schools block with Schools Forum agreement. The other blocks are not subject to this limitation on transfers. For the 2023/24 budget, no balances were transferred.
- 4.3 The DSG expenditure budgets required for 2023/24 total £118.7m, which is £3m more than the funding available. As a result, a £3m in-year efficiency target has been set against this in order to balance the DSG budget, against the High Needs Block
- 4.4 There is a brought forward deficit on the DSG of £4.761m.

4.5 The forecast position at the end of January is shown in Table 1. A more detailed position per cost centre is shown in Appendix A.

Prior Years			Table 1 - DSG Block forecast 2023/24	2023/24							Deficit/ (surplus) £'000
2020/21 Outturn £'000	2021/22 Outturn £'000	2022/23 Outturn £'000		Original Budget £'000	Budget Changes £'000	Final Budget £'000	Quarter 1 Forecast £'000	Quarter 2 Forecast £'000	Quarter 3 Forecast £'000	Month 10	
			<b>Expenditure:</b>								
64,558	70,512	73,090	Schools Block (inc ISB)	76,952	0	76,952	76,952	76,952	76,952	76,952	0
10,441	9,899	10,240	Early Years Block	10,848	711	11,559	10,848	10,849	10,849	11,483	(75)
981	1,001	967	Central School Services Block	973		973	966	967	954	950	(23)
20,939	23,827	26,456	High Needs Block	29,946	0	29,946	30,125	31,531	31,526	31,511	1,564
0	0	0	High Needs Block In-Year deficit recovery	(3,065)		(3,065)	0	0	0	0	3,065
<b>96,919</b>	<b>105,240</b>	<b>110,754</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>115,656</b>	<b>711</b>	<b>116,366</b>	<b>118,892</b>	<b>120,300</b>	<b>120,282</b>	<b>120,897</b>	<b>4,530</b>
			<b>DSG Grant Income:</b>								
(65,700)	(70,293)	(72,937)	Schools Block	(76,952)	0	(76,952)	(76,952)	(76,952)	(76,952)	(77,005)	(52)
(10,229)	(9,834)	(10,102)	Early Years Block	(10,848)	(711)	(11,559)	(10,848)	(10,848)	(10,848)	(11,252)	307
(959)	(1,009)	(992)	Central School Services Block	(973)		(973)	(973)	(973)	(973)	(973)	0
(20,148)	(22,601)	(24,983)	High Needs Block	(26,882)	0	(26,882)	(26,882)	(26,882)	(26,882)	(26,887)	(5)
<b>(97,037)</b>	<b>(103,737)</b>	<b>(109,014)</b>	<b>Total DSG Income</b>	<b>(115,656)</b>	<b>(711)</b>	<b>(116,366)</b>	<b>(115,656)</b>	<b>(115,656)</b>	<b>(115,656)</b>	<b>(116,117)</b>	<b>250</b>
(112)		(53)	In-year adjustments								
<b>(97,149)</b>	<b>(103,737)</b>	<b>(109,067)</b>	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(115,656)</b>	<b>(711)</b>	<b>(116,366)</b>	<b>(115,656)</b>	<b>(115,656)</b>	<b>(115,656)</b>	<b>(116,117)</b>	<b>250</b>
			<b>In year net deficit/(surplus):</b>								
(1,142)	219	153	Schools Block	0	0	0	0	0	0	(52)	(52)
211	65	138	Early Years Block	(0)	0	(0)	(0)	1	1	232	232
22	(8)	(25)	Central School Services Block	0	0	0	(7)	(6)	(20)	(23)	(23)
679	1,227	1,474	High Needs Block	0	0	0	3,243	4,649	4,645	4,624	4,624
		(50)	Grant adjustment (re PPG)								
<b>(230)</b>	<b>1,503</b>	<b>1,689</b>	<b>Net in-year Deficit</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>3,237</b>	<b>4,644</b>	<b>4,626</b>	<b>4,780</b>	<b>4,780</b>
1,691	1,461	2,964	Deficit Balance in reserves	4,761		4,761	4,761	4,761	4,761	4,761	4,761
		108	In year reserve movement	0		0	148	148	148	148	148
<b>1,461</b>	<b>2,964</b>	<b>4,761</b>	<b>Cumulative Deficit</b>	<b>4,761</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,761</b>	<b>8,145</b>	<b>9,553</b>	<b>9,535</b>	<b>9,689</b>	<b>9,689</b>

4.6 The Month Ten forecast shows an in-year forecast deficit of £4.8m,. When added to the cumulative deficit of £4.76m, the forecast year end deficit on the DSG is £9.7m.

4.7 The forecast overspend on the High Needs Block is £4.5m. £3m of this was set as an in-year efficiency target which remains unmet. The remaining £1.56m overspend reflects the current pressures on top up funding in schools. There has been a slight reduction of £15k from the Q3 position on the High Needs Block. Top Up funding is forecast to be £1.7m more than the budget set, seeing overspends in further education colleges and mainstream schools. The mainstream schools are covering additional EHCPs and have been given additional funding for those children on roll who would be in a special school, if places were available. There are reduced costs in higher cost placement areas such as Independent Special Schools.

4.8 The £23k underspend forecast on the Central School Services block is in relation to one-off staffing savings and additional income from fixed penalty notices.

4.9 The Early Years Block has received additional grant funding of £710k to assist with the new funding rates that came into use from September 2023. Despite this, we are expecting the Early Years Block deficit to increase by £232k. The Early Years budget paper has more detail on this.

4.10 The table below shows the forecast position for the end of 2023/24 by block. The surplus balance on the Schools Block of £1.2m is supporting the forecast overspend position on the other blocks.

Reserve Balances (surplus)/deficit	1.4.2023 Actual	Change in reserves	In-year Deficit/ (Surplus)	31.3.2024 Forecast
Schools Block - growth fund	(996)	0	0	(996)
Schools Block De-delegated	(267)	148	0	(119)
Schools Block - other	(92)	0	0	(92)
Early Years Block	1,052	0	232	1,283
Central School Services Block	39	0	(23)	16
High Needs Block	5,070	0	4,624	9,694
Grant changes	(45)	0	(52)	(97)
<b>Total Deficit Balance</b>	<b>4,761</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>4,780</b>	<b>9,689</b>

## 5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The total forecast deficit on the DSG amounts to £9.7m, comprising £4.76m from previous years and a further £4.9m forecast overspend in year. The forecast position will be kept under review and updates provided to Schools' Forum.

## 6. Appendices

- 6.1 Appendix A – DSG 2023-24 Budget Monitoring Report Month 10

## Dedicated School's Grant (DSG) 2023/2024 Budget Monitoring Month Ten

Cost Centre	Description	Original Budget 2023/24	Net Virements in year	Amended Budget 2023/24	Forecast	Variance	Comments
90020	Primary Schools (excluding nursery funding)	55,688,850		55,688,850	55,688,850	0	
DSG top slice	Academy Schools Primary	0		0	0	0	
90025	Secondary Schools (excluding 6th form funding)	20,405,140		20,405,140	20,405,140	0	
DSG top slice	Academy Schools Secondary	0		0	0	0	
90230	DD - Schools in Financial Difficulty (primary schools)	0		0	0	0	
90113	DD - Trade Union Costs	57,830		57,830	57,830	0	
90255	DD - Support to Ethnic minority & bilingual Learners	186,100		186,100	186,100	0	
90349	DD - Behaviour Support Services	234,910		234,910	234,910	0	£3.1k underspend will be used to off-set future years costs to school
90424	DD - CLEAPSS	3,210		3,210	3,210	0	
90470	DD - School Improvement	308,160		308,160	308,160	0	
90423	DD - Statutory & Regulatory Duties	124,230		124,230	124,230	0	£5.7k underspend will be used to off-set future years costs to school
90235	School Contingency - Growth Fund/Falling Rolls Fund	0		0	0	0	
90054	De-delegated funding from reserves	-147,692		-147,692	-147,692	0	
	SSR	91,756		91,756	91,756	0	
	<b>Schools Block Total</b>	<b>76,952,494</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>76,952,494</b>	<b>76,952,494</b>	<b>0</b>	
90583	National Copyright Licences	168,090		168,090	168,092	2	
90019	Servicing of Schools Forum	45,030		45,030	42,735	-2,295	
90743	School Admissions	189,150		189,150	189,150	0	
90354	ESG - Education Welfare	177,480		177,480	154,370	-23,110	one-off saving on staffing costs plus FPN income considerably higher than budget
90460	ESG - Statutory & Regulatory Duties	294,530		294,530	297,470	2,940	
90054	Efficiency Target	997		997	0	-997	unallocated 23/24 grant to be used to off-set reserve deficit
	SSR	98,039		98,039	98,039	0	
	<b>Central School Services Block DSG</b>	<b>973,316</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>973,316</b>	<b>949,856</b>	<b>-23,460</b>	
90010	Early Years Funding - Nursery Schools	931,080	67,170	998,250	1,028,904	30,654	
90037	Early Years Funding - Maintained Schools	2,016,590	139,620	2,156,210	2,138,774	-17,436	
90036	Early Years Funding - PVI Sector	6,202,250	435,963	6,638,213	6,678,226	40,013	
90052	Early Years PPG & Deprivation Funding	218,930	14,110	233,040	216,144	-16,896	
90053	Disability Access Fund	43,060		43,060	22,000	-21,060	
90018	2 year old funding	724,260	53,840	778,100	824,739	46,639	
90017	Central Expenditure on Children under 5	339,480		339,480	341,867	2,387	Pay award higher than budgeted
90287	Pre School Teacher Counselling	64,040		64,040	65,070	1,030	Teacher payrise element that was more than the budgeted value
90238	Early Years Inclusion Fund	108,000		108,000	90,000	-18,000	Plans to spend were rejected
90054	Early Years adjustment re grant funding	122,681		122,681	0	-122,681	
	SSR	77,731		77,731	77,731	0	
	<b>Early Years Block Total</b>	<b>10,848,102</b>	<b>710,703</b>	<b>11,558,805</b>	<b>11,483,455</b>	<b>-75,350</b>	

## Dedicated School's Grant (DSG) 2023/2024 Budget Monitoring Month Ten

Cost Centre	Description	Original Budget 2023/24	Net Virements in year	Amended Budget 2023/24	Forecast	Variance	Comments
90026	Academy Schools RU Top Ups	985,450		985,450	1,273,964	288,514	
90539	Special Schools - Top Up Funding	5,950,060		5,950,060	5,720,067	-229,993	
90548	Non WBC Special Schools - Top Up Funding	430,660		430,660	432,620	1,960	
90554	Non WBC free schools	536,480		536,480	685,870	149,390	
90556	SEMH provision at Theale	919,000		919,000	987,770	68,770	
90575	Non LEA Special School (OofA)	1,177,630		1,177,630	1,091,690	-85,940	
90579	Independent Special School Place & Top Up	5,566,450		5,566,450	5,413,090	-153,360	
90580	Further Education Colleges Top Up	1,212,000		1,212,000	1,674,370	462,370	
90617	Resourced Units top up Funding maintained	320,630		320,630	562,775	242,145	
90618	Non WBC Resourced Units - Top Up Funding	119,850		119,850	105,640	-14,210	
90621	Mainstream - Top Up Funding maintained	1,142,580		1,142,580	1,675,070	532,490	More EHCP's plus additional special place funding
90622	Mainstream - Top Up Funding Academies	548,920		548,920	943,369	394,449	More EHCP's plus additional special place funding
90624	Non WBC Mainstream - Top Up Funding	180,000		180,000	147,280	-32,720	
90625	Pupil Referral Units - Top Up Funding	999,700	90,000	1,089,700	1,050,000	-39,700	
90627	Disproportionate No: of HN Pupils NEW	65,000		65,000	200,000	135,000	
90628	EHCP PRU Placement	920,420		920,420	980,510	60,090	
	<b>High Needs Block: Top Up Funding Total</b>	<b>21,074,830</b>	<b>90,000</b>	<b>21,164,830</b>	<b>22,944,085</b>	<b>1,779,255</b>	
90320	Pupil Referral Units	660,000		660,000	660,000	0	
90540	Special Schools	2,860,000		2,860,000	2,860,000	0	
90546	Special Schools - Place Funding Post 16	790,000		790,000	790,000	0	
90551	Mainstream Maintained - post 16 SEN places	36,000		36,000	36,000	0	
90552	Special Schools and PRU Teachers Pay and Pension	312,050		312,050	324,860	12,810	
90584	Resourced Units - Place Funding	242,000		242,000	242,000	0	
	<b>High Needs Block: Place Funding Total</b>	<b>4,900,050</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,900,050</b>	<b>4,912,860</b>	<b>12,810</b>	
90240	Applied Behaviour Analysis	226,660		226,660	284,800	58,140	
90280	Special Needs Support Team	346,350		346,350	346,350	0	
90281	SEND Strategy (DSG)	64,940		64,940	65,760	820	
90282	Medical Home Tuition	388,730		388,730	211,030	-177,700	huge reduction in use of casual workers going forward, with emphasis on using permanent staff - plans have been further delayed re way forward so a current year saving plus removal of EOTAS post until next financial year
90237	High Needs Contingency	200,960	-90,000	110,960	110,960	0	
90286	Early Years Speech & Language	0	23,665	23,665	12,290	-11,375	
<del>90287</del>	<del>Pre School Teacher Counselling</del>	<del>90,430</del>		<del>90,430</del>	<del>91,300</del>	<del>870</del>	<del>Teacher payrise element that was more than the budgeted value</del>
90288	Elective Home Education Monitoring	34,320		34,320	36,620	2,300	Increased number of children resulting in more visits and therefore mileage claims

## Dedicated School's Grant (DSG) 2023/2024 Budget Monitoring Month Ten

Cost Centre	Description	Original Budget 2023/24	Net Virements in year	Amended Budget 2023/24	Forecast	Variance	Comments
90290	Sensory Impairment	282,340		282,340	260,790	-21,550	
90295	Therapy Services	469,700		469,700	494,020	24,320	
90372	Therapeutic Thinking	58,590		58,590	33,890	-24,700	
90373	Emotional Based School Avoiders (EBSA)	134,840		134,840	108,530	-26,310	
90374	SEMH Practitioner	41,490		41,490	27,720	-13,770	
90555	LAL funding	161,690		161,690	161,690	0	
90565	Equipment For SEN Pupils	15,000		15,000	15,000	0	
90577	SEN Commissioned Provision	636,220		636,220	633,250	-2,970	
90582	PRU Outreach	61,200		61,200	61,200	0	
90585	HN Outreach Special Schools	50,000		50,000	50,000	0	
90610	Hospital Tuition	36,180		36,180	27,805	-8,375	
90830	ASD Teachers	285,880		285,880	289,880	4,000	Teacher payrise element that was more than the budgeted value
90961	Vulnerable Children	179,400		179,400	124,400	-55,000	
90581	Dingleys Promise	30,000		30,000	30,000	0	
	<b>High Needs Block: Non Top Up or Place Funding</b>	<b>3,794,920</b>	<b>-66,335</b>	<b>3,728,585</b>	<b>3,477,285</b>	<b>-251,300</b>	
90054	Efficiency Target	-3,064,547	-23,665	-3,088,212	0	3,088,212	
	SSR	176,475		176,475	176,475	0	
	<b>High Needs Block Total</b>	<b>26,881,728</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>26,881,728</b>	<b>31,510,705</b>	<b>4,628,977</b>	
	<b>TOTAL DSG EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>115,655,640</b>	<b>710,703</b>	<b>116,366,343</b>	<b>120,896,510</b>	<b>4,530,167</b>	
90030	DSG Grant Account	-115,655,640		-115,655,640	-115,405,866	249,774	
	Early Years Supplementary Funding	0.00	-710,703	-710,703	-710,703	0	
	<b>Net In-year Deficit</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,779,941</b>	<b>4,779,941</b>	
	<b>Deficit Balance brought forward</b>	<b>4,761,000</b>		<b>4,761,000</b>	<b>4,761,000</b>	<b>0</b>	
	<b>In year reserve movement</b>				<b>147,692</b>	<b>147,692</b>	Funding from reserves for de-delegations
	<b>Cumulative Deficit</b>	<b>4,761,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,761,000</b>	<b>9,688,633</b>	<b>4,927,633</b>	





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## Schools' Forum - Contracts - Forward Plan

The Schools' Forum must be consulted when the local authority is proposing a contract for supplies and services which is to be funded from the Schools Budget (Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)) and is in excess of the EU procurement thresholds (£170,781.60).

Contract Title	Contract Start Date	Contract End Date (initial term)	Contract End Date (Including any Extension)	Contract Term in years (in brackets maximum possible extension)	Contract Total Value (£) based on Initial Term	Contract Amount (Total Value inclusive of Contract Extension Agreed)	Supplier name	WBC Responsible Officer	Notes
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)	01/08/2021	31/07/2024	31/07/2024	3 (4)	£164,850	Extension value yet to be confirmed	Rose Road Association	Thomas Ng / Kiki Hurford (supports procurement process only)	This contract is not funded from the DSG and is an Information item only. A report will be brought to the Forum for information later in the year.
West Berkshire Schools Meals Service	24/07/2020	23/07/2023	23/07/2025	3 (2)	£600000approx	£1,000,000	Caterlink	Kiki Hurford (supports procurement process only)	Invoices are paid directly from schools that opted to be in the contract. The contract has been extended by two years to 2025 in consultation with the relevant WBC officers and the schools that are part of the contract. The contract is reviewed on an annual basis by the head teachers (in July). The procurement process is supported by a WBC Officer.
Education Packages for Young People with Severe Social Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties	01/09/2020	31/08/2023	31/08/2025	3 (2)	£1,674,000	£2,790,000	Engaging Potential LTD	Jane Seymour / Kiki Hurford (supports procurement process only)	Information on this contract was included within the High Needs Block Report brought to the Forum in March 2023.
Energy Framework - CCS framework RM6011 - Electricity	01/04/2017 (rolling contract since 2008)	01/10/2023	31/03/2025		£5,421,522		EDF (HH)	Adrian Slaughter/Sarah Wood	<b>Update from Energy Team 27.02.24:</b> An email to all schools was sent out on 20/02/2024 to provide the latest estimated gas and electricity pricing for 24/25 financial year. Actual pricing should be confirmed by the Crown Commercial Service by the end of April/early May. Schools are reminded that should they wish to leave the central energy contract, they will need to give notice in writing to <a href="mailto:energymangement@westberks.gov.uk">energymangement@westberks.gov.uk</a> by 11 March 2024. This will mean that they will leave the central energy contract on 31 March 2025.
Energy Framework – CCS Framework RM6011 - Gas	01/04/2017 (rolling contract since 2008))	01/10/2023	31/03/2025		£1,325,589		Total	Adrian Slaughter/Sarah Wood	
Children and Young People's Integrated Therapies (CYPIT)	01/04/2023	31/08/2028	31/03/3031	5 (3)	£2,348,480	£3,757,568	Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust	Kiki Hurford / Thomas Bailey	A report was brought to the Schools' Forum meeting in October 2022 and the new therapy contract was agreed.

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