

# Notice of Meeting

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## Schools Forum

**Monday 2 December 2024 at 5.00pm**  
Via Zoom

The meeting can be watched live here: [www.westberks.gov.uk/schoolsforumlive](http://www.westberks.gov.uk/schoolsforumlive)

Date of despatch of Agenda: Tuesday 26 November 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 2 December 2024 *(continued)*

**Forum Members:** Reverend Mark Bennet, Nicolle Browning, Heather Codling, Iain Cottingham, Paul Davey, Jacque Davies, David Fitter, Richard Hand, Michelle Harrison, Keith Harvey, Jon Hewitt, Trevor Keable, Jo Lagares, Julie Lewry, Jo MacArthur, Jamie Morton, Chris Prosser, David Ramsden, Lesley Roberts, Graham Spellman (Chair), Phil Spray, Chloe Summerville, Edwin Towill and Charlotte Wilson

# Agenda

## Part I

Page No.

- |   |  |        |
|---|--|--------|
| 1 | <b>Apologies</b>   |        |
| 2 | <b>Minutes of previous meeting dated 14th October 2024</b> | 1 - 8  |
| 3 | <b>Actions arising from previous meetings</b>              | 9 - 10 |
| 4 | <b>Declarations of Interest</b>                            |        |
| 5 | <b>Membership</b>  |        |

## Items for Decision

- |   |   |         |
|---|---|---------|
| 6 | <b>School Funding Formula 2025/26 (Melanie Ellis)</b> | 11 - 30 |
| 7 | <b>Final De-delegations 2025/26 (Lisa Potts)</b>      | 31 - 74 |

## Items for Discussion

- |   |  |          |
|---|--|----------|
| 8 | <b>Draft HNB Budget Proposals 2025/26 (Nicola Ponton/Neil Goddard)</b> | 75 - 102 |
|---|--|----------|

## Items for Information

- |    |  |           |
|----|--|-----------|
| 9  | <b>Update on the DfE's Delivering Better Value Programme (Hester Collicut)</b>                   | 103 - 112 |
| 10 | <b>Deficit Schools (Melanie Ellis)</b>   | 113 - 118 |
| 11 | <b>Forward Plans</b>   | 119 - 122 |
| 12 | <b>Date and format of the next meeting</b><br><i>Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 5pm.</i> |           |

**Agenda - Schools Forum to be held on Monday 2 December 2024** *(continued)*

Sarah Clarke  
Service Director: Strategy and Governance

If you require this information in a different format or translation, please contact  
Sadie Owen on telephone (01635) 519045.

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**Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee**

## **SCHOOLS FORUM**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 14 OCTOBER 2024**

**Present:** Councillor Heather Codling (Executive Portfolio Holder: Children and Family Services), Councillor Iain Cottingham (Executive Portfolio Holder: Finance and Resources), Paul Davey (Maintained Primary School Governor), Jacquie Davies (Pupil Referral Unit Headteacher), David Fitter (Academy School Headteacher), Richard Hand (Trade Union), Michelle Harrison (Maintained Primary Schools), Keith Harvey (Maintained Primary School Headteacher), Jon Hewitt (Maintained Special School Headteacher), Trevor Keable (Academy School Governor), Jo Lagares (Maintained Primary School Headteacher), Julie Lewry (Academy School Headteacher), Jamie Morton (Non School - Post 16 Providers), Lesley Roberts (Maintained Primary School Headteacher), Phil Spray (Maintained Primary School Governor), Chloe Summerville (Maintained Nursery School Headteacher) and Charlotte Wilson (Academy School Headteacher)

**Also Present:** Rose Carberry (Principal Adviser for School Improvement), AnnMarie Dodds (Executive Director - Children's Services), Melanie Ellis (Service Lead - Financial Management), Neil Goddard (Service Director - Education and SEND), Jessica Bailiss (Democratic Services Officer)

**Apologies for inability to attend the meeting:** Reverend Mark Bennet (Church of England Diocese), Nicolle Browning (Maintained Secondary School Headteacher), Jo MacArthur (Maintained Primary School Headteacher), David Ramsden (Maintained Secondary School Headteacher), Graham Spellman (Romary Catholic Diocese (Chair)) and Edwin Towill (Academy School Headteacher)

*(Vice-Chair in the Chair)*

#### **PART I**

##### **1 Minutes of previous meeting dated 15th July 2024**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2024 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Vice-Chair.

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

The Schools' Forum noted that all actions were completed.

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

Chris Prosser, Jacquie Davies and Jon Hewitt declared that they had an interest in agenda item nine due to being from a school with a surplus balance. As their interest was a prejudicial and pecuniary interest they would leave the meeting for the duration of the item and not take part in the vote.

##### **4 Membership**

Jess Bailiss provided the following updates with regards to Membership:

## SCHOOLS FORUM - 14 OCTOBER 2024 - MINUTES

- Edwin Towill had joined the Schools' Forum as an academy representative.
- There were two academy governor vacancies. An election was held in September however, no nominations were received. The election would be repeated at a later stage.
- Chris Prosser was approaching the end of his term of office at the end of October and had confirmed that he would continue for a further term.
- Graham Spellman reached the end of his term of office at the end of July and following consultation with the Diocese had confirmed that he would continue for a further term.

*(The Vice-Chair proposed that agenda items 10 and 11 be considered first as some Officers and Forum Members were expected to arrive slightly late to the meeting)*

### **5 Delivering Better Value Programme Update (Hester Collicut)**

Hester Collicut introduced her report (Agenda Item 10), which provided an update on the Delivering Better Value Programme (DBV) and its impact on the SEND system in West Berkshire. Hester Collicut reported that updates were provided to the Department for Education (DfE) quarterly between April 2024 and April 2025. Information concerning the second quarter had just been submitted. The DBV programme was progressing well. There were delays relating to recruitment, which did impact on some areas of delivery including the Mental Health Programme and the Transition Support Programme. Both of these programmes had been provided with permission to run beyond March 2025 into the summer.

Trevor Keable referred to paragraph 4.19 of the report where it stated that a business case would be submitted for additional resources to support the business-as-usual processing of annual reviews. He assumed that this tied in with agenda item eight (Transition Support Programme) and queried if he was correct in understanding that this was work that the Local Authority should be carrying out anyway and therefore should not require extra resources. Hester Collicut reported that it was a statutory obligation to manage annual reviews. Additional input would be required to meet the increased demand for Education Health and Care Plans. It was an area that had been highlighted through DBV and would require expansion and realignment of services in order to meet deadlines. It was expected that a review of services would take place over the autumn term.

Trevor Keable referred to the Transition Support Programme report later on the agenda (agenda item 8) and noted that it was seeking further funding. He assumed that this was the same funding referred to in the DBV update report. Hester Collicut stated that a pilot programme was being delivered as part of the Transition Support Programme, which was part of/funded by DBV and therefore would only be funded until July 2025. To ensure the pilot programme was successful this needed to run for the full year, and this was why additional funding was being sought for the posts outlined in the report later on the agenda. The pilot programme would impact on the High Needs Block because it would support successful transitions into mainstream school and meet needs earlier. Trevor Keable further queried if in affect the Forum was being informed that there was not the money available to provide what legally should be being provided. Hester Collicut confirmed that this was not the case as the annual review business case was a separate internal mechanism at the LA. It was about the restructure of the assessment team and reviewing processes. The DBV had provided the opportunity to unpick processes and provide a sustainable model moving forward.

Hester Collicut clarified that match funding support was being sought from the Forum for the two posts, which formed part of the Transition Support Programme. The post,

## SCHOOLS FORUM - 14 OCTOBER 2024 - MINUTES

focused on annual reviews, was held within the DBV, and this was a short phase to ensure the pilot worked successfully focusing on transitions of year five and six pupils. In the meantime, irrespective of DBV, a review of statutory assessments was taking place to ensure statutory requirements were being met.

Neil Goddard further clarified that the LA had been under resourced in relation to the annual review process and therefore unable to engage in a way it would like to. There had recently been budget capacity provided to add an interim role to enable the LA to start catching up with input to annual reviews. There was a bid going through the internal corporate processes for additional LA money to make this a permanent post going forward. Transitions were a very separate issue but was linked in terms of the resources that went into it. The LA understood its statutory role in relation to annual reviews and was looking to place further investment in this area.

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

### 6 **Safety Valve Programme Update (Hester Collicut)**

Hester Collicut introduced the report (Agenda Item 11), which provided the most up to date information in relation to the Safety Valve Programme (SVP). Since the change in Government there had not been any notification received regarding the SVP. It still existed, however the ways LAs were invited into it was still unclear. No confirmation had been provided yet regarding how long SVP would continue. West Berkshire was currently in the DBV Programme. The report suggested that when information was available regarding changes to SVP, this would be brought forward to the Schools' Forum rather than regular updates at each meeting which were not necessary when nothing had changed.

**RESOLVED** that the Schools' Forum noted the update and that information on SVP would be brought forward as and when it was available.

### 7 **School Funding Formula Consultation (Melanie Ellis)**

Melanie Ellis introduced the report (Agenda Item 6) which set out the requirements and changes for setting the primary and secondary school funding formula for 2025/26 and to approve West Berkshire Council's funding proposals to go out to consultation with all schools. The consultation with schools was planned to commence on 16<sup>th</sup> October and finish on 6<sup>th</sup> November. The major issue was that financial information had not yet been reviewed from the Department for Education (DfE). Normally provisional information was received in July, which enabled the LA to give schools an indication on funding. It was not expected that the information would be received before 30<sup>th</sup> October, which would not allow enough time to run the consultation and therefore it was proposed that the consultation was based on the general principles from the past few years. The questions normally used were set out in section ten of the report.

Melanie Ellis explained that if anything different came out of the Government announcement then a follow up consultation via email would be required.

Trevor Keable asked for clarification on point 5.1 (5) of the report regarding the possibility of transferring up to 0.5 percent of the total Schools Block to other blocks of the DSG. He queried if this was stating that if the Forum did not approve a transfer then the LA would appeal the decision. Melanie Ellis clarified that this was setting out that the LA could apply for disapplication, and this was something available to the LA however, there were no forgone conclusions on this.

Trevor Keable queried section three of the report relating to the Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA), where it was stated that there was no impact. Melanie Ellis understood no impact had been assessed because the impact was the same across all

## SCHOOLS FORUM - 14 OCTOBER 2024 - MINUTES

schools. The point of an EIA was to assess if a decision impacted a certain group of characteristics, and it was not believed that this would be the case. Trevor Keable stated that he disagreed with this and felt that removing money from schools would have an impact. Melanie Ellis stated she would consult Officers at the LA regarding the EIA in time for the next Forum meeting in December.

Trevor Keable asked what transferred money would be used for if the transfer was agreed. Melanie Ellis confirmed that if a block transfer was approved it would move up to 0.5 percent of funding from the Schools Block into a block of the Forum's choice, which had historically been the High Needs Block (HNB). Neil Goddard added reassurance that by moving funding from the Schools' Block to the HNB, funding was distributed to schools in a different and more targeted way. This also applied to any funding clawed back, in that this would fund pupils with identified needs through the HNB.

Trevor Keable asked how it could be assured that it would not be used to offset the deficit. Neil Goddard reported that the HNB was in deficit and West Berkshire was not in an unusual position compared to other LAs in relation to this. By transferring from the Schools Block to the HNB the deficit would be reduced by the amount transferred but money would still go through various routes to schools to support the pupils that needed it. The Vice-Chair reminded the Forum that the consultation provided schools with the opportunity to give a view on any transfer of funding.

Lesley Roberts reminded the Forum of the process in previous years and believed that the difficulty the previous year was that the proposal had changed late in the process and was different to what schools had voiced through the consultation. A halfway mark had therefore been agreed. The Vice-Chairman was of the understanding that the consultation was to obtain views however, Schools' Forum had the final decision on the matter, which might not necessarily be in line with the consultation views. Neil Goddard commented that consultation was carried out with the purpose of understanding the views of schools. The recommendation from the LA would be informed by but not limited by these views. The Schools' Forum's decision would be based on the views of schools and that of the LA. If the LA disagreed with the Forum's decision the only course of action it could take would be to apply to the Secretary of State as set out in the report.

Chris Prosser clarified that the previous year the consultation had suggested a zero percent transfer and subsequently the LA had expressed that it was going to make a disapplication request. As a result, a compromise of a 0.25 percent transfer had been reached, which had prevented the disapplication request going ahead. It was observed that it was the first time that details of a possible disapplication request were included within the consultation.

David Fitter referred to the transfer of funding, and this being used to offset the deficit in the HNB. He was unclear how the funding could also be used to support students who needed the money in schools. Neil Goddard explained that he understood the perception and explained that the view of the LA was that that in doing a transfer, this money would be used first and if expenditure went beyond this in-year then there would be a deficit position. Any in-year deficit would then be combined with deficit carried forward from previous years.

The Vice-Chair proposed that the Forum consider item seven on the Draft De-delegation proposals with the view to voting on all the items for consultation together (see item 7).

*(The Schools' Forum considered item seven – Draft De-delegation Proposals 2025-26).*

The Vice-Chair proposed that the Schools' Forum agree that consultation be undertaken with all schools on:

(1) West Berkshire Council's proposed school funding formula for 2025/26



## SCHOOLS FORUM - 14 OCTOBER 2024 - MINUTES

- (2) An up to 0.5% transfer from the Schools Block to other funding blocks
- (3) The criteria to be used to allocate additional funds
- (4) The proposed services to be de-delegated (included in the report for agenda item 7).

The motion was seconded and at the vote was carried.

### **RESOLVED that:**

- Melanie Ellis would consult Officers at the LA regarding the EIA and assessed impact in time for the next Forum meeting in December.
- The recommendation as set out in section 2.1 of the report was approved by the Schools' Forum,

### **8 Draft De-delegations (Lisa Potts)**

Lisa Potts introduced the report (Agenda Item 7), which set out the details, cost, and charges to schools of the services on which maintained school representatives were required to vote (on an annual basis).

Appendix A contained an outline based on a per pupil value based on the October 2023 census and this was because the October 2024 census details had not yet been received. The total costs of the services would not change. There had not been any changes from the previous year regarding the services proposed for de-delegation. The recommendation was that the information be included in the consultation with schools (as set out in the previous report).

*(The Vice-Chair redirected back to Agenda Item 6 to conduct a vote on the item)*

### **9 Transitions Support Programme Proposal (Hester Collicut)**

Hester Collicut introduced the report (Agenda Item 8), which outlined the progress that had been made in relation to the Transitions Support Programme as part of the Delivering Better Value Programme and outlined the rationale for the match funding request.

Hester Collicut explained that the report proposed match funding for two posts to enable targeted support for year six pupils as they moved through the spring and summer term, into the autumn term. It was a full year's programme, which had been coproduced with schools through the Delivering Better Value (DBV) Programme. Shared funding was being sought because the DBV Programme would end in July and it was suggested the Transitions Support Programme needed to run beyond this to ensure it had an impact. The Vice-Chair was of the understanding that whilst the Forum could take a view on this, the final decision sat with the LA. Neil Goddard reported that the LA would wish for this to be a joint decision with the Schools' Forum however, the LA was asking the Schools' Forum to take a view as a consultee rather than the decision-making body.

Trevor Keable queried where funding would come from if the recommendation was approved. Neil Goddard clarified that it was a project where using money from the HNB for the purpose set out would, overtime, help to reduce the escalation of costs and pressure against the HNB, because transitions would be effectively managed.

Chris Prosser raised concern regarding posts introduced as part of Invest to Save initiatives historically where no impact had been demonstrated and he was concerned about the process being repeated. The Vice-Chair highlighted that the Transitions Support Programme had been identified through research carried out by Newton and hopefully this provided an evidence base. Hester Collicut highlighted that when children received EHCPs it was often at the point of transition that high numbers were lost to

## SCHOOLS FORUM - 14 OCTOBER 2024 - MINUTES

specialist placements. Irrespective of if a child received an EHCP at that point, the aim was to ensure these children were supported successfully into mainstream. Consultation with parents and schools on this area highlighted that there was great anxiety and a lack of confidence in the system and the aim was to address this. A number of children had been identified as particularly vulnerable and if there was success in supporting these children then a significant amount would be saved against the HNB and their outcomes would be improved.

Neil Goddard referred to Chris Prosser's point about historical spend with the view of reducing pressure and he noted that this was something that Forum had raised concerns about in the past. Neil Goddard confirmed that this was something that would be looked into through DBV and would be brought back to the Schools' Forum at a later stage. In relation to the project in question there was an evidence base for why it should be undertaken and that it would likely lead to savings. It was also worth noting that the HNB would only provide half the cost as the other half was funded through DBV. It was therefore felt the project offered good value to the HNB as it would provide a longer-term piece of work that would enable the LA to assess the impact.

Hester Collicut confirmed that the posts were term time only and oncosts were included.

Paul Davey was of the understanding that DBV funding would end in a year's time, and he queried if the total cost of the project would move over the HNB at that stage. Hester Collicut stated that the impact of the pilot project would need to be assessed and if success could be demonstrated then there would be a strong case for a review by the Schools' Forum about maintaining the programme moving forward.

Lesley Roberts commented that it would be good to see earlier help offered to younger children if the pilot programme was a success. Hester Collicut commented that there would be an opportunity to expand and consider how the programme might be developed moving forward. A specific area was currently being focused on that could be easily evaluated so that immediate impact could be assessed.

Councillor Heather Codling emphasised that the best outcomes for young people were being sought from this programme and not just the financial benefits. Finances were important and it was important to get this element right however, it was the outcomes for the young people involved that she was most concerned about. Chris Prosser agreed however, highlighted the importance of questioning how funding would be used.

The Vice-Chair invited the Forum to consider the recommendation set out in the report. It was proposed and seconded that the recommendation for the match funding of two Transition Support Programme posts that had been identified as necessary for the sustained delivery of the pilot initiative for one year, be approved.

**RESOLVED** that the recommendation under section 2.1 of the report was approved.

### 10 **Clawback of Surplus Balances Update (Neil Goddard)**

*(Chris Prosser, Jacque Davies and Jon Hewitt left the meeting at 5.50pm)*

Neil Goddard introduced the report (Agenda Item 9), which updated the Schools' Forum on the outcomes of the review of the proposed clawback of excessive balances in relation to the 2023/24 financial year end.

Neil Goddard reported that following on from the process that had led to the decision taken by Schools' Forum in July 2024, the LA had listened very carefully to concerns raised by schools about the process implemented and had conducted a review of all surpluses identified as uncommitted and subject to clawback. The review had concluded on 11<sup>th</sup> September. Neil Goddard reported that he had visited many of the schools directly impacted along with Councillor Heather Codling. Constructive discussions had taken place about the circumstances that had led to the situation and the underlying

## SCHOOLS FORUM - 14 OCTOBER 2024 - MINUTES

issues for why surpluses had been accrued. Each school had been given the opportunity to provide the LA with further information whilst being better informed about what information was required. The information had been reviewed by a panel, which he had formed part of along with the Audit Manager and Melanie Ellis, and it had become clear that there were elements of surplus balances that should have been counted as committed. This was largely because they related to capital expenditure. This had not been identified originally because either the capital expenditure had been delayed; had been driven by recent events or had not been recorded in a discrete way when provided in the first instance. Through these discussions a much more accurate position had been reached in terms of surplus balances.

Neil Goddard explained that the policy already agreed by the Schools' Forum had then been applied to remaining surplus balance as set out in the report and as a result only two schools would be impacted. It was acknowledged that this was a significant change from the original proposal however reflected a much more informed position.

It was recommended by the LA that the Schools' Forum approved the recommended clawback amount as set out in the report. In order to clarify the process going forward, Neil Goddard noted that at the previous round of meetings the Heads Funding Group (HFG) and Schools' Forum had participated in discussions regarding what balances contained and it was highlighted that this was not the role of the Schools' Forum or HFG. This was a piece of work to be undertaken by the LA with individual schools and having undertaken this work in detail, the decision before the Schools' Forum was whether to clawback or not. It was clarified that the LA could then take steps to appeal this through the Secretary of State if felt appropriate. Neil Goddard reminded the Forum that any funding clawed back would go into the HNB and would go back to schools through a more targeted approach.

The Vice-Chair commented that the process had been difficult however, it felt like the approach that had subsequently taken place was the correct one. Trevor Keable was concerned that process had not been completed correctly the first time around resulting in a report being presented to the Forum that was incorrect. Going forward there needed to be confidence that the reports received from the LA were accurate. It was disappointing that this was not the case. Neil Goddard acknowledged the points made and stated that the LA would not wish to present anything other than accurate reports to the Forum. There had been an ambition to complete the process by the end of the academic year and this had led to an insufficient amount of rigor in the process. The LA acknowledged retrospectively that this was an error and had taken action to address and recognise this.

Richard Hand commented that it was important to be mindful that lots of LAs had been in a similar position and it was a result of serious under funding under the previous Government.

It was proposed and seconded that the LA's revised clawback proposals set out in section 5.1 of the report be approved. At the vote the motion was carried.

**RESOLVED** that the LA's revised clawback proposals set out in section 5.1 of the report were approved by the Schools' Forum.

### 11 **DSG Monitoring 2024/25 Month 6 (Lisa Potts)**

*(Chris Prosser, Jacque Davies and Jon Hewitt rejoined the meeting at 6pm)*

Lisa Potts introduced the report (Agenda Item 12), which provided the forecast financial position of the services funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and highlighted any under or over spends, and the cumulative deficit on the DSG.

## SCHOOLS FORUM - 14 OCTOBER 2024 - MINUTES

Lisa Potts advised that the report presented data for quarter two where the in-year deficit was standing at just under £8m. This was largely due to the in-year deficit in the High Needs Block (HNB). The forecast deficit for the end of the year was £17.5m.

There were a number of new funding streams in the Early Years Block including increased entitlement for children over nine months old. There was also a saving in the area relating to a senior post.

There were a couple of areas of overspend in the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) and this was mainly due to charges for the Capita system which had been higher than expected.

Regarding the HNB, two terms worth of top up funding had been set out for the maintained special schools, which provided a better idea of what the forecast was likely to be for this area. There was currently a £119k overspend and pressure was continuing due to increasing numbers of children requiring an EHCP assessment.

Lisa Potts drew attention to the table under section 5.12 of the report, which highlighted the expected position at the end of the year for each of the individual blocks. Underspend in the Schools' Block was helping to bring the deficit down slightly.

Lisa Potts explained that the report did not include figures related to the clawback and the funding adjustment would be included with the next forecast in quarter three.

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

### 12 Forward Plans

**RESOLVED** that the Schools' Forum noted the forward plan and contracts forward plan.

### 13 Date and format of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Schools' Forum would take place virtually Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024.

*(The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm and closed at 6.05 pm)*

**CHAIR** .....

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

**Actions from previous meetings**

Ref No.	Date of meeting(s) raised	Item	Action	Responsible Officer	Update
Oct24-Ac2	14th October 2024	School Funding Formula Consultation	Melanie Ellis would consult Officers at the LA regarding the EIA and assessed impact in time for the next Forum meeting in December.	Melanie Ellis	Melanie Ellis has consulted and also reviewed the DfE EIA and updated the EIA included with the School Funding Formula report in line with this.

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## Schools Funding Formula 2025/26: Consultation Results

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**Report being considered by:** Schools' Forum

**Date of Meeting:** 2nd December 2024

**Report Author:** Melanie Ellis

**Item for:** Decision                      **By:** All School Members/All Forum Members/All Maintained School Members

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### 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To set out the results of the consultation with all schools on the proposed primary and secondary school funding formula for 2025/26.
- 1.2 For Schools Forum to consider the Local Authority and Heads Funding Group recommendations to Schools Forum.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Following consultation, the Local Authority recommend the following for setting the school funding formula for 2025/26, for approval at Schools Forum and to go as a recommendation for political ratification:
  - (a) To mirror the Department for Education's (DfE) 2025/26 National Funding Formula (NFF) to calculate the funding allocations.
  - (b) To address any surplus or shortfall in funding by adjusting the AWPU values.
  - (c) To apply a 0.5% top slice to schools' funding to support the High Needs Block.
  - (d) To approve the criteria to be used to allocate additional funds.
  - (e) To approve the proposed services to be de-delegated.
- 2.2 Following the meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> November 2024, the Heads Funding Group (HFG) recommendations were as follows:
  - (a) Agree
  - (b) Agree
  - (c) Recommended a 0% block transfer
  - (d) Agree

- (e) Agree for 2025/26 in line with the consultation responses. However, recommend to commence a detailed review of dedelegations on a service by service basis, with a view to voting on each service separately for 2026/27.

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?		Y	
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?	Y			The NFF has a positive impact on some protected characteristics. If a transfer to the high needs block is supported this would further support disability.
Data Impact:		Y		
Consultation and Engagement:	All schools in West Berkshire.			

### 4. Introduction/Background

- 4.1 2025/26 is the third year of transition to the direct schools National Funding Formula (NFF). Each Local Authority (LA) will continue to have some discretion over their schools funding formulae, in consultation with local schools.
- 4.2 In previous years, the DfE has announced provisional financial settlement information for each LA for the upcoming financial year by the end of July. This generally includes



confirmed NFF per pupil funding rates to be paid to each individual LA and details of how funding rates and any other elements of the Funding Framework have changed.

- 4.3 However, the notional NFF allocations for schools for 2025-26 are yet to be published, with an indication as to the publication date being by the end of November 2024. Due to the delay in the confirmation the NFF factor values, a modelling authority proforma tool (APT) for 2025-26 will not be provided.
- 4.4 A summary policy note was issued on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2024 by the DfE with indicative schools NFF values. These mostly look to be increasing by 0.5%, after mainstreaming additional grants and allowing for the full year effect of the September 2024 teachers pay increase. This uplift will need to accommodate the full cost of the 2025-26 support staff pay award and the pay award for teachers from September 2025. There will be a separate grant to cover the additional cost of the increase in employers' NI contributions in 2025-26. Full detail will be confirmed in due course.
- 4.5 A key feature of the budget setting process is the consultation with schools. This takes place each year for the Schools Forum to consider the outcomes early in the autumn. Despite the lack of notional allocations and confirmed factor values, it was important to still seek views from schools on the relevant areas of the budget that remain subject to local decision making.
- 4.6 The LA will remain responsible for determining final allocations to schools, in consultation with the Schools Forum.
- 4.7 The LA has the right of appeal to the Secretary of State on any funding decisions made by the Schools Forum.
- 4.8 Political ratification must be obtained before the 22nd January 2025 deadline for submission.

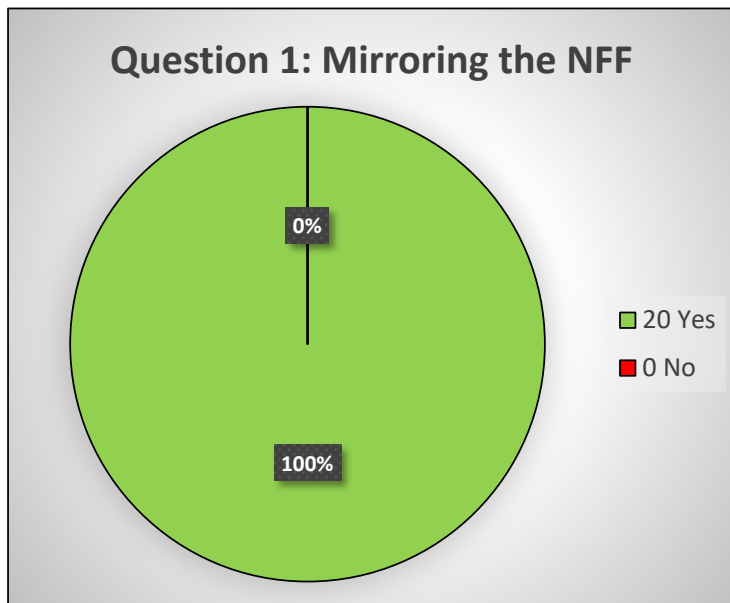
## 5. Consultation Responses

- 5.1 The consultation was open for three weeks from 16th October 2024 to 6th November 2024 and 20 responses were received.

### **Question 1:**

- 5.2 2025/26 is the third year of transition to the direct schools National Funding Formula (NFF). Local authorities:
  - Must use all NFF factors other than the following optional factors: rates, PFI contracts and exceptional circumstances.
  - Will only be allowed to use NFF factors in their local formulae.
  - Must move their local formula factor values at least 10% closer to the NFF, except where local formulae are already 'mirroring' the NFF. (local factors within 2.5% of the respective NFF values are deemed to be mirroring the NFF).

Do you agree that, subject to final affordability, West Berkshire should mirror the DfE's 2025/26 NFF as closely as possible and that this formula should be used to calculate funding allocations? Yes/No



**Comments in support:**

"It makes sense to mirror the DfE NFF as far as possible".

"We need to continue to mirror the DfE's 2025/26 NFF and to use this to calculate funding allocations".

"This is consistent with previous years. Not mirroring the NFF would be contrary to the requirement to move local formula factor values closer to the NFF year on year".

**Local Authority recommendation:**

To mirror the Department for Education's (DfE) 2025/26 National Funding Formula (NFF) to calculate the funding allocations.

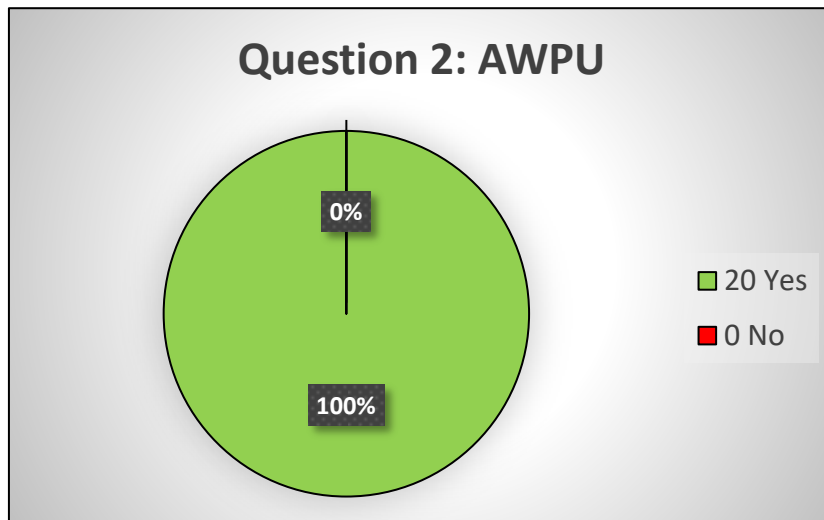
**HFG recommendation:**

Agree

**Question 2:**

West Berkshire Council replicates the NFF as far as possible, however, a decision needs to be taken locally on how to allocate any surplus or shortfall in the final funding allocation. There are a number of options for ensuring affordability, which effectively means deciding on a methodology for allocating any funding shortfall or surplus. Amending the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU), the basic funding entitlement, is the LA's recommendation as this would restrict the gains of all schools, but protects some schools by the minimum funding guarantee (MFG).

Do you agree that any shortfall or surplus in funding is addressed by adjusting the AWPU values? Yes/No



**Comments in support:**

“Fair approach across all schools with MFG protection”.

“This option seems fairest”.

“Adjusting AWPU is the fairest way of addressing any shortfall or surplus as it affects all schools equally in proportion to their size and phase. It is consistent with previous years”.

“This is the fairest way of doing this”.

**Local Authority recommendation:**

To address any surplus or shortfall in funding by adjusting the AWPU values.

**HFG recommendation:**

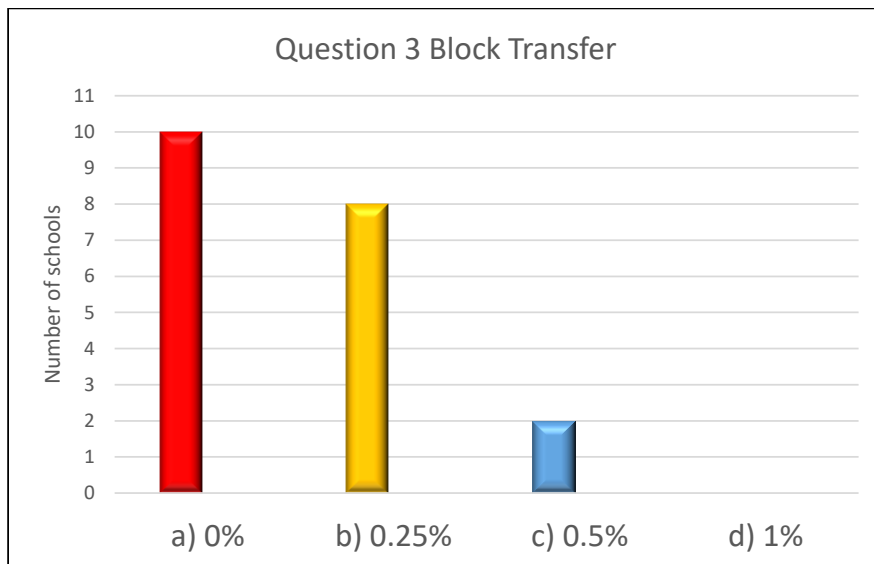
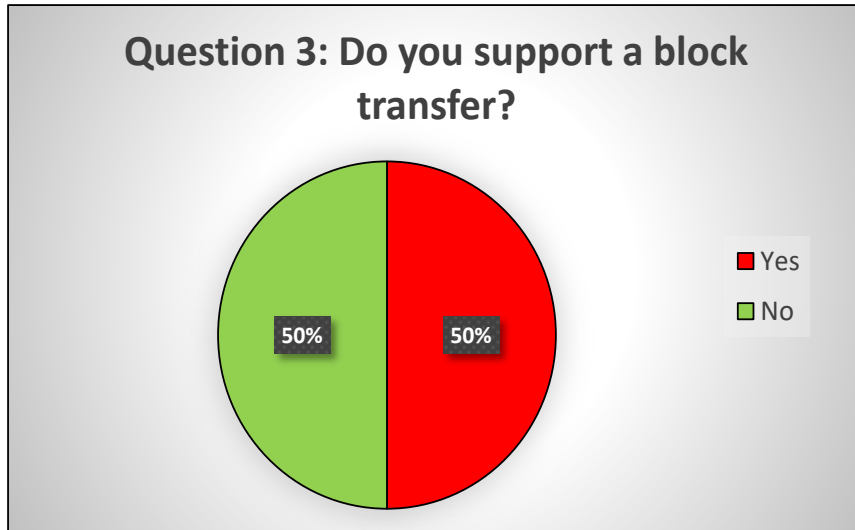
Agree

**Question 3:**

The NFF allows for a transfer up to 0.5% of the total schools block allocations to other blocks of the DSG, with Schools Forum agreement. Without Schools Forum agreement, or where they wish to transfer more than 0.5% of their schools block funding into one or more other blocks, local authorities can submit a disapplication request to the Secretary of State.

What percentage transfer of funding would you support from the Schools Block to the High Needs block?

A) 0%, B) 0.25%, C) 0.5%, D) 1%.



**Comments in support:**

“I do not generally agree with funding being transferred from core school budgets. However, I know that without an agreement from schools' forum, the Local Authority is likely to appeal to the Secretary of State, due to the high level of deficit within the High Needs Block. Therefore, I think that 0.5% of funding should be transferred, which I feel is a level, which would be just about manageable for schools”.

“Support 0.25%. More information (methodology, viability of funding allocations) is required to support a higher transfer”.

“We are sympathetic to the idea of top-slicing Schools Block funding to help support high needs students in the LA. Any transfer of funds should not be used simply to reduce the £16.5m deficit in the HNB. We would agree to a maximum 0.25% transfer provided that it is clear to schools how the LA propose to use the additional funding and provided there is a clear plan on how the LA will reduce the HNB deficit”.

“Support 0.25%. Funding for EHCP’s is already low and many schools are struggling to balance budgets alongside employing staff to support children. Transferring further money would only be agreeable when all other consultations and plans are implemented. We need to ensure greater scrutiny of how EHCP’s are agreed and funded. Some schools will have to make difficult decisions about how best to support children in mainstream classes – e.g. sharing support or funding part of the day”.

“Support 0.25%. This amount seems to a compromise percentage to ensure some money is given to the High Needs Block, whilst bearing in mind 1) that some schools will not benefit greatly from this if they have low SEND numbers, 2) other schools are already stretched with their budgets or are in deficit and cannot afford this middle ground percentage to be transferred and 3) the Local Authority is likely to appeal to the Secretary of State, due to the high level of deficit within the High Needs Block already if some monies are not transferred”.

### **Comments against:**

“I think it needs to be understood that EHCPs are making schools pay more than is provided anyway. Schools pay £6,000 to the EHCP through the agreed approach but due to the payments being based on staff pay 20 years ago, the actual costs are significantly higher and schools need to support the children with hours expected. Transferring money over, will lead to schools having a larger deficit and the problem not being fixed”.

“While the funding issues for High Needs are recognised, a detailed deficit recovery plan should be in place before any funding transfer is considered”.

“Over the last 5 years we have transferred £1.4 million to the HNB and yet the deficit has still grown by 84% in the last financial year and is forecast to increase by a further 75% by the end of this financial year. At the same time SEND provision is even more stretched with a severe lack of appropriate provision to meet the needs of children and young people. The transfers are not making any difference. Leaving the money in schools allows schools to use the money directly on children and young people”.

“Schools are already penalised with the poor SEN funding rates/bands day to day for children in receipt of top up funding EHCP support. Services for SENs Support have vanished and only parents who can afford a diagnosis receive this as thresholds too high for local funded provision e.g. dyslexic testing. Current practise has incentivised the desire for an EHCP. The deficit is linked to outside provision provided and chosen by the LA. We spend minimal in schools and schools are struggling as a result to recruit staff and provide safe spaces for all children”.

### **Local Authority recommendation:**

To apply a 0.5% top slice to the schools’ funding to support the High Needs Block.

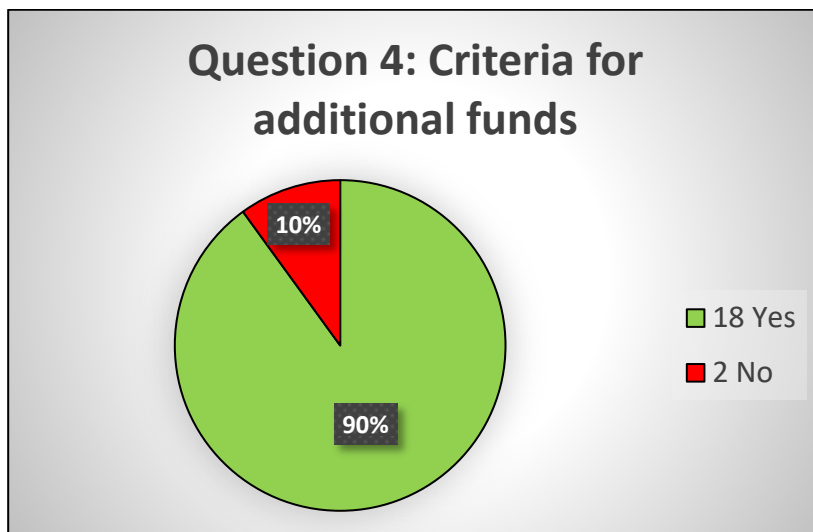
### **HFG recommendation:**

To apply 0% block transfer.

#### Question 4:

School funding regulations allow a few exceptional circumstances to be funded outside the formula and be top sliced from the DSG. Criteria for allocating these need to be agreed.

Do you agree with the criteria set to access additional funds outside the school formula? Yes/No



#### Comments against:

"I think the School Forum's previous decisions to cease funding schools in financial difficulty and falling rolls are still accurate and should not be re-started."

"The methodology for the additional high needs funding formula needs to take account of all EHCP students in a school including those from other LAs, not just those from WBC. In our case, the total number of EHCP students, including our Reading students, would bring the number of EHCP from 11 to 28, slightly above the threshold for additional funding. The number of EHCP students is not the only indicator of a disproportionately high level of SEN in a school, as it does not take account of the students with lower SEN needs, who need additional input and resources. Addressing this might also result in a fairer distribution of the total funding between the primary and secondary sector".

#### Local Authority recommendation:

To approve the criteria to be used to allocate additional funds.

#### HFG recommendation:

Agree

#### Question 5

De-delegated services are for **maintained** schools only. Funding for these services must be allocated through the formula but can be passed back, or 'de-delegated' for

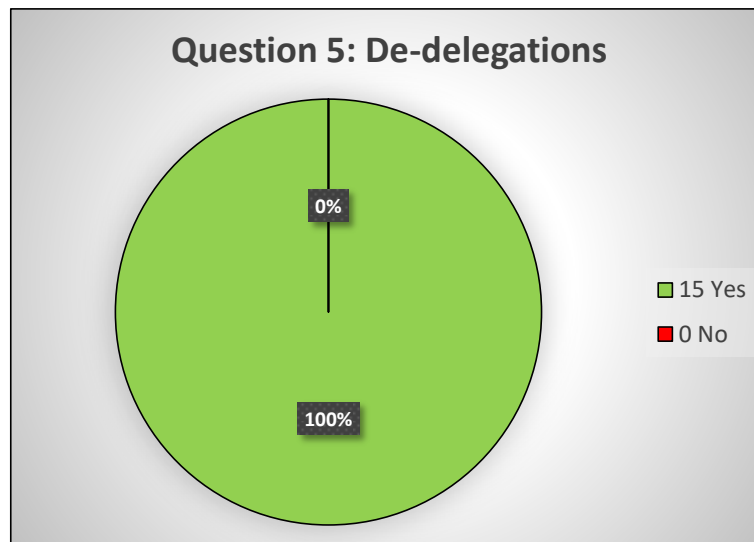
maintained primary and secondary schools with schools forum approval. The de-delegations need to be re-determined on an annual basis.

The services currently and proposed to be de-delegated for primary and secondary only are Behaviour Support Services, Ethnic Minority Support, Trade Union Local Representation and CLEAPSS.

Education responsibilities held by local authorities for **all** schools are funded from the Central Schools Services Block of the DSG. Education functions held by local authorities for **maintained schools only**, can be funded from maintained schools budget shares and de-delegated, with agreement of the maintained schools members of schools forums. The services for maintained schools are Statutory and Regulatory Duties comprising statutory accounting functions, internal audit and administration of pensions.

In order to meet the requirements of the employer under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations and other related legislation, a full schools health and safety service will be provided to all maintained schools. All maintained schools will need to agree to be part of this collective agreement to equitably fund the service.

Do you agree with the proposed De-delegated Services, Education Functions and Health and Safety Service for all maintained schools? Yes/No



**Comments in support:**

“Yes for health and safety. We can’t afford school improvement even with no slice. We have to source externally ad hoc or in exchange for working partnerships (traded days)”.

“There is still some concern as to why School Improvement Service is not listed in the de-delegated services and is therefore not subject to the right kind of scrutiny”.

“I am happy with all of these services”.

“These are invaluable services for all schools”.

**Local Authority recommendation:**

To approve the proposed services to be de-delegated.

**HFG recommendation:**

Agree for 2025/26 in line with the consultation responses. However, recommend to commence a detailed review of dedelegations on a service by service basis, with a view to voting on each service separately for 2026/27.

**6. Options for Consideration**

6.1 As detailed above

**7. Proposals**

7.1 For Heads Funding Group (HFG) to consider the Local Authority recommendation to Schools Forum.

**8. Appendices**

8.1 Appendix A – Equalities Impact Assessment



# West Berkshire Council Equity Impact Assessment

TEMPLATE  
March 2023

## Contents

Section 1: Summary details .....	12
Section 2: Detail of proposal.....	13
Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics.....	14
Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts .....	16
Section 4: Review.....	17

## Section 1: Summary details

<b>Directorate and Service Area</b>	People CS, Education and Resources, Finance Property and Procurement
<b>What is being assessed</b> (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	The schools funding formula 25/26
<b>Is this a new or existing function or policy?</b>	No, annual setting of the formula
<b>Summary of assessment</b> Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	Annual setting of the schools funding formula. WBC follows the NFF so already has funding factors in to protect some characteristics, therefore does not unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community.
<b>Completed By</b>	Melanie Ellis
<b>Authorised By</b>	
<b>Date of Assessment</b>	7.11.24

## Section 2: Detail of proposal

<p><b>Context / Background</b> Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.</p>	Following the NFF for schools funding
<p><b>Proposals</b> Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.</p>	All schools consulted with. Results and recommendations within this report.
<p><b>Evidence / Intelligence</b> List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.</p>	As per the report.

<p><b>Alternatives considered / rejected</b></p> <p>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.</p>	<p>Consultation responses have been considered.</p>
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**Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics**

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
<b>Age</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The NFF differentiates between primary and secondary phases of education, recognising that as pupils progress through key stages, the breadth and complexity of the curriculum increases, leading to higher costs. As WBC follows the NFF there will be no additional impact on age that should be considered.		Melanie Ellis, Service Lead Management Accounting, Revenues and Benefits.	
<b>Disability</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The NFF provides protection for the funding of children and young		Melanie Ellis, Service Lead Management Accounting,	

				<p>people with SEN and disabilities.</p> <p>By supporting a block transfer from schools to high needs, this would further support disability.</p>		Revenues and Benefits.	
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			Melanie Ellis, Service Lead Management Accounting, Revenues and Benefits.	
<b>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			Melanie Ellis, Service Lead Management Accounting, Revenues and Benefits.	
<b>Pregnancy &amp; Maternity</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			Melanie Ellis, Service Lead Management Accounting, Revenues and Benefits.	
<b>Race</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The NFF uses additional needs factors of deprivation, low prior attainment and English as a foreign language, and mobility.		Melanie Ellis, Service Lead Management Accounting, Revenues and Benefits.	
<b>Sex</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The NFF does not differentiate by gender		Melanie Ellis, Service Lead Management Accounting,	

						Revenues and Benefits.	
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			Melanie Ellis, Service Lead Management Accounting, Revenues and Benefits.	
<b>Religion or Belief</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The NFF is applied to all schools consistently, including faith schools.		Melanie Ellis, Service Lead Management Accounting, Revenues and Benefits.	

### Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

<b>Additional community impacts</b>	<b>No Impact</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Description of impact</b>	<b>Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts</b>	<b>Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)</b>	<b>Timescale and monitoring arrangements</b>
<b>Rural communities</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sparsity factor		Melanie Ellis, Service Lead Management Accounting, Revenues and Benefits.	
<b>Areas of deprivation</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Deprivation factor		Melanie Ellis, Service Lead Management Accounting, Revenues and Benefits.	
<b>Displaced communities</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mobility factor		Melanie Ellis, Service Lead	

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
						Management Accounting, Revenues and Benefits.	
Care experienced people	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			Melanie Ellis, Service Lead Management Accounting, Revenues and Benefits.	
The Armed Forces Community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mobility factor		Melanie Ellis, Service Lead Management Accounting, Revenues and Benefits.	

#### Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	7.11.2024
Person Responsible for Review	Melanie Ellis
Authorised By	







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## De-delegation, Education Functions and Health and Safety Service Proposals 2025/26

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<b>Report being considered by:</b>	Schools Forum on 2 <sup>nd</sup> December 2024		
<b>Report Author:</b>	Lisa Potts		
<b>Item for:</b>	Decision	<b>By:</b>	All Maintained School Representatives

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### 1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report sets out the details, cost, and charges to schools of the services on which maintained school representatives are required to vote (on an annual basis).

### 2. Recommendations

2.1 That maintained school representatives agree that a detailed review of de-delegated services, including implications, be undertaken for the 2026/27 Financial Year. At the current stage, based on the recommendation by the Heads Funding Group (set out in section 13) and the results of the consultation with schools, the de-delegations be agreed as set out below for the 2025/26 financial year.

Maintained Secondary and Primary Schools:

- Therapeutic Thinking Support Team (previously) Behaviour Support Services
- Ethnic Minority Support
- Trade Union Representation
- CLEAPSS
- School Improvement
- Statutory and Regulatory Duties comprising:
  - Statutory accounting functions in respect of schools
  - Internal Audit of schools
  - Administration of pensions for school staff
- Health and Safety Service to Schools

Maintained special, nursery and PRU Schools:

- Trade Union Representation
- CLEAPSS (Special schools and PRU only)
- Statutory and Regulatory Duties comprising:
  - Statutory accounting functions in respect of schools
  - Internal Audit of schools
  - Administration of pensions for school staff
- Health and Safety Service to Schools

## Summary of proposals

	2025/26 Primary Budget £	Agreed by HFG	2025/26 Secondary Budget £	Agreed by HFG	2025/26 Early Years & High Needs Budgets £	Agreed by HFG
Therapeutic Thinking Support	£211,658		£65,116		n/a	n/a
Ethnic Minority Support (census)	£125,905		£38,735		n/a	n/a
Trade Union Representation	£56,018		£17,234		£2,149	
CLEAPSS	£2,086		£1,392		£74*	
School Improvement and Governor Support	£243,313		£74,855		n/a	n/a
Education Functions	£114,813		£35,322		£5,165	
Health & Safety services to schools	As per banding		As per banding		As per banding	

\*special schools only

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		
<b>Data Impact:</b>		X		
<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>	Neil Goddard, Melissa Perry, Rose Carberry, Mike Lindburn			

## 4. Introduction/Background

- 4.1 This report sets out the details, cost, and charges to schools of the services on which maintained school representatives are required to vote (on an annual basis).
- 4.2 De-delegated services consist of Behaviour Support, Ethnic Minority Support, Trade Union Local Representation, Consortium of Local Education Authorities for the Provision of Science Services (CLEAPSS) and School Improvement
- 4.3 Education functions consist of the statutory and regulatory duties held by the local authority in respect of maintained schools.
- 4.4 The Health and Safety service provides a compliance, advice and training role for schools.
- 4.5 In the consultation held with schools between 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024 to 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024, the following question was asked:

*Do you agree with the proposed De-delegated Services, Education Functions and Health and Safety Service for all maintained schools? Yes/No*

There were 15 responses received, 15 yes and 0 no.

Since the consultation ended, it's been noticed that information in relation to School Improvement de-delegation was missed from the consultation, but this will be followed up.

## 5. Supporting Information on De-delegated services

- 5.1 De-delegated services are for maintained schools only. Funding must be allocated through the formula but can be passed back, or de-delegated for maintained primary and secondary schools with schools forum approval.
- 5.2 Funds cannot be de-delegated from Special and Nursery Schools and PRUs for these services, but those schools will have the option to buy back these services at a cost based on the same amount per pupil as for primary and secondary schools. Academies may also be given the option to buy into the service.
- 5.3 The schools funding regulations for 2025/26 have not yet been published, but we have assumed similar arrangements for de-delegation of the cost of these services will apply for 2025/26.
- 5.4 Primary and secondary school representatives are required to recommend to Schools Forum on whether each service is to be de-delegated or not. The services below were de-delegated in 2024/25 and are proposed to be de-delegated in 2025/26:

### **Primary and Secondary only:**

- Behaviour Support Services
- Ethnic Minority Support
- Trade Union Local Representation
- CLEAPSS
- School Improvement

## 6. Therapeutic Thinking Service

6.1 The Therapeutic Thinking Service proposal for 2025/26 is set out in Appendix B.

6.2 Table 1 shows the budget and unit charge for 2025/26 compared to 2024/25. The total cost will be divided by the total numbers of pupils in the October 2024 census to determine a unit charge per pupil on which the de-delegated amount per school will be based. As all schools will have access to all aspects of the service, the same unit charge will apply to both primary and secondary schools. Based on the October 2023 census this is estimated to be £19.28 per pupil but the final rate will be determined according to the October 2024 census.

TABLE 1	2024/25			2025/26		
	Number of pupils	Unit Charge per pupil	Budget	Number of pupils	Unit Charge per pupil	Budget
Maintained Primary Schools	10,980	£18.21	£199,911	10,980	£19.28	£211,658
Maintained Secondary Schools	3,378	£18.21	£61,503	3,378	£19.28	£65,116
<b>Total</b>			<b>£261,414</b>			<b>£276,774</b>

## 7. Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service

7.1 The detail of the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS) is set out in Appendix C.

7.2 Table 2 shows the budget and the unit charge for the service for 2025/26 compared to 2024/25. The total cost in respect of Primary and Secondary schools will be divided by the total number of pupils in the October 2024 census to determine a unit charge per pupil on which the de-delegated amount per school will be based. As all schools will have access to all aspects of the service, the same unit charge will apply to both primary and secondary schools. Based on the October 2023 census this is estimated to be £11.47 per pupil but the final rate will be determined according to the October 2024 census.

TABLE 2	2024/25			2025/26		
	Number of pupils	Unit Charge per pupil	Budget	Number of pupils	Unit Charge per pupil	Budget
Maintained Primary Schools	10,980	£12.97	£142,370	10,980	£11.47	£125,905
Maintained Secondary Schools	3,378	£12.97	£43,800	3,378	£11.47	£38,735
			<b>£186,170</b>			<b>£164,640</b>

## 8. Trade Union Representation

8.1 The detail of the service provided by Trade Union representatives to schools is set out in Appendix D.

8.2 Table 3 shows the budget and unit charge for the service for 2025/26 compared to 2024/25. The proposal for 2025/26 is based on the cost of 1FTE supply teacher on UPS3. The total net cost in respect of primary and secondary schools will be divided by the total number of pupils in the October 2024 census to determine a unit charge per pupil on which the de-delegated amount per school will be based on. As all schools have access to all representatives (regardless of which school they are based in), the same unit charge will apply to both primary and secondary schools. Based on the October 2023 census the charge will be £5.10 per pupil.

TABLE 3	2024/25			2025/26		
	Number of pupils	Unit Charge per pupil	Budget	Number of pupils	Unit Charge per pupil	Budget
Maintained Primary Schools	10,980	£4.74	£52,076	10,980	£5.10	£56,018
Maintained Secondary Schools	3,378	£4.74	£16,021	3,378	£5.10	£17,234
			<b>£68,097</b>			<b>£73,252</b>

## 9. Consortium of Local Education Authorities for the Provision of Science Services (CLEAPSS)

9.1 The detail of the service provided by this subscription is set out in Appendix E.

9.2 As the actual pricing from CLEAPSS will not be available until after the schools budget has been set, an assumption has been made on the 2025/26 fee. Any over or under spend will be recovered the following year, as in all de-delegated services. Table 4 shows the budget and unit charge for the service for 2025/26 compared to 2024/25. The unit charge includes the administration fee. Note that secondary schools will need to pay the fee relating to sixth form pupils separately as de-delegation is based on pre 16 pupils only.

TABLE 4	2024/25				2025/26			
	Number of pupils	Unit Charge per pupil	Charge per school	Budget	Number of pupils	Est Unit Charge per pupil	Est Charge per school	Estimated Budget
Maintained Primary Schools	10,980	£0.19		£2,086	10,980	£0.19		£2,086
Maintained Secondary Schools	3,378	£0.19	£250	£1,392	3,378	£0.19	£250	£1,392
				<b>£3,478</b>				<b>£3,478</b>

## 10. School Improvement Team

10.1 The detail of the service provided by the School Improvement Team is set out in Appendix F.

10.2 Table 5 shows the budget and unit charge for the service for 2025/26 compared to 2024/25. The total cost will be divided by the total numbers of pupils in the October 2024 census to determine a unit charge per pupil on which the de-delegated amount per school

will be based. As all schools will have access to all aspects of the service, the same unit charge will apply to both primary and secondary schools. Based on the October 2023 census the charge will be £22.16 per pupil.

TABLE 5	2024/25			2025/26		
	Number of pupils	Unit Charge per pupil	Budget	Number of pupils	Unit Charge per pupil	Budget
Maintained Primary Schools	10,980	£20.29	£222,829	10,980	£22.16	£243,313
Maintained Secondary Schools	3,378	£20.29	£68,554	3,378	£22.16	£74,855
			<b>£291,383</b>			<b>£318,168</b>

## 11. Education Functions for Maintained Schools

11.1 Education responsibilities held by local authorities for **all** schools are funded from the Central Schools Services Block of the DSG. Education functions held by local authorities for **maintained schools only** can be funded from maintained schools budget shares and de-delegated, with agreement of the maintained schools members of schools forums.

11.2 Education functions consist of the statutory and regulatory duties held by the local authority in respect of maintained schools. These consist of Accountancy, Internal Audit and Pension scheme administration. The Accountancy, audit and pension administration services are described in appendix G.

11.3 Representatives of all maintained schools (including Special and Nursery Schools and PRUs) are required to recommend to Schools Forum whether or not these services should be funded from maintained school budget shares and de-delegated for 2024/25:

### All Maintained Schools:

- Statutory and Regulatory Duties comprising:
  - Statutory accounting functions in respect of schools
  - Internal Audit of schools
  - Administration of pensions for school staff

11.4 Academies and other non-maintained schools also may be able to choose to buy into any of the above services subject to service provider agreement.

11.5 Table 6 shows the budget and estimated unit charges for these services in 2025/26 compared to 2024/25. The total cost will be divided by the total numbers of pupils in the October 2024 census to determine a unit charge per pupil on which the de-delegated amount per school will be based. The same unit charges will apply to both primary and secondary schools. Based on the October 2023 census the charge will be £10.46 per pupil



TABLE 6	2024/25		2025/26				
	Charge per Pupil	Budget	Unit Charge per pupil	Total Budget	Primary Budget	Secondary Budget	Budget for Nursery, Special Schools and PRUs
Accountancy	£3.68	£54,607	£3.96	£58,817	£43,483	£13,378	£1,956
Audit	£3.55	£52,781	£3.67	£54,574	£40,346	£12,413	£1,815
Pension Scheme Administration	£2.61	£38,797	£2.82	£41,910	£30,984	£9,532	£1,394
<b>Total Education Functions</b>	<b>£9.84</b>	<b>£146,185</b>	<b>£10.46</b>	<b>£155,301</b>	<b>£114,813</b>	<b>£35,322</b>	<b>£5,165</b>

## 12. Health and Safety Service to Schools

12.1 As the Council is the employer and therefore the principal legal duty holder (notwithstanding any delegated responsibilities to a schools, Head Teachers and Governors) in relation to health and safety, it makes sense to ensure an adequate, effective and efficient health and safety service is provided to all Local Authority maintained schools and a buy-back option offered to non-maintained schools.

12.2 The Health and Safety Team provide a compliance, advice and training role for schools and the Team continue to be heavily involved in assisting schools developing and reviewing covid secure arrangements, plans and risk assessments.

12.3 Following a decision to change the way the service operated in 2020/21, for the last year all maintained schools have had the Level Two (Enhanced) service. This is a comprehensive health and safety support service and covers all aspects of health and safety management and support including necessary health and safety training.

12.4 It is proposed to provide the full schools health and safety service to all maintained schools, continuing on from the previous year. This will meet the requirements of the employer under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations and other related legislation.

12.5 Schools will pay a graduated fee based on pupil numbers for the Level 1 element of the service and a top up cost to cover the combined service. All maintained schools will need to agree to be part of this collective agreement to equitably fund the service.

12.6 A buy-back option would continue to be offered to schools such as academy and independent schools. Income generated from buy-back services would be invested in the service or offset to reduce costs for the schools in the collective agreement.

12.7 Table 8 below shows the 2025/26 cost if all Local Authority maintained schools, Voluntary Controlled, Voluntary Aided and special schools agree to one equal service.

Table 8

Pupil No's	Band A 0-60	Band B 61 - 100	Band C 101-200	Band D 201-300	Band E 301- 465	Band F +466	Band G Secondary
21/22	£800.00	£1,300.00	£1,600.00	£2,000.00	£2,600.00	£4.47 Per pupil	£4.47 Per pupil
22/23	£800.00	£1,300.00	£1,600.00	£2,000.00	£2,600.00	£4.57 Per pupil	£4.57 Per pupil
23/24	£832.00	£1352.00	£1664.00	£2080.00	£2704.00	£5.89 Per Pupil	£5.89 Per Pupil
24/25	£881.92	£1433.12	£1763.84	£2204.80	£2866.24	£6.24 Per Pupil	£6.24 Per Pupil
25/26	£917.20	£1,490.44	£1,834.39	£2,292.89	£2,980.89	£6.40 per Pupil	£6.40 per Pupil

### 13. Heads' Funding Group Recommendation

13.1 At its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> November, the HFG recommended that a detailed review of de-delegated services be undertaken going forward, but at the current stage based on the results of the consultation with schools, the de-delegations should be agreed as set out in the report for the 2025/26 financial year.

### 14. Appendices

14.1 Appendix A – De-delegations per school for 2025/26

14.2 Appendix B - Therapeutic Thinking Support Service

14.3 Appendix C - Ethnic Minority & Traveller Achievement Service

14.4 Appendix D – Trade Union Representation Service

14.5 Appendix E – CLEAPSS Service

14.6 Appendix F – School Improvement Team

14.7 Appendix G – Accountancy, Audit and Pension Administration (Education Functions)

14.8 Appendix H - Health and Safety service to schools

14.9 Appendix I – Health and Safety Service 2025/26

14.10 Appendix J – Legal Duty Holders for Health & Safety

Indicative De-Delegations for 2025/26 - Based on October 2023 Census Data											
	De-delegations						Education functions for maintained schools			Total De-delegations and Education Functions	
	Therapeutic Thinking	Ethnic Minority Support (census)	Trade Union Representation	CLEAPSS	School Improvement & Governor Support	Statutory Accounting Functions	Internal Audit of Schools	Pension Scheme Administration			
Proposed Primary Delegation	£211,658	£125,905	£56,018	£2,086	£243,313	£43,483	£40,346	£30,984	£753,793		
Proposed Secondary Delegation	£65,116	£38,735	£17,234	£1,392	£74,855	£13,378	£12,413	£9,532	£232,655		
<b>Total Proposed Delegation</b>	<b>£276,774</b>	<b>£164,640</b>	<b>£73,252</b>	<b>£3,478</b>	<b>£318,168</b>	<b>£56,861</b>	<b>£52,759</b>	<b>£40,516</b>	<b>£986,447</b>		
Estimated income from other maintained schools	£0	£0	£2,520	£80	£0	£1,956	£1,815	£1,394	£7,766		
<b>Total Cost of Service</b>	<b>£276,774</b>	<b>£164,640</b>	<b>£75,772</b>	<b>£3,558</b>	<b>£318,168</b>	<b>£58,817</b>	<b>£54,574</b>	<b>£41,910</b>	<b>£994,213</b>		
Cost per primary pupil	£19.28	£11.47	£5.10	£0.19	£22.16	£3.96	£3.67	£2.82	£69		
Cost per secondary pupil	£19.28	£11.47	£5.10	£0.19	£22.16	£3.96	£3.67	£2.82	£69		
Cost per other maintained school pupil	n/a	£11.47	£5.10	£0.19	£22.16	£3.96	£3.67	£2.82	£49		
Fixed cost per secondary school	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	£250.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	£250		
School	Pupil No's	EAL No's									
Aldermaston C.E. Primary School	103	4.4	1,985	1,181	525	20	2,282	408	378	291	7,071
Basildon C.E. Primary School	150	6.9	2,891	1,720	765	29	3,324	594	551	423	10,296
Beedon C.E. (Controlled) Primary School	35	2.2	675	401	179	7	776	139	129	99	2,403
Beernham Primary School	58	14.7	1,118	665	296	11	1,285	230	213	164	3,982
Birch Copse Primary School	414	14.1	7,981	4,747	2,112	79	9,174	1,640	1,521	1,168	28,422
Bradfield C.E. Primary School	148	1.1	2,853	1,697	755	28	3,280	586	544	418	10,160
Brightwalton C.E. Aided Primary School	93	2.3	1,793	1,066	474	18	2,061	388	342	262	6,385
Brimpton C.E. Primary School	53	0.0	1,022	608	270	10	1,174	210	195	150	3,639
Bucklebury C.E. Primary School	107	2.4	2,063	1,227	546	20	2,371	424	393	302	7,346
Burghfield St Mary's C.E. Primary School	190	4.6	3,663	2,179	969	36	4,210	752	698	536	13,044
Calcot Infant School and Nursery	191	44.2	3,682	2,190	974	36	4,232	756	702	539	13,112
Calcot Junior School	273	22.0	5,283	3,130	1,393	52	6,050	1,081	1,003	770	18,742
Chaddleworth St Andrew's C.E. Primary School	27	0.0	520	310	138	5	598	107	99	76	1,854
Chineley Primary School	177	3.5	3,412	2,030	903	34	3,922	701	650	499	12,151
Cold Ash St Mark's CE Primary School	195	2.4	3,759	2,236	995	37	4,321	772	717	550	13,387
Compton C.E. Primary School	179	4.5	3,451	2,053	913	34	3,967	709	658	505	12,289
Cunliffe Primary School	82	14.0	1,581	940	418	16	1,817	325	301	231	5,629
Downs Way Primary School	212	4.7	4,087	2,431	1,082	40	4,698	840	779	598	14,554
Enborne C.E. Primary School	75	4.7	1,446	860	383	14	1,662	297	276	212	5,149
Englefield C.E. Primary School	109	4.7	2,101	1,250	556	21	2,415	432	401	308	7,483
Falkland Primary School	420	18.7	8,096	4,816	2,143	80	9,307	1,663	1,543	1,185	28,834
Garland Junior School	220	10.2	4,241	2,523	1,122	42	4,875	871	808	621	15,103
Hampstead Noreys C.E. Primary School	67	1.1	1,292	768	342	13	1,485	265	246	189	4,600
Hermitage Primary School	188	5.7	3,624	2,156	959	36	4,166	745	691	531	12,906
Hungerford Primary School	346	10.5	6,670	3,968	1,765	66	7,667	1,370	1,271	976	23,753
The Isleys Primary School	53	3.4	1,022	608	270	10	1,174	210	195	150	3,639
Irkpen Primary School	48	6.3	925	550	245	9	1,064	190	176	135	3,295
John Rankin Infant and Nursery School	220	26.3	4,241	2,523	1,122	42	4,875	871	808	621	15,103
John Rankin Junior School	358	14.1	6,901	4,105	1,826	68	7,933	1,418	1,315	1,010	24,577
Kennet Valley Primary School	194	22.1	3,740	2,225	990	37	4,299	768	713	547	13,318
Kinbury St Mary's C.E. Primary School	130	6.7	2,506	1,491	663	25	2,881	515	478	367	8,925
Long Lane Primary School	209	14.0	4,029	2,397	1,066	40	4,631	828	768	590	14,348
Mortimer St Mary's C.E. Junior School	176	8.0	3,393	2,018	898	33	3,900	697	647	497	12,083
Mortimer St. John's C.E. Infant School	243	9.1	4,684	2,786	1,240	46	5,385	962	893	686	16,682
Mrs Blands Infant School	148	37.4	2,853	1,697	755	28	3,280	586	544	418	10,160
Pangbourne Primary School	164	6.7	3,161	1,881	837	31	3,634	649	603	463	11,259
Parsons Down Infant School	90	18.8	1,735	1,032	459	17	1,994	356	331	254	6,179
Parsons Down Junior School	184	7.1	3,547	2,110	939	35	4,077	729	676	519	12,632
Purley CoE Primary School	93	3.6	1,793	1,066	474	18	2,061	388	342	262	6,385
Robert Sandilands Primary School and Nursery	213	23.2	4,106	2,442	1,087	40	4,720	844	783	601	14,623
Shaw-cum-Dorington C.E. Primary School	95	7.8	1,831	1,089	485	18	2,105	376	349	268	6,522
Shelford C.E. Primary School	52	1.1	1,002	596	265	10	1,152	206	191	147	3,570
Springfield Primary School	304	20.8	5,860	3,486	1,551	58	6,737	1,204	1,117	858	20,870
Spurcrott Primary School	382	25.5	7,364	4,380	1,949	73	8,465	1,513	1,404	1,078	26,225
St Finian's Catholic Primary School	201	8.2	3,875	2,305	1,025	38	4,454	796	739	567	13,799
St John the Evangelist CoE Infant and Nursery School	179	55.5	3,451	2,053	913	34	3,967	709	658	505	12,289
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	213	83.6	4,106	2,442	1,087	40	4,720	844	783	601	14,623
St Nicolas C.E. Junior School	258	19.0	4,973	2,958	1,316	49	5,717	1,022	948	728	17,712
St Paul's Catholic Primary School	298	46.3	5,744	3,417	1,520	57	6,604	1,180	1,095	841	20,458
Stockcross C.E. School	73	3.2	1,407	847	372	14	1,618	289	268	206	5,012
Streatley C.E. Voluntary Controlled School	99	3.4	1,908	1,135	505	19	2,194	392	364	279	6,796
Sulhamstead and Upton Nenet School	99	1.2	1,908	1,135	505	19	2,194	392	364	279	6,796
Thatcham Park CoE Primary	320	21.5	6,169	3,669	1,633	61	7,091	1,267	1,176	903	21,968
Theale C.E. Primary School	314	10.5	6,053	3,601	1,602	60	6,958	1,244	1,154	886	21,557
Welford and Wickham C.E. Primary School	66	1.1	1,272	757	337	13	1,463	261	243	186	4,531
Westwood Farm Infant School	186	22.2	3,585	2,133	949	35	4,122	737	683	525	12,769
Westwood Farm Junior School	238	11.0	4,588	2,729	1,214	45	5,274	943	875	672	16,339
The Willows Primary School	349	22.5	6,728	4,002	1,781	66	7,734	1,382	1,282	985	23,959
The Wincombe School	425	62.7	8,193	4,873	2,168	81	9,418	1,683	1,562	1,199	29,177
Woolhampton C.E. Primary School	100	0.0	1,928	1,147	510	19	2,216	396	367	282	6,865
Yattendon C.E. Primary School	94	1.2	1,812	1,078	480	18	2,083	372	345	265	6,453
<b>PRIMARY TOTAL</b>	<b>10,980</b>	<b>838.31</b>	<b>211,658</b>	<b>125,905</b>	<b>56,018</b>	<b>2,086</b>	<b>243,313</b>	<b>43,483</b>	<b>40,346</b>	<b>30,984</b>	<b>753,793</b>
<b>SECONDARY TOTAL</b>	<b>3,378</b>	<b>37.20</b>	<b>65,116</b>	<b>38,735</b>	<b>17,234</b>	<b>1,392</b>	<b>74,855</b>	<b>13,378</b>	<b>12,413</b>	<b>9,532</b>	<b>232,655</b>
<b>TOTAL ALL PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS</b>	<b>14,358</b>	<b>875.5</b>	<b>276,774</b>	<b>164,640</b>	<b>73,252</b>	<b>3,478</b>	<b>318,168</b>	<b>56,861</b>	<b>52,759</b>	<b>40,516</b>	<b>986,447</b>
<b>Other Maintained Schools</b>											<b>0</b>
Hungerford Nursery	36.58		n/a	n/a	187	n/a	n/a	145	134	103	569
Victoria Park Nursery	35		n/a	n/a	181	n/a	n/a	140	130	100	551
<b>Total within Early Years Block</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>1,120</b>
Brookfields Special School	185		n/a	0	944	35	0	733	680	522	2,913
The Castle Special School	146		n/a	0	745	28	0	578	536	412	2,299
icollege	91		n/a	0	464	17	0	360	334	257	1,433
<b>Total Within High Needs Block</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,153</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,671</b>	<b>1,551</b>	<b>1,191</b>	<b>6,646</b>
<b>Total for All Other Maintained Schools</b>	<b>493.98</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,520</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,956</b>	<b>1,815</b>	<b>1,394</b>	<b>7,766</b>
<b>Total all Maintained Schools</b>	<b>14,852</b>	<b>876</b>	<b>276,774</b>	<b>164,640</b>	<b>75,772</b>	<b>3,558</b>	<b>318,168</b>	<b>58,817</b>	<b>54,574</b>	<b>41,910</b>	<b>994,213</b>

## West Berkshire Council Maintained Schools

### Proposal to De-Delegate Formula Funding 2025/26

#### Therapeutic Thinking Support Team

#### Outline of Proposed Service 2025/26

The Therapeutic Thinking Support Team (TTST) offers evidence-based advice and support to schools through promotion of a Therapeutic approach to manage and reduce difficult and dangerous behaviours. The type of involvement includes whole school support, staff training, staff support, class or year group support, as well as individual support for pupils.

#### The Team

*Vacancy* (TTST Manager & Senior EP)

Robyn Stevens (Assistant EP)

Sue Butcher (Primary TTST Adviser)

Madeleine Williams (SEMH Practitioner)

Katy Higgins (SEMH Practitioner)

*Vacancy* (SEMH Practitioner) – due to start in the next month

Roslyn Arthur (Exclusions and Reintegration Team Manager)

#### Key Features

1. Quick and flexible response for schools who have pupils presenting with difficult and dangerous behaviours.
2. No cap on requests
3. Different levels of response within the team (whole school, group, individual).
4. Support and advice in relation to Therapeutic approaches; developing therapeutic plans to support inclusion within school
5. The team will be informed by evidence based practice and the Therapeutic approaches, which will result in clear suggestions of what needs to happen to move the situation forward.
6. Partners and working relationships: The team will liaise with other agencies to support the needs of schools and pupils.

#### What would schools get?

##### Referrals

1. Rapid Response: capacity to respond rapidly to school concerns. This could relate to children but also whole school situations that arise. Anti-social behaviour would be the main focus but wouldn't exclude other complex situations.
2. For those needing some quick advice, signposting, or consultation, the TTST manager or Roslyn are available for telephone consultations.

3. TTST referrals will be triaged weekly and the most appropriate level of support offered within 5 days.

#### Whole school/ Systemic support

1. Access to support for challenging whole school situations through adviser with senior level management/Headteacher experience
2. Consultation with the adviser to consider how to develop SEMH provision and support SEMH needs at a whole school level, e.g. revision of behaviour policy, identifying staff training needs
3. Training in some interventions so that school staff can deliver SEMH interventions to pupils, e.g. Homunculi, Lego Therapy
4. Training to individual schools on 'Emotional Regulation'
5. A recorded de-escalation training for whole schools via SLA
6. Literature on a variety of SEMH supports, e.g. check ins, group dynamics, small gardens

#### Whole class support

1. Adviser support to consider group dynamics of classes; partnership working with the teacher to consider the environment, routines, strategies, the behaviour policy, management of groups of children
2. Write up and actions as well as agreed review of cases where appropriate.

#### Individual support

1. Observations and discussions with key staff to identify need, review current support and strategies, and consider changes/ agree actions
2. Write up of observations and meetings and review of cases
3. Working with the teacher/SLT to write or review a therapeutic plan
4. Having identified a child or young person's need and provision, following consultation and further analysis, a SEMH Practitioner may offer an intervention to develop the unmet need, e.g. Social skills through Lego Therapy,
5. Support in developing 'Small garden' provision as well as support to transition pupils back into the classroom, when appropriate
6. Support from practitioners where appropriate to help implement/model strategies in school.
7. Access to 'Circle of adults' meetings facilitated by an Assistant Educational Psychologist or a SEMH Practitioner for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion, as a starting point or to aid transition. A Circle of Adults meeting is led by 2 trained workers and involves key staff and professionals from the school. It lasts 1.5 – 2 hours and provides a structured approach to problem-solving and identifying agreed strategies.

#### **Feedback from 2023/2024 delivery**

In line with previous years, the TTST annual evaluation has been overwhelmingly positive:

- 80% of respondents found TTST involvement extremely or very helpful

*'Kind and supportive. Always offer practical advice. Assurance. Prompt in offering advice.'*

- Schools in particular valued:

- Receiving general advice and strategies
- SEMH Practitioners running interventions for pupils
- Class support
- Training

Schools generally noticed an improvement in pupil wellbeing and reduction in anti-social behaviours following TTST involvement, and particularly commented on being given the tools and strategies at support pupil emotional regulation.

Feedback relating to positive changes in children’s SEMH skills:

*‘More able to articulate feelings and verbalise what has happened. Improved listening with support.’*

*‘He is communicating his frustrations verbally rather than becoming physically aggressive towards others. He uses strategies such as breathing and counting when frustration occurs.’*

Following TTST involvement, 70% felt that staffs’ knowledge and understanding of a child’s needs had improved a lot.

Additional testimonials:

*‘We value the service. We appreciate how quickly you respond and offer support. Positive for us. Thank you.’*

Of whole class support:

*‘We also had a whole class visit that was great to be able to look at the class as a whole and then to review what was going well and what changes we could make to carrying on creating a calmer learning environment.’*

### Proposed Cost of Delivery in 2025/26

The following table summarises the proposed cost of the service for 2025/26. It is based on employing the team members outlined above.

	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 Proposed £	% increase
Staffing Costs	228,018	236,541	255,781	
Other Costs	6,890	6,890	5,550	
Support Service Recharges	23,491	24,343	26,133	
Total Cost	258,399	267,774	287,464	6.85%
Less Surplus Brought Forward	0	-6,360	-10,690	
<b>Amount to be De-Delegated</b>	<b>258,399</b>	<b>261,414</b>	<b>276,774</b>	<b>5.56%</b>

The overall cost of staffing has increased by 6.85%, mainly due to 2024/25 staffing budgets being built on estimated increases. The overall cost has increased by 5.56% as there was a balance carried forward from 23/24.

This does not take into account income which will be earned from any Academies which choose to buy back this service. Any additional income received from this source will reduce the net cost and the charge to maintained schools.

### Method of charging in 2025/26

The total net cost of the service will be divided by the total number of pupils recorded in the October 2024 census to arrive at a per pupil amount for charging purposes. Using October 2023 census data, this would equate to £19.28 per pupil. Appendix A of the main report shows the indicative total amount per school.

Other Options which *may* be considered

1. The local authority offer a fully traded service (likely to increase the cost to individual schools).
2. Schools “pay as you go” either by employing/using own staff when needed or purchasing support from external providers (may include the local authority if still able to offer this service).
3. Local authority to consider an alternative (cheaper) service to offer.

## West Berkshire Council Maintained Schools

### Proposal to De-Delegate Formula Funding 2024/25

#### Ethnic Minority & Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS)

#### Context

EMTAS has been funded through a de-delegation process as agreed with the Heads Funding Group. All the support for ethnically diverse, English as an additional language (EAL) and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) pupils is provided by the West Berkshire EMTAS Service.

EMTAS has gone through an academic year of significant change with 3 members of staff leaving including the Team Leader, and one on maternity leave. There are 2 remaining part time staff in the service currently, one Pupil Support Officer and GRT Officer.

#### 15. LA Responsibilities regarding EAL

Local authorities (LAs) in the UK have several statutory duties regarding pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL). These duties are aimed at ensuring that EAL pupils receive appropriate education and support to achieve their full potential. Key statutory duties include:

##### 1. Ensure Access to Education:

LAs are responsible for ensuring that all children of compulsory school age, including EAL pupils, have access to full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs (SEN) they may have. This includes making sure EAL pupils can access the National Curriculum.

##### 2. Promote High Standards:

LAs have a duty to promote high standards of education and fair access to educational opportunity for all children, including EAL pupils. This involves supporting schools to meet the diverse needs of EAL pupils, ensuring they can achieve academic success.

##### 3. Support Schools in Meeting EAL Needs:

LAs are expected to provide guidance, resources, and training to schools to help them meet the needs of EAL pupils. This can include providing specialist EAL teachers, developing inclusive teaching strategies, and ensuring that appropriate assessment and monitoring systems are in place.

##### 4. Safeguarding and Welfare:

LAs have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area, including EAL pupils. This includes ensuring that EAL pupils are not disadvantaged due to language barriers and that their welfare needs are identified and addressed.

##### 5. Equal Opportunities and Non-Discrimination:

LAs must ensure that EAL pupils are not discriminated against based on their language or ethnic background. This includes upholding the principles of the Equality Act 2010, which protects against discrimination in education.

##### 6. Provision of Additional Support:

Where necessary, LAs must provide additional support to schools to meet the specific needs of EAL pupils. This may involve funding for language support programs, translation services, or additional educational resources.

##### 7. Monitoring and Assessment:



LAs are responsible for monitoring the progress of EAL pupils to ensure that they are receiving the support they need and are making appropriate progress. This includes working with schools to track the academic achievement of EAL pupils and identifying any areas where further support may be required.

### **8. Engagement with Parents and Communities:**

LAs should engage with the parents and communities of EAL pupils to ensure they are informed about their children's education and can participate in school life. This might involve providing information in multiple languages and ensuring that communication barriers are minimised.

### **9. Inclusion and Integration:**

LAs are tasked with promoting the inclusion and integration of EAL pupils into the wider school community. This involves supporting schools in creating an inclusive environment where EAL pupils can participate fully in all aspects of school life.

These statutory duties ensure that EAL pupils receive the necessary support to overcome language barriers, integrate successfully into the education system, and achieve their full potential. Departments across Children's services support meeting these duties.

## **Current Structure**

Value is recognised from the school in provision of focused and skilled TA in class to support behaviour and language development. The time a pupil is 'open' to the service is varied and can be up to a year.

The management of the GRT Officer has been taken on by the Senior Education Welfare Officer and the management of the Pupil Support Officer has been taken on by the Medical Tuition Co-Ordinator in the absence of these posts currently.

Training has taken place across the schools.

In West Berkshire the main language spoken by EAL pupils is Polish, however we have 82 different languages spoken across our West Berkshire Schools. Little Health and St Barts have the largest population in Secondary Schools of EAL pupils with Polish, Hindi and Urdu being the most common first languages. St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has the largest population in Primary school with Hindi and Polish again being most common.

		<b>% EAL</b>	<b>No. on Roll</b>
<b>Total</b>	2,376		
Aldermaston C.E. Primary School	6	3	113
Basildon C.E. Primary School	3	2	174
Beedon C.E. (Controlled) Primary School	1	1	16
Beenham Primary School	4	3	53
Birch Copse Primary School	33	18	355
Bradfield C.E. Primary School	4	3	151
Brightwalton C.E. Aided Primary School	2	2	90
Brimpton C.E. Primary School	1	1	42
Brockhurst and Marlston House Schools	2	2	155
Brookfields Special School	23	14	224
Bucklebury C.E. Primary School	2	1	93
Burghfield St Mary's C.E. Primary School	5	4	168
Calcot Infant School and Nursery	21	13	164
Calcot Junior School	41	20	198
Chaddleworth St Andrew's C.E. Primary School	1	1	22

## De-delegation, Education Functions and Health and Safety Service Proposals 2025/26

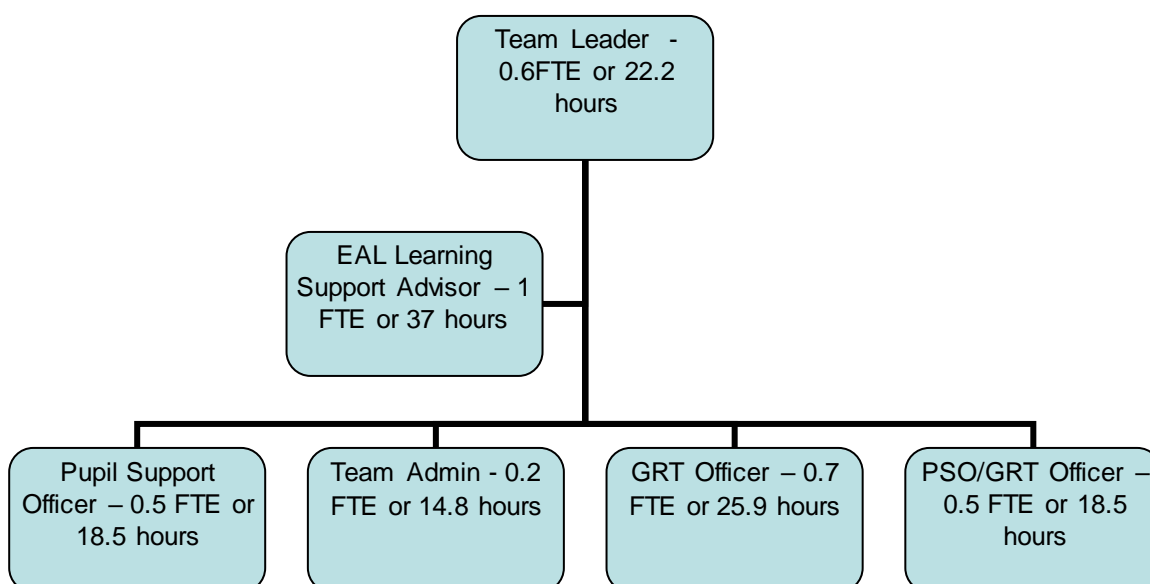
Chieveley Primary School	2	2	150
Cold Ash St Mark's C.E. School	1	1	171
Compton C.E. Primary School	5	4	184
Curridge Primary School	5	3	77
Denefield School	43	18	1111
Downsway Primary School	7	5	180
Elective Home Education	9	6	426
Enborne C.E. Primary School	2	1	78
Falkland Primary School	33	17	418
Fir Tree School and Nursery	40	21	219
Francis Baily Primary School	49	22	550
Garland Junior School	16	10	154
Hermitage Primary School	14	9	181
Highwood Copse Primary School	5	4	89
Hungerford Primary School	21	7	286
iCollege (Alternative Curriculum)	5	5	140
John O'Gaunt School	30	12	453
John Rankin Infant and Nursery School	22	14	193
John Rankin Junior School	33	18	272
Kennet School	138	31	1839
Kennet Valley Primary School	28	14	163
Kintbury St Mary's C.E. Primary School	10	6	130
Lambourn Primary School	15	8	177
Little Heath School	156	36	1665
Long Lane Primary School	18	12	173
Mortimer St John's C.E. Infant School	11	7	120
Mortimer St Mary's C.E. Junior School	19	12	237
Mrs Bland's Infant School	22	13	217
Oaklands School Hungerford	1	1	12
Pangbourne Primary School	23	14	175
Pangbourne Valley Playgroup	1	1	17
Park House School	40	15	998
Parsons Down Partnership Infant	7	3	60
Parsons Down Partnership Junior	22	14	145
Purley CE Primary School	9	6	94
Robert Sandilands Primary School and Nursery	37	16	202
Shaw -cum-Donnington C.E. Primary School	6	5	74
Shefford C.E. Primary School	6	2	44
Speenhamland School	91	28	247
Springfield Primary School	36	19	285
Spurcroft Primary School	46	22	409
St Bartholomew's School	200	35	1983
St Finian's Catholic Primary School	7	5	170
St John the Evangelist C.E. Nursery and Infant	43	18	131
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	158	28	243
St Nicolas C.E. Junior School	57	25	189
St Paul's Catholic Primary School	67	17	252
Stockcross C.E. School	7	4	77
Streatley C.E. Voluntary Controlled School	2	2	80
Sulhamstead and Upton Nerve School	1	1	79
Thatcham Park Primary	27	14	346
The Castle School	15	9	172
The Downs (Foundation) School	13	9	1404
The Grange School	2	2	8
The Ilsleys Primary School	2	2	54
The Willink School	72	20	1253
The Willows Primary School	70	20	361
The Winchcombe School	99	25	389
Theale C.E. Primary School	21	12	274

Theale Green School	43	16	755
Trinity School	149	32	1142
Welford and Wickham C.E. Primary School	1	1	56
Westwood Farm Infant School	32	17	218
Westwood Farm Junior School	25	14	176
Whitelands Park Primary School	19	9	342
Woolhampton C.E. Primary School	4	4	89
Yattendon C.E. Primary School	1	1	75

Total EAL Referrals Sep 2023 - August 2024		
No. of Schools	No. of Pupils	Referral Type
		EAL
	10	EY
	9	Transition: FS2 to Yr1
	7	Romanian
	6	Ukrainians
	5	Polish
	1	Afghan
	25	Other
23	63	Total

In September 2020 EMTAS was restructured and moved to be part of the Education Welfare and Safeguarding Service (EWSS).

Currently, EMTAS is financed to support a structure of:



At last year's (23/24) Schools Forum, there was an agreement to remain with the structure and cost of the team with some savings in project work and other lines from the budget. This brought amount to be de-delegated to £214,610.

It is proposed that due to the significant changes within the EMTAS service that this is an opportunity to revisit the service and ensure that it is value for money for all schools.

Benefits:

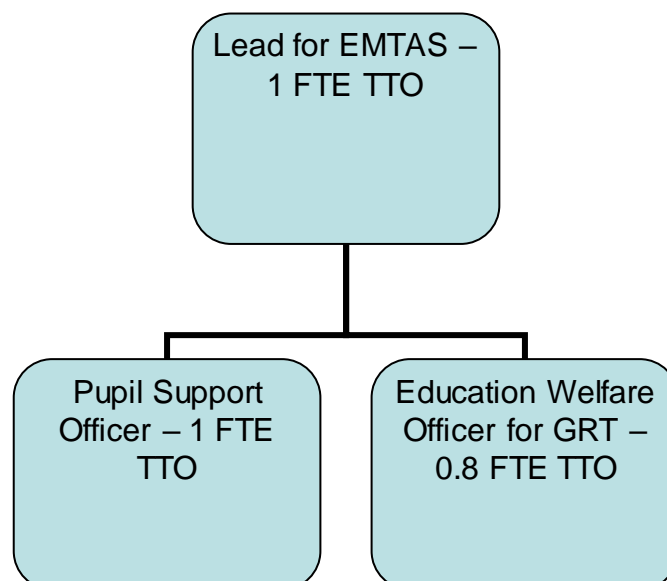
- Highly regarded service by schools
- Invaluable training on EAL across the Borough
- INSET training for staff
- EAL vs SEN support
- Money available for additional TA time for EAL pupils
- Bilingual support for Romanian and Polish to date
- Health link to education for GRT
- Link to GRT families
- GReaT programme for 1:1 support for GRT pupils to improve phonics

Risks:

- Not all schools that contribute benefit from the service
- The schools with the higher numbers of EAL are not always the ones that require the support
- Assessments can be completed by school
- No progress data available
- No specific time-limited intervention
- Staff are employed for full days which does not replicate the school day
- Over ½ service has left – unable to recruit on FTC until March 2025 (less than 6 months for recruitment/training etc)
- Due to de-delegated income, contracts would have to be Fixed Term unless agreed to fund for over 2 years.
- Limited knowledge on assessments remains in service
- Limited training experience remains in service
- Underspend for 24/25

Suggestions for Schools Forum decision:

- 1) **PROPOSAL 1** - Re-design the EAL/GRT support with a more strategic/training focus. We have already compiled an informative SLA ONLINE provision for schools to access advice and guidance which needs to be maintained as a one stop information hub for EAL/GRT. This would be coupled with a good EAL training programme to run across the academic year from September 2025 – 2026. The structure of the service would be:



The focus of the staff would be to prioritise language support where most needed across the schools with this greatest need. Support would look like in the form of a comprehensive training plan with support for completing EAL assessments.

The service re-designed referrals to ensure that the right information was received and prioritise support for the most vulnerable pupils especially where there were SEND.

Schools would continue to receive support with engagement with their GRT families in multiple areas e.g. the EHCP process, issues around safeguarding, behaviour, avoiding exclusion, intervention for gaps in learning, transition, delivery of culturally sensitive topics (Sex Education), transport, admissions, attendance, housing and Elective Home Education.

Cost of service is: **£183,315**

This is the equivalent to **£11.17** per EAL/GRT pupils in our schools and a reduction from the current £12.97 per pupil.

With the reduced costs into the service, schools will be able to employ TAs directly but there is also a continued budget of £17k within the budget to still support schools where requested.

The Team Leader is responsible for the day-to-day management of the service.

- Production and execution of EAL strategy across the LA and schools in West Berkshire to meet the needs of pupils and schools, promoting inclusion and successful language development
- Organisation of English language assessments of EAL pupils for whom language may be a barrier to learning, writing advisory reports with recommended strategies where schools are unable to action.
- Arranging advice and support for individual pupils, including those with EAL and possible SEND needs and those in the EHCP process.
- Supporting schools and families of vulnerable pupils at professional's meetings linked to EHCPs.
- Training package of support for teachers and teaching assistants EAL/GRT and reducing barriers to learning.
- Organisation of tailored packages of support to schools to meet the needs of ethnically diverse pupils and those from Gypsy, Roma, Traveller families e.g. managing the GRaT 121 programme – training teaching assistants through targeted workshops to deliver intervention programmes to narrow the attainment gap with their peers and to reduce inequalities.
- Tracking the attainment of GRT pupils termly to inform interventions and the allocation of the GRT Pupil Support Officer.
- Multi-agency approach to support schools with EAL and GRT pupils.
- Support refugees/asylum seekers access education swiftly
- Provide EAL and GRT advice, guidance, and resources to schools.

The EAL Learning Support Adviser is responsible for providing support to schools. This includes:

- Completion of EAL assessments for pupils who may be finding it difficult to access learning. Providing advisory assessment reports with recommendations and guidance for classroom teachers.
- Supporting and delivering training at a corporate level for Heads, SLT, Inclusion Leads, SENCOs and teachers. Also, deliver in school workshops for support staff to understand the needs of EAL learners, share useful strategies and resources.
- Signpost resources and learning to schools

The Pupil Support Officers (PSO) work with schools supporting individual and small groups of pupils:

- Support is focused on helping vulnerable pupils to access the curriculum and improve English acquisition.
- PSOs may support schools with parent communication, in school meetings regarding SEND and the EHCP process to support vulnerable pupils.
- PSOs will train staff and provide appropriate resources to support pupils.
- The Pupil Support Officer for GRT pupils has a wider brief involving extensive liaison between families, staff, and other professionals. May be allocated to deliver short-term weekly interventions in school, after a referral either due to concerns about academic progress or behaviour. GRT families are supported with attendance, admissions, transition, and engagement with learning. GRT PSO is specifically targeted with raising attendance and attainment of pupils from the GRT community recognising barriers and supporting schools with inclusion including curriculum. There is also a strong health link.

## Benefits of Service

### EAL assessments

Referrals for EAL assessments were received from 19 West Berkshire Schools from the beginning of the September 2023 to August 2024 academic year: total 63 pupils. There have not been any referrals from Secondary Schools.

No. of Schools	Name of Schools (Teaching Assistant funding)	Name of Schools year1
17	St. Nicolas CE Junior School	Curridge Primary School
	Kintbury St. Mary's CE Primary School	Hermitage Primary School
	John Rankin Schools	Birch Copse Primary School
	Parsons Down Partnership of Schools	Robert Sandilands School
	Beenham Primary School	Calcot Schools
	The Willows Primary School	St. Paul's Primary School
	Long Lane Primary School	St Johns
	Mrs. Bland's Infant & Nursery School	Shaw-cum-Donnington Primary School
		St. Joseph's School
1	John Rankin Schools	
1	Aldermaston	

### In school TA Funding:

In addition to bilingual support, EMTAS provided funding for Teaching Assistants within schools to support EAL learners in the early stages of English acquisition. EMTAS increased the hourly rate to £10.43 per hour in September 2018 to be more in line with current Teaching Assistant pay. This has risen to £12.13 an hour and funding will now replicate this inflation.

Number of TA funded hours given to schools:

TA Funding 2023-24 (Academic Year)				
	£allocation	Hours	No. of Pupils	No. of Schools
EAL - Sep 2023 - March 2024	£10,221	980	64	17

EAL - April 2024 - July 2024	£522	50	5	1
GRT121	£156	15	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£10,899</b>	<b>1045</b>		
2023-24 budget	£17,000			
% spend of total budget	64%			

**Schools in receipt of GReaT121 project funding during 2022/23** to provide targeted intervention for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils.

Great121 - total £939
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### Training provided (Shaw House and individual schools)

Academic Year 2022/23
EMTAS delivered corporate training – ‘How to meet the needs of New Arrivals’ this year and will be increasing this to three, two hour sessions (one per term).
EAL training for TAs who are to deliver EAL interventions after an EAL assessment outcome.
Moving forward, additional EAL workshops allocated as well as TA intervention will provide a further increased tailored support for schools.

### Number of families supported by Pupil Support Officer (GRT)

West Berkshire has 115 children who are ascribed as Gypsy, Roma or Traveller.  
33 West Berkshire schools have Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils on roll.

22 GRT children have been supported in 20 schools (an increase of 50%) seeking guidance and support by the PSO GRT. Transition support has been provided between schools and also when pupils have been transferring from out of West Berkshire into our schools. This work involves ‘in year’ changes as well as end of Key Stage transitions.

EMTAS Pupil Support Officer for GRT pupils has supported children and families from GRT backgrounds during 2022/23. This included face to face sessions and a range of home/school visits, as well as consultations with SLT at schools with a high proportion of GRT pupils.

The following schools have received support from EMTAS for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils.

Aldermaston	Mortimer
Brimpton	Mrs Bland's
Burghfield St Mary's	Purley
Calcot	Robert Sandilands
Castle	SUN
Engaging Potential	Thatcham Park
Garlands	The Downs
Hermitage	Theale Green
i-college	Westwood Farm
Kennet	Willink

Schools have been supported with engagement with their GRT families in multiple areas e.g. the EHCP process, issues around safeguarding, behaviour, avoiding exclusion, intervention for gaps in learning, transition, delivery of culturally sensitive topics (Sex Education), transport, admissions, attendance, housing and Elective Home Education.

### GRT Outreach:

Over the previous years, EMTAS has delivered engagement sessions for pre-school children via the hire of the Bus Of Hope facility. This included sessions 9/12 months of the year at Paices Hill traveller site based in Aldermaston. Unfortunately, due to governance issues at the BOH and mechanical ones of the bus; this has led to the end of this collaborative project. A positive outcome has been the emergence of new co-production with an NHS Health Bus helping to reduce inequities in the WB community. This is going well and has seen many families benefit from co-working across the services.

### Ukrainian families

Since the Ukrainian families arrived in West Berkshire, their transition has been supported with EAL assessments and guidance reports. Also, by delivering training to staff to understand their wider needs. Support specifically for these families and to meet the LA duties of safeguarding and regular check ins with the families transitioning over from Ukraine was carried out by an Education Welfare Officer specifically focused on Ukrainian families, working closely with the Ukrainian Hub. This post and funding has now ceased.

## Proposed Cost of Delivery in 2025/26

The following table summarises the proposed cost of the service for 2025/26 in comparison with previous years.

	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26	% change
Staffing Costs	169,080	178,080	153,480	
Other Costs	17,020	17,020	17,020	
Support Service Recharges	18,610	19,510	17,050	
Total Cost	204,710	214,610	187,550	-14.43%
Less Surplus Brought Forward	-17,692	-28,440	-22,910	
<b>Amount to be De-Delegated</b>	<b>187,018</b>	<b>186,170</b>	<b>164,640</b>	<b>-13.1%</b>

## Method of charging in 2025/26

The total cost of the service will be divided by the total number of pupils recorded in the October 2024 census to arrive at a per pupil amount for charging purposes. Based on October 2023 census data, this equates to £11.47 per pupil. Appendix A of the main report shows the total amount per school.

## Other Options which may be considered

Schools receive a high-quality level of support in West Berkshire which has been highly valued by those that have used the service. The centrally funded service has allowed all schools to receive the level of support that they need which has not been directly linked to the number of pupils in schools.



If schools did not support a centrally delivered service to meet the needs of English as an additional language learners and those from the Gypsy Roma Traveller community they could expect to have to purchase support.

## West Berkshire Council Maintained Schools

### Proposal to De-Delegate Formula Funding 2025/26

#### Trade Union Representation Service

## Outline of Proposed Service 2025/26

West Berkshire Council has a school trade union facilities agreement which includes provision for compensating individual schools for release time for teacher trade union representatives they employ. Compensation is paid from the dedicated schools grant (DSG).

Union representatives attend joint consultation meetings with the authority and meetings with head teachers and HR on a variety of employee relations matters. The latter includes TUPE consultation meetings where schools converted to academy status; consultation on reorganisations of teaching and support to staff (note: NASUWT and ATL also represent non teaching staff; NEU only represents teachers); disciplinary issues; grievances; ill health cases; capability cases; and settlement agreements

### What union officers do

Union officers use 'facilities time' to work with members experiencing professional difficulties (casework) and to support groups of members either in individual schools or through negotiation and consultation with the local authority acting on behalf of its schools (collective work). The casework dealt with by union officers falls into two broad categories: individual issues and collective issues.

#### Individual casework issues

The union officers spend most of the facilities time dealing with members. Union members in West Berkshire schools are able to contact their union representative directly by email or telephone. Issues raised by members in this way are known as casework. Casework can be divided into capability; disciplinary; grievance; and contracts, pay and conditions

Advice is often given on how the teacher/support staff can seek to resolve the matter for themselves. However, there are a number of cases where the union officer has to make contact with school management, human resources providers or an LA officer directly. Employees are entitled to be accompanied by a union officer at formal meetings under school HR procedures.

Contracts, Pay and Conditions issues such as pay determination appeals and questions of what teachers can be directed to do are becoming increasingly common.

### Collective Issues

These include consultation on changes to working conditions such as pay policies, sickness absence policies, codes of conduct restructuring and redundancy.

This school year has seen an increase in the number of school restructurings accompanied by the risk of redundancy, as school budgets come under increasing pressure. The redundancy procedure is complex and often involves multiple meetings. The

threat of redundancy can quickly undermine morale in a school and often the role of union officers is to reassure and support employees as well as ensuring that correct procedures are followed.

## Proposed Cost of Delivery in 2025/26

The following table summarises the proposed cost of the service for 2025/26, compared to 2024/25. It is based on engaging a representative from each of the unions:

	2024/25 £	Proposed UPS3 2025/26 £
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>	<b>£64,036</b>	<b>£68,884</b>
Support Service Recharges	£6,404	£6,888
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>£70,440</b>	<b>£75,772</b>
Income from Nursery and Special Schools and PRUs	£2,149	£2,520
<b>Cost to Primary and Secondary Schools</b>	<b>£68,291</b>	<b>£73,252</b>

The proposed budget for 2025/26 is based on:

- Reimbursement to schools providing release time (not the salary of the union representative for trade union activities) is dependent on agreement by Schools Forum in respect of maintained primary and secondary schools and from other schools which elect to buy in the facilities time – the budget is calculated as approximately equivalent to 1fte teacher paid on UPS3 across all unions;
- Each trade union to have five days for regular activities including attendance at local authority consultative meetings;
- Balance of budget available is divided proportionately by the number of current members in each union as at 1<sup>st</sup> June (the budget will be adjusted depending on the actual level of buy back from other schools).

Note that representatives work across all sectors, and it is irrelevant what type of school they are employed by. Therefore the total net cost is divided between all schools de-delegating rather than taking each sector separately.

## Method of charging in 2025/26

The total cost of the service will be divided by the total number of pupils recorded in the October 2024 census to arrive at a per pupil amount for charging purposes. Using October 2023 census data, this would equate to £5.10 per primary and secondary pupil. Appendix A of the main report shows the indicative total amount per school. Academies and other schools may choose to buy into the service at the same per pupil rate (this would provide funding for additional hours).

## Other Options which *may* be considered

It should be noted that once a decision has been made to discontinue pooling arrangements, it would be almost impossible to reverse that decision at a later date.

Therefore the HFG and SF need to be aware that a decision to cease pooling arrangements for this budget would be permanent.

There may be the option to consider a reduced service at a lower cost to schools.

## West Berkshire Council Maintained Schools Proposal to De-Delegate Formula Funding 2025/26 CLEAPSS Service

### Outline of Proposed Service 2025/26

West Berkshire Council has an agreement with CLEAPSS (Consortium of Local Education Authorities for the Provision of Science Services) which includes the provision of support and advice to teachers, technicians, head teachers and governors/trustees on how best to use high quality practical work to support pupils learning in science, design & technology and, most recently, art & design.

All but two of the 182 authorities, with the duty to provide education, in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the various islands, are members of CLEAPSS.

The Local Authority can offer schools and academies the opportunity to purchase an annual CLEAPSS subscription at a heavily discounted price from that which schools would pay to CLEAPSS independent of West Berkshire Council.

The CLEAPSS service also requires the provision of a Radiation Protection Officer (RPO) and the Radiation Protection Adviser (RPA) for secondary schools and academies who will require some radiation sources on site as part of the national curriculum.

### Benefits of Service

CLEAPSS covers:

- Health & safety including model risk assessments
- Chemicals, living organisms, equipment
- Sources of resources
- Laboratory design, facilities and fittings
- Technicians and their jobs
- D&T facilities and fittings

CLEAPSS provides:

- Termly newsletters for primary and secondary schools
- A wide range of free publications
- Model and special risk assessments
- Low-cost training courses for technicians, teachers and local authority officers
- A telephone helpline
- A monitoring service, e.g. for mercury spills
- Evaluations of equipment
- Advice on repairs
- A H&S / Review of service publishers, exam boards and other organizations producing teaching resources

The local authority will have met the conditions of membership if all community schools subscribe.

## Costs and Method of charging for 2025/26

CLEAPSS set the pricing each year in February/March for the financial year April to March ahead. In 2024/25 the charge to schools was 19 pence per pupil including administration costs. For secondary schools who require the service of a Radiation Protection Officer (delivered by WBC Health & Safety Team) and a Radiation Protection Adviser (delivered by CLEAPSS) there are additional costs of £250 per annum for the Radiation Protection Officer for the Radiation Protection Adviser.

The proposal for 2025/26 is to keep the same rate per pupil to 19 pence per pupil.

As the de-delegation covers pre-16 pupils only, maintained secondary schools will need to pay the 6<sup>th</sup> form element of the fee as a separate sum.

The charges for the RPA and RPO service will also remain the same at £250.

Independent, Academies, Foundation and VA schools may purchase the CLEAPSS subscription directly through CLEAPSS.

The cost per pupil/school is shown in the table below in comparison with the cost of buying this service directly from CLEAPSS, the RPA/RPO service is not available directly from CLEAPSS.

School	Cost through local authority per pupil	Cost directly per pupil (min 200 pupils/ 350 secondary)	Radiation Protection Advisor	Radiation Protection Officer
Nursery	19p	32.5p	N/A	N/A
Primary	19p	32.5p	N/A	N/A
Secondary	19p	32.5p	£60	£190
Special	19p	32.5p	N/A	N/A
PRU	19p	32.5p	N/A	N/A
Primary Academy	19p	32.5p	N/A	N/A
Secondary Academy	19p	32.5p	£60	£190
Incorporated colleges	19p	32.5p	£60	£190

**West Berkshire Council Maintained Schools**  
**Proposal to De-Delegate Formula Funding 2025/26**  
**School Improvement Team**

## Outline of Proposed Service 2025/26

### 1. Statutory Functions

#### 1.1 From section 13A of Education Act 1996:

“Duty to promote high standards and the fulfilment of potential”

When delivering school improvement functions, LAs must also have regard to the Schools Causing Concern statutory guidance. The guidance covers “Schools Causing Concern” but also other maintained schools which the LA has serious concerns about and needs to be addressed.

To fulfil these requirements, the LA is required to have the expenditure to:

- Monitor all maintained schools (visit to schools at risk, data monitoring; categorisation of support)
- Have the resources to be able to take action where necessary to support the improvement of standards in particular, This includes issuing Warning Notices where there are concerns about standards, leadership, governance , finance or the safety of pupils.

#### 1.2 Monitoring National Curriculum Assessment Arrangements

Expenditure on monitoring NC assessment arrangements required by orders made under section 87 of the 2002 Education Act.

Under the Education (NC) (KS1 Assessment Arrangements) Order 2004, a local authority must:

- Appoint a person who has recent experience of provision of the NC in primary schools.
- LAs have equivalent duties in KS2

(Currently costed at £25k per annum)

#### 1.3 Religious Education

A local authority must:

- Set up a standing advisory council on religious education (section 390 Education Act 1996); and

- Prepare an agreed syllabus of religious education in accordance with Schedule 31, Education Act 1996. (currently costed at £4K per annum)

## 2. Other services provided free of charge

2.1 The School Improvement Team is currently funded by DSG and also the traded side of the service. There is however a significant part of the service that is provided free for all maintained schools, regardless of whether they buy into the Traded service or not.

This includes:

1. **Ofsted** support – 24/7 support from an experienced adviser from the first phone call from Ofsted to the feedback at the end of the inspection. Support for staff as and when needed and rapid support when issues need to be closed down, school end. From January 2023 we have been attending during the actual inspection if the HT has requested it. This is due to the heightened emotions and tensions surrounding the Ruth Perry tragedy and the increased stresses that an inspection creates for the school and its leaders. Issues can be raised during the inspection with the support of the School Improvement team.
2. **Safeguarding audits** – Initially conducted for all schools in the immediate window for an Ofsted Inspection. The school Improvement team would like these audits going forwards, to be more regular. These are conducted with the person responsible for the SCR and DSLs/DDSLs. SCR/responsibilities/Governor involvement. Areas include;
  - a. A visual check of the SCR, picking up any issues (if any)
  - b. Overseas checks, identity checks, Section 128 etc
  - c. Staff and governor Training and how that is recorded, DSL compliance.
  - d. KCSIE/safeguarding updates
  - e. Early help procedures
  - f. Safer recruitment training
  - g. Staff personnel files
  - h. Record keeping/system used for safeguarding
  - i. Part time timetables/CME/AP provision and checks made on the providers
  - j. Filtering and monitoring
  - k. Site security
  - l. PREVENT training
  - m. SRE
3. Supporting schools when they are making **formal complaints to Ofsted**. Meeting with the HT/Governors and compiling and producing reports to support the complaints procedure.
4. Support for schools producing evidence to the DFE for **Revocations of Academy** orders.
5. **Ofsted Meetings** – attending regular meetings with HMI and the regional director to support our schools during Inspection and ensure that issues and concerns are raised promptly and that action is taken. E.g certain inspectors were not operating within the guidelines for their Code of Conduct. These inspectors were not scheduled again within the authority.



6. **Weekly KIT emails** – to ensure that links and resources are sent in a timely manner, so that Head Teachers have current DFE and Ofsted updates and are not missing deadlines for statutory compliance.
7. **Well being support for school leaders.** Visits and signposting to ensure Leaders are supported through a whole host of issues that might be affecting them.
8. **Primary Heads Forum** – Focused presentations that share information to upskill and support Head teachers 5x across the year.
9. **Head teacher recruitment** – a School Improvement Adviser to support, sit on the Headteacher Appointment Panel, advise the panel on the process of recruitment, support with panel questions and presentations and both the adviser and Director Of Education attends the final panel.
10. **Documentation** – Any documents we produce are sent out to all schools e.g
  - (i) Templates for Deep Dives
  - (ii) Questions for middle leaders
  - (iii) Expertise knowledge and signposting in any area
11. **Website checks on all schools in the ofsted window**, against the DFE’s criteria, to support schools to ensure that they are compliant with the updated requirements.
12. **Re categorisation** –
  - a. **Outcome 3 for Section 8 Inspections** – up to 3 days further support for maintained schools that are a cause for concern.
  - b. **Support of Outcome 4 schools** – at least 3+ days of intensive support.
  - c. **Schools that have to operate a MOU** to ensure that they have a HT are supported by an experienced School Improvement Adviser.
13. **Email queries** from all school staff and leaders about all areas of school improvement.
14. **Support for schools receiving Ofsted complaints** – supporting Chairs of Governors through the complaints procedure, meeting with HTs and offering bespoke support as needed.
15. **Deficit support for schools needing advise and support.**
16. **Targeted support for schools with lower than expected Key Stage results.**
  - a. Pedagogy training across the year.
  - b. Learning Walks and support within schools.
17. **Subsidised courses** wherever possible.
18. **New to Headship** – 3 days of free support from an experienced School Improvement Adviser and a mentor provided by the LA.

- a. **Training in the autumn term on change management, SEF, IDSR and SDP planning.**
- b. **Supporting documentation for the first year of Headship.**

19. **Free Safeguarding Governor network** – to support this vital area within the responsibilities of the Governing Body.

### 3. Proposed Cost of Delivery in 2025/2026

3.1 The School Improvement service has been funded by a grant since 2017.

3.2 In October 2021, the DFE consulted on the future funding of the service with the proposal to:

- (i) Phase out the current grant funding by the start of 2023/24
- (ii) Reduce the grant in 2022/23 to 50% of the current amount on a per school basis
- (iii) The remaining 50% funding to be de-delegated to schools in 2022/23

3.3 For the 2023/24 year & beyond the service will be wholly funded by de-delegation

3.4 The following table summarises the proposed cost of the service for 2025/26.

	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 Proposed £	% increase
Staffing Costs	292,681	303,250	294,614	
Other Costs	15,480	15,480	15,770	
Support Service Recharges	30,816	31,873	31,038	
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>338,977</b>	<b>350,603</b>	<b>341,422</b>	-2.69%
Less Surplus Carried Forward	-130,000	-59,220	-23,254	
<b>Amount to be De-Delegated</b>	<b>208,977</b>	<b>291,383</b>	<b>318,168</b>	<b>8.4%</b>

The overall cost of staffing and overheads has decreased by 2.69%, this is mainly due to a reduced spend on moderation in KS1.

This does not take into account income which will be earned from any Academies which choose to buy back this service. Any additional income received from this source will reduce the net cost and the charge to maintained schools.

### Method of charging in 2025/26

The total net cost of the service will be divided by the total number of pupils recorded in the October 2024 census to arrive at a per pupil amount for charging purposes. Using October 2023 census data, this would equate to £22.16 per pupil. Appendix A of the main report shows the indicative total amount per school.

Other Options which *may* be considered

1. The local authority offer a fully traded service (likely to increase the cost to individual schools).
2. Schools “pay as you go” either by employing/using own staff when needed or purchasing support from external providers (may include the local authority if still able to offer this service).
3. Local authority to consider an alternative (cheaper) service to offer.

## West Berkshire Council Maintained Schools

### Proposal to De-Delegate Formula Funding 2025/26

#### Statutory and Regulatory Duties - Accountancy, Audit and Pension Scheme Administration

Accountancy (Statutory Functions)
<p><b>Description of Duties:</b>            Consolidation of school accounts into Council's year end statement of accounts.            Overview of school budget submissions &amp; budget monitoring reports.            Monitoring of schools in financial difficulty/deficit.            Monitoring adherence to Scheme for Financing Schools.            Returns to Central Government – CFR, CFO grants return.            Administration of grants &amp; other funding to maintained schools eg. PPG, budget allocations &amp; adjustments.            Budgeting and accounting functions relating to maintained schools (Sch 2, 74)</p>
Cost: £58,817
0.32 FTE Accountants; 0.39 FTE Senior Accountant; 0.02 Schools Accountancy Manager; 0.14 FTE Finance Manager <b>Total FTE 0.87</b>
Pension Scheme Administration
<p><b>Description of Duties:</b>            Administration of Teachers and Local Government pension schemes in relation to staff working in maintained schools:            Amending and updating employee records in relation to pensions            Responding to queries from employees in relation to pensions            Completion of statutory monthly returns to Teachers Pensions and Local Government pension scheme, including service and pay calculations.</p>
Cost: £41,910
1.0 FTE Pensions Assistant

## Internal Audit of Schools – Statutory Requirements

### Description of Duties:

Annual internal audit of maintained schools according to level of risk - circa 10 schools are audited per year. Each audit takes on average 7 days. The audit covers Governance; financial planning and management; financial policy, processes and records; benchmarking and value for money; school fund, SFVS.

We also carry out follow-up reviews for those schools that have a weak or very weak audit report opinion.

There is provision for adhoc advice to schools/issuing the Anti Fraud Advisory Bulletins and the investigation of any financial irregularities. We also monitor compliance with submitting the SFVS returns.

We have also included an element of time for the planning and monitoring of the school visit programme, and liaising with Accountancy /governor support etc on queries when they arise.

Cost: £54,574

0.65 FTE Senior Auditor; 0.09 FTE Audit Manager

## Proposed Cost of Delivery in 2025/26

The following table summarises the proposed cost of the service for 2025/26, compared to 2024/25.

	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 Proposed £
Accountancy	52,626	54,607	58,817
Audit	52,911	52,781	54,574
Pension Scheme Admin	35,864	38,797	41,910
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>141,401</b>	<b>146,185</b>	<b>155,301</b>
Less income from Special and Nursery Schools and PRUs	4,302	4,460	5,165
<b>Amount to be De-Delegated</b>	<b>137,099</b>	<b>£141,725</b>	<b>150,136</b>

## Method of charging in 2025/26

The total net cost of the service will be divided by the total number of pupils recorded in the October 2024 census to arrive at a per pupil amount for charging purposes. Using October 2023 census data, this would equate to £10.46 per pupil. Appendix A of the main report shows the indicative total amount per school.

Other Options which *may* be considered

1. The local authority offer a fully traded service (likely to increase the cost to individual schools).
2. Schools “pay as you go” either by employing/using own staff when needed or purchasing support from external providers (may include the local authority if still able to offer this service).

Local authority to consider an alternative (cheaper) service to offer.

## **West Berkshire Council Maintained Schools**

### **Proposal to De-Delegate Formula Funding 2025/26**

### **Statutory and Regulatory Duties – Health and Safety**

#### **1. Introduction**

1.1 The Council has an established, professional and well regarded Health and Safety Team that already supports West Berkshire schools.

#### **2. Background and Legislative Context**

2.1 The principal legislation in the United Kingdom for health and safety is the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. There is also a considerable amount of health and safety legislation under the Health and Safety at Work Etc Act 1974 including the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations etc.

2.2 The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations set out that every employer shall appoint one or more competent persons to assist him in undertaking the measures s/he needs to take to comply with the requirements imposed by the relevant statutory provisions.

2.3 The regulations state that the employer shall ensure that the number of competent persons appointed, the time available for them to fulfil their functions and the means at their disposal are adequate having regard to the size of the undertaking, the risks to which employees are exposed and the distribution of those risks throughout the organisation. It should be noted that the regulations do not suggest any limit or scope to the competent advice or how it should be delivered practically.

2.4 The regulations also state that where there is a competent person in the employer's employment, that person shall be appointed in preference to a competent person not in his employment.

2.5 The duties imposed by the health and safety at work Act 1974 and associated regulations apply to the Council as an employer and it would also apply to the Council in relation to Local Authority maintained schools as the Council is the employer.

2.6 In the case of Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools the Governors are the employer. In independent schools and Academies the Governors or the Academy Trust are the employers.

2.7 The Council also has the general "duty to educate", even where the Governors or an Academy Trust are the employer, there could be some limited involvement for the Council if a serious incident were to occur. See Appendix B for further information on the legal duty holders.

### 3. The Councils Health & Safety Support Service to Schools

3.1 The Council offers a health and safety support services to West Berkshire schools in line with the service level agreement offered to all schools included in the dedelegation system.

3.2 Following a decision to change the way the service operated in 2020/2021 since then all maintained schools have had the Level Two (Enhanced) service. This is a comprehensive health and safety support service and covers all aspects of health and safety management and support including necessary health and safety training, health and safety compliance and advice for schools.

3.3 As the Council is the employer and therefore the principal legal duty holder (not withstanding any delegated responsibilities to a schools, Head Teachers and Governors) in relation to health and safety, it makes sense to ensure an adequate, effective and efficient health and safety service is provided to Local Authority maintained schools and then a buy-back option offered to non-maintained schools.

### 4. Proposal

4.1 The schools health and safety service would be provided to all maintained schools, continuing on from the previous year. This will meet the requirements of the employer under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations and other related legislation.

4.2 Schools will pay a graduated fee based on pupil numbers. All maintained schools will need to agree to be part of this collective agreement to equitably fund the service.

4.3 A buy-back option would continue to be offered to schools such as academy and independent schools. Income generated from buy-back services would be invested in the service or offset to reduce costs for the schools in the collective agreement.

4.4 Table 1 below shows the 25/26 cost if all Local Authority maintained schools, Voluntary Controlled, Voluntary Aided and special schools agree to one equal service. Due to rising costs it has been necessary to increase the cost of the service by 4%.

**Table 1**

Pupil No's	Band A 0-60	Band B 61 - 100	Band C 101-200	Band D 201-300	Band E 301- 465	Band F +466	Band G Secondary
21/22	£800.00	£1,300.00	£1,600.00	£2,000.00	£2,600.00	£4.47 Per pupil	£4.47 Per pupil
22/23	£800.00	£1,300.00	£1,600.00	£2,000.00	£2,600.00	£4.57 Per pupil	£4.57 Per pupil
23/24	£832.00	£1352.00	£1664.00	£2080.00	£2704.00	£5.89 Per Pupil	£5.89 Per Pupil
24/25	£881.92	£1433.12	£1763.84	£2204.80	£2866.24	£6.24 Per Pupil	£6.24 Per Pupil
25/26	£917.20	£1,490.44	£1,834.39	£2,292.89	£2,980.89	£6.40 per Pupil	£6.40 per Pupil

There are no discounts based on federated schools. However, schools who operate on the same site would pay one fee based on a combined pupil total up to 465 pupils when it

will be charged per pupil. Maintained nursery schools would pay Band A due to the part time nature of their pupils.

4.5 Table 3 below shows the cost of providing the enhanced service:

<b>Table 3</b>	<b>2025/26 Proposed £</b>
Staffing Costs	122,560
Other Costs	9,270
Support Service Recharges	13,180
Total Cost	145,010
De-delegated basic income @ £6.40 per pupil	95,814
Remainder cost to be met by all Maintained Primary and Secondary Schools via a top up to support the delivery of the Health & Safety Service.	<b>49,196</b>

## 5. Recommendation

5.1 Schools consider the option set out above to maintain the current level of service.

## 6. Conclusion

6.1 The Council recognises that safety is important but needs to be approached creatively and should not be seen as simply another legal burden or bureaucratic chore. A planned approach to managing risk should be seen as an enabler, not just to prevent accidents and work related health problems for both staff and pupils but to build a culture of sensible risk management, linked to a curriculum where teaching young people can develop their capability to assess and manage risk.

6.2 The Council will continue to support sensible and pro-active health and safety management in schools by providing a supportive infrastructure and service to schools.

6.3 If the recommendation above is not accepted then schools should identify what system they would prefer and the service offer and financial implication can be calculated accordingly.



## West Berkshire Council Maintained Schools

### Health and Safety Service 2025/26

The Health and Safety Team are part of Finance and Property Service in the Resources Directorate. Our address is: Council Offices, Market Street, Newbury RG14 1BZ

#### Overview of Service

West Berkshire Council has a professional and dedicated Schools Health and Safety Team who provide support and advice to schools on all aspects of health and safety including an online safety management system incorporating accident reporting, compliance management and a resource library.

The Schools Health and Safety Team also work on policy development and effective implementation, user friendly guidance and information, support in completing risk assessments, a complete range of health and safety training, safety alerts and health and safety newsletters.

7. Schools Health & Safety Needs Assessment

8. Schools Health & Safety Needs Assessment are designed to measure levels of compliance with legislation and best practice. The associated action plan will help you prioritise your improvements. The assessment is conducted using a process of objective evidence gathering including a review of safety documentation, discussions with relevant managers and staff and a tour/inspection of the site.

9.

10. We have operated the current system of needs assessments for six years now and have seen schools develop their health and safety management system but continued improvement is still required. In order to free resource time that could be better utilised helping schools improve on the areas identified in the needs assessments, we propose to continue with the needs assessments with an amended schedule and to develop topic based assessments that will enable greater depth and time to be devoted to specific topics.

11.

Schools will be able to request a new needs assessment at any time, which will be booked at the earliest mutually convenient opportunity at no additional cost to the school.

12. There are a set number of questions in the Schools Needs Assessment, each carrying a maximum score of 4. Any question marked not applicable will reduce the total maximum score possible accordingly. The frequency of needs assessments discussed above has been included in Table 1 below.

**Table 1**

Overall Score	Description	Score Range Achieved	Frequency between assessments
91%+	Schools which score 91% or above on the previous needs assessment will require a new needs assessment completed in up to 5 years. Support will be provided in intervening years on the areas identified for improvement and topic specific assessments will be completed for all maintained schools and those schools purchasing the service.	91% and above	Up to 5 years
80% to 90%	13. Schools which score 80-90% on the previous needs assessment will require a new needs assessment completed in up to 4 years. Support will be provided in intervening years on the areas identified for improvement and topic specific assessments will be completed for all maintained schools and those schools purchasing the service.	80% to 90%	Up to 4 years
55% to 79%	14. Schools which score 55-79% on the previous needs assessment will require a new needs assessment completed in up to 2 years. Support will be provided in intervening year on the areas	60% to 79%	Up to 3 years

	identified for improvement and topic specific assessments will be completed for all maintained schools and those schools purchasing the service.		
Up to 54%	15. Schools which score below 55% on the previous needs assessment will require a new needs assessment completed in up to 1 year. Support will be provided in intervening months on the areas identified for improvement and topic specific assessments will be completed for all maintained schools and those schools purchasing the service.	59% and below	Up to 1 year

**West Berkshire Council Health and Safety**

**Table 2**

<b>Health and Safety Service</b>	
<b>Summary</b>	
<p>The aim of this service is to provide schools with a named, dedicated and professional Health and Safety Adviser to provide 'on-site support and advice' to the school, guiding and prioritising the integration of an effective and efficient safety management system and documentation in support of the School's Health and Safety Policy.</p> <p>The schools dedicated Health and Safety Adviser will begin by arranging and completing a Health and Safety Audit (Needs Assessment) of the school that will help to identify the strengths and areas for improvement in the schools existing arrangements. The Schools dedicated Health and Safety Adviser will then continue to work closely with the school to help plan, develop and implement your health and safety policy and the areas for improvement you need.</p> <p>The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations require you to appoint someone competent to help you meet your health and safety duties. A competent person is someone with the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to manage health and safety.</p> <p>West Berkshire Council, Schools Health and Safety Team will be your competent person and help ensure you meet your health and safety duties. Details of the Health and Safety service are listed below in further detail.</p>	
<b>Service Provided</b>	<b>Service Standard</b>
<b>1. Advice</b>	Advice and support will be provided to the school on specific questions/issues. If required the schools dedicated Health and Safety Adviser will arrange to visit the school and meet with relevant persons to ensure the enquiry is resolved.
<b>2. Health and Safety Needs Assessment</b>	<p>Schools will receive a health and safety needs assessment designed to assess and measure levels of compliance with health and safety legislation and best practice. The associated action plan will help you prioritise your improvement plan.</p> <p>Your dedicated Health and Safety Adviser will then arrange to assist and support the school in progressing the recommendations to ensure continual improvement.</p> <p>Health and Safety Needs Assessments will be completed for all maintained schools and those schools purchasing the service on a cycle subject to the outcome of the previous needs assessment as per Table 1 above.</p> <p>Schools will be able to request a new needs assessment at any time, which will be booked at the earliest mutually convenient opportunity at no additional cost to the school.</p>
<b>3. School Safety Policy:</b>	<p>Review existing against a model H&amp;S Policy that is school specific, in line with the LA Safety Policy, and conforms to appropriate local and legislative requirements.</p> <p>Ensure the Policy identifies key commitments with current signature.</p> <p>Ensure that the Policy, Organisation and arrangements are carried out</p>

	and accurately reflect practice.
<b>4. Safety Organisation:</b>	Review and provide documentation that identifies how health and safety is/shall become 'embedded' in daily operations at the school. Identify and/or nominate key staff tasked with health and safety responsibilities.
<b>5. Planning and implementing:</b>	<p>Review the existing arrangements; ensure the school adequately documents the standards and procedures required for a safe place of work.</p> <p>Following written review and prioritisation of issues, help the school to progress the areas for improvement by providing support and guidance. Improvement will be achieved with the schools full commitment and involvement.</p>
<b>6. Health and Safety Risk Assessment:</b>	<p>Provide the school with training regarding completion of Risk Assessments.</p> <p>Provide review of the schools risk assessments on request, to support their completion.</p> <p>Provide support and guidance including a suite of generic risk assessments and guidance.</p>
<b>7. Telephone/Incident response:</b>	<p>Provide general telephone health and safety advice as required.</p> <p>Please note that where the topic is of a specific nature, additional time may be required for a detailed response following the initial call.</p> <p>Whilst every endeavour is made to provide an immediate answer to health and safety queries via telephone/email, requests may require additional research time.</p> <p>Should the associated risk to safety or health warrant a school visit, this shall be arranged at the request of the school.</p>
<b>8. Health and Safety Training</b>	<p>The Health and Safety Team run school specific health and safety courses. All health and safety training is included for all maintained schools and those schools purchasing the service.</p> <p>On-site training can also be arranged at no additional cost. Much of the training offer can now be completed by attending virtual training sessions via zoom/teams meaning costs in terms of staff availability and downtime for training are reduced.</p> <p>Pre-recorded whole school training sessions are available for some subjects free of charge to all maintained schools and those purchasing the service.</p>
<b>9. Fire Management</b>	<p>Schools can request a review of the schools Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) with their Health and Safety Advisor.</p> <p>Your advisor can also: Complete a site inspection to verify recommendations have been implemented. Discuss any issues outstanding and how to address these.</p> <p>Your advisor will also help review your schools evacuation plans and fire safety arrangements.</p> <p>Your advisor can also provide Fire Awareness training to school staff on request from schools.</p>
<b>10. Asbestos Management</b>	<p>Schools can request a site visit to complete a condition check of ACM (asbestos containing materials) with their Health and Safety Advisor.</p> <p>Your advisor can also review:</p>

	<p>The Asbestos Management Plan The Asbestos Register The Asbestos Survey</p> <p>Additionally any asbestos related risk assessment you may have in place will be reviewed to ensure it is correct and relevant.</p> <p>Your advisor can also provide tool-box talks to your staff regarding ACMs on site and highlight their responsibilities in respect of managing ACMs.</p>
<b>11. Legionella Management</b>	<p>Schools can request a site visit to complete a review of the legionella risk assessment with their Health and Safety Advisor.</p> <p>The advisor will also check that the school are working within the written scheme suggested and in line with the recommendations of the legionella risk assessment.</p>
<b>12. Playground Equipment</b>	<p>Schools can request a site visit to complete a playground equipment inspection with their Health and Safety Advisor. This will be a guided check to ensure staff are confident with what should be checked, what should be recorded and what action to take.</p> <p>We can also review the playground equipment risk assessment with the school to ensure it is suitable and sufficient.</p> <p>We can also provide on-site training and support to staff on request.</p>
<b>13. First Aid</b>	<p>Schools can request support and assistance to ensure the school's first aid needs assessments are in place and up to date and an appropriate number of staff are identified and trained to deliver first aid.</p>
<b>14. Accident / Incident investigation and enforcement action</b>	<p>Schools can request on-site support and advice from your named and dedicated Health and Safety Adviser during an accident investigation for a serious accident or enforcement action by an enforcing authority such as the Health and Safety Executive.</p>
<b>15. Accident Reporting &amp; Recording System</b>	<p>The Councils Accident Reporting &amp; Recording System is provided to all schools to allow them to record and monitor accidents/incidents.</p>
<b>16. CHAS</b>	<p>Assessing health and safety competence can be a lengthy process. CHAS assesses applicants: health and safety policy, their organisation for health and safety and their specific health and safety arrangements to a standard acceptable to our buyers and others. In essence, CHAS completes the initial health and safety application process for you.</p> <p>Using CHAS will help you select a competent contractor or supplier but you still need to check they are competent to carry out your project by checking they have appropriate experience and take references etc.</p>

16. School responsibilities

Whilst the duty to comply with statutory requirements cannot be delegated and remains with Schools and in some cases the Local Authority, the tasks involved with the effective implementation of health and safety management in schools is delegated to Head Teachers. For this approach to be successful, each school must do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their staff, pupils and non-employees.

The operation of an effective health and safety management system at the school is central to achieving the above, with key areas being:

- The school Health and Safety Policy
- Organising for health and safety
- Planning and implementing safety controls
- Monitoring school health and safety performance
- Auditing and reviewing health and safety compliance and best practice.

Schools must also use the Council's Crest system to record accidents and incidents relating to the health and safety of their staff, pupils or visitors.

**17. West Berkshire Council Schools Health and Safety Team**

18. The Schools Health and Safety Team is made up of two Senior Schools Health and Safety Advisors and a Health and Safety Manager who also manages Corporate Health and Safety.

**Mike Lindenburn - Health & Safety Manager**

Mike has a wide range of experience in both the public and private sectors for over twenty years, providing strategic direction and operational management on health and safety. Applying initiative and practical, cost-effective solutions whenever possible. He is professional and hard working with good leadership, management and influencing skills.

Mike is a Chartered Member of the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (CMIOSH), has a Level 5 Institute of Leadership & Management certificate in Leadership, is an Associate Member of Institute of Environmental Management and Audit (AIEEMA), and has achieved (BIOH) Asbestos Specialist S301, BOHS P901 Legionella Management and completed RoSPA Operational playground inspection course.

**Alice Pye - Senior Health & Safety Advisor (Schools)**

Alice has over 15 years' experience of health and safety enforcement as an Environmental Health Officer. Alice has excellent organisational and communication skills and will work well with schools by building positive relationships. She is a member of the Chartered institute for Environmental Health (CIEH) and is EHRB registered, she also holds NEBOSH, (BIOH) Asbestos Specialist S301, BOHS P901 Legionella Management and has completed the RoSPA Operational playground inspection course.

**Julian Routledge - Senior Health & Safety Advisor (Schools)**

Julian is an experienced health and safety adviser and is able to quickly and effectively bring people together to promote a positive organisational safety culture. Julian has a good ability to successfully interact with a variety of different people and develop good relationships to provide tailored advice and support. As well as NEBOSH Julian holds (BIOH) Asbestos Specialist S301, BOHS P901 Legionella Management and has completed the RoSPA Operational playground inspection course.

To discuss any aspect of the Health & Safety Service please contact:

Key Contacts			
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## West Berkshire Council Maintained Schools

### Legal Duty Holders for Health and Safety

England and Wales	
School type	Employer
Community schools	The local authority
Community special schools	
Voluntary controlled schools	
Maintained nursery schools	
Pupil referral units	
Foundation schools	The governing body
Foundation special schools	
Voluntary aided schools	
Independent schools	The governing body or proprietor
England	
Academies and free schools	The Academy Trust

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## High Needs Block (HNB) Budget 2025/26

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**Report being considered by:** Schools' Forum  
**Date of Meeting:** 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024  
**Report Author:** Nicola Ponton & Neil Goddard  
**Item for:** Discussion      **By:** All Forum Members

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### 1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To provide information on the proposed 2025-26 HNB budget.

### 2. Recommendations

2.1 To note and provide feedback on the HNB budget for 2025-26.

2.2 To include the current, Invest to Save initiatives and non-statutory services in the HNB budget currently, with the caveat that their continuation will be reviewed as part of the Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme. These projects include:

- 0.4 post in the Early Development and Inclusion Team
- 1 FTE SEMH post
- £90,000 to maintain I-College placements

### 3. Introduction/Background

3.1 Setting a balanced budget for the High Needs Block remains a major challenge due to the rising number of high needs pupils and increasing unit costs, while place funding has remained static. The number of children with EHCPs continues to grow significantly, despite consistent thresholds being applied. The total number of EHCPs in January 2024 was 1534 compared to 971 in 2019, an increase of 58% in five years. The data below is taken from the SEN 2 returns which is published in January each year but reports on the year prior. For context, the current number of EHCPs in West Berkshire is 1668.

Year	WBC EHCP Total	% increase from 2019	National EHCP Total	% increase from 2019
2018	971	-	353,995	-
2019	1034	6.5%	390,109	10%
2020	1074	10.61%	430,697	22%
2021	1198	23.4%	473,255	34%
2022	1322	36%	517,049	46%
2023	1532	58%	575,963	63%

- 3.2 4.7% of children and young people in West Berkshire had an EHCP in 2023, up from 4.5% in 2022. This is higher than the national average (4.3%) and when compared to the Southeast (4.6%) and Statistical Neighbours (4.33%).
- 3.3 The demand for additional EHCPs has been intensified by the Covid pandemic which caused some children to fall further behind, leading to an increase in EHCP requests. Additionally, the pandemic has also exacerbated a pre-existing issue with rising incidence of Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA).
- 3.4 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 9 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
<b>24/25</b>	-29,153,266	-335,047	37,408,701	7,920,388

- 3.5 Pressure on the High Needs Block is a national issue, with many local authorities having significant overspends and setting deficit budgets. The 35 Local Authorities with the highest level of overspend are now part of the Government's Safety Valve Programme. While another 55 Local Authorities participate in the Delivering Better Value (DBV) Programme. There are three tranches to this programme; West Berkshire is in the third tranche.
- 3.6 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. The current number of EHCPs is 1668. The increase in EHCPs is largely concentrated in specialist placements rather than mainstream schools, which is the main factor driving budget pressure in the High Needs Block



- 3.7 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 twenty-four children on roll, rising to thirty by September 2025 and to its full capacity of forty-two by 2027. Every one of these children would have needed to be placed in a non-maintained or independent special school. The new Kennet Valley SEMH/Autism provision opened in September 2024 with six children, rising to twelve by 2025. It is expected that a further twelve place primary SEMH provision in the west of the Authority will be established as a matter of urgency based upon identified need. A sufficiency strategy has now been completed as part of the DBV programme and this will guide further investment in additional capacity.
- 3.8 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 refreshed SEND Strategy for 2024-29 is proposing further measures to increase capacity in mainstream schools, the DBV Programme will include initiatives to support inclusive practice in mainstream schools. (See Appendix B)
- 3.9 Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5 in Appendix A show where the predicted 2025-26 costs exceed 2024-25 budgets.
- 3.10 Based on currently available data, the current position on the HNB budget for 2024-25 and 2025-26 is set out in the table below. In summary, the total budget needed in 2025-26 is **£42,984,862**. The in year overspend is predicted to be **£12,956,998** and the total cumulative overspend will be **£29,048,691**.

Cost Centre	Description	Proposed Budget 2025/26
90539	Special Schools Maintained	6,465,770
90548	Non WBC special schools	301,200
90554	Non WBC free schools	481,870
90617	Resource Units Maintained	696,400
90026	Resource Units Academies	1,297,350
90618	Resource Units Non WBC	43,720
90621	Mainstream Maintained	2,039,520
90622	Mainstream Academies	1,199,630
90624	Mainstream Non WBC	103,350
90575	Non Maintained Special Schools	1,397,600
90579	Independent Special Schools	10,925,660
90580	Further Education	1,508,950
90627	Disproportionate HN Pupils	200,000
90556	New SEMH Provision at Theale	1,728,060
90557	Kennet Valley Resource Base	560,400
90625	PRU Top Up Funding	1,196,370
90628	PRU EHCP SEMH Placements	1,098,090
	<b>High Needs Block: Top Up Funding Total</b>	<b>31,243,940</b>
90540	Special Schools	3,410,000
90546	Special Schools - Place Funding Post 16	790,000

90584	Resourced Units - Place Funding	304,000
90552	Special Schools and PRU Teachers Pay and Pension	339,170
Top Slice	Resource Units Academies – pre16	564,000
90551	Mainstream Maintained - post16 SEN places	48,000
Top Slice	Mainstream Academies – post 16	60,000
Top Slice	Further Education	678,000
90320	Pupil Referral Units	860,000
	<b>High Needs Block: Place Funding Total</b>	<b>7,053,170</b>
90240	Applied Behaviour Analysis	392,080
90290	Sensory Impairment	251,220
90577	SEN Commissioned Provision	700,640
90565	Equipment for SEN Pupils	20,000
90295	Therapy Services	614,680
90288	Elective home Education Monitoring	61,640
90282	Medical Home Tuition	391,500
90610	Hospital Tuition	36,180
90281	SEND Strategy (DSG)	74,010
90237	Alternative Provision Co-ordinator	42,640
90555	Language and Literacy Centres LALs	183,920
90585	Specialist Inclusion Support Service	50,000
90582	PRU Outreach Service	61,200
90280	Cognitive and Learning Team	388,830
90830	ASD Advisory Service	314,280
90372	Therapeutic Thinking	74,480
90961	Vulnerable Children	179,400
90287	Early Development and Inclusion Team	107,900
90581	Dingley's Promise	125,000
90373	Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)(WBC Led)	142,460
90237	Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) (school led)	110,960
90237	Transition project - part funded DBV	46,310
90374	SEMH Practitioner	53,350
	Invest to save - i-college	90,000
	<b>High Needs Block: Non Top Up or Place Funding</b>	<b>4,512,680</b>
	SSR	175,072
	<b>High Needs Block Total</b>	<b>42,984,862</b>

The impact of the additional resources allocated in the recent budget have not been included, and any transfer between High Needs and School's Block will reduce the projected deficit.

The increase in the estimated budget requirement for 25-26 relates mainly to the following costs:

- Independent and non-maintained school placements – increased budget requirement of **£3,510,300**
- Special School top ups - increased budget requirement of **£247,431**

- Mainstream EHCP top ups – increased budget requirement of **£275,650**
- Castle@Theale planned increase in numbers in 2024 – increased budget requirement of **£277,179**
- Kennet Valley SEMH resource planned increase in numbers for 2025 – increased budget requirement of **£140,590**
- PRU - increased budget requirement of - **£109,260**

3.11 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.

#### 4. Proposals

4.1 To consider and comment on the HNB budget for 2025-26 including the breakdown by cost centre as set out in Appendix A.

4.2 To continue to monitor and scrutinise the HNB overspend through regular meetings of the Heads Funding Group.

#### 5. Conclusion

6.1 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 the budget by 2028. In the interim, the HFG / Schools Forum is asked to consider the deficit HNB budget as set out in this report.

#### 6. Appendices

6.1 Appendix A - High Needs Budget Detail

6.2 Appendix B - Delivering Better Value (DBV) Programme Update

6.3 Appendix C - Historical Data

## Appendix A

### High Needs Budget Detail

#### 1. PLACE FUNDING – STATUTORY

- 1.1 Place funding is determined 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; 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 would need to be allocated to 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 199 and 221 respectively (rising to 224 in Jan 2025), a total of 420.

TABLE 1 - Place Funding Budget	2024/25 Budget			2025/26 Estimated Budget		
	No. of Places	£	Current No. of Pupils	Proposed No. of Places	£	Difference in number
Special Schools - pre 16	286	2,860,000	420	344	3,410,000	58
Special Schools – post 16	79	790,000		79	790,000	0
Resource Units Maintained – pre 16	35	234,000	33	47	304,000	12
Special Schools and PRU Teachers Pay and Pension		332,520		0	339,170	0
Resource Units Academies – pre 16 (DSG top slice)	97	610,000	93	94	564,000	-3
Mainstream Maintained post 16	6	36,000	16	8	48,000	2
Mainstream Academies – post 16 (DSG top slice)	27	162,000	10	7	60,000	-20
Further Education	129	774,000	113	113	678,000	-16
PRU Place Funding (90320)	66	660,000	90	86	860,000	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>725</b>	<b>6,458,520</b>	<b>769</b>	<b>778</b>	<b>7,053,170</b>	<b>53</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 2024/25 and the estimate for 2025/26.

<b>TABLE 2</b>	<b>2024/25 Budget</b>			<b>2025/26</b>	
<b>Top Up Budgets</b>	<b>Budget £</b>	<b>Forecast £ (Month 7)</b>	<b>Over/(under) £</b>	<b>Estimate £</b>	<b>Difference 24/25 budget &amp; 25/26 prediction</b>
Special Schools Maintained (90539)	6,218,340	5,965,800	-252,540	6,465,770	247,430
Non WBC special schools (90548)	215,295	352,730	137,435	301,200	85,905
Non WBC free schools (90554)	618,120	643,960	25,840	481,870	-136,250
Resource Units Maintained (90617)	676,120	676,120	0	696,400	20,280
Resource Units Academies (90026)	1,259,558	1,218,850	-40,708	1,297,350	37,792
Resource Units Non WBC (90618)	105,638	60,430	-45,208	43,720	-61,918
Mainstream Maintained (90621)	1,821,000	1,937,070	116,070	2,039,520	218,520
Mainstream Academies (90622)	1,142,500	1,142,500	0	1,199,630	57,130
Mainstream Non WBC (90624)	140,385	137,800	-2,585	103,350	-37,035
Non Maintained Special Schools (90575)	1,423,548	1,276,440	-147,108	1,397,600	-25,948
Independent Special Schools (90579)	7,389,412	8,151,970	762,558	10,925,660	3,536,248
Further Education (90580)	1,465,000	1,276,790	-188,210	1,508,950	43,950
Disproportionate HN Pupils (90627)	150,000	190,000	40,000	200,000	50,000
New SEMH Provision at Theale	1,450,880	1,450,880	0	1,728,060	277,180
Kennet Valley Resource Base	419,810	419,810	0	560,400	140,590
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24,495,606</b>	<b>24,901,150</b>	<b>405,544</b>	<b>28,949,480</b>	<b>4,453,874</b>

## **2.2 Maintained Special Schools**

There will be an increase in costs of £247,431 this is due to the expansion of provision at The Castle School which is due to open in Autumn 2025.

## **2.3 Non West Berkshire Special Schools**

There is an increase in costs due to an increase in pupils attending special schools in neighbouring local authorities.

## **2.4 Non West Berkshire Free 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. There is a significant saving in this budget as a number of young people are due to leave their Free school at the end of year 11 in July 2025.

## **2.5 Resource Budgets (Academies/Maintained and Non West Berkshire)**

As part of the DBV programme a sufficiency plan is being created to increase the range of provision across West Berkshire, to ensure that current, and future, needs of children and young people with SEND are met locally, whilst allowing flexibility for adapting to changing demands. This will lead to increases in these budgets over time. For 25-26 there are small variations to the Academies/Maintained and Non West Berkshire resource units budgets this is due to moves for specific children.

## **2.6 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 This is being addressed via the SEND banding review outlined in appendix B. Due to the increasing number of pupils in mainstream school with an EHCP an increase in both budgets is recommended

## **2.7 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. Four independent schools for children with these needs have opened in the West Berkshire area: Mile House, The Grange, Haywards Farm including (Northcroft school) 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 schools. 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.

The predictions of cost for specialist placements in 2025-26 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 2025-26. To account for this unpredictability, we have built in a percentage increase into the cost of these placements based on EHC plan trends over the last 3 years.

Due to the number of placements made over 24/25 and the continued demand for highly specialist placements the independent school budget is overspent and this is reflected in the budget forecast for next year.

## 2.8 Further Education

The costs of FE placements for students with SEND in 2025-26 are estimated for budgeting purposes as further education providers only finalise their placement offers in October 2024. Therefore, an assumption was made that numbers of young people with EHCPs moving in to or remaining at college would reflect patterns in previous years.

## 2.9 Castle@Theale Secondary SEMH Provision

Castle@Theale costs will increase in 2025-26 as a further six 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.

## 2.10 Kennet Valley SEMH Provision

Kennet Valley costs will increase in 2025-26 as a further six pupils will be admitted. However, the provision is very cost effective compared to alternatives in the independent sector

## 3 PUPIL REFERRAL UNITS (PRU) – STATUTORY asked for 31/10/2024

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

TABLE 3 PRU Budgets	2024/25 Budget			2025/26	
	Budget £	Forecast £ (Month 7)	Over/(under) £	Estimate £	Difference 24/25 budget & 25/26 prediction
PRU Top Up Funding (90625)	1,139,400	1,139,400	0	1,196,370	56,970
PRU EHCP SEMH Placements (90628)	1,045,800	1,045,800	0	1,098,090	52,290
Non WBC PRU Top Up Funding (90626)	0	0	0		0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,185,200</b>	<b>2,185,200</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,294,460</b>	<b>109,260</b>

3.9 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 25/26 PRU Top Up Funding is based on the profile of pupils at iCollege in the summer term.

3.10 The estimate forecast is based on this year's current project plus 3%.

3.11 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.

3.12 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 eighteen at the Parson Down Infant site. In addition, twelve 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 April 2024.

#### 4 OTHER STATUTORY SERVICES

Table 4 details the budgets for other statutory services.

TABLE 4		2024/25 Budget		2025/26	
Other Statutory Services	Budget £	Forecast £ (Month 7)	Over/(under) £	Estimate £	Difference 24/25 budget & 25/26 prediction
Applied Behaviour Analysis (90240)	270,420	380,660	110,240	392,080	121,660
Sensory Impairment (90290)	296,460	253,380	-43,080	251,217	-45,243
SEN Commissioned Provision (90577)	650,830	680,040	29,210	700,642	49,812
Equipment for SEN Pupils (90565)	15,000	15,000	0	20,000	5,000
Therapy Services (90295)	526,080	534,910	8,830	614,682	88,602
Elective home Education Monitoring (90288)	49,480	41,800	-7,680	61,640	12,160
Medical Home Tuition (90282)	381,690	329,800	-51,890	391,500	9,810
Hospital Tuition (90610)	36,180	18,090	-18,090	36,180	0



SEND Strategy (DSG) (90281)	69,230	69,230	0	74,010	4,780
Alternative Provision Co-ordinator	39,540	39,540	0	42,640	3,100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,334,910</b>	<b>2,362,450</b>	<b>27,540</b>	<b>2,584,591</b>	<b>249,681</b>

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

This budget historically supported a small number of children with EHC Plans for whom the Authority had agreed an ABA programme. ABA is an intensive intervention programme for children with autism which aims to modify their behaviours, in order to allow children to function more successfully in school and in society. There are now fewer ABA programmes funded and this budget (which will be renamed) supports 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. This budget will be split over two separate cost centres.

4.2 **Sensory impairment** Support for children with hearing, visual and multi-sensory impairments is purchased from the Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service (SCS). This includes support from qualified teachers of HI and VI, audiology and mobility support. This budget has a small saving due to decreasing numbers of pupils needing SCS support.

#### 4.3 **SEN Commissioned Provision (Engaging Potential)**

Engaging Potential is an independent special school commissioned to provide alternative educational packages for fourteen 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. This contract is going through the commissioning process to be renewed.

#### 4.4 **Equipment for SEN Pupils**

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 increases to £20,000 and all mainstream schools are able to request funding for equipment over the cost of £500 as this has a very significant impact on school budgets especially for smaller primary schools.

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

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

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.

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.

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.

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

Local Authorities have a statutory duty to monitor Elective Home Education (EHE) arrangements made by parents and to ensure that all children are receiving a suitable education. Oversight of EHE monitoring falls under the Education Welfare and Safeguarding Service. Currently, the Elective Home Education Officer role is filled at 0.6 full-time equivalent (FTE). Budget has been allocated to expand this role to a full 1.0 FTE position; however, full recruitment to this role has been delayed due to the need for internal backfill of a substantive post.

#### **4.7 Medical Tuition Service**

The Medical Tuition Service (formerly known as the Home Tuition Service) is a statutory program dedicated to providing educational support, including in-home tuition, to students who are unable to attend school full-time due to medical conditions or illnesses. In the 2022-23 fiscal year, the program's budget was increased to ensure the Local Authority fulfils its obligations to children unable to attend school for health-related reasons. This year, savings have been realised due to recruitment delays. However, demand for this service continues to grow as it supports all pupils covered under Section 19 and responds to rising cases of mental health challenges among children and young people, compounded by extended waiting times for additional

support. The majority of referrals involve students facing ASD, anxiety, and other mental health barriers that hinder school attendance.

This year has focused on stabilising and enhancing the service through process improvements, expanding educational offerings, and fostering closer collaboration with schools to enhance educational support. Key developments include transitioning staff to permanent contracts and conducting a comprehensive review of emerging issues within Section 19 provision. This review will inform future decisions regarding referral pathways and support services, which may impact future budget requirements. While no immediate financial adjustments are anticipated, it remains premature to project future budgetary needs given the pending decisions on how best to fulfil statutory obligations.

The service places a particular emphasis on supporting students with Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCP) and those with significant anxiety, including the co-ordination of EOTAS packages where there is no appropriate provision for a pupil. This work goes beyond traditional teaching, which is how the service has been established, to include critical skills in re-engagement, integration, and coordination of educational packages for EOTAS, areas that have previously been under-resourced within the team. To meet the wide-ranging needs of our students, we have now appointed a full-time qualified SENCO, providing the team with enhanced capabilities to support the broad spectrum of needs within the service. There will be a requirement for this area to be further developed and supported.

#### **4.8 Hospital Tuition**

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 2025-26 budget remains the same as 2024-25.

#### **4.9 SEND Strategy Officer**

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.

#### **4.10 Alternative Provision / EOTAS Coordinator**

It is proposed that an additional post of Alternative Provision / EOTAS Coordinator is funded in 25-26) 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. This post has been put on hold while all initiatives to support SEN students are reviewed by DBV.

## 5 NON-STATUTORY Services

5.1 **Table 5** details the non-statutory service budgets for 2024-25, predicted outturn, and estimates for 2025-26.

5.2 The table shows the budget for these services in 2025-26 assuming that the services continue and there are no changes to staffing levels. However, the effectiveness of non-statutory services is being considered as part of DBV and recommendations regarding non-statutory services will be made by DBV officers and members of the Heads Funding Group. Should decisions be made to reduce or cease any non-statutory services, the 2025-26 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 and 2024-25, for an additional 0.4 teacher in the EDIT Team, an additional SEMH practitioner and extra iCollege places. These projects will be considered as part of the review of non-statutory services.

TABLE 5 Non Statutory Services	2024/25 Budget			2025/26	
	Budget £	Forecast £ (Month 7)	Over/(under) £	Estimate £	Difference 24/25 budget & 25/26 prediction
Language and Literacy Centres LALs (90555)	171,840	171,840	0	183,920	12,080
Specialist Inclusion Support Service (90585)	50,000	50,000	0	50,000	0
PRU Outreach Service (90582)	61,200	61,200	0	61,200	0
Cognitive and Learning Team (90280)	363,830	342,500	-21,330	388,830	25,000
ASD Advisory Service (90830)	248,800	248,800	0	261,590	12,790
ASD Fund - Additional support	52,690	52,690	0	52,690	0
Therapeutic Thinking (90372)	69,330	58,130	-11,200	74,480	5,150
Vulnerable Children (90961)	50,000	0	-50,000	50,000	0
Vulnerable Children (90961)	129,400	119,400	-10,000	129,400	0
Early Development and Inclusion Team (90287)	68,950	68,950	0	75,920	6,970
Dingley's Promise (90581)	35,000	120,000	85,000	125,000	90,000
Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)(90373)	139,240	139,240	0	142,460	3,220
additional invest to save projects	110,966	110,960	-6	110,960	-6
Transition project - part funded DBV	0	0	0	46,310	46,310
Invest to save:					
0.4fte additional support EDIT team	28,190	4,440	-23,750	31,980	3,790

SEMH Practitioner	43,560	43,560	0	53,350	9,790
Extension of i-college	90,000	90,000	0	90,000	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,712,996</b>	<b>1,681,710</b>	<b>-31,286</b>	<b>1,928,090</b>	<b>215,094</b>

**5.4 Language and Literacy Centres (LALs)**

The LALs provide forty-eight 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.

**5.5 Specialist Inclusion Support Service**

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.

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**

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**

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.

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

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.

**5.8 Autism Team**

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.

The context for this service is vastly increasing numbers of children with ASD diagnoses an Autism diagnosis and mainstream schools having 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.

## 5.9 Vulnerable Children

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

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.

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

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

Where capacity allows, 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.

The service has been reduced in size in recent years from 3.4 to 1.8 FTE. However, following additional resources (0.90 FTE) which is being funded by DBV, EDIT have been able to:

- Ensure all children go straight onto caseload
- Support transition from pre-school to school
- Provide targeted support and additional training for settings
- Provide support to parents and carers

An additional 0.4 post was agreed as an invest to save initiative in 2022-23 and carried forward to 2023-24. This was requested for 2024-25 but was replaced by the DBV funding detailed above. Ideally, a minimum of 0.4 days can be agreed as permanent extra hours to ensure EDIT can avoid having a waiting list. A permanent extension to EDIT hours of 0.9 FTE would mean a continuation of all the provision listed in 5.2.1 above.

## 5.11 Dingley's Promise

Dingley's Promise is a charitable organisation which provides registered early years education for children under five 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.

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.

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 ending. 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 ending. The West Berkshire centre is running at a loss and effectively being subsidised by centres in other areas.

It is therefore proposed that Dingley's Promise receive funding equivalent to special school bands for the children they support, this would be in an annual lump sum of £125,000. 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 Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)**

This support is divided into two separate pathways, a Local Authority led pathway for primary schools and school led provision for secondary schools. The aim of the EBSA team is to help schools reduce school-related anxiety, increase pupil attendance and/or their engagement in education, and to reduce the need for alternative provision.

#### **5.13 Transition Project**

As highlighted in the high needs block report at appendix B a Transitions Support Programme Pilot has been put in place by DBV. Additional funding to support this project is being requested from the HNB. More information will be available on this pilot via the DBV updates.

#### **5.14 Invest to Save projects**

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. This funding has continued and additional resources have been put in place via DBV. The effectiveness of these provisions will be reviewed as part of the DBV process.

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 via DBV

## Appendix B

### Delivering Better Value (DBV) Programme Update

1. West Berkshire was successful in its DBV grant bid and received £1 million funding, commencing in April 2024, to implement a one year SEND improvement programme.

The purpose of the Delivering Better Value Programme is to improve the delivery of SEND services for children and young people whilst working towards financial sustainability. Any significant impact on financial trajectories through the DBV programme are anticipated to be delivered from September 2025 and have a cumulative effect over the following years.

The West Berkshire DBV Programme consists of two workstreams.

- DBV Workstream 1 - Clear communications with families and wider local area partners to support access to services and the SEND system when they need it.
  - DBV Workstream 2 - Enabling settings, schools and colleges to meet the diverse needs of their communities locally including complex emotional and mental health needs of CYP.
  - The DBV Programme and its governance has become fully aligned and incorporated into the new [SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2024 to 2029](#) to ensure the overarching delivery of the “Innovation in SEND” programme in West Berkshire.
2. The activities of the DBV workstreams are incorporated within the six priorities and enablers identified in the SEND and Inclusion Strategy, to be delivered between 2024 -2029.

Six priorities of the SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2024 - 2029	Enablers identified in the SEND and Inclusion Strategy
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Early Years</li> <li>2. Early Intervention</li> <li>3. Inclusion</li> <li>4. Developing local specialist provision &amp; support</li> <li>5. Strengthening alternative provision and support</li> <li>6. Preparation for Adulthood</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To develop a digital strategy which enables us to collect, use &amp; share data more effectively; and to develop a digital dashboard enabling leaders’ effective oversight.</li> <li>• Work with Public Health, and other partners, to improve the SEND content of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) to enable the local area to better meet need in the future.</li> <li>• Explore opportunities to digitise Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).</li> <li>• Develop a commissioning and quality assurance resource and function to support the placements of children and young people with SEND.</li> <li>• Work effectively with our partners to improve governance and oversight of SEND provision.</li> <li>• Support the development and expansion of the newly created West Berkshire Parent/Carer Forum ensuring that</li> </ul>



	<p>leaders can respond to the views of children &amp; young people and their families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance the work to support the SEND Youth Forum, ensuring that leaders can respond to the views of children and young people.</li> <li>• Ensure the most efficient use of limited financial resources in the High Needs Block of funding.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>DBV Workstream 1 – Objective:</b> Clear communications with families and wider local area partners to support access to services and the SEND system when they need it.</p> <p><b>Approach listed below:</b></p>	<p>What has been delivered in West Berkshire since April 2024</p>
<p>Mapping existing services across agencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-agency gap analysis has been completed in relation to the Universal and Targeted Offer in conjunction with health colleagues – e.g. review of the support available around Autism, pre and post diagnosis. “A plan on a page” for available services will be published on the Local Offer.</li> <li>• Gaps in offers are being identified and will be commissioned or co-commissioned as necessary and the Local Offer updated.</li> </ul>
<p>GAP analysis</p>	
<p>Ensuring clear and current referral pathways are published for families &amp; service users. Update and refresh the Local Offer to ensure accessibility for service users</p>	
<p>Communications Plan to relaunch updates to Local Offer to families and service users</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A SEND Strategic Communications Plan encompasses both work under the DBV Programme and the wider SEND and Inclusion Strategy under the collective strapline: “Innovation in SEND.”</li> <li>• An ‘Innovation in SEND’ blog / web page published to showcase updates</li> <li>• Parent Champion Coram Programme promoting engagement with families</li> <li>• A parent /carer survey of the Local Offer to inform a “refresh” of the Local Offer – “ You said/we did document” _ Nov 2024 Local Offer</li> </ul>
<p>Creating a digital dashboard to measure performance and inclusivity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A public facing dashboard is being developed for the Local Offer (Dec 2024)</li> </ul>

<p><b>DBV Workstream 2 - Objective:</b> Enabling settings, schools and colleges to meet the diverse needs of their communities locally including complex emotional and mental health needs of CYP</p> <p><b>Approach listed below:</b></p>	<p>What has been delivered in West Berkshire since April 2024</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole School Mental Health Project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A revised, evidenced based pilot Mental Health Project programme is underway led by the Virtual School Team who are working with ten schools. (October 2024- July 2025).</li> <li>• All mainstream schools will have access to an online learning platform to support Mental Health identification and good practice.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on supporting transitions into mainstream (Transitions Support Programme) to be led by schools and co-produced in clusters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transitions Support Programme Pilot-Pupil level data has been reviewed to enable the identification of mainstream Year 6 pupils most likely to require additional support at transition. Targeted interventions will be available for these children to ensure as many as possible successfully transition into their secondary mainstream school – January 2025 -January 2026 – 50/50 funding DBV &amp; Schools.</li> <li>• West Berkshire Schools’ Guidance for a Successful Primary to Secondary Transition and Early Years to Reception will be published in October 2024.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertaking a banding review of unit costs of mainstream, maintained special and alternative provision to ensure parity and alignment with local and national funding arrangements.</li> <li>• Delivering a pilot of updated banding system and impact analysis if review supports this.</li> <li>• Reviewing the use of element 2 funding in schools and settings to promote targeted intervention at SEND support through early identification of need and timely access to appropriate resources, reducing the need for EHC assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phase 1 of a SEND funding review completed August 2024. Phase 2 underway, co-produced with schools. This will provide ;- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A shared understanding of the range and levels of needs across West Berkshire settings and schools and how that compares with other areas.</li> <li>➤ A clear and consistent graduated approach to meeting needs across the local area.</li> <li>➤ A transparent and equitable system of SEND funding and resource allocation across West Berkshire.</li> <li>➤ Identification and development of changes to the current SEND system.</li> <li>➤ Improvement in the quality and clarity of EHCPs.</li> <li>➤ Evidencing the impact of resourcing on children and young people’s outcomes.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p><b>DBV Workstream 2 - Objective:</b> Enabling settings, schools and colleges to meet the diverse needs of their communities locally including complex emotional and mental health needs of CYP</p> <p><b>Approach listed below: (contd.)</b></p>	<p>What has been delivered in West Berkshire since April 2024</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing decision making processes to ensure transparency, consistency, and value for money. Decision making processes to be updated, where necessary, on the local offer.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A review of statutory decision-making processes has been undertaken to ensure transparency, consistency, and value for money. Any changes in process will be managed through consultation and updated on the local offer.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide additional capacity to pilot Annual Reviews for Year 5/6s to support Transitions Programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New quality assurance process for EHC plans and Annual review (Nov 2024 – Nov 2026) -Funded by WBC</li> <li>• Revision of Standard Operating procedures (SOPS) and Induction training for SEND Casework Team in data input under review</li> <li>• Additional resourcing to process transition Annual Reviews quickly to support Transitions Support Programme in place.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audit schools' additional SEND training needs through surveys, focus groups and case studies to create a plan to meet gaps in existing SEND training.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An audit of schools' training needs has been undertaken and an evaluation of impact of current LA support services is being completed</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure existing SEN support teams work in a more coordinated way (e.g. Explore a single point of access to triage requests to sign post, monitor and moderate demand) to ensure early intervention.</li> <li>• Multi-disciplinary teams to support schools (Transitions Support Programme) e.g.</li> <li>• Increase the Early Development and Inclusion Team (EDIT) capacity.</li> <li>• Increase the Autism Team capacity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot Early Years Transitions Support Programme delivered from Summer Term 2024 supported Early Years transition into Foundation 2 – EYSENIT team</li> <li>• The Key Stage 2/3 Transitions Programme has been co-produced with schools (Primary and Secondary SENCOs and Year 7 teachers)</li> <li>• Additional ASD and SEMH support posts for transitions support pilot for year 5/6 pupils.</li> </ul>
<p><b>DBV Workstream 2 - Objective:</b> Enabling settings, schools and colleges to meet the diverse needs of their communities locally including complex emotional and mental health needs of CYP</p>	<p>What has been delivered in West Berkshire since April 2024</p>

Approach listed below: (contd.)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring and supporting data analysis to inform development of sufficiency strategy.</li> <li>• <i>Enabler in SEND and Inclusion Strategy: - To develop a digital strategy which enables us to collect, use &amp; share data more effectively; and to develop a digital dashboard enabling leaders' effective oversight</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work on SEND Data Management has informed the development of a Sufficiency Plan, data dashboards and a clearer financial overview.</li> <li>• West Berkshire <b>SEND Placement Sufficiency Analysis- 30 August 2024</b> is being ratified and will be published November 2024.</li> <li>• Paper to Corporate Board to be presented on Mitigation of Specialist Placements – 26/11/2024 with detailed proposals to develop SEND placement capacity and enhance the continuum of provision in West Berkshire.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing and updating of Strategic and Operational commissioning and procurement practices - include brokerage and contract management.</li> <li>• Stimulating markets, where necessary, to ensure appropriate and sufficient placement types are available for specialist and Alternative provision to meet current and anticipated demand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work is now underway to establish a robust children's commissioning and brokerage function to ensure that children and young people gain access to the services that they need in a timely manner, as well as ensuring that the local authority can deliver value for money (November 2024-March 2025).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing individual high-cost placement packages to ensure they meet need and remain value for money.</li> <li>• Reviewing of funding arrangements on all placements - joint children's services piece of work across social care and education - led by strategic commissioner.</li> <li>• Piloting multi agency funding system for high-cost placements and reviewing all Joint funding/commissioning arrangements with social care and health.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A High-Cost Placement Review has been undertaken and is informing work around joint decision making in relation to Social Care, Education and Health Placements.</li> </ul>

### 3. Funding Review

As part of the work of DBV a review of SEND Funding is being undertaken. Phase 1 was a Desktop Review of funding arrangements during the Summer of 2024 and the report was circulated to schools in Sept 2024. Phase 2 of the SEND Funding Review has been initiated based on the recommendations from this report

A launch event for schools interested in finding out more was held on 7th October, and a number of schools from primary, secondary and special sectors have offered to become part of the Mainstream Schools working group. The first meeting of the working group was held 8th November, where the group will agree the way forward drawing on examples from other Local Authorities.

The Mainstream group is meeting monthly to develop and test the model and agree an implementation framework. Implementation is likely to be phased from September 2025, starting with new EHCPs.

The consultant who has been commissioned to support this work is also working with special schools to develop a simplified special school model and will be working with mainstream schools with designated units and resourced provisions to develop a simplified model to reflect that provision. Dependent on the progress of the work, this element will be implemented partially in 2025/2026 and inform budgets for 2026 / 2027.

### 3.1 The aims of the project are:

- Develop a fair, transparent and effective funding system for SEND that supports and enables:
  - The right provision / support being in place at the right time as locally as possible linked to evidenced needs
  - The identification and sharing of effective and best practice and enabling it to become common practice
  - Improved parent / carer confidence in West Berkshire's local provision
  - Efficient and effective use of funding / resources.
- The intended outcomes of the project are:
  - A shared understanding of the range and levels of SEND needs of pupils across West Berkshire's schools and how that compares with other areas.
  - A shared understanding of the range and levels of needs of children and young people who have an EHCP maintained by West Berkshire.
  - A shared understanding of the strengths, issues, next steps and all partners' role in improving the local system.
  - Identification of potential changes to the current system.
  - Identification of other actions required to support implementation of a new system, including improvement in the quality and clarity of EHCPs.
  - A transparent and equitable system of resource allocation across West Berkshire.

- Evidencing the impact of resourcing on children and young people's outcomes.
- Identification of workforce development priorities.
- Supporting specialist place planning.

The working group will report into the DBV task group who will feed into the SEND Strategic Improvement Board. The schools funding forum will be kept updated on the working group's progress.

#### 4. DBV Impact on HNB Spend

4.1 The revised deficit forecast for the HNB: -

HNB Deficit	Mitigated	Unmitigated
2024-2025	£15,766,217	£20,863,699

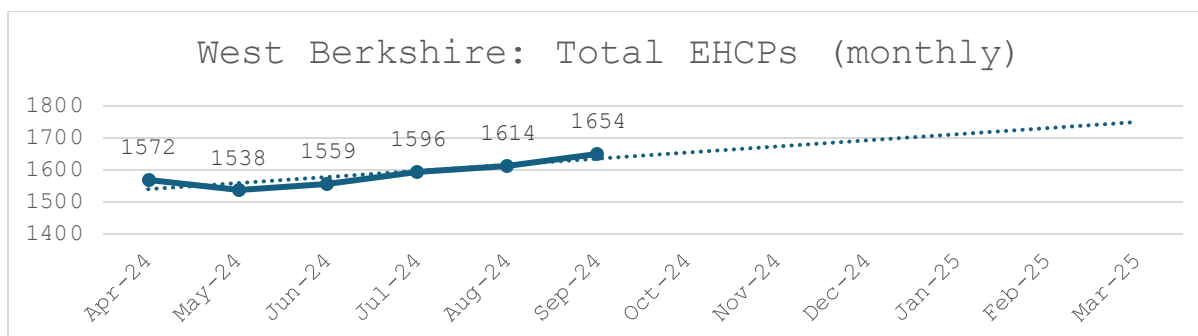
4.2 The mitigated cost avoidance has been achieved by: -

- Capacity Development in maintained specialist provision, reducing the demand for Independent non maintained school placements.
- £1.5 clawback from schools – 2023-2024.

4.3 It is anticipated in future years that a reduction in spend through the DBV programme will be achieved by; -

- 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.

4.4 However, West Berkshire is currently maintaining approximately 1670 EHC plans (Oct 2024), and it is anticipated that this figure will continue to grow, even with the mitigations in place provided by the DBV Programme. These figures are in line with the trend we have seen throughout the financial year, with numbers expected to reach 1700 by December 2024. Nationally, the number of children and young people with EHC plans increased to 576,000, as at census day in January 2024, up by 11.4% from 2023. The number of EHC plans has increased each year since their introduction in 2014.



4.5 The anticipated mitigations through the DBV Programme, and additional mitigations identified will have an impact on the unmitigated forecast of the High Need Block.

	2025/26	2026/2027	2027/2028
DBV + additional mitigations savings	£8.2 million	£13.5 million	£19.3 million
Percentage of unmitigated deficit	16.8 %	16.47%	15.67%

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.

The latest estimate of expenditure in the High Needs Block budget for both 2024/25 and 2025/6 is set out in Table 2. The figures are based on current and anticipated numbers of high needs pupils.

TABLE 1	2024/25 Budget £	2024/25 Forecast £	2025/26 Estimate £
Place Funding	6,458,520	6,458,520	7,053,170
Top Up Funding	24,495,610	24,901,150	28,949,480
PRU Funding (top ups only)	2,185,200	2,185,200	2,294,460
Other Statutory Services	2,334,910	2,362,450	2,584,590
Non Statutory Services	1,712,996	1,681,710	1,928,090
Support Service Recharges	213,480	173,697	175,072
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>37,400,716</b>	<b>37,762,727</b>	<b>42,984,862</b>
HNB DSG Allocation	-29,153,266	-29,153,266	-30,027,864
0.25% Schools Block Transfer	-335,047	-335,047	
Clawback from schools	0	-1,518,292	
In year overspend	7,912,403	6,756,122	12,956,998
HNB DSG Overspend from previous year	9,864,006	9,335,571	16,091,693
<b>Total cumulative deficit</b>	<b>17,776,409</b>	<b>16,091,693</b>	<b>29,048,691</b>

## Historical Data

<b>TABLE A</b>			
<b>Top Up Funding</b>	<b>2021/22 £</b>	<b>2022/23 £</b>	<b>2023/24 £</b>
Special Schools Maintained (90539)	4,985,051	5,233,228	5,676,186
Non WBC special schools (90548)	955,003	524,418	445,499
Non WBC free schools (90554)	0	535,617	660,692
Resource Units Maintained (90617)	321,587	317,407	655,772
Resource Units Academies (90026)	930,495	993,556	1,378,364
Resource Units Non WBC (90618)	207,271	131,516	95,738
Mainstream Maintained (90621)	974,686	1,182,597	1,687,494
Mainstream Academies (90622)	580,039	640,595	928,159
Mainstream Non WBC (90624)	174,581	169,046	152,115
Non Maintained Special Schools (90575)	851,541	875,863	1,092,852
Independent Special Schools (90579)	3,072,415	3,683,566	4,965,814
Further Education (90580)	1,175,012	1,149,072	1,628,914
Disproportionate HN Pupils (90627)	51,609	86,321	194,565
SEMH provision at Theale (90556)	0	765,987	986,986
SEMH provision at Theale (90556)	0	0	1,319
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14,279,289</b>	<b>16,288,789</b>	<b>20,550,468</b>

<b>TABLE B</b>			
<b>PRU Funding</b>	<b>2021/22 £</b>	<b>2022/23 £</b>	<b>2023/24 £</b>
PRU Top Up Funding (90625)	861,561	902,512	959,950
PRU EHCP SEMH Placements (90628)	755,402	927,182	1,084,765
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,616,964</b>	<b>1,829,694</b>	<b>2,044,715</b>

<b>TABLE C</b>			
<b>Other Statutory Services</b>	<b>2021/22 £</b>	<b>2022/23 £</b>	<b>2023/24 £</b>
Applied Behaviour Analysis (90240)	196,912	246,773	335,102
Sensory Impairment (90290)	229,972	250,722	264,955
SEN Commissioned Provision (90577)	572,815	622,999	654,469



Equipment for SEN Pupils (90565)	8,090	16,231	-872
Therapy Services (90295)	335,164	329,133	490,251
Home Tuition (90315)	0	0	0
Elective home Education Monitoring (90288)	21,889	26,123	33,084
Medical Home Tuition (90282)	151,500	202,609	208,124
Hospital Tuition (90610)	53,847	34,000	5,055
SEND Strategy (DSG) (90281)	51,381	56,157	66,653
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,621,570</b>	<b>1,784,747</b>	<b>2,056,821</b>

<b>Table D Non Statutory Services</b>	<b>2021/22 £</b>	<b>2022/23 £</b>	<b>2023/24 £</b>
Language and Literacy Centres LALs (90555)	122,000	187,553	161,690
Specialist Inclusion Support Service (90585)	50,000	50,000	50,000
PRU Outreach Service (90582)	61,200	61,200	61,200
Cognitive and Learning Team (90280)	324,416	328,257	345,230
ASD Advisory Service (90830)	206,627	268,046	282,703
Vulnerable Children (90961)	168,232	178,980	112,558
Behaviour Programme (Invest to Save) (90370)	0	0	0
PPEP Care Programme (90371)	0	0	0
Early Development and Inclusion Team (90287)	57,817	86,663	91,294
Dingley's Promise (90581)	30,000	30,000	30,000
Therapeutic Thinking (90372)	53,272	52,457	30,986
Emotional Based School Avoiders (WBC managed)	65,623	123,879	105,075
Emotional Based School Avoiders (School managed)	99,585	99,864	111,199
Early Years Speech & Language (Invest to Save)	0	7,665	12,290
SEMH Practitioner (invest to save)	0	14,497	25,482
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,238,772</b>	<b>1,489,061</b>	<b>1,419,707</b>

<b>TABLE E</b>	<b>2021/22</b>			<b>2022/23</b>			<b>2023/24</b>		
<b>Place Funding</b>	<b>pupil numbers</b>	<b>planned places</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>pupil numbers</b>	<b>planned places</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>pupil numbers</b>	<b>planned places</b>	<b>£</b>
Special Schools – pre 16 (90540)	440	286	2,860,000	448	286	2,860,000	409	286	2,860,000
Special Schools – post 16 (90546)		79	790,000		79	790,000		79	790,000
Resource Units Maintained – pre 16 (90584)	31	35	226,000	32	35	222,000	33	35	238,000
Special Schools and PRU Teachers Pay & Pension			312,046			304,690			324,864
Mainstream Maintained post 16 (90551)	11	6	34,000	6	6	36,000	16	6	36,000
PRU Place Funding (90320)	84	66	660,000	72	66	660,000	72	66	660,000
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>4,882,046</b>			<b>4,872,690</b>			<b>4,908,864</b>

## Delivering Better Value Update – November 2024

<b>Produced for:</b>	Schools Forum
<b>Requested by:</b>	Heads Funding Group
<b>Portfolio Member:</b>	Councillor Heather Codling
<b>Service Director:</b>	Susan Tanner
<b>Date Prepared:</b>	20.11.2024
<b>Briefing Author:</b>	Hester Collicut, DBV Programme Manager

### 1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This covering report is intended to draw attention to the progress and the risks associated with the Delivering Better Value programme (DBV). The appendices provide the detail on the progress over the period April – October 2024.

### 2 Background

- 2.1 At Appendix 1, there is a table summarising engagement and impact of key DBV work, up to 20 November 2024.
- 2.2 The status of delivery can be seen in the dynamic Gantt Chart attached to this report: Appendix 2.
- 2.3 The current risks associated with the programme are detailed in the Risk Log attached to this report as Appendix 3.

### 3 Appendices

- 3.1 Appendix 1 – Summary of Engagement and Impact
- 3.2 Appendix 2 – DBV Gantt Chart – April 2024 – March 2025
- 3.3 Appendix 3 - DBV Risk Register

Appendix 1 – Summary of Engagement and Impact

Activity	Evidence
<p><b>DBV Workstream 1 - Clear communications with families and wider local area partners to support access to services and the SEND system when they need it.</b></p>	<p><b>1. Innovation in SEND Blog:</b></p> <p>6 items published:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Innovation in Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) – Introduction -15/7/2024.</li> <li>2. Engaging with SEND Parents and Carers -15/7/2024.</li> <li>3. West Berkshire SEND Local Offer - Have your say! 18/7/2024.</li> <li>4. West Berkshire SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2029 12/9/2024.</li> <li>5. SEND Inclusion strategy Short Breaks Statement Publication -17/9/2024.</li> <li>6. Response to West Berkshire SEND Local Offer Survey 4/11/2024.</li> </ol>
	<p><b>1. Engagement of the Coram Parent Champion Programme to support parental engagement with SEND – 10 parent champions recruited</b></p>
	<p><b>2. Proactive Support of Existing Parent Carer Forum</b> through DBV Communication and Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in PCF member from 4 (April) to 42 (November) e.g. use of Community Hub events</li> </ul>
	<p><b>3. Publication of SEND and Inclusion Strategy – 2024 – 2029</b> - Available on the Local Offer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A detailed Delivery Plan sits behind this.</li> </ul>

Activity	Evidence
<p><b>DBV Workstream 2 - Enabling settings, schools and colleges to meet the diverse needs of their communities locally including complex emotional and mental health needs of CYP.</b></p>	<p>1. <b>Early Years Transition Support Programme</b> Funded by DBV: (From April 2024)            The DBV funding was given for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 extra days per week for school transition support – given at a much higher level than is usually possible.  <b>Impact:</b> 63 children supported into school. 100% of settings and schools were offered an in-person transition meeting and follow-up. 86% took up this offer. 1 extra day per week to provide targeted support and 2 training sessions per term, for FS1 and FS2 staff.  <b>Impact:</b> 24 Targeted Support Visits made to date. Ability of settings to continue to include the child and staff confidence has increased according to 100% of responses. A total of 40-50 members of staff per session from FS1 and FS2 settings have been trained on six topics. 100% of staff have rated the training good or above in all categories on their evaluations. 76.5% have rated the training as excellent across all categories.</li> <li>• 0.5 of an extra day per week for parent support for queries that come in through parents using the local offer and joint working with the family hubs and health visiting service.  <b>Impact:</b> Fourteen families have been supported towards their next steps. Four children who would otherwise have come to us later or not at all have now been taken onto EDIT caseload</li> </ul> <p><i>Some of the savings made through EDIT Early Intervention:            Looking only at children who started this September 2024, 14 children whose families initially expressed their preference for special school were actually supported to go to mainstream primary school. <u>This represents a saving of £392,000 for one year based on costs of West Berkshire special schools (£28,000 per place per year - costs would be far higher for a private placement).</u>            Looking only at the 63 children on EDIT caseload who started school in September 2024, EDIT intervention led to these children being supported in ways other than an EHCP for an average of 11.5 months per child during their inclusion in FS1, a saving of 335 months of</i></p>

	<p><i>payments via EHCPs.</i>  <u>Looking only at children who started school in September 2024, 21 EHCPNA's were avoided</u>  <u>completely due to the progress children made while being supported by EDIT, a saving of a minimum of £142,716 for their FS2 year alone (based on average EHCP rate of £12,796 per</u>  <u>child with school contributing the first £6000.</u></p> <p><b>Transitions Support Programme – Primary -Secondary – operating from Jan 2025 - Dec 2025</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50 children in Year 6 identified as at risk for failing to transfer successfully from their mainstream primary to secondary and support services will be used to target resources to further support transition.</li> <li>• Additional SEMH and ASD practitioners are being recruited to further support programme (posts advertised)</li> <li>• Additional Resourcing for Annual Review Processing for Transitions in place.</li> </ul>								
	<p><b>2. Mental Health Support Programme Pilot</b> Commenced October 2024.</p> <p>10 Schools have been recruited to the pilot and have embarked on the programme.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>School</th> <th>Type</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Theale Green</td> <td>Secondary - mainstream</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The Downs</td> <td>Secondary - mainstream</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Falkland</td> <td>Primary -mainstream</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	School	Type	Theale Green	Secondary - mainstream	The Downs	Secondary - mainstream	Falkland	Primary -mainstream
School	Type								
Theale Green	Secondary - mainstream								
The Downs	Secondary - mainstream								
Falkland	Primary -mainstream								

	St John and St Nicolas Schools Federation	Primary mainstream Federated	
	Lambourn	Primary – mainstream - Excalibur Academies Trust	
	Kintbury	Primary – mainstream	
	Robert Sandilands	Primary , mainstream	
	Curridge/ Woolhampton	Primary/mainstream	
	Streatley	Primary, mainstream foundation	
	Hungerford	Primary/mainstream	
	<p>3. <b>SEND Data Dashboard</b> - A Data Dashboard is now available for the SEND strategic Improvement Board and work is ongoing to incorporate health data into the dashboard.</p> <p>The Inclusion Dashboard is currently being developed and it is intended to be published on the revised Local Offer site in December 2024.</p>		
	<p>4. A draft <b>Sufficiency Plan</b> now provides evidence and informs the business case for the development of further SEND provision (Ratification Nov 2024)</p>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure that there is sufficient capital funding to support proposed and future developments of additional resourced provision over the next 10 years, a single <b>“SEND Strategy – Infrastructure Delivery revised Infrastructure Development”</b> business case was submitted for approval by the Council in August 2024, to facilitate draw down to deliver our priority SEND projects as they become defined. There is a detailed process for approval, including presentation at Capital Strategy Group (November) and then through our committee process from January to February/March, culminating in Full Council in late Feb/early March 2025.</li> <li>• Paper to Corporate Board to be presented on Mitigation of Specialist Placements – 26/11/2024 with detailed proposals to develop SEND placement capacity and enhance the continuum of provision in West Berkshire</li> <li>• A High -Cost Placement funding review was undertaken in August by senior Local Authority Officers.</li> </ul>
	<p>5. <b>SEND Funding Review</b> – Phase 1 completed August 2024. Co -produced Phase 2 of review underway. School membership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headteacher, Kintbury St Mary's CE Primary School</li> <li>• Headteacher, Streatley Primary School</li> <li>• Assistant Headteacher, The Castle School</li> <li>• Assistant Headteacher, I College</li> <li>• Headteacher, The Winchcombe School (primary)</li> <li>• Assistant Headteacher, St Bart's Secondary School</li> <li>• Headteacher, Brookfields School</li> <li>• Headteacher, Brightwalton Primary School</li> <li>• Assistant Headteacher, Denefield</li> <li>• Headteacher, Long Lane Primary</li> <li>• SENDCO, St Bart's</li> <li>• Headteacher, Thatcham Park Primary</li> <li>• Headteacher, Springfield Primary</li> <li>• Headteacher, The Castle School</li> </ul>



# Delivering Better Value: West Berkshire

DBV Task Group  
Project Lead

Appendix 2

Project Start:   
Display Week:

TASK	ASSIGNED TO	PROGRESS	START	24	4 Nov 2024																												
					M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	
<b>GAP analysis to Inform Local Provision/Need</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Name</b>																															
PCF involved in co-production activities in relation to DBV Programme, represented on workings groups and at the SEND strategic Improvement Board	PCF member of SSB, Coram Parent Champion Programme, Family Hub workshops	Beth Kelly	40%	1/4/24	31/3/25	G e n u i t																											
Gap Analysis - mapping existing services and referral pathways	Delayed from some services due to revised priorities	Catherine Kane	75%	1/4/24	30/6/24																												
Communication Strategy re DBV to parents, schools, settings and local area partners co-produced	Communication Plan and SEND Blog in place	Beth Kelly/Peta	80%	1/4/24	30/9/24																												
GAP analysis of Local Offer completed	Paper submitted to DMT - September 2024	Jane Seymour/Beth Kelly	100%	1/6/24	31/8/24																												
Local Offer co-production - survey to parents/carers on effectiveness and reach	Survey Completed - August 2024 - 80+ responses - incorporated into SEND and Inclusion Delivery Plan - supporting refresh of Local Offer - publication of You Said we Did document in Oct 2024	Beth Kelly/Hannah Geddert	100%	1/6/24	31/8/24																												
Joint commissioning opportunities explored with Local Area Partners re; any required provision following GAP analysis	Production of Plans on a page by Education, Therapies and Mental Health - awaiting completion of tasks	Catherine Kane	80%	1/6/24	30/9/24																												
Digital Performance and Inclusivity Dashboard - design completed and used to report to SEND Strategic Partnership Board - September 2024 onwards	Dashboard used to report to Send Strategic Improvement Board and Director Management Team	Azim Mohamed	100%	1/7/24	31/7/24																												
Training of Local Partners and Parents - user guide on line Portal	On line Portal implementation - delayed - technical issues - revised date sought - Paper to DMT - Nov 2024	Hannah Geddert	20%	1/9/24	30/9/24																												
Launch of Refreshed Local Offer	Work underway to change to new platform - Phase 1 complete by October - Revised Local Offer Phase 2 November - technical delays may impact on delivery - additional resource requested to support updating Local Offer - 0.3 FT equivalent funded until Dec 2024 from DBV. Business case submitted for BAU requirement	Beth Kelly	25%	1/9/24	30/11/24																												
Information sharing & Communication activities to Families, Schools and Local Area Partners- Regular workshops etc held			0%	1/10/24	31/3/25																												
Annual Impact Assessment -HNB Budget 2025/26	Submitted to Schools Forum	Nicola Ponton	80%	1/11/24	31/11/24																												
<b>Ensuring Sufficiency</b>																																	
Revision of data processing systems to inform SEND Sufficiency Strategy	Ongoing activities with wider Data Management systems within WBC to improve data capture and analysis	Azim Mohamed/Catherine Kane	70%	1/4/24	31/7/24																												
Exploration of Joint Commissioning activities with Local Area Partners - with key programmes of activity established	Developing Through Sufficiency Plan - e.g. Alternative Provision Framework	Catherine Kane	15%	1/5/24	1/3/25																												
New systems established for INMSS/AP SEND contract monitoring	Following High Cost Placement Review - Business case submitted for revised Commissioning structure across Children's Services - September 2024/focus on commissioning a brokerage - completed March 2025	Susan Tanner	80%	1/6/24	30/6/24																												
Launch of Consultation of Commissioning Framework	Following High Cost Placement Review - Business case submitted for revised Commissioning structure across Children's Services - September 2024 -focus on commissioning and brokerage - completed March 2025	Susan Tanner/Catherine Kane	10%	1/6/24	30/6/24																												
Draft SEND Sufficiency Plan	Awaiting sign off from DMT	Catherine Kane	100%	1/7/24	31/8/24																												
Ratification of SEND Sufficiency Plan	Corporate Board	Catherine Kane	95%	1/9/24	31/10/24																												
SEND Commissioning Framework ratified	Following High Cost Placement Review - Business case submitted for revised Commissioning structure across Children's Services - September 2024 -occurs on commissioning a brokerage - completed March 2025	Catherine Kane	80%	1/9/24	31/10/24																												
Annual Impact Assessment -HNB Budget 2025/26	Submitted to Schools Forum	Nicola Ponton	80%	1/11/24	30/11/24																												
<b>Financial Sustainability</b>																																	
Launch of co-produced Banding Review and Decision-Making Processes	Phase 1 of Banding Review complete - Phase 2 SEND Funding review Launched 7.10.2024 - Decision making paper recommendations reviewed in light of High Cost Placement Review - more system changes required to incorporate core agency changes - phased change management process required over 12 -18 months, incorporating the outcomes of the SEND funding review Phase 2	Susan Tanner/Jane Seymour	100%	1/5/24	31/8/24																												
Phase 2 Banding Review - co production of new funding arrangements	Co -production element underway with schools -revised programme deliver - July 2025	Susan Tanner/Helen Redding		7/10/24	1/7/25																												
Publication of refreshed decision-making process on Local Offer	Delayed whilst Local Offer undergoing Phase 1 refresh - update ready for Phase 2	Hester Collicutt	25%	1/9/24	31/9/24																												
Launch of Pilot new Funding arrangements - see 31 - revised programme of delivery	Revised Programme of delivery - see 31	Susan Tanner/Helen Redding		1/9/24	31/3/25																												

TASK	ASSIGNED TO	PROGRESS	START	24	4 Nov 2024 11 Nov 2024 18 Nov 2024 25 Nov 2024 2 Dec 2024 9 Dec 2024 16 Dec 2024 23 Dec 2024																																			
					M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	
Impact report to Schools Forum and ratification of reviewed Banding System	This will now be a report to Schools Forum - providing overarching update on DBV in Nov 2024		1/3/25	31/3/25																																				
Annual Impact Assessment -HNB Budget 2025/26	Submitted to Schools Forum	Nicola Ponton	80%	1/11/24	30/11/24																																			
<b>Supporting Inclusive Practice</b>																																								
Launch of revised whole area Mental Health Project - Delayed until Sept 2024	Revised Mental Health Project Development with Virtual School/AE Education/Birmingham Newman University - Launching Oct 2024 - will continue until July 2025	Hester Collicutt	100%	1/4/24	31/7/25																																			
Increase capacity in existing Autism/Early Years/ and Special School Outreach Teams - awaiting outcome of Longitudinal study for HFG and recommendations	EDIT team increased capacity to undertake transitions work until March 2025 - funded by DBV - Longitudinal study delayed	Karen Bartlett	80%	1/4/24	30/9/24																																			
Review referral process: explore single point of access to services (links with Workstream 1 ; GAP analysis)	Early Years review undertaken , "Plans on Page " supporting this work- in design - published - parent friendly version in draft form	Beth Kelly/Karen Bartlett	80%	1/4/24	30/9/24																																			
Co-produced design of Transition Support Programme with settings/schools/PCF	Co-produced with schools - Transitions Guidance for 6/7 transfer to be published in October 2024 - Early Years Transitions Guidance - to be published \October 2024 - <del>Transfer to be published to be published by 31 Dec 2024</del>	Karen Bartlett	100%	1/5/24	31/7/24																																			
Pilot of Transition Support Programme	This programme will extend 6 months - will additional staff in place funded by DBV - request to schools Forum to Match fund to allow the Programme to extend for one year commencing Jan 2025	Karen Bartlett	60%	1/8/24	31/7/25																																			
Evaluation of Impact of Mental Health Project	Delayed until June/July 2025 - due to delay in implementation of project	Gus Marriott		1/1/25	31/7/25																																			
Evaluation of Transition Support Programme	Early Years to Reception under evaluation - Nov 2024, 6/7 transition delayed - partial evaluation by June/Jul 2025	Karen Bartlett		1/1/25	28/2/25																																			
Annual Impact Assessment -HNB Budget 2025/26	Submitted to Schools Forum -Nov 2024	Nicola Ponton	80%	1/11/24	30/11/24																																			

Insert new rows ABOVE this one

Appendix 3

AnnMarie Dodds	Significant (4)	4 - Green	9 - Amber	12 - Red	16 - Red
Susan Tanner	Moderate (3)	3 - Green	6 - Amber	8 - Amber	12 - Red
Hester Collicutt	Minor (2)	2 - Green	4 - Green	6 - Amber	8 - Amber
DBV Programme	Insignificant (1)	1 - Green	2 - Green	3 - Green	4 - Green
	Rare(1)	Unlikely (2)	Possible (3)	Probable (4)	

Workstream Name	Risk	Reasons for Risk / Triggers / Causes	Consequences/Impact	Risk Owner(s)	Current controls	Impact	Likelihood	Current Rating (R+L)	Direction of Travel Risk Level UP,Down,,LEVEL	Mitigation Action(s)	Owner of Action	Target Date	Open / Closed	Impact	Likelihood	Target / Residual Rating (R+L)	Comments
DBV PROGRAMME	SEND Inspection - imminent	SEND Inspection - imminent	Staff unable to focus on DBV Projects - delay	Susan Tanner	Revision of priority areas which is carefully articulated by senior management to support staff in prioritising their individual work.	Minor =2	Possible=3	6= AMBER	down	Delivery plan of SEND and Inclusion Strategy to ensure DBV Priorities fully integrated into SEND and Inclusion Strategy	Susan Tanner	ongoing	Open	Minor	Unlikely	2+ 2 = 4 - Green	
DBV PROGRAMME	Capacity development at Brookfield Special School suspended	Capacity development at Brookfield Special School suspended	Reduction in mitigation opportunities submitted to DfE with DBV mitigations - increased pressure in HNB by requirement to use INMSS provision	Susan Tanner	Mitigations of Specialist Placements sub group established - June 2024 and Sufficiency Plan	Significant =4	Possible =3	12+ RED	down	Options paper to DMT - Oct 2024 - NFA currently academisisation delayed	Susan Tanner /Hannah Geddert	Dec-24	Open	Moderate	Possible	6= AMBER	
DBV PROGRAMME	Delays in recruitment	Delays in recruitment	Programme Co-ordinator Project officer	Susan Tanner/Hester Collicutt	Programme Co-ordinator recruitment in August 2024	Moderate= 3	Possible = 3	9= AMBER	down	Recruitment by September 2024	Hester Collicutt	Sep-24	Closed				
GAP Analysis/Local Provision	Reduced capacity on Engagement and Communication role	Reduced capacity on Engagement and Communication role	Delay in Key work in engaging stakeholders - delay in programme	Susan Tanner /Beth Kelly/Hester Collicutt	Programme Co-ordinator role to support	Minor =2	Possible = 3	6= AMBER	down	Recruitment by September 2024	Beth Kelly/ Hester Collicutt	Sep-24	Open	Minor	Unlikely	2+ 2 = 4 - Green	
GAP Analysis/Local Provision	Co-production and work on updating Local offer with new information delayed due to capacity - (Plans on a Page Health & Social Care)	Co-production and work on updating Local offer with new information delayed due to capacity	Not ready for September launch	Beth Kelly/Catherine Kane	Close monitoring and advice and support from Commissioning Consultant	Moderate= 3	Possible= 3	9= AMBER	up	Extension granted and commitment at SSIB - Health agreed to prioritise at notification of inspection	Susan Tanner	Sep-24	Open	Significant =4	Possible =3	12+ RED	
Supporting Inclusive Practice	EDIT Team Capacity for Transition Support Programme	EDIT Team Capacity for Transition Support Programme	Staff not secured to deliver extended offer in September	Susan Tanner	Contracts requested to be extended for EDIT Team	Moderate= 3	Possible = 3	9= AMBER	down	Contracts Extended until 31 March 2025	Susan Tanner	Jul-24	Closed				
Supporting Inclusive Practice	Delays in completing Transition Annual Reviews	Delays in meeting statutory timeslines in relation to Annual Reviews resulting in delays in updating plans and notification of requests for change of placement	Unsuccessful transitions for 6/7 transfer early years into school transitions.Demand for high cost placements increases and supported through tribunal leading to pressure on High Need Block.	Susan Tanner /Neil Goddard	Request for AR officer to be funded by MBV Grant between Sept and March 2024/5	Significant =4	Possible=3	12+ RED	down	AR Officer post recruited to Sept 2024	Susan Tanner	Sep-24	Open	Minor	Unlikely	2+ 2 = 4 - Green	
Supporting Inclusive Practice	Mental Health Project	Lack of EPS to undertake statutory services put proposed project to jeopardy	NO Mental Health Project for delivery in September 2024	Susan Tanner/Hester Collicutt/Catherine Kane	Tendering process for revised Mental Health Project to outside providers	Significant =4	Possible=3	12+ RED	down	New Mental Health Project Commissioned	Susan Tanner/Hester Collicutt/Catherine Kane	Oct-24	Open	Minor	Unlikely	2+ 2 = 4 - Green	
GAP Analysis/Local Provision	Local Offer - updates required	Platform update delayed and review and update hampered by lack of staff capacity	Local Offer is inaccessible to limited in its function with no resources to support change	Susan Tanner/Beth Kelly	Progress on changing platform monitored over summer with feedback into Task Group	Moderate= 3	Possible = 3	9= AMBER	level	Increase capacity of Local officer and Team by 0.3 until Dec 2024 to address immediate requirement - place but issues with Local Offer technical - set up Local offer working group	Susan Tanner/Beth Kelly	Sep-24	Open	Moderate	Possible	12+ RED	
Ensuring Sufficiency	Developing Short Term Sufficiency to meet specialist demand in September 2025 following 6/7 transfer and rising 5s transition	Lack of specialist and resource provision to meet anticipated need in September 2025	Increased pressure on HNB and INMSS placements will be required.	Hannah Geddert/Susan Tanner	Capacity Development: DBV Sub-group Mitigation of Specialist Placements- Summary of paper to DMT	Significant =4	Probable=4	16 =RED	level	Awaiting decision from DMT an 6/7 transfer information ( 24/11)	Susan Tanner	Feb-25	Open	Significant =4	Probable=4	16 =RED	
Ensuring Sufficiency	Developing Medium Term Sufficiency to meet specialist demand in September 2026 following 6/7 transfer and rising 5s transition	Lack of specialist and resource provision to meet anticipated need in September 2026	Increased pressure on HNB and INMSS placements will be required.	Hannah Geddert/Susan Tanner	Capacity Development: DBV Sub-group Mitigation of Specialist Placements- Summary of paper to DMT	Moderate= 3	Possible = 3	9= AMBER	up	Awaiting decision from DMT -	Susan Tanner	Feb-26	Open	Moderate	Possible	9= AMBER	
Enabler	Parent Carer Forum - Expansion	Limited increase in volunteers even with focused effort	Very limited co-production activities as no capacity to engage	Susan Tanner/Beth Kelly	Set up Coram partnership and summer activities to engage with parents at family hubs	Moderate= 3	Possible = 3	9= AMBER	level	Further Comms work and linking with Swings and Smiles to provide further support to PCF	Susan Tanner/Beth Kelly	Sep-24	Open	Moderate	Possible	9= AMBER	
GAP Analysis/Local Provision	Therapy assessments for Tribunals are not being undertaken by our provider For this not know to CYPIT or Children attending "out of area" schools. This means independent sourced prenatal advice is the primary source of therapy information at tribunal which made lead to over provision.	Increased number of tribunals in West Berkshire , beyond the figure identified in the shred CYPIT contract.	Tribunal outcomes for Therapy Input in Part F of EHC plans may result in over provisions and significant cost to the LA	Susan Tanner/Catherine Kane	Issues raised with the commissioner of the ICB - as the ICB has duty to assess.	Moderate= 3	Possible = 3	9= AMBER	up	Liaison with ICB Commissioning to develop statutory capacity of team to support assessment of need	Susan Tanner/Catherine Kane	Oct-24	Open	Moderate	Possible	9= AMBER	
Enabler	Data Cleansing	Continued emergence of significant ongoing data cleansing required to ensure accuracy of information on Data Dashboard and wider SEND data requirements.	Impact on information informing planning e.g. number of EHC plans on Deficit Management Plan effecting accurate predictions of impact of overspend .	Lisa Potts/Emma Burch/Azim Mohammed/ Hester Collicutt	SEND Team regularly updating data , data cleansing activities	Moderate= 3	Possible = 3	9= AMBER	level	Increase capacity of data analyst through DBV programme	Emma Burch/Hester Collicutt/ Susan Tanner	Dec-24	Open	Minor	Unlikely	2+ 2 = 4 - Green	

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## Deficit Schools

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<b>Report being considered by:</b>	Schools' Forum		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	2nd December 2024		
<b>Report Author:</b>	Melanie Ellis		
<b>Item for:</b>	Information	<b>By:</b>	All Maintained Schools Representatives

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### 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report provides details of the schools in deficit during 2024/25.
- 1.2 The report also provides information on lessons learned from monitoring schools in deficit.

### 2. Recommendation

- 1.1 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. Deficit schools update

- 4.1 Ten schools ended 2023/24 in deficit totalling £671k.
- 4.2 The 2024/25 budget shows ten schools again, eight the same schools from 2023/24 and two new schools. The budgeted deficit totals £866k.
- 4.3 The table below shows the budgets for these schools and status of the licence approvals for 2024/25.

## Deficit Schools

Main School Budgets	2023/24 Year end balance	2024/25 Budgeted Outturn	2025/26 Budgeted Outturn	2026/27 Budgeted Outturn	2027/28 Budgeted Outturn	2028/29 Budgeted Outturn	2029/30 Budgeted Outturn	2030/31 Budgeted Outturn	Licensed	Terms for granting licence
Aldermaston CofE Primary School	£2,263	(£78,677)	(£28,267)	£11,220	£29,035	£25,104			10.10.24	Granted with standard terms
St Finian's Catholic Primary School	(£87,161)	(£66,938)	(£28,754)	£4,042	£17,270	£18,890			10.10.24	Granted with standard terms
St John & St Nicolas Schools Federation	(£47,172)	(£34,442)	(£563)	£16,349	£19,647	£20,840			10.10.24	Granted with standard terms
Kennet Valley Primary School	£3,875	(£34,604)	(£17,910)	(£64,526)	(£200,759)	(£361,170)			10.10.24	The submitted budget does not show recovery but due to 1)the additional work the school has been involved in to open the new SEMH and Autism unit on site, and 2)the budget in SBS titled WORKING Budget 2024/25 RECOVERY 03.10.24 showing a recovery in 2027/28, it has been agreed that the deficit be licensed.
Woolhampton CofE Primary School	(£133)	(£18,249)	(£7,707)	(£11,037)	(£29,247)	(£61,129)			10.10.24	The submitted budget does not show recovery but due to 1)the exceptional challenges the school has experienced in the past year, and 2)the budget in SBS titled "Budget 2024/5 WORKING COPY 03.10.24" showing a recovery in 2026/27, it has been agreed that the deficit be licensed.
Hermitage Primary School	(£13,311)	(£50,816)	(£34,257)	(£21,017)	(£71,235)	(£178,365)			14.10.24	The submitted budget does not show recovery so work will need to continue in order to recover the deficit in an acceptable timescale. The timescales will be discussed at the next deficit recovery meeting with the school.  It has been agreed that the deficit for 2024/25 be licensed.
Pangbourne Primary School	(£77,778)	(£145,349)	(£235,409)	(£268,704)	(£156,708)	(£81,917)	£5,135	£93,650	08.11.24	Granted with longer recovery period.
Brimpton CofE Primary School	(£14,162)	(£26,170)	(£61,017)	(£110,216)	(£191,657)	(£318,507)			Outstanding	Not yet granted as have not received a budget that recovers the deficit in an acceptable timescale.
Spurcroft Primary School & Nursery	(£199,639)	(£228,263)	(£313,042)	(£380,675)	(£471,299)	(£516,595)			Outstanding	Not yet granted as have not received a budget that recovers the deficit in an acceptable timescale.Meeting arranged for 8.11.24.
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School & Nursery	(£158,621)	(£182,459)	(£147,304)	(£79,298)	(£21,816)	£8,780			Resubmitted	Not yet granted. Budget resubmitted and now shows recovering in 2028/29. Awaiting governor approval.
Enborne CofE Primary School	(£32,958)	£9,875							N/A	
Theale CofE Primary School	(£39,994)	£9,856							N/A	
<b>Total of Deficits</b>	<b>(£670,929)</b>	<b>(£865,967)</b>	<b>(£874,230)</b>	<b>(£935,473)</b>	<b>(£1,142,722)</b>	<b>(£1,517,683)</b>				

## 5. Reasons for school deficits

### 5.1 Falling pupil numbers:

- (1) National trend of falling numbers and no indication that this will reverse.
- (2) Viability of the smallest schools.
- (3) Belief that the school can market its way out of this.
- (4) Aversion to requesting a reduction in PAN.
- (5) Aversion to merging year groups (especially amongst parent governors).

### 5.2 Additional unfunded high need children:

- (1) Time taken to produce an EHCP and time lag in being awarded funding.
- (2) EHCPs not covering the full cost of support needed.

### 5.3 Increasing costs:

- (1) Energy.
- (2) Maintenance of buildings.
- (3) Catering – affecting small schools.
- (4) Unfunded support staff pay increases.

### 5.4 Lower Income:

Post covid income levels and hoping that this will recover to pre-covid levels and not addressing this as a long-term issue. This mostly applies to wrap around care and clubs that are impacted by parents working from home.

## 6. Reasons for not being able to recover a deficit

### 6.1 Budgetary control:

- (1) Lack of ownership of budget by Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Governors.

All budget assumptions should be challenged and owned by the above, and not just left to the School Business Manager or Finance Officer (SBM/FO).

- (2) Poor financial management.

The monitoring of school's finances not being given sufficient time and attention to be reviewed to allow decisions to be made. The information should be timely, accurate and robust, with any variances fully explained.

In-year deficits or overspends not being addressed. Decisions should be made to consider the financial impact over more than just the current financial year.

Budgeting based on last year rather than reviewing what happened last year and using it to inform future forecasting.

Lack of spend control on non-salary items, such as authorising purchases without checking budget position. Failing to prioritise purchases eg no option items such as energy, insurance, necessities and nice to haves.

- (3) Staffing decisions.

Staff members should not automatically be replaced on a like for like basis. Consideration should be given to the needs of the school and the affordability of the replacement.

Appointment of additional staff should be referred to governors as this is a change from the budgeted agreed structure. Impact on future years should be considered.

Possible overuse of timesheets and overtime claims. Lack of payroll reconciliations or not investigating or resolving differences.

Recruitment and retention concerns. Disproportionate number of teachers on UPR. Retention is good but expensive.

Uninsured staff absences.

- (4) SBM/FO

Insufficient hours to perform the role.

Lack of experience or financial background.

Expectation to cover admin tasks.

Tend to be cautious, overestimating expenditure and underestimating income, resulting in surpluses against budget, but masking deficit warnings.

## 6.2 Decision making:

- (1) Not agreeing the budget in a timely manner.

This should ideally be before the financial year begins, the date is known and the school should be able to plan to meet this deadline. We are still in the process of getting budgets agreed with deficit schools in November.

The LA issues budget shares by the end of March but does provide advance forecast figures, so this should not hold up the budget setting process.

- (2) Unwillingness to share possible deficit with WBC at the earliest point in time, take decisive action or explore early options.
- (3) Not taking advice from HR on staffing options.
- (4) Slowness to act on the deficit.

## 6.3 Funding uncertainty:

Late notification, not reading the detail provided.

## 7. Good practice learned from schools that do recover their deficit

### 7.1 Strong budgetary control:

- (1) Full ownership of budget by Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Governors.
- (2) Good financial management.

The monitoring of school's finances is given sufficient time and attention to be reviewed to allow decisions to be made. The information is timely, accurate and robust, with any variances fully explained.

Papers circulated in advance of governor meetings and governors should consider submitting questions in advance to allow for a full response to be available at the meeting so discussion can take place.

In-year deficits or overspends addressed as soon as they arise with actions to bring the school back in line with budget.



Reviewing what happened last year and using it to inform future forecasting.

Strong spend control on non-salary items.

(3) Staffing decisions.

Full consideration given to the appointment of additional staff. Impact on future years considered.

Staff members not automatically replaced on a like for like basis. Consideration given to the needs of the school and the affordability in all decisions.

Thinking creatively and speaking to HR. Considering fixed term contracts.

(4) SBM/FO

Strong SBM with accountancy background or qualifications, with enough time to fulfil the accounting requirements.

7.2 Decision making:

(1) Agreeing the budget in a timely manner, ideally before the financial year begins.

(2) Sharing possible deficit with WBC at the earliest point in time, taking decisive action and exploring early options.

Taking advice from HR on staffing options.

Deciding whether to share the financial position with staff to help get ideas to improve efficiency or generate savings. Sharing can result in retirement plans being shared or requests to reduce hours.

(3) Those schools that get ahead can avoid or minimise and recover deficits sooner.

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## Schools Forum Work Programme 2024/25

	Item	HFG Deadline	Heads Funding Group	SF Deadline	Schools Forum	Action required	Author
<b>Term 3</b>	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	Neil Goddard / Nicola Ponton
	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
	Deficit Schools ( <i>standing item</i> )	19/12/2024	08/01/2025	14/01/2025	20/01/2025	Information	Melanie Ellis
<b>Term 4</b>	Work Programme 2025/26			04/03/2025	10/03/2025	Decision	Jessica Bailiss
	Final High Needs Block Budget 2025/26	18/02/2025	25/02/2025	04/03/2025	10/03/2025	Decision	Neil Goddard / Nicola Ponton
	Final Early Years Block Budget 2025/26	18/02/2025	25/02/2025	04/03/2025	10/03/2025	Decision	Lisa Potts / Beth Kelly
	DSG Monitoring 2024/25 Month 10			04/03/2025	10/03/2025	Information	Lisa Potts / Neil Goddard
	Update on the DfE's Delivering Better Value Programme ( <i>standing item</i> )	18/02/2025	25/02/2025	04/03/2025	10/03/2025	Discussion / Decision	Hester Collicut / Susan Tanner
	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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## 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	31/07/2025	3 (4)	£164,850	£239,500	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. Spring 2024: one year extension was negotiated between council and provider and approved at Procurement Board
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	Nicola Ponton / Catherine Kane  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	The central energy contract is a non-mandated contract that maintained schools can access for provision of their gas and electricity. Any schools interested in joining the contract should email <a href="mailto:energymanagement@westberks.gov.uk">energymanagement@westberks.gov.uk</a> for more information.
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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