



## SCHOOLS FORUM

**MEETING ON THURSDAY 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020**  
**8.30am Virtual Meeting on Microsoft Teams**

### **AGENDA**

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS
2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING – held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020
3. MATTERS ARISING
4. MEMBERSHIP FOR 2020/21 ACADEMIC YEAR
  - a) New members
  - b) Remaining vacancies
5. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (DSG) MONITORING REPORT 2020/21 – Paper attached
6. SCHOOLS BLOCK DE-DELEGATED FUNDING 2021/22 – Paper attached
7. HIGH NEEDS BLOCK FUNDING 2021/22 – Paper attached
8. GROWTH FUNDING
9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS
10. DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS
  - 14th January 2021
  - 11th February 2021



# **SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING MINUTES**

**HELD ON 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020**

**8.30am**

**Microsoft Teams meeting**

Position	Attendee	22 October 2020	10 December 2020	14 January 2021	18 March 2021	June 2021
<b>Chairing the meeting</b>						
Chair	Brian Peacock / Vacant					
Vice Chair	Diane Atkinson	✓				
<b>18 School Members</b>	<b>Appointed Members</b>					
<b>8 Maintained School reps:</b>						
Maintained Secondary Head	Peter Tite	✓				
Maintained Primary Head	Elizabeth Hargreaves / Vacant					
Maintained Primary Head	Susan Aldred	✓				
Maintained Primary Head	Michelle Smith	✓				
Maintained Primary Head	Carolyn Morris	✓				
Maintained Special Head	Rik Robinson	✓				
Maintained Infant School Head	Gillian Crompton	✓				
Maintained PRU Head	Charlotte Rolfe / Trish Walker / Amanda Leaver	R				
<b>2 Free School reps:</b>						
Free School Head	Claire Gammon	A				
Alt' Provision Free School Head	Gary Holding	✓				
<b>4 Academy reps:</b>						
Secondary Academy Head	Dean Logan					
Secondary Academy Head	Diane Atkinson	✓				
Primary Academy Head	Donna Simpson	A				
Special Academy Head	Jen Ashworth	✓				
<b>4 Governors:</b>						
Secondary Governor	Gillian Yates	A				
Primary Governor	Brian Peacock / Vacant					
Primary Governor	Pauline Lovick	✓				
Primary Governor	Helen Holden	✓				
<b>4 Non-school members:</b>						
Teacher Unions	Simon Jones	✓				
Non-Teaching Unions	Paul Crewe	✓				
Post 16 FE College	Fazal Dad / Elissa Best	✓✓				
Early Years Provider	Tracy Ellett					
<b>Schools Forum Members present</b>		<b>15</b>				
<i>Quorate 40% of filled posts</i>		8	8	8	8	8
<b>In Attendance</b>						
LA Officers	Jenny Hackett	✓				
LA Officers	Kirsten Reid	✓				
LA Officers	Jayne Ivory / Carol Grimshaw / Alison Ashworth- Taylor	✓				
LA Officers	Jo Siddle	✓				
LA Officers	Simon Ross	✓				
LA Officers	Safiyya Mulla	✓				
Council Members	Cllr Julie Gunn					
LA Officers	Corrine McMillan					
<b>Total</b>						

## **1. Welcome and introductions**

Diane Atkinson (Acting Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Welcome to new members of the Forum - Fazal Dad and Claire Gammon.

Apologies were received from Claire Gammon, Gill Yates and Donna Simpson.

## **2. Minutes from the previous meeting**

It was agreed that the minutes from 4<sup>th</sup> June 2020 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting. Approved by Paul Crewe and seconded by Pauline Lovick.

## **3. Matters arising**

A review of recent meetings shows that these matters arising remain unresolved:

JH updated members that the new BwD redundancy policy is now in place. As agreed at Schools Forum in June, it won't be necessary for schools to buy into the LA's HR SLA in order to be eligible for support, but an audit by the HR team may be required in order to gain assurance that appropriate procedures have been followed. SJ mentioned that in previous years redeployment used to be considered across schools in order to avoid redundancies and questioned what the current redeployment policy was. PL mentioned that the schools who accepted an employee under redeployment would also inherit their continuous service, and therefore the risk of redundancy / early retirement costs in the future.

**Action: JH to check the current redeployment policy with HR.**

## **4. Vacancies for 2019/20 academic year**

Vacant posts are:

There is a vacancy for the Chair of Schools Forum as Brian Peacock has resigned from the management committee of St Thomas's PRU. DA asked for a card to be sent to Brian Peacock on behalf of Schools Forum and to wish him well. DA asked members who wanted to volunteer to take up the role as Chair. It was agreed for Diane Atkinson to continue as Chair for this year and Michelle Smith agreed to be Vice Chair.

There is a vacancy for a Primary Head representative as Elizabeth Hargreaves has retired. There is also a Governor representative vacancy to replace Brian Peacock. DA asked members if they know of any colleagues who would like to join Schools Forum to let JH know and, if within ten days JH doesn't hear anything, then JH to put an item in the Headteachers' bulletin.

**Action: JH to send a thank you card to Brian Peacock on behalf of the Forum.**

**Action: JH to put an item in the Headteachers bulletin asking for Schools Forum reps.**

## **5. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budget monitoring report 2020/21**

Based on the forecast from September to the end of the financial year, there are a few areas of pressure, mainly in the High Needs Block. There has been an increase in EHCP and SEN placements. A new emergency SEN budget was created this year, however, not much has been spent to date due to Covid although applications are now being made.

DA explained that high needs does need extra funding for this year, so it would be helpful if any underspend on the emergency SEN pot could be used. PT commented that he wouldn't have an issue with the money being used to support pressures this year however he would want the emergency funding panel to approve it. JH clarified that there was no proposal to move funding out of the emergency pot at this stage, just to use any underspend that does happen to arise to help offset the other pressures. Pauline, Michelle and Helen were all in agreement. It was agreed that the budget would remain at £640k, but that any underspend could be used to offset other High Needs Block pressures.

GC explained that some SENCOs on the emergency funding panel were applying statutory panel principles. JS suggested maybe feeding back to the SENCOs that this is not a statutory assessment panel and perhaps by Christmas to re-group and give training to the panel to look at the needs and do some case studies. The process is in its infancy but overall it is very good. DA summarised and asked for this to be looked at by the end of the financial year.

There is going to be significant investment in the High Needs Block in 2021/22, at least 8%, so we can still look at having the emergency funding pot next year as well as managing the new demand pressures.

There is a significant overspend in the de-delegated maternity reimbursement budget, over the years it has been overspent, JH will update members further under Item 8.

FD asked if we are allowed to move budgets across various areas. JH responded that money can be moved around from the High Needs Block, Central School Services Block and Early Years Block (subject to the early years 95% pass-through rule). The Schools Block is much more restricted, you can de-delegate funding to be managed centrally by the LA but only for specific things. You can transfer up to half a percent into the High Needs Block to help with SEN pressures but any higher transfer requires approval from the Secretary of State.

SA asked that if we don't use the emergency SEN underspend to offset the high needs deficit, how can the deficit be covered? JH responded that if we have an overspend at the end of year it comes out of the Council's reserves. FD asked about the overspend being picked up by the Council, is that allowed? JH responded that if we end up in a position where we have a significant DSG deficit then the DfE will start to intervene and will ask for a recovery plan. DfE will monitor the position and it will attract scrutiny. DA mentioned that the local authority has always managed to work within the budget.

## **6. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2021/22**

There have been some early announcements about the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for the new financial year. The final grant will be announced before Christmas but it all seems quite positive. The government promised investment for schools and, despite Covid, there will be an increase in the Schools Block next year.

The Teachers' Pay and Pension Grants will be rolled into the Schools Block, we have to set a minimum funding guarantee (MFG) for schools between 0.5% and 2.0% per pupil and the half percent for the High Needs Block can still be transferred if approved by Schools Forum.

We hope to set the MFG at 2.0% and as a result, a consultation will need to go out to Headteachers to approve this (because it is different from the 1.84% we applied last year). JH explained that we would like to fully align with the national funding formula (NFF) in 2021/22, and asked members if they would like this to be included in the consultation. PT asked about aligning with the NFF, are you able to do some modelling of the impact it will have on schools? JH said yes, and that that this could be included in the consultation document. DA asked when we are likely to be forced to follow the NFF. JH responded it might be within the next 2 or 3 years.

The High Needs Block will increase by 8%.

FD asked if there would be a cost of living increase across all sectors. DA responded the increase in the Schools Block is part cost of living, but also incorporates the Pay and Pension Grants. JH mentioned that the High Needs Block has never grown over the years until last year, prior to that there was no inflationary growth. JA asked that as staffing costs increase every year will the high needs top-up rates increase again year-on-year. JH responded that it will be considered as part of the overall high needs budget which will be discussed at the next meeting, we just have to see if there is enough money.

## **7. Central School Services Block (CSSB): Historical Commitments 2021/22**

The DfE have applied a 20% reduction to these budgets in 2020/21 and will do so again in 2021/22. JH has summarised in the report how we managed it this year and what we are proposing next year.

Music budget will be OK for this year and next year, and Broadband Connectivity will be OK. Capital contribution will be reduced but there are other sources of capital funding for schools.

For SIGs, there was a small amount of capacity in the original £350k budget, and underspends from previous years have helped to managed the 20% reduction this year, but next year we will have a much smaller budget. De-delegation was discussed as an option to partially restore the budget. JS asked if the de-delegation would be for all schools or just maintained schools. JH responded that de-delegation is just for maintained, mainstream schools. SA pointed out that de-delegation for SIGs would really be taking money from school budgets just to give it back, and other members agreed. It needs to be decided, therefore, whether to reduce the amount to primary and secondary schools, or for money not to be given to academies.

FD mentioned that school improvement is the main focus for our children and that it's important to make sure the school improvement agenda doesn't go away. DA mentioned that we have a School Improvement Board and that this will be an item on their agenda. DA explained that the pot is still there but it will be a reduced pot. JS explained that Schools Forum will need to make a decision and inform the School Improvement Board. FD asked if use of the school improvement funding is reviewed annually. JS responded that there is a SIG Plan which each SIG writes, and this is agreed by the School Effectiveness team and the impact is fed back to the School Improvement Board. DA mentioned to JH that something will need to be prepared for the SIGs explaining the reduction in funding and potential impact.

## **8. Schools Block de-delegated funding 2021/22**

JH explained that we will vote on de-delegation next time. Currently we de-delegate for free school meal eligibility checks, maternity reimbursement, trade union duties and retained education functions. The maternity pot is not looking big enough so we may need to increase from £16.00 per pupil to £22.50 per pupil.

RR asked where special schools fit into the de-delegation or, are they exempt? JH responded that any school that is funded through the High Needs Block is not affected by the de-delegation as it only relates to the Schools Block. KR mentioned that in the past we have earmarked some funding from the High Needs Block to contribute to the de-delegated pots, so that the special schools and PRU can benefit from them. JH will add this to the list for the high needs budget. DA asked members to give some consideration to the maternity increase, as it will be an agenda item in December and we will need to vote. JH said that this could be included in the consultation documents if members wished.

The RPA for this year is £18 per pupil. Something for schools to look at individually. To be voted on at the next meeting, but probably won't be de-delegated.

## **9. Scheme for Financing Schools**

This item is to inform members of changes made each year. The Scheme for Financing Schools sets out the relationship between maintained schools and the local authority.

The changes are:

The DfE ran a consultation called "Financial transparency of local authority maintained schools and academy trusts", following which maintained schools must provide local authorities with 3-year financial forecasts every year. Maintained schools must also submit a deficit recovery plan when their deficit rises above 5% (no impact for BwD schools as we ask for a recovery plan whatever the size of the deficit).

Maintained schools may join the Secretary of State's Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) scheme.

Annex D of the Scheme for Financing Schools, which covers responsibility for redundancy and early retirement costs, now makes reference to BwDs new policy in this area.

## **10. Schools' consultation**

JH asked members for feedback on the consultation, and decisions about which of the issues discussed above should be included.

SJ asked if the consultation going out to all schools at this time was the best way to go ahead, given the pressures Headteachers are facing. FD expressed concern about the timings in the consultation document, and JH explained that these are inevitably tight to fit in with voting at Schools Forum and DfE deadlines. JH clarified that the only thing we definitely need to consult on is the minimum funding guarantee (MFG), the rest of the document is really just to make sure all the schools are aware of proposed changes.

DA emphasised that if we don't do a formal consultation we do need to demonstrate that we have consulted schools on the MFG. JH suggested emailing the Heads about the proposal to increase the MFG from 1.84% to 2.0%. Helen pointed out that the draft consultation document contains a lot of detailed information, which it would be useful for Headteachers to see.

JS suggested for JH to take the additional information to SIG meetings and answer any questions with the Headteachers during the meeting.

It was agreed that:

- JH will email Headteachers directly about the MFG.
- All other issues (including alignment with the national funding formula, transfer of 0.5% from High Needs Block and maternity de-delegation) will be discussed through the SIGs, giving Heads an opportunity to contribute if they wish without requiring a formal consultation response.
- JH will talk to SIGs at the same time about the reduction in the school improvement historical commitments budget.

**ACTION: Majority decision for JH to send an email to Headteachers.**

**ACTION: JH to attend the SIG meetings for verbal discussion on all the school funding issues for 2021/22.**

## **11. Any other business**

Nothing to report.

## **12. Dates for future meetings**

- **10th December 2020**
- **14th January 2021**
- **11th February 2021**

## **REPORT TO SCHOOLS FORUM**

### **DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT BUDGET MONITORING 2020/21**

#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1. To report the budget position of the 2020/21 Dedicated Schools Grant as at 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020.

#### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. Schools Forum members are asked to note and comment on this report.**

#### **3. Background**

- 3.1. The monitoring report below reflects Blackburn with Darwen's latest DSG and pupil premium allocations, published in July 2020.
- 3.2. Maternity reimbursement claims to the end of October amounted to £223k. The full-year forecast shown below assumes that claims will continue to be submitted at similar rate between now and the end of the financial year, resulting in a significant forecast overspend of £150k.
- 3.3. Since budgets were set, there has been an increase in Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and in demand for places in Special Educational Needs (SEN) settings, which is reflected in the forecast overspend of £302k on the High Needs Block.
- 3.4. As at 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020, £26k of funding had been approved from the newly created High Needs budget for short-term interventions of £640k. This is following two panels, one held in September 2020 and one in October 2020. Assuming applications continue to be submitted and approved at a similar rate, the budget is forecast to underspend by £490k, which will help to offset other High Needs Block pressures.
- 3.5. Vacancy savings of £100k are anticipated across the local authority's in-house SEN teams.

#### **4. Budget Monitoring Report**

- 4.1. The budget monitoring report is shown across the next three pages.

<b><u>Dedicated Schools Grant budget monitoring 2020/21</u></b>	<b><u>Oct-20</u></b>		
	<b>Current Budget</b>	<b>Full-Year Forecast</b>	<b>Variance</b>
	£	£	£
<b><u>Schools Block</u></b>			
Maintained Primary Schools - School Budget Share	55,044,175	55,044,175	-
Maintained Secondary Schools - School Budget Share	10,569,100	10,569,100	-
	65,613,275	65,613,275	-
<b><u>Schools Block Centrally Retained Budgets</u></b>			
Retained Education Functions	273,391	273,391	-
Growth Fund	100,000	100,000	-
	373,391	373,391	-
<b><u>De-delegated budgets</u></b>			
Free Schools Meals Eligibility	43,943	43,943	-
Maternity Reimbursement - Teachers	148,900	298,900	150,000
Maternity Reimbursement - Non-Teachers	81,324	81,324	-
Trade Union Duties	105,040	105,040	-
	379,207	529,207	150,000
<b>Total Schools Block</b>	<b>66,365,873</b>	<b>66,515,873</b>	<b>150,000</b>
<b><u>Central School Services Block</u></b>			
<b><u>Historical Commitments</u></b>			
Contribution to Music Services	96,000	96,000	-
School Improvement Groups	280,000	280,000	-
Broadband Connectivity	300,000	300,000	-
Capital Expenditure from Revenue	520,000	520,000	-
	1,196,000	1,196,000	-
<b><u>Centrally Retained Budgets - Ongoing Responsibilities</u></b>			
LA Retained Duties	992,306	992,306	-
School Licensing	136,500	136,500	-
	1,128,806	1,128,806	-
<b>Total Central School Services Block</b>	<b>2,324,806</b>	<b>2,324,806</b>	<b>-</b>

<b><u>Dedicated Schools Grant budget monitoring 2020/21</u></b>	<b><u>Oct-20</u></b>		
<b><u>High Needs Block</u></b>			
<u>Special Schools</u>			
Maintained Special School Place Funding	1,800,000	1,908,333	108,333
Maintained Special Schools Top-up Funding	2,467,900	2,552,878	84,978
Academy Special Schools Top-up Funding	712,100	759,167	47,067
	4,980,000	5,220,378	240,378
<u>Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)</u>			
PRU Place Funding	1,650,000	1,650,000	-
PRU Top-up Funding	205,800	289,500	83,700
PRU Home & Hospital / Outreach Commission	490,000	490,000	-
	2,345,800	2,429,500	83,700
<u>Mainstream Top-up Funding</u>			
Maintained Primary Schools	2,724,700	3,036,145	311,445
Maintained Secondary Schools	263,700	282,388	18,688
Academy Primary Schools	294,700	413,345	118,645
Academy Secondary Schools	721,200	826,371	105,171
	4,004,300	4,558,249	553,949
<u>High Needs Centrally Retained Budgets</u>			
Equipment and Adaptations	125,000	125,000	-
Independent Special Schools	3,103,000	3,103,000	-
Element 3 top-up funding for pupils placed out of area in other LA provision	312,800	312,800	-
Element 3 top-up funding for Post-16 placements	562,809	562,809	-
SEN Inclusion Fund (HNB)	135,000	135,000	-
High Needs Non-Delegated Budgets	5,051,974	4,965,774	(86,200)
New SEN Panel allocation	640,023	150,000	(490,023)
	9,930,606	9,354,383	(576,223)
<b>Total High Needs Block</b>	<b>21,260,706</b>	<b>21,562,510</b>	<b>301,804</b>

<b>Early Years Block</b>			
Maintained Nurseries	767,000	767,000	-
Maintained Primary Schools - Nursery Classes	1,710,700	1,710,700	-
Academy Primary Schools - Nursery Classes	74,500	74,500	-
Early Years Centrally Retained Budgets	687,700	687,700	-
Early Years Pupil Premium	94,403	94,403	-
Early Years Disability Access Fund	43,700	43,700	-
SEN Inclusion Fund (EYB)	35,000	35,000	-
3 & 4 year-old hours - Children's Centres	807,400	807,400	-
2 year-old hours - Children's Centres	374,500	374,500	-
2 year-old hours - Childminders / PVI's	1,095,191	1,095,191	-
3 & 4 year-old hours - Childminders / PVI's	5,975,279	5,975,279	-
<b>Total Early Years Block</b>	<b>11,665,373</b>	<b>11,665,373</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Pupil Premium</b>			
Primary Schools	4,564,538	4,564,538	-
Secondary Schools	579,548	579,548	-
Special Schools / PRU	184,250	184,250	-
LAC Pupil Premium	680,050	680,050	-
<b>Total Pupil Premium</b>	<b>6,008,386</b>	<b>6,008,386</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>107,625,144</b>	<b>108,076,948</b>	<b>451,804</b>
<b>Funded by:</b>			
Dedicated Schools Grant	(101,616,758)	(101,616,758)	-
Pupil Premium	(6,008,386)	(6,008,386)	-
Sixth Form Grant	-	-	-
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(107,625,144)</b>	<b>(107,625,144)</b>	<b>-</b>

The Schools and Education Finance Team  
December 2020

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## **REPORT TO SCHOOLS FORUM**

### **DE-DELEGATION OF SERVICES AND RETENTION OF FUNDING FOR EDUCATION FUNCTIONS 2021/22**

#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1. To provide an update to Schools Forum on the funds that can be de-delegated from 2021/22 school budget shares.
- 1.2. To enable Schools Forum to consider the services to be de-delegated in 2021/22.
- 1.3. To enable Schools Forum to consider the continued retention of funding for education functions in 2021/22.

#### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. Maintained primary and secondary representatives are asked to formally approve which services will be considered for de-delegation in 2021/22.**
- 2.2. Maintained primary and secondary representatives are asked to formally approve that an amount be retained from school budgets in financial year 2021/22 in respect of education functions, previously funded by the Education Services Grant.**

#### **3. Background**

##### **De-delegation of Services**

- 3.1. The Schools Finance Regulations that came into effect in April 2013 require the delegation to schools of the entirety of the Schools Block funding, subject to certain prescribed exceptions.
- 3.2. Maintained, mainstream schools may choose, by vote at Schools Forum, to de-delegate some of these prescribed elements of funding to be managed centrally by the local authority on behalf of them. Delegation means the allocation of funding to schools through the local schools funding formula. De-delegation means the retention of funding by the local authority.
- 3.3. Decisions are to be made by primary and secondary phases separately, and voting is restricted to school members representing those phases. De-delegation does not apply to academies, which could instead choose to buy into local authority services. It also does not apply to special schools, as they no longer receive delegated budgets in the same way that mainstream schools do, but they may be able to access any collective arrangements using their funding.

- 3.4. The difference between de-delegation and buy-back is that, in the case of de-delegation, all maintained schools in that phase will have an appropriate level of funding deducted from their delegated budgets, and the local authority will hold the de-delegated budgets centrally and provide services on behalf of all schools.
- 3.5. If de-delegation is not voted for, all schools will receive the additional funding, and may choose, on a school-by-school basis, how to fund those responsibilities. As with any item of expenditure, should Schools Forum not vote for de-delegation, groups of schools could still choose to combine their resources in order to achieve best value, including buying services back from the local authority where available.
- 3.6. A list of the possible services that can be de-delegated is shown below:
- 3.6.1. Additional school improvement services
  - 3.6.2. Contingencies including schools in financial difficulties and deficits of closing schools
  - 3.6.3. Behaviour support services
  - 3.6.4. Support to underperforming ethnic groups and bilingual learners
  - 3.6.5. Free schools meals eligibility
  - 3.6.6. Insurance
  - 3.6.7. Risk Protection Arrangements (RPA)
  - 3.6.8. Museum and library services
  - 3.6.9. Staff costs supply cover (for example, long term sickness, maternity, trade union and public duties).
  - 3.6.10. Licences/subscriptions other than those paid for by Department for Education (DfE)
- 3.7. In 2020/21, Blackburn with Darwen maintained schools voted to de-delegate the following services:
- a) Free school meal eligibility checks
  - b) Maternity pay cover for both teaching and non-teaching staff
  - c) Trade union facility time

### **Education Functions**

- 3.8. In the 2015 Spending Review, Central Government announced that it would be cutting the Education Services Grant (ESG), a funding stream paid to local authorities outside of the local government finance settlement in respect of certain education functions.
- 3.9. There were two elements of ESG – the retained grant, and the general grant. Retained ESG was only paid to local authorities, and funded the responsibilities they hold for all pupils in the area, regardless of whether they are educated in maintained or academy schools. The general element of ESG was paid to local authorities in respect of the pupils in maintained schools. It was also paid separately to each academy in respect of the pupils in their own school.
- 3.10. The retained element of ESG was transferred into Dedicated Schools Grant from April 2017, and has formed part of the Central Schools Services Block since April 2018. The general element of the grant ended in September 2017 for both local authorities and academies.

3.11. The functions of the local authority covered by the general element of the grant include:

- 3.11.1. School Improvement
- 3.11.2. Statutory and regulatory duties in respect of maintained schools, such as best value and procurement advice, internal audit compliance, pension scheme administration
- 3.11.3. Education welfare, including the inspection of attendance registers
- 3.11.4. Asset management to ensure maintained school buildings are in a satisfactory condition
- 3.11.5. Central support services, such as music tuition, visual, creative and performing arts, outdoor education centres
- 3.11.6. Monitoring of National Curriculum assessments

3.12. The local authority remains responsible for providing these functions on behalf of its maintained schools, and financial regulations allow for funding to be retained from the budgets of maintained schools in order to cover the costs.

#### 4. De-delegation of services and retention of funding for education functions in 2021/22

4.1. For each service de-delegated, local authorities must make a clear statement of how the funding is being taken out of the formula. In the Blackburn with Darwen Formula, the rate per pupil will be listed by service.

4.2. The table below lists the de-delegated items agreed for 2020/21 and the amount for retained education functions, showing the amount de-delegated per pupil and the total central budget created in each case.

##### *De-delegated services 2020/21*

	Primary rate per pupil	Secondary rate per pupil	Total budget 2020/21
	£	£	£
Free School Meals	11.38	11.38	£43,900
Staff costs – maternity	16.00	16.00	£230,200
Staff costs – trade union	7.30	7.30	£105,000
Education functions	19.00	19.00	£273,400
<b>Total</b>	<b>53.68</b>	<b>53.68</b>	<b>£652,500</b>

4.3. In financial year 2019/20, total maternity reimbursements amounted to £318,360 which represented an overspend on the centrally-held budget of £74,360. Claims up to the end of October 2020 amounted to £223k and it is therefore anticipated that the current year budget of £230,200 will also significantly overspend.

4.4. With the above in mind, the table below lists the proposed de-delegated items for 2021/22 and the amount for retained education functions, showing the amount de-delegated per pupil and the total central budget created in each case. The total budget figures are based on 2020/21 pupil numbers and will be updated once October 2020 census numbers are confirmed.

*De-delegated services 2021/22*

	Primary rate per pupil	Secondary rate per pupil	Total budget 2020/21
	£	£	£
Free School Meals	11.38	11.38	£43,900
Staff costs – maternity	24.50	24.50	£352,500
Staff costs – trade union	7.30	7.30	£105,000
Education functions	19.00	19.00	£273,400
<b>Total</b>	<b>62.18</b>	<b>62.18</b>	<b>£774,800</b>

Schools and Education Finance Team  
December 2020

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## **REPORT TO SCHOOLS FORUM**

### **HIGH NEEDS BLOCK FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2021/22 FINANCIAL YEAR**

#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1. To provide Schools Forum with an early indication of proposed High Needs Block arrangements for financial year 2021/22.

#### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. Schools Forum members are asked to note and comment on the initial proposals for the allocation of the High Needs Block for 2021/22.**

#### **3. Background**

- 3.1. In July 2020, the DfE announced provisional Dedicated Schools Grants (DSG) allocations to all local authorities, which included an allocation for the High Needs Block.
- 3.2. The DfE announced that Local Authorities would receive a minimum 8% inflationary increase per head of population compared to the previous financial year.

#### **4. Initial proposals for 2021/22 High Needs Block arrangements**

The LA is proposing to set budgets within the High Needs Block using the following principles:

- 4.1. Funding to be provided to cover the costs of delivering Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and Individual Pupil Resource Agreements (IPRAs) in mainstream schools.
- 4.2. Funding will be based on Element 3 top-up levels determined by assessing the needs of pupils against the resource allocation framework.
- 4.3. For schools with higher than “expected” pupils (i.e. pupils exceeding the number covered by the notional SEN element of the school budget share) additional Element 2 funding (£6,000 per pupil) to be provided in addition to Element 3 funding.
- 4.4. The following places to be commissioned in Special Schools and Resourced Provisions across Blackburn with Darwen schools:
  - 200 places at Newfield Special School (including 20 places in Post-16) – this is yet to be confirmed, estimate based on current year pupil numbers already in excess of 190
  - 15 places at St Cuthbert’s Resource Provision
  - 18 places at Lower Darwen HI Resource Provision
  - 92 places at Crosshill Special School (including 20 places in Post-16)
  - 2 places at St Wilfrid’s HI Resource Provision
  - 54 places at Eden Special School

- 4.5. Maintained Special Schools will receive place funding of £10,000 per place and Element 3 top-up funding for all pupils. Academies and free schools will receive Element 3 top-up funding from the LA only (with place funding to be received directly from the ESFA). Top-up funding levels will be determined by assessing the needs of the pupil against the resource allocation framework.
- 4.6. The following places to be commissioned in Alternative Provision across Blackburn with Darwen schools:
- 165 places at St Thomas's PRU
  - 120 places at The Heights
- 4.7. The PRU will receive place funding of £10,000 per place and Element 3 top-up funding for all pupils. As a free school, The Heights will receive its funding directly from the Education and Skills Funding agency (ESFA), based on the number of places it expects to fill following discussions with Blackburn with Darwen and other LAs.
- 4.8. A commissioned service will continue with St Thomas's PRU to support pupils who are educated at hospital or need education at home because of their needs.
- 4.9. A new resource unit will be developed at St Thomas's PRU that provides support and guidance for Key Stage 3/4 pupils who are exhibiting mental health concerns in a mainstream provision. It would also support pupils with an EHCP for SEMH/ASD when appropriate to the needs of the pupil. The curriculum would be core with an emphasis on life skills and preparing students for the world of work. Pupils in Key Stage 4 to undertake appropriate level exams.
- 4.10. Funding previously received by Special Schools and Alternative Provision settings through the Teachers' Pay Grant (TPG) and Teachers' Pension Employer Contribution Grant (TPECG) has been included in the High Needs Block in 2021/22. This will be paid over to such schools as a lump sum in 2021/22, at an amount equal to the grant received in 2020/21.
- 4.11. Other proposals include:
- Continuing to fund Post-16 high needs in Further Education settings/Colleges based on demand
  - Continuing to fund placements in Independent Special Schools based on demand
  - Continuing to fund the SEND Support Service in the LA – additional funding to be built in for the TPG and TPECG, additional staffing resource included to reflect increased demand and costs previously covered by the SEND Reform Grant
  - Continuing to fund Equipment & Adaptations
  - Continuing to operate the emergency SEN funding panel
  - The inclusion of a contingency to reflect anticipated growth
- 4.12. The table at the end of this paper shows the first draft proposed allocation of the High Needs Block for 2021/22.

## **5. Next Steps**

- 5.1. The final High Needs Block allocation for Blackburn with Darwen will be announced later in December 2020.
- 5.2. These draft budget proposals will be kept under review over the coming months with a view to final High Needs budgets being presented to Schools Forum at the meeting in February 2021.

**The Schools and Education Finance Team  
December 2020**

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	2020/21 Budget	2020/21 Forecast Expenditure	2020/21 Forecast Pressure / Saving	Proposed 2021/22 Budget	Movement from 2020/21	Notes
Special Schools place funding - pre 16	1,600,000	1,708,333	108,333	1,800,000	200,000	Increase to 180 places - to be confirmed - already over 170 this year
Special academies / free schools place funding - pre 16	1,070,000	1,070,000	-	1,180,833	110,833	Increase from 65 to 72 places at Crosshill in September 2021, and from 42 to 54 at Eden
Special Schools place funding - post-16	200,000	200,000	-	200,000	-	20 places at Newfield
Special academies / free schools place funding - post 16	140,000	140,000	-	183,333	43,333	Increase from 15 to 20 places at Crosshill in September 2021
Special Schools top-up funding	3,143,943	3,244,988	101,045	3,259,145	115,202	
SALT contract at Newfield	-	39,000	39,000	39,000	39,000	Not new, just not budgeted in previous years
TPG and TPECG for Special Schools	-	-	-	191,877	191,877	Received as separate grants in 2020/21
Alternative provision place funding	1,650,000	1,650,000	-	1,650,000	-	165 places at PRU
AP academies / free schools place funding	5,833	5,833	-	10,000	4,167	
Alternative provision top-up funding	189,300	198,000	8,700	189,300	-	
AP additional 1:1 support	-	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000	Approximately £25k per term - not new, just not budgeted in previous years
Home & Hospital funding	490,000	490,000	-	490,000	-	
PRU Elective Home Education commission	-	-	-	20,000	20,000	
New PRU Resource Unit	-	-	-	150,000	150,000	For KS3/4 pupils with mental health concerns in mainstream
TPG and TPECG for AP providers	-	-	-	195,782	195,782	Received as separate grants in 2020/21
Element 2 top-up funding for mainstream schools	362,000	428,000	66,000	372,000	10,000	Includes Resourced Provision in maintained schools
Element 3 top-up funding for mainstream schools	3,642,201	4,130,150	487,949	3,963,782	321,581	
Element 2 top-up funding for Resourced Provision in academies	20,500	20,500	-	14,500	(6,000)	Reduction to 2 places in Resourced Provision from September 2021
Element 3 top-up funding for Resourced Provision in academies	52,562	44,562	(8,000)	26,428	(26,134)	Reduction to 2 places in Resourced Provision from September 2021
Equipment and Adaptations	125,000	125,000	-	125,000	-	
Independent Special Schools	3,103,000	3,103,000	-	3,103,000	-	
Element 3 top-up funding for pupils placed out of area in other LA provision	312,800	312,800	-	312,800	-	
Place funding for Post-16 college placements	818,000	818,000	-	882,000	64,000	Commissioned 143 post-16 places from September 2021
Element 3 top-up funding for Post-16 college placements	562,809	562,809	-	562,809	-	
High Needs Non-Delegated Budgets	3,256,500	3,156,500	(100,000)	3,368,900	112,400	Increase for in-house Teachers' Pay and Pension costs covered by grants in 2020/21
HN Strategic Commissioning and Service Modernisation	1,931,264	1,945,064	13,800	2,129,590	198,326	Includes SEND Implementation Manager & website maintenance costs previously covered by SEN Reform Grant
SEN Inclusion Fund	135,000	135,000	-	135,000	-	
New SEN Panel allocation	640,023	150,000	(490,023)	640,023	-	
Growth contingency	-	-	-	500,000	500,000	
Forecast surplus / (shortfall)	(135,697)	(135,697)	-	(272,855)	(137,158)	
	23,315,038	23,616,842	301,804	25,497,248	2,182,209	
High Needs Budget per DfE allocations	20,620,683			23,226,581	2,605,898	12.64%
Transfer from Schools Block	640,023			-		
High Needs Budget	21,260,706			23,226,581	1,965,876	9.25%
Place funding to be stripped out and passed to providers directly	2,054,333			2,270,667		
Available High Needs Budget	23,315,039			25,497,248	2,182,209	9.36%

## REPORT TO SCHOOLS FORUM

### GROWTH FUND 2020/21 AND FUTURE YEARS

#### 1. Purpose

- 1.1. To explain the principles of the growth fund and consider a review of the Blackburn with Darwen (BwD) policy in this area.

#### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Schools Forum members are asked to note and comment on this report.

#### 3. Background

- 3.1. Within the Schools Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) local authorities (LAs) receive a growth fund allocation, which can be used for the following:
  - to support growth in pre-16 pupil numbers to meet basic need
  - to support additional classes needed to meet the infant class size regulation
  - to meet the costs of new schools
- 3.2. Any growth funding not used in this way will be passed out to schools via the schools funding formula.
- 3.3. The importance of the growth fund can best be illustrated by considering the way school budgets are calculated, which is set out in the table below.

Type of School	Pupil count used to calculate budgets	Example
Maintained	October census prior to the <i>financial</i> year to which the budget relates	October 2019 census informs budget for April 2020 to March 2021
Academy	October census prior to the <i>academic</i> year to which the budget relates	October 2019 census informs budget for September 2020 to August 2021

- 3.4. If a school, therefore, is asked to increase their numbers in any given September, then:
  - for maintained schools, it will be 7 months before they receive any funding in their budget for the additional pupils.
  - for academies, it will be 12 months before they receive any funding in their budget for the additional pupils.

#### 4. Current policy

- 4.1. The current growth funding policy in BwD is to pay schools the Basic Entitlement element of the schools funding formula x the number of additional pupils x the number of months for which they are without funding.

4.2. Historically, growth funding has only been paid where the local authority has specifically asked schools to increase their Published Admission Number (PAN). However, several of the borough's secondary schools were asked to take additional pupils in September 2020 and, although this did not necessarily take them above their PAN, finance and education colleagues have agreed that growth funding should be paid to reflect the additional costs that these schools will incur between September 2020, and the point at which those pupils first attract funding through the schools funding formula.

## 5. In-year admissions

5.1. If pupils are admitted to a school after the October census date in any given year, the school will have to educate that pupil for at least one financial year without receiving any funding for them through the schools funding formula.

5.2. For many schools the number of in-year admissions is not significant, and may be offset by the impact of pupils leaving after the October census date (in which case funding is not clawed back).

5.3. However, some BwD schools accept significant in-year admissions through the Fair Access system, and it could be argued that this process is part of the LA's strategy to meet basic need in the borough.

5.4. The Department for Education (DfE) include a Mobility Factor in their national funding formula for children who first register in school on either the spring or summer term census. Any such pupil is flagged as "mobile" and, if mobile pupils account for more than 6% of the school cohort, the school will receive an element of funding for pupils above the 6% threshold in addition to the Basic Entitlement. The Mobility Factor in financial year 2019/20 was £1,000 per pupil. As described above, however, this funding will only appear in school budgets in the financial year after the "mobile" pupil first appears on an October census.

5.5. To try and mitigate the financial pressures experienced by schools that have significant in-year growth, we are considering allocating an amount of funding for each additional pupil admitted into schools after the census date, over and above the 6% threshold adopted by the DfE. Funding would be paid in the autumn term of the academic year following the year of growth i.e. the autumn term before the financial year in which the pupils will actually be reflected in the budget.

5.6. We have considered paying schools an amount equal to the Basic Entitlement for each additional pupil, but the LA's growth funding allocation is unlikely to make this approach sustainable and, importantly, any overspend on the growth fund would mean less money available to pass out through the schools funding formula. Allocating an amount equal to the Mobility Factor, so £1,000 per pupil, might be achievable.

5.7. Further work is being done to establish how growth data can be most accurately captured, but it is estimated that adopting this policy would cost an additional £100,000 in financial year 2020/21.

## **6. Next Steps**

- 6.1. The admissions team will investigate how best to capture growth in pupil numbers following the October census date. A snapshot of pupil numbers at the end of the academic year would be ideal if this can be provided by schools.
- 6.2. The final 2021/22 Schools Block allocation for Blackburn with Darwen will be announced later in December 2020.
- 6.3. The forecast demand on the 2021/22 growth fund will be calculated based on the assumption that:
  - all schools who are asked by the LA to take additional pupils in September 2021 will receive additional funding for these pupils based on the Basic Entitlement.
  - any school whose pupil numbers grow by more than 6% between the October census and the end of the academic year will receive some additional funding for these pupils – amount to be determined based on affordability.
- 6.4. Proposals will be brought to the Schools Forum meeting in January 2021. As a key principle, the growth fund must not be so large as to jeopardise the use of national funding formula rates, and appropriate minimum funding guarantees, in the schools funding formula.

**The Schools and Education Finance Team  
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