



SCHOOLS FORUM

**MEETING ON THURSDAY 11th February 2021
8.30am Virtual Meeting on Microsoft Teams**

AGENDA

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS
2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING – held on 14th January 2021
3. MATTERS ARISING
4. MEMBERSHIP FOR 2020/21 ACADEMIC YEAR
5. HIGH NEEDS FUNDING FOR 2021/22 – Paper attached
6. EARLY YEARS FUNDING FOR 2021/22 – Paper attached
7. CENTRAL SCHOOL SERVICES FUNDING FOR 2021/22 – Paper attached
8. POLICY FOR THE ALLOCATION OF THE GROWTH FUND – Paper attached
9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS
10. DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS



SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING MINUTES

HELD ON 14th January 2021

8.30am

Microsoft Teams meeting

Position	Attendee	22 October 2020	10 December 2020	14 January 2021	18 March 2021	June 2021
Chairing the meeting						
Chair	Brian Peacock / Diane Atkinson	✓	✓	A		
Vice Chair	Diane Atkinson / Michelle Smith	✓	A	✓		
18 School Members		Appointed Members				
8 Maintained School reps:						
Maintained Secondary Head	Peter Tite	✓	✓	✓		
Maintained Primary Head	Rob Andrew		A	✓		
Maintained Primary Head	Susan Aldred	✓	✓	✓		
Maintained Primary Head	Michelle Smith	✓	A	✓		
Maintained Primary Head	Carolyn Morris	✓	A	✓		
Maintained Primary Head	Vicky Brown		✓	✓		
Maintained Special Head	Rik Robinson	✓	✓			
Maintained Infant School Head	Gillian Crompton	✓	✓	A		
Maintained PRU Head	Vicki Michael	R	✓	✓		
2 Free School reps:						
Free School Head	Claire Gammon	A	A	A		
Alt' Provision Free School Head	Gary Holding	✓	✓	✓		
4 Academy reps:						
Secondary Academy Head	Dean Logan		✓	✓		
Secondary Academy Head	Diane Atkinson	✓	✓	A		
Primary Academy Head	Donna Simpson	A	✓	A		
Special Academy Head	Jen Ashworth	✓				
4 Governors:						
Secondary Governor	Gillian Yates	A	✓	✓		
Primary Governor	Brian Peacock / Vacant					
Primary Governor	Pauline Lovick	✓	✓	✓		
Primary Governor	Helen Holden	✓	✓	✓		
4 Non-school members:						
Teacher Unions	Simon Jones	✓	✓	✓		
Non-Teaching Unions	Paul Crewe	✓	✓	✓		
Post 16 FE College	Fazal Dad / Elissa Best	✓✓	✓✓	✓ / A		
Early Years Provider	Tracy Ellett					
Schools Forum Members present		15	16	15		
<i>Quorate 40% of filled posts</i>		<i>8</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>8</i>
In Attendance						
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					
Total		5	5	6		

1. Welcome and introductions

Due to the absence of the Chair, Diane Atkinson, Michelle Smith (Vice Chair) chaired the meeting and welcomed everyone. Vicki Michael and Rob Andrew, new Heads, were welcomed to their first meeting.

Apologies were received from Diane Atkinson, Donna Simpson, Gillian Crompton, Elissa Best and Claire Gammon.

2. Minutes from the previous meeting

It was agreed that the minutes from 10th December 2020 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

3. Matters arising

Action: JH will contact Andrew Hutchinson from Governor Services for a Governor rep. Andrew is going to put a request in the spring term report to governors.

4. Vacancies for 2020/21 academic year

There is still a vacancy for a school governor rep. This item was covered in Matters Arising.

5. Updated DSG allocations for 2021/22

JH went through the briefing paper and pointed out what the allocations were.

JH referred to section 4.1. All Blocks have seen an increase with the exception of the Central School Services Block which has reduced because of the cut to Historical Commitments discussed in previous meetings. Overall the funding position is positive.

FD asked about the £13million increase. JH responded that a big chunk of the increase is the Schools Block, the vast majority of which will be passed out to schools. The increase in the High Needs Block reflects that fact that we have not had enough money in previous years.

PL asked whether the increase in the Schools Block is partly due to the rolling in of grants previously received separately and JH responded yes, the schools used to receive the Teachers' Pay and Pension Grants separately and these are now included in the Schools Block figure, which further accounts for the increase.

6. High Needs Block funding 2021/22

JH shared the report on screen. JH is updating the report every week at the moment as there are new EHCPs being approved all the time.

There is pressure on the High Needs Block in the current year and it is showing an overspend, albeit this is partially offset by an underspend on the Emergency SEN budget. There is the possibility to make the Emergency SEN budget slightly smaller next year, and this, together with the 0.5% transfer from the Schools Block, would enable us to create a

growth contingency of £1m to try and guard against a similar overspend position arising next year.

JS explained that there is real scrutiny from the DfE over high needs. JH stated that while some authorities have really struggled, we have done well in recent years and have managed to avoid a cumulative DSG deficit. If we ever do have a deficit this will be reported to the DfE.

MS stated she would support the potential transfer of 0.5%. JH explained that if we don't do the 0.5% then:

1. There wouldn't be enough money to keep the Emergency SEN pot going, and
2. Overall things would look quite tight next year

PT explained that he supports the 0.5%, and pointed out that next year, without lockdown, there might be even more pressure.

SA said that for some schools whose budget are not healthy, 0.5% might be difficult for them to sacrifice, and that was something for Forum to be aware of. JH explained that leaving the 0.5% in the Schools Block wouldn't necessarily result in a 0.5% increase for every school, because of the way the schools funding formula works. This is covered further in Item 7.

FD asked that if the contingency was to go up a million, and wasn't all required, could some or all of the 0.5% be given back to the Schools Block JH responded that once it's in the High Needs Block then it's hard to put it back into the Schools Block as school budgets can't be changed partway through the year. But an underspend this year may mean we don't need to take the 0.5% next year. FD asked that if a million is put aside would we not get questioned by the DfE. JH responded that it is our responsibility to set the High Needs budget and the DfE would be unlikely to question this. They wouldn't be happy if we ended the year with a significant amount of unspent funding, but neither would we, so the level of the contingency will be kept under constant review.

VM said that she thought that we need the contingency.

FD agreed with the proposed contingency amount.

7. Schools Block funding 2021/22

JH presented a number of options for the allocation of the Schools Block, and recommended Option 1 which mirrors the National Funding Formula and includes a 0.5% transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block.

KR mentioned that it was agreed a few years ago that we would gradually move over fully to the National Funding Formula and said it was a really good idea to adopt it fully this year.

	For	Against	Abstained	Total
Schools Block to High Needs Block transfer of 0.5%	11			11

	For	Against	Abstained	Total
Agree recommended options for setting school budgets (Option 1)	11			11

8. Any Other Business

School Reserves Policy

JH explained that while some schools may be going into a deficit reserves position this year due to Covid, a number of schools had been in touch to say that they hadn't been able to spend all that they had planned this year and might therefore be carrying surplus reserves. JH mentioned the possible introduction of a capital pot, whereby schools could put surplus funds aside to pay for future capital works, within a limit of maybe three years. This might help to mitigate the reduction in the DSG revenue contribution to capital budget that has been cut as one of the Historical Commitments.

Alternatively, we could waive the reserves clawback policy for one year only and consider the capital idea for subsequent years.

FD asked what the figures would be. JH responded that we only let schools carry a certain percentage of their revenue budgets in their cumulative reserves, 10% for secondary and 12% for primary schools, anything above this is subject to clawback. FD explained that he would support the secondary Heads given all that has been going on in the last 18 months and questioned whether clawback was actually required at all. JH mentioned that the clawback policy was introduced to avoid schools building up massive reserves, which has been seen historically in the some boroughs. FD mentioned that he would not support no clawback this year.

SA explained that she thinks the idea of a capital pot is a good idea going forward; waiving the clawback would be good this year.

PL agreed that we should not do a clawback this year. Some schools wanted to review the staffing structure in September 2020 which would have had an impact on their reserves position, but were unable to do so.

VM mentioned that if reserves are built up, Heads need to be clear about what they are saving the money for.

SJ agreed that given with what everyone has been going through this year, it would be best not to do clawback, however the capital is a good idea for the future.

JH will send something round to Heads once she has discussed with her Manager.

9. Dates for future meetings

•• 11th February 2021

REPORT TO SCHOOLS FORUM

HIGH NEEDS BLOCK FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2021/22

1. Purpose

- 1.1. To provide Schools Forum with an overview of the High Needs Block funding arrangements for financial year 2021/22.

2. Recommendations

- 1.2. Schools Forum members are asked to note and comment on the local authority's proposals on High Needs Block funding arrangements.**

3. Background and calculation of total High Needs Block

- 3.1. The amount of funding in the High Needs Block is calculated by combining a number of factors to determine an allocation for each local authority (LA). These factors are:
- 3.1.1. Basic entitlement of £4,660 per pupil in special schools and academies
 - 3.1.2. Historic spend
 - 3.1.3. Proxy factors – population, disability living allowance, children in bad health, KS2 and KS4 low attainment, free school meals and IDACI
 - 3.1.4. Funding floor factor – for 2021/22 this incorporated a minimum increase of 8% on the previous year's baseline
 - 3.1.5. Hospital education funding
 - 3.1.6. Import/export adjustment with other LAs
- 3.2. In the meeting on 14th January 2021, Schools Forum approved a transfer of 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block. This amounted to £662,186.
- 3.3. The table below summarises the funding available to the LA to provide high needs services during 2021/22.

High Needs Block 2021/22 Summary table

	Rate	No of pupils 2021/22	Settlement 2021/22 £
Per pupil unit	£4,660	348.5	1,624,010
Historical plus proxy factors			23,818,645
Import/export adjustment	£6,000	29.5	177,000
Allocation before direct funding			25,619,655
Less direct funding			-2,178,000
Add 0.5% transfer from Schools Block			662,186
Total High Needs Block allocation			24,103,841

3.4. The current adjustment for the direct funding of places is itemised in the table below.

High Needs Block 2021/22 places and deductions summary table

	No of places	Rate	£
Mainstream Academies - SEN Units & Resourced Provision			
Pre-16 SEN places	3	£6,000	18,000
Special Free Schools			
Pre-16 SEN places	42	£10,000	420,000
Special Academies			
Pre-16 SEN places	65	£10,000	650,000
Post-16 SEN places	15	£10,000	150,000
AP Free Schools			
Pre-16 AP places	1	£10,000	£10,000
Further Education and ILP			
Direct funding	155	£6,000	930,000
Total high needs deductions			2,178,000

3.5. Following the submission in November 2020 (and the recent verification) of the High Needs Place Change return, further adjustments in respect of direct funding are anticipated as shown in the table below.

High Needs Block 2021/22 forecast amendments to deductions summary table

	No of places	Rate	£
Mainstream Academies - SEN Units & Resourced Provision			
Pre-16 SEN places – reduction of 1 for 7 months	-1	£6,000	-3,500
Special Free Schools			
Pre-16 SEN places – increase of 12 for 7 months	12	£10,000	70,000
Special Academies			
Pre-16 SEN places – increase of 7 for 7 months	7	£10,000	40,833
Post-16 SEN places – increase of 5 for 8 months	5	£10,000	33,333
Further Education and ILP			
Direct funding – reduction of 12 for 8 months	-12	£6,000	-48,000
Total high needs deductions			92,666

Budget planning for 2021/22 has therefore been based on the assumption that a further £92,666 will be taken from the LA's High Needs Block allocation and passed directly to providers.

4. Proposals for the 2021/22 High Needs Block arrangements

4.1. Special schools and resourced provision

- 4.1.1. Places in special schools will continue to be funded based on the £10,000 per place funding system, together with top-up funding as appropriate for each occupied place.
- 4.1.2. Top-up funding levels will be determined by assessing the needs of the pupil against the resource allocation framework.
- 4.1.3. The current estimated number of places required in special schools is 346 (302 for 2020/21). The split by school is shown below.
 - Crosshill – 72, plus 20 post-16 places
 - Newfield – 180 plus 20 post-16 places
 - Eden – 54 places
- 4.1.4. Direct funding adjustments for Crosshill as an academy and Eden as a free school are shown in the tables at 3.4 and 3.5 above.
- 4.1.5. There are 36 resourced provision places included in the 2021/22 budget plan, 15 at St Cuthbert's, 3 at St Wilfrid's and 18 at Lower Darwen. The direct funding adjustment for St Wilfrid's as an academy is shown in the tables at 3.4 and 3.5 above.
- 4.1.6. In addition to the above, places are commissioned from independent special schools, and from special schools in other boroughs. The commissioning of these places is demand-led, and the cost of each placement is negotiated with the provider on a place-by-place basis.

4.2. Alternative provision

- 4.2.1. Places in alternative provision settings will continue to be funded based on the £10,000 per place funding system, together with top-up funding as appropriate for each occupied place.
- 4.2.2. The current estimated number of places required in these settings is 285 for 2021/22. The split by school is shown below.
 - St Thomas's PRU – 165 places
 - The Heights – 120 places
- 4.2.3. The Local Authority will continue to commission St Thomas's PRU to deliver the Hospital Education service, which provides education to children who cannot attend mainstream school for medical reasons. This includes outreach support.
- 4.2.4. As an AP 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.

4.3. Post-16 settings

- 4.3.1. Post-16 placements in colleges and FE establishments for young people with special educational needs will continue to be funded based on demand.
- 4.3.2. The direct funding adjustments for post-16 providers are shown in the tables at 3.4 and 3.5 above.
- 4.3.3. Top-up payments are negotiated with providers on a place-by-place basis.

4.4. Top-up funding in mainstream schools

- 4.4.1. Top-up funding is available for children with special educational needs being educated in mainstream schools.
- 4.4.2. Eligibility for this funding is subject to assessment by the Blackburn with Darwen SEN team, and will usually be linked to an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or an Individual Pupil Resource Agreement (IPRA).
- 4.4.3. Top-up funding levels will be determined by assessing the needs of the pupil against the resource allocation framework.
- 4.4.4. An element of the 0.5% funding transferred from the Schools Block will be ring-fenced to support the panel created in September 2020, which allocates funding to children with special educational needs who are receiving support in mainstream schools, but who do not have an EHCP or an IPRA.

4.5. Contingency

- 4.5.1. A growth contingency of £1m will be included in the High Needs Block in 2021/22, to reflect the recent trend of a steady increase in demand for high needs places. This will be used to fund SEN placements across all sectors.

4.6. Centrally provided high needs support services and non-delegated budgets

- 4.6.1. The LA provides a number of services and support to SEN pupils, for which funding is retained centrally. Expenditure includes, but is not limited to:
 - SEND support services (staffing)
 - Equipment and adaptations
 - Contribution to SEN transport

5. Summary

5.1. A summary of the planned allocation of the High Needs Block is set out in the table below.

Summary table for High Needs Block allocations for 2021/22

Settings	Place funding £	Top up funding £	Other funding £	Total £
All primary schools including resourced provision	400,000	2,774,303		3,174,303
All secondary schools including resourced provision		1,356,295		1,356,295
Special schools	2,000,000	3,339,412	230,877	5,570,289
Alternative provision including hospital provision	1,650,000	941,833	195,782	2,787,615
Independent Special Schools and Out of Borough placements		3,415,800		3,415,800
Post-16 placements		562,809		562,809
Equipment and adaptations			125,000	125,000
New SEN panel			385,574	385,574
SEN Inclusion Fund			135,000	135,000
Central support services			3,368,900	3,368,900
Strategic Commissioning and service modernisation			2,129,590	2,129,590
Growth Contingency			1,000,000	1,000,000
Total				24,011,175

The Schools and Education Finance Team
February 2021

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REPORT TO SCHOOLS FORUM

EARLY YEARS BLOCK FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2021/22

1. Purpose

1. To provide Schools Forum with an overview of the Early Years Block funding arrangements for 2021/22.

2. Recommendations

2.1. Schools Forum members are asked to note and comment on the Local Authority's proposals on Early Years Block funding arrangements.

3. Background

3.1. At the last meeting held on the 14th January 2021, Schools Forum were advised of the Dedicated Schools Grant settlement for Blackburn with Darwen, including the amount to be received through the Early Years Block (£11.816m compared to £11.539m in 2020/21).

3.2. A breakdown of the Early Years Block allocation is shown in the table below:

Early Years Block 2021/22 Summary table

Based on 570 hours per year	Funding rate per hour	Part Time Equivalent nos 2021/22	£
3 & 4 year-olds funding entitlement	£4.76	2,737.07	7,426,219
3 & 4 year-olds additional 15 hours	£4.76	863.82	2,343,717
2 year-olds funding entitlement	£5.36	579.91	1,771,742
Early years pupil premium			94,449
Disability access fund			44,895
Maintained schools supplementary funding			135,176
Total Early Years Block allocation			11,816,198

3.3. Funding from the Department for Education (DfE) is based on 570 hours per year i.e. 38 weeks of 15 hours per week.

3.4. The hourly rates applied by the DfE have been increased by 6p in 2021/22 for three and four year-olds and by 8p for two year-olds.

3.5. As in previous financial years, Early Years Block allocations are provisional and are based on Schools, Early Years and Alternative Provision census data from January 2020. These allocations will be updated based on January 2021 and January 2022 census data.

3.6. The Local Authority has now developed budgets for 2021/22, in line with the requirements of the DfE to fund early years services for the 2021/22 financial year. These are set out in this report to enable Schools Forum to review the bases of funding.

4. Requirements for funding allocated to settings for 2021/22

- 4.1. The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) publish guidance each year around local authority funding of early years providers. The key points that the LA is required to follow in 2021/22 are set out below:
 - 4.1.1. Local authorities (LAs) must set a single funding rate including the same base rate and supplements for both entitlements for three and four year-olds for the universal 15 hours, and for the additional 15 hours for working parents.
 - 4.1.2. LAs must plan to pass on at least 95% of their total three and four year-old funding directly to providers to deliver the three and four year-old entitlements. This is measured by a pass-through rate calculation. LAs may request that the 95% requirement be disappplied in specific, exceptional circumstances, however, Blackburn with Darwen has not made a disapplication request for 2021/22.
 - 4.1.3. LAs must now use a universal base rate for all types of provider in their local three and four year-old formula including for maintained nursery schools.
 - 4.1.4. LAs may continue to use “lump sums” to distribute additional funding to maintained nursery schools.
 - 4.1.5. LAs must include a deprivation supplement in their local three and four year-old formula. Any other supplements must fall into one of the allowable categories.
 - 4.1.6. LAs must not channel more than 10% of their funding for three and four year-olds through supplements.
 - 4.1.7. LAs must provide a Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENiF) for three and four year-olds.
 - 4.1.8. LAs must pass on the Early Years Pupil Premium and the Disability Access Fund in full to providers of eligible three and four year-olds.
- 4.2. For two year-olds there are fewer requirements. There is no pass-through rate threshold as it has been demonstrated that the vast majority of such funding is passed on by local authorities to providers. There are no compulsory supplements for two year-olds and local authorities are encouraged to apply a flat hourly rate for all providers. LAs do not need to establish a SENiF for two year-olds.
- 4.3. Blackburn with Darwen LA has complied with these requirements in its funding proposals for early years in 2021/22.

5. Funding proposals for two, three and four year-olds.

5.1. The table below summarises the proposed hourly rates to be used for all settings including maintained nursery schools.

Summary of early years hourly rates proposed for 2021/22

All provision settings	Universal 15 hours	Additional 15 hours	Base Rate
2 year old rates 21/22			£5.04
2 year old rates 20/21			£4.96
3 & 4 year old rates 21/22	£4.36	£4.36	
3 & 4 year old rates 20/21	£4.30	£4.30	

5.2. The table below summarises the proposed supplement rates to be used for all settings including maintained nursery schools for three and four year-olds.

Summary of early years hourly supplement rates proposed for 2021/22

All provision settings	Rates per hour 21/22	Rates per hour 20/21
Deprivation rate	£0.19	£0.19
Supplement for maintained nursery schools	£0.88	£0.88
Supplement for children in need	£0.53	£0.53

6. Summary of funding proposals

6.1. The table below shows the allocation of the total Early Years Block if the rates shown above are applied.

Summary of early years proposed funding 2021/22

Proposed budget for all provision settings	21/22 £'000s	20/21 £'000s
3 & 4 year olds		
Base rate	8,949	8,602
Deprivation	197	192
Supplement for children in need	3	5
Supplement for maintained nursery schools	135	143
SEN Inclusion Fund – some will also be provided from the High Needs Block	35	35
Early years contingency funding	0	0
Centrally retained funding	586	576
Early years pupil premium	94	78
Disability access fund	45	44
Total funding for 3 and 4 year-olds	10,044	9,675
2 year olds		
Base rate	1,666	1,752
Centrally retained funding	106	112
Total funding for 2 year-olds	1,772	1,864
Total early years funding	11,816	11,539

- 6.2. The proposed budget includes an assumption that the £135k supplementary funding for Maintained Nursery Schools (MNS) included in the 2021/22 Early Years Block allocation will be passed out to those schools in full. Whilst the allocation for the period from April to August 2021 is confirmed, the DfE have included the following wording in their guidance:

“The maintained nursery school supplementary funding allocations for September 2021 to March 2022 are conditional: they may be subject to change and local authorities should therefore treat them as unconfirmed”

In the light of the above, consideration was given to the creation of a contingency fund to protect the MNS supplement should the funding for September 2021 to March 2022 be withdrawn partway through the year. It was decided not to take this approach, as this would have prevented the full DfE hourly rate increase from being passed on to providers, and the risk is considered to be low.

- 6.3. The centrally retained funding for 2021/22 is £692,000 (2020/21 £688,000). The pass-through rate for three and four year-olds has been calculated at 95.38% (2020/21 95.31%). This is based on the Blackburn with Darwen provider rate of £4.36 compared to the DfE funding rate of £4.76 (see table in paragraph 3.2). Supplements form 2% of the overall three and four year-old funding. The proposal therefore meets the requirements set out in section 4 of this paper.

The Schools and Education Finance Team
February 2021

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REPORT TO SCHOOLS FORUM

CENTRAL SCHOOL SERVICES BLOCK FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2021/22

1. Purpose

- 1.1. To provide Schools Forum with an overview of the Central School Services Block (CSSB) funding arrangements for 2021/22.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Schools Forum members are asked to note and comment on the funding allocated in the Central School Services Block.**
- 2.2. Schools representatives are asked to formally approve the funding arrangements set out in paragraph 4.6.**

3. Background

- 3.1. In the 2015 Spending Review, the Government announced that it would be cutting £600m from 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.
- 3.2. 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.
- 3.3. 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.
- 3.4. The CSSB is made up of two elements, as follows:
 - Residual funding for historical commitments.
 - Retained duties element previously funded by the ESG, as described above.

3.5. The table below summarises the funding available to the LA to provide for central services during 2021/22.

Central Schools Services Block 2021/22 Summary table

	Funding	No of pupils 2021/22	£
Per pupil unit (2020/21 £45.97)	£48.00	25,592.00	1,228,416
Historical commitments	£922,240		922,240
Total central school services allocation			2,150,656

4. Centrally retained services

Historical commitments

4.1. The table below shows the historical commitments funded through the Blackburn with Darwen CSSB.

Centrally retained historical commitments summary table

	2021/22	2020/21
Contribution to Music Services	76,800	96,000
School Improvement Groups	224,000	280,000
Broadband Connectivity	205,440	256,800
Capital Expenditure from Revenue	416,000	520,000
Total centrally retained funds	922,240	1,152,800

4.2. Historical commitments are services that have in the past been provided by local authorities, for schools, using funding top-sliced from the Schools Block. Top-slicing from the Schools Block is no longer permitted, subject to certain prescribed exceptions (now referred to as de-delegation), so from financial year 2018/19 onwards the DfE transferred an amount of funding sufficient to cover these commitments into the CSSB of each LA.

4.3. In recent years the DfE have asked LAs to start unwinding these contributions, as they are not covered under the list of statutory duties that LAs have for all schools. For the first time in 2020/21, the DfE applied a 20% reduction to these budget lines and, as illustrated above, they have applied a further cut of 20% in 2021/22.

4.4. The LA proposes to manage these reductions in financial year 2021/22, as follows:

- Contribution to Music Services – reserves of £117k exist which will cover the shortfall in the medium-term, however, the service probably needs to be reviewed.
- School Improvement Groups – the funding available to each SIG will be reduced.
- Broadband Connectivity – the existing service can be delivered for an annual cost of between £250k and £330k, as different elements of the contract become renewable in different years. Underspend from prior years can be used to cover the funding shortfall in 2021/22. The service will need to be reviewed in 2022/23 if the reductions continue at the same rate.
- Capital Expenditure – the contribution to the capital programme will be reduced.

Ongoing commitments under retained duties

- 4.5. In respect of ongoing commitments, the allocation is based on pupil numbers. In 2021/22 the allocation for ongoing commitments has increased to £1,228,416 from £1,172,006 in 2020/21. The rate per pupil has increased from £45.97 to £48.00, and the number of pupils increased by 97 to 25,592 pupils.
- 4.6. The table below sets out the proposed funding arrangements for 2021/22, which require Schools Forum approval on a line by line basis.

Centrally retained ongoing responsibilities summary table

Ongoing duties requiring Schools Forum approval	2021/22	2020/21
Co-ordinated Admissions	393,000	384,000
Servicing of Schools Forum	44,000	44,000
Contribution to statutory and regulatory duties held by LA for all schools, academies and free schools	606,936	607,511
Synergy module to support with FSM assessment	37,000	0
Not allocated (could be used towards eligible redundancy costs)	7,640	0
Total	1,088,576	1,035,511

The 2021/22 figures include a proposed allocation of £37,000 for the implementation of a new module on the Council's Synergy Pupil Level Database, which will support with Free School Meals (FSM) eligibility assessments. It is felt that the introduction of Universal Credit brings with it the risk that fewer customers will engage with the Council, and that this may result in a decrease in the number of children being identified as eligible for FSM. Synergy is currently used by parents to apply for school places online, and the new module will enable FSM eligibility data to be gathered at the same point. The funding allocated above would cover the purchase of the module and the inputting of historical data; the costs would not be recurrent.

- 4.7. The funding arrangements for 2021/22 set out in the table below do not require Schools Forum approval.

Centrally retained ongoing responsibilities summary table

Ongoing duties not requiring Schools Forum approval	2021/22	2020/21
Central Licences held under the secretary of state	139,840	136,495
Total paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7	1,228,416	1,172,006

The Schools and Education Finance Team
February 2021

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REPORT TO SCHOOLS FORUM

BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN POLICY FOR THE ALLOCATION OF THE GROWTH FUND FOR SCHOOL PLACES

1. Purpose

- 1.1. To provide Schools Forum with an opportunity to review the proposed Blackburn with Darwen policy covering the allocation of the growth fund for school places.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Mainstream school representatives are asked to approve the Blackburn with Darwen policy for the allocation of the growth fund for school places.**

3. Background

- 3.1. Local authorities are responsible for funding growth needs for all schools in their area, for new and existing maintained schools and academies.
- 3.2. To support with this, the Department for Education (DfE) include a growth funding element in local authorities' Schools Block Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocation each year.
- 3.3. Growth funding allocations for local authorities are based on the growth in pupil numbers between the last two October censuses, but authorities are free to set a growth fund at whatever level they choose, in consultation with Schools Forum.
- 3.4. DfE guidance states that the growth fund can only be used only to:
 - Support growth in pre-16 pupil numbers to meet basic need
 - Support additional classes needed to meet the infant class size regulation
 - Meet the costs of new schools
- 3.5. The growth fund must not be used to support:
 - Schools in financial difficulty
 - General growth due to popularity
- 3.6. Local authorities are able to set their own criteria for the payment of growth funding, but should fund all schools based on the same criteria.
- 3.7. To ensure consistency, local authorities should have a clear growth fund policy in place.

4. Detail of the policy

4.1. A copy of the proposed policy is attached.

4.2. When creating the policy, two options were considered, as follows:

1. Fund the difference between the Reception / Year 7 intake in the year of growth and the Reception / Year 7 intake in the previous year
2. Fund the difference between the Reception / Year 7 intake in the year of growth and the school's Published Admission Number (PAN)

4.3. In both cases, the growth funding to be paid would be equal to the number of pupils to be funded x the Basic Entitlement from the school funding formula in the year of funding.

4.4. Growth funding would not be restricted to admissions in excess of PAN in Reception and Year 7, although it is envisaged that these would be the most common. Schools may be asked to grow other year groups if, for example, there was a significant housing development in the area.

4.5. Option 2 is felt to be the most appropriate, because:

- All school place planning work undertaken by the local authority and the DfE is based on the PAN in the borough, and whether this is sufficient to meet basic need
- Funding places in excess of PAN ensures that schools will continue to receive funding in every year that they offer additional places. Funding the movement from one year to the next would mean front-loading funding in the first year of growth, which is not what the growth fund is designed to achieve. Schools would need to continue to grow year after year to attract funding beyond this first year, which would be an unrealistic expectation

The Schools and Education Finance Team
February 2021

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BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN BOROUGH COUNCIL

**POLICY FOR THE ALLOCATION OF THE GROWTH
FUND FOR SCHOOL PLACES**



1. Introduction

1.1. Local authorities are responsible for funding growth needs for all schools in their area, for new and existing maintained schools and academies.

1.2. The importance of growth funding 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

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.

1.3. To support with this funding lag, the Department for Education (DfE) include a growth funding element in local authorities' Schools Block Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocation each year.

1.4. Growth funding allocations for local authorities are based on the growth in pupil numbers between the last two October censuses, but authorities are free to set a growth fund at whatever level they choose, in consultation with Schools Forum.

2. DfE Guidance

2.1. DfE guidance states that the growth fund can only be used only to:

- Support growth in pre-16 pupil numbers to meet basic need
- Support additional classes needed to meet the infant class size regulation
- Meet the costs of new schools

2.2. The growth fund must not be used to support:

- Schools in financial difficulty
- General growth due to popularity



2.3. Local authorities are able to set their own criteria for the payment of growth funding, but should fund all schools based on the same criteria.

3. Blackburn with Darwen Policy

3.1. Blackburn with Darwen will provide growth funding to all schools who agree to provide places in excess of their Published Admission Number (PAN) in a given academic year.

3.2. Funding will only be provided where the additional places have been offered at the request of the local authority, in order to meet basic need requirements in the borough.

3.3. Additional places are defined as places recorded in the October census of the relevant academic year, in excess of the school's PAN.

3.4. Schools will receive funding as follows:

- Additional places x Basic Entitlement x $7/12$ to cover the period from September to the following March – to be paid in the spring term of the academic year of admission
- Additional places x Basic Entitlement x $5/12$ to cover the period from April to August – academes only – to be paid in the summer term of the academic year of admission

3.5. Where pupils have been admitted to a school due to appeals, the number of places to be funded will be capped at the number of additional places that the school offered prior to the start of the academic year.

3.6. Where the school formally increases their PAN in order to meet basic need, the original PAN, at the date at which the growth need was identified, will be used to calculate the increase in pupil numbers as described at 3.3 above.