



Buckinghamshire Council Schools Forum

Agenda

Date: Tuesday 12 October 2021

Time: 1.30 pm

Venue: MS Teams Meeting

Membership: Ms J Antrobus (Newton School), Ms J Cochrane (Sir Henry Floyd Grammar School), Ms P Coppins (Manor Farm Community Infant School), A Cranmer, Ms S Cromie (Wycombe High School), Ms J Freeman (Rye Liaison Group), Mr A Gillespie (Burnham Grammar School), Mr D Hood (Cressex Community School), Mrs J Male (Alfriston School), Mr K Patrick (Chiltern Hills Academy) (Chairman), Mrs D Rutley (Aspire PRU), Mr S Sneesby (Kite Ridge School), Ms E Stewart (Stoke Mandeville Combined School), Ms K Tamlyn (Cheddington Combined School) (Vice-Chairman), Mr B Taylor (Special School Representative) and Ms J Watson (Lent Rise School)

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1 Election of Chairman & Vice Chairman	
2 Apologies & Membership of Sub-Committees	
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4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting	3 - 6
5 SFFG Update Verbal update to be provided by the Chairman of the SFFG, Ms K Tamlyn.	
6 Schools Forum constitution and Membership To be presented by Ms E Williams, Head of Finance- Childrens Services, Buckinghamshire Council.	7 - 22
7 DfE Consultation- "Fair school funding for all: completing our reforms to the National Funding Formula" To be presented by Ms E Williams, Head of Finance- Childrens Services, Buckinghamshire Council.	23 - 36
8 Revenue Budget Monitoring To be presented by Ms E Williams, Head of Finance- Childrens Services, Buckinghamshire Council.	To Follow

9	National Funding Formula and Operational Guidance 2022-23	37 - 42
	To be presented by Ms E Williams, Head of Finance- Childrens Services, Buckinghamshire Council.	
10	De-Delegation 2022-23	43 - 50
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	Tuesday 07 December 2021- 1.30pm	
	MS Teams Virtual Meeting	

If you would like to attend a meeting, but need extra help to do so, for example because of a disability, please contact us as early as possible, so that we can try to put the right support in place.

For further information please contact: Christina Beevers on 01296 382938, email democracy@buckscc.gov.uk



Schools Forum minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Schools Forum held on Tuesday 29 June 2021 in MS Teams Virtual Meeting, commencing at 1.30 pm and concluding at 3.36 pm.

Members present

Ms J Cochrane, Ms P Coppins, Cllr A Cranmer, Ms S Cromie, Ms J Freeman, Mr A Gillespie, Mr D Hood, Mrs J Male, Mr K Patrick, Mrs D Rutley, Mr S Sneesby, Mrs E Stewart, Ms K Tamlyn, Ms J Watson, Ms S Bayliss, Ms C Beevers, Mr H Beveridge, Mrs G Bull, Mr J Carter, Ms J Divers, Ms S Fahey, Mr S James, Ms N Lovegrove, Mr R Page, Ms H Slinn, Ms F Smalley, Ms S Stephens and Ms E Williams

Agenda Item

1 Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and reminded all of the basic etiquette for a MS Teams meeting.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from:

Mr G Drawmer, Head of Achievement and Learning- Buckinghamshire Council, Ms C Glasgow, NASUWT and Ms J Antrobus- Newton School

3 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

4 Minutes from the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2021 were **AGREED** as an accurate record.

The actions from the meeting held on 23 March 2021 were reviewed and **AGREED** as completed or carried forward as below.

Action	To be Actioned By	Completion Date
To bring a paper to update and sign off the constitution for 2021.	Ms E Williams	October 2021 Schools Forum Meeting

5 Update from SFFG

Ms K Tamlyn- Chairman of the Schools Forum Funding Group gave an overview of the SFFG meeting. The action notes were appended to the minutes.

6 Revenue Budget Outturn 2020-21

Ms E Williams, Head of Finance (Children's Services)- Buckinghamshire Council gave an overview of the report provided.

Recommendations:

Schools Forum is asked to note the final outturn position against the Dedicated Schools Grant in 2020-21 and the impact on the DSG reserve.

Resolved:

Schools Forum **NOTED** the final outturn position against the Dedicated Schools Grant in 2020-21 and the impact on the DSG reserve.

Action	To be Actioned By	Completion Date
To take the Revenue Outturn report to PEB and BASH to see if gain support of all Head Teachers across Bucks for further lobbying for high needs funding. To then potentially draft a letter if full support received to MP's.	All Head Teachers	ASAP

7 School Revenue Balances 2020-21

Mr J Carter, Schools Accountant- Buckinghamshire Council gave an overview of the report provided.

Recommendations:

To note the surplus and deficit balances for maintained schools as at 31 March 2021.

Resolved:

Schools Forum **NOTED** the surplus and deficit balances for maintained schools as at 31 March 2021.

8 High Needs Update

Ms H Slinn- Head of Integrated SEND- Buckinghamshire Council gave an overview of the report provided.

Recommendations:

Schools Forum is asked to note the impact of the year end budget position on the High Needs budget for 2020-21 for independent placements.

Resolved:

Schools Forum **NOTED** the impact of the year end budget position on the High Needs budget for 2020-21 for independent placements.

9 DSG Update

9A DSG Management template

Ms E Williams, Head of Finance (Children's Services)- Buckinghamshire Council gave an overview of the report provided.

Recommendations:

- Schools Forum is asked to note the initial financial modelling of demand and costs against the High Needs Block as part of the DSG Deficit Management Plan.
- Schools Forum is also asked to note and agree the priority workstreams aimed at reducing costs over the period 2021 to 2025. The financial modelling will be updated for the impact of actions as they are implemented.

Resolved:

- Schools Forum **NOTED** the initial financial modelling of demand and costs against the High Needs Block as part of the DSG Deficit Management Plan.
- Schools Forum **NOTED** and **AGREED** the priority workstreams aimed at reducing costs over the period 2021 to 2025. The financial modelling will be updated for the impact of actions as they are implemented.

9B DSG Recovery Board update

Mr S James, Director for Education- Buckinghamshire Council gave an overview of the presentation provided.

10 AOB

11 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 12 October 2021- 1.30pm
MS Teams Virtual Meeting

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Report to Schools Forum

Date: 12th October 2021

Title: Constitution and Membership 2021-22

Author: Liz Williams, Head of Finance – Children’s Services

Recommendations:

- a) To agree the draft constitution for Schools Forum.
- b) To seek representatives from the Maintained Junior School and Maintained PRU sector in line with the current constitution.

Reason for decision: to agree the updated constitution and the number of representatives from each sector.

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this agenda item is to review the membership of school’s forum to ensure it is in line with the pupil numbers in academies and maintained schools, and to confirm the updated constitution so that this can be published.
- 1.2 Elections will then need to be held to seek representatives for vacancies on the school’s forum.

2 Constitution

- 2.1 The Schools Forum constitution has been reviewed and updated to reflect the transition to the unitary council and to include previous decisions in relation to membership. The draft constitution is attached as Appendix A to this report.
- 2.2 The Schools Forum’s constitution sets out the rules for school’s forum membership and this is set in line with the DfE’s guidance on school’s forum structure.

- 2.3 DfE guidance is that the split of membership for maintained and academy schools should be reflective of the proportion of pupils in each sector. Within Buckinghamshire it has been further agreed that the split of membership should also reflect local circumstances, namely, to clearly set out secondary upper and secondary grammar schools' representation.
- 2.4 The current constitution details the school membership of school's forum as follows:
- i. One maintained nursery school member (either head teacher or governor).
 - ii. Three special school members
 - a. Two maintained special school members (preferably one head teacher and one governor).
 - b. One academy school member (either head teacher or governor).
 - iii. Eight secondary school members
 - a. One maintained secondary school
 - b. Four academy secondary schools (preferably two head teacher and two governors).
 - c. 3 academy grammars
 - iv. Two pupil referral unit (PRU) members (preferably one head teacher and one governor).
 - v. Ten primary school members
 - a. Two maintained infant school members (preferably one head teacher and one governor).
 - b. Two maintained junior school members (preferably one head teacher and one governor).
 - c. Four maintained combined school members (preferably two head teachers and two governors).
 - d. Two academy school members (preferably one head teacher and one governor).

3 Review of Current Membership – mainstream schools

3.1 In order to ensure that the membership of school's forum is representative of pupil numbers in each type of school have been reviewed and compared to the current constitution. The outcome of that review is summarised in the table below.

Review of pupil numbers and Schools Forum membership: Based on January 2021 Census Data

Schools by Type and Pupil Numbers				Membership Based on Pupil Numbers		Current Constitution		Current Members	
School Type	Total Schools	Pupil Numbers	% of Total Pupils	Maintained	Academy	Maintained	Academy	Maintained	Academy
Primary Maintained	145	35,111	41%	8		8		7	
Primary Academy	40	11,125	13%		2		2		1
Secondary Maintained	6	6,580	8%	1		1		1	
Secondary Academy/Free/UTC (Upper)	17	15,886	19%		4		4		4
Secondary Academy (Grammar)	13	16,578	19%		3		3		3
Sub Total	221	85,280	100%	9	9	9	9	8	8
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Nursery Maintained	2	268		1		1		1	
Special Maintained	8	1,163		2		2		2	
Special Academy	2	351			1		1		1
Pupil Referral Unit	3	98		1	1	1	1		1
Total	236	87,160		13	11	13	11	11	10

3.2 The data indicates that the current constitution is still representative of pupil numbers. There are current vacancies for maintained primary and maintained PRU representatives.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM CONSTITUTION

1 Name

- 1.1 The Buckinghamshire Schools' Forum ("the Forum").

2 Terms of reference

- 2.1 The Forum is established in accordance with Section 47A of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, and the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012.

3 Status

- 3.1 The Forum exists to advise Buckinghamshire Council ("BC") on various matters prescribed by law. It also exists to take certain decisions in its own right.
- 3.2 The "Schools Revenue Funding Operational guide" sets out the relevant roles, responsibilities and powers of the Local Authority and the Schools Forum.

4. Membership

- 4.1 The Forum shall consist of the following three types of members:
- (a) "Schools members," defined as members elected to represent governing bodies and head teachers of schools maintained by BC.
 - (b) "Academies members," defined as members who represent the proprietors of academies situated in BC's area.
 - (c) "Other members", defined as members other than schools' members or

academies members who represent the interests of wider stakeholders.

4.2 There shall be thirty members of the Forum comprising the following:

- (a) Thirteen elected schools' members,
- (b) Eleven elected academies members,
- (c) Six other members.

4.3 The school's members referred to in 4.1(a) shall consist of the following sub-groups:

- (a) One maintained nursery school member (either head teacher or governor).
- (b) Three special school members
 - Two maintained special school members (preferably one head teacher and one governor).
 - One academy school member (either head teacher or governor).
- (c) Eight secondary school members
 - One maintained secondary school
 - Four academy secondary schools (preferably two head teacher and two governors).
 - 3 academy grammars
- (d) Two pupil referral unit (PRU) members (preferably one head teacher and one governor).
- (e) Ten primary school members
 - Two maintained infant school members (preferably one head teacher and one governor).

- Two maintained junior school members (preferably one head teacher and one governor).
- Four maintained combined school members (preferably two head teachers and two governors).
- Two academy school members (preferably one head teacher and one governor).

4.4 The maintained schools' members must include at least one head teacher and one governor.

4.5 The academies members referred to in 4.1(b) above:

- a) May include but will not necessarily be restricted to academy principals and governors; will preferably include at least one representative of primary academy proprietors.
- b) Must include at least one representative of a special academy proprietor, in the event that there is such an academy within Buckinghamshire.
- c) Must include at least one representative of an alternative provision academy, in the event that there is such an academy within Buckinghamshire.

4.6 The other members referred to in 4.1 (c) above shall consist of:

- a) Two representatives nominated by recognised teachers' trade unions.
- b) Two representatives nominated by the diocesan authorities; Two representatives nominated by the Early Years Forum at least one of whom who will be there explicitly to represent early years providers from the private, voluntary, and independent (PVI) sector.
- c) Such other members as may be appointed by BC save that other members shall never number more than a third of the total membership.

4.7 The following categories of people are barred from being other members:

- (a) Elected Members of BC who are appointed to the executive of i.e. a Lead Member or portfolio holder; ('Executive Members').
- (b) The Director of Children's Services or any officer employed or engaged to work under the management of the Director of Children's Services, and who does not directly provide education to children; (or manage those who do)
- (c) Other officers with a specific role in management of and/or who advise on funding for schools.
- (d) Additionally, the Forum may from time to time consist of observers including an observer appointed by the Secretary of State for Education. Observers shall be entitled to attend meetings but shall not be members and shall not have any voting rights.

5 Election & Appointment of Members

5.1 Schools members and academies members will each be responsible for their own election processes save that the following rules and restrictions shall apply:

- a) A single person may not represent more than one group concurrently.
- b) Election of members from different parts of the County shall be encouraged to ensure the Forum is representative of education provided across the geographic areas, having regard to pupil numbers and school numbers, and that no one geographic area can be seen to have an unfair bias on the Forum.
- c) Members shall be elected or appointed for the period of three years from

the date of their election or appointment.

- d) Members shall be eligible for re-election or reappointment at the end of their period of membership;
 - e) Members will cease to be a member if he or she resigns from the Schools Forum or no longer occupies the office by which he or she became eligible for election, selection or appointment to the Schools Forum.
 - (f) In the case of an, other member the member shall cease to be a member if he or she is replaced by BC, or at the request of the body which the member represents, or by another person nominated by that body.
 - g) BC may end the appointment of any member before the expiry of his or her term if the member concerned ceases to hold the office by virtue of which he or she became eligible for appointment or election to the Forum.
 - h) Elections should be organised so that each of the sub-groups listed at 4.3, 4.5(c) and 4. 5(d) is able to choose a representative of its own.
 - i) In the event that an election results in a tie between two or more candidates, BC may choose which candidate shall become a member.
- 5.2 BC will offer appropriate support to each of the groups referred to in 3.2 above in managing its election process and if so, requested will devise a model scheme in consultation with the Forum which it will then invite the Forum to adopt.
- 5.3 Other members will be appointed by BC in consultation with the bodies listed in 3 .6 above and, where BC deems appropriate, with wider stakeholders.

6 Meetings

- 6.1 There shall be at least four meetings per year of the Forum, but more meetings may be held if the Forum deems it necessary (up to a maximum of 8). All meeting times will be agreed by the Forum for the coming year and will vary to accommodate the needs of members and to meet any specific deadlines imposed by the Department for Education.
- 6.2 All meetings shall be quorate if at least two fifths of the total current members (excluding vacancies) are present. Inquorate meetings may still proceed but cannot legally make decisions, however inquorate meetings can still be consulted with and provide an "unofficial" view or response to BC.
- 6.3 All meetings of the Forum will be convened by the clerk, but he or she will comply with any direction in the matter given by the Forum in a meeting or given by the Chairman (or in his or her absence the Vice Chairman).
- 6.4 Written notice of a meeting, along with a copy of the agenda and papers for the meeting will be given at least five working days before the date of the meeting itself.
- 6.5 All meetings of the Forum will be open to members of public. Furthermore, papers, agendas and minutes must and will be made publicly available in a timely manner on the BC website.
- 6.6 All members have the right to speak at meetings of the Forum and the following persons may also speak, even though they are not members:
 - a) The Director of Education for BC, or a designated representative.
 - b) The Chief Finance officer for BC, or a designated representative.
 - c) Any elected member of BC with primary responsibility for Children's Services or Education.

- d) Any Elected Member of BC with primary responsibility for BC's resources.
 - e) Any person who is invited by the Forum to attend to provide financial or technical advice to the forum.
 - f) An observer appointed by the Secretary of State.
 - g) Any person presenting a paper or other item to the Forum that is on the meeting's agenda, but that person's right to speak: shall be limited to matters related to the item that the person is presenting.
 - h) Any other person with the permission of the Chairman, at the Chairman's discretion, (or the Vice Chairman in the Chairman's absence).
- 6.7 The minutes of proceedings of the Forum will be drawn up by the clerk and will be signed at the same or next subsequent meeting by the Chairman. Proceedings of the Forum shall not be invalidated by any defects in the election or appointment of any member, or the appointment of the Chairman or Vice Chairman. Nor does the existence of any vacancy on the Forum invalidate proceedings.

7 Alternates/Substitutes

- 7.1 Any member of the Forum may nominate an alternate member ('the alternate member') to attend meetings of the Forum in his or her absence. The alternate member must come from the same sector as that of the member they are covering.
- 7.2 Where a member has nominated an alternate member, the alternative member may attend and vote in place of the member. A member may only nominate an alternate member who would himself or herself be eligible to be appointed or elected to the Forum under the same category as the member.

7.3 The name of the alternate member must be notified to the clerk of the Forum at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting in question where possible.

8 Chairman and Vice Chairman

8.1 The members must elect a person as Chairman (and preferably a Vice Chairman) from among their number and determine the term of office, as one calendar year.

8.2 The members of the Forum may not elect as Chairman any member of the Forum who is an Elected Member or officer of BC, even if they are members of the Forum by virtue of representing a school, academy or other group or sector.

8.3 The Chairman and Vice Chairman will hold office until the next meeting which falls after the date which is a year after the meeting at which they were originally elected.

8.4 On ceasing to hold office, the Chairman and Vice Chairman shall be eligible for re election.

8.5 In the event of a casual vacancy in the office of Chairman or Vice Chairman, the Forum shall, at their next meeting, elect one of their membership to fill that vacancy and the member so elected shall hold office until the date of the meeting to which the previous Chairman or Vice Chairman would have held office had the vacancy not occurred.

8.6 A Chairman or Vice Chairman shall cease to hold office if:

- a) He or she resigns his or her office by written notice given to the clerk; or
- (b) He or she ceases to be a member of the Forum.

9 Clerk

- 9.1 The Forum shall be assisted by a clerk ('the clerk').
- 9.2 The clerk may either be an employee of BC or independent.
- 9.3 A member may not also act as the clerk, nor will the clerk be treated as a member.
- 9.4 None of the people listed in 4 above may be the clerk.
- 9.5 The clerk shall attend all meetings, assisting and taking instructions from the Chairman.
- 9.6 The clerk's role may include but will not necessarily be limited to the following:
- a) Providing a link between the Forum and BC.
 - b) Managing meeting logistics including dispatching papers.
 - c) Taking a note of proceedings.
 - d) Maintaining an action log of points agreed at a meeting.
 - e) Providing technical advice to the Forum on the constitution and the law.
 - (f) Providing the route by which members can access further information and co-ordinate communication to school's forum members outside of the formal meeting cycle, responding to any queries about the business of the Forum from head teachers, governors and others who are not on it themselves.
 - (g) Being responsible for ensuring contact details of all members are up to date, maintaining the list of members on the school's forum and advising on membership issues in general.
 - (h) Assisting with the co-ordination of nomination/election processes run by the constituent groups.
 - (i) If appropriate, providing technical advice in relation to the Schools Forum Regulations and in relation to the operation of this Constitution; and

organising, operating, and recording any voting activity of the Forum in line with the provisions of this Constitution.

10 Sub-Committees

- 10.1 The Forum may set up sub-committees, either standing or ad-hoc, to carry out tasks as specified by the Forum.
- 10.2 The Forum shall decide the terms of reference and membership of any standing sub committees and membership may include those who are not members of the Forum. The Forum should review standing sub-committee membership and terms of reference annually.
- 10.3 Each standing sub-committee will have a minimum of five members with a quorum of three Forum members.
- 10.4 Membership and terms of reference of any ad-hoc sub-committee shall be decided when establishing the sub-committee and may include those who are not members of the Forum. The duration of any ad-hoc sub-committee shall be established and entered in the terms of reference when the group is established.
- 10.5 The members of each sub-committee will choose a Chairman and if required a Vice Chairman. The Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Forum may also be appointed as Chairman or Vice Chairman of any sub-committee.
- 10.6 All sub-committees will be closed meetings, but the sub-committee Chairman must report back to the Forum at the next available meeting and the report will be included in the Forum minutes.
- 10.7 Sub-committees shall provide advice and make recommendations to the Forum but are unable to take decisions or provide views to consultation without

reference to the Forum unless specifically agreed in the terms of reference for that sub-committee. Where a decision-making power is conveyed by the Schools Forum Regulations to the Forum, the Forum cannot delegate this power to a sub-committee. Any recommendations from a sub-committee are to come back to the forum for a recorded vote.

10.8 The standing sub-committees of the Forum are:

- a) The Schools Forum Funding Group (SFFG).
- b) The Early Years and Schools Specific Contingency Group.
- c) The DSG Spending Review Group.

11 Voting

11.1 Every question to be decided at a meeting of the Forum will be determined by a majority of the votes of members present, and in the case of an equality of votes the Chairman will have a second or casting vote, save that:

- a) Voting on the funding formula shall be limited to schools' members, academies members and the early years other members.
- b) Voting on de-delegation will be limited to the specific primary and secondary schools' members i.e. only primary school members may vote on primary school de-delegation and only secondary school members may vote on secondary school de-delegation.

11.2 Any formal recommendations made to BC shall be determined by a majority of the votes of members present at a meeting of the Forum and not by sub-groups.

11.3 There will be clarity in the procedures for recording the outcome of a vote, and any resolutions the Forum makes in relation to any vote taken.

11.4 When voting, members have a responsibility to represent the interests of their peer group as a whole rather than the interests of their own school/institution.

12 Provision of Account to Schools

12.1 The Forum shall as soon as reasonably practicable inform the governing bodies of schools maintained by the Council of all consultations carried out under clause 11 above.

13 Expenses

13.1 BCC shall meet the expenses of the Forum. Expenses shall be charged to the Schools Budget. The Forum budget cannot increase above the previous years' level without approval of the Secretary of State for Education.

13.2 There is an entitlement for members of the Forum to claim expenses. BC shall reimburse all reasonable expenses of members in connection with attendance at meetings of the Forum. This shall include:

- a) Travelling expenses.
- b) Childcare or other care costs; (up to a prescribed maximum from time to time in force)
- c) Financial loss of earnings may be claimed (up to a prescribed maximum from time to time in force) but is only available to those not employed at a school maintained by Buckinghamshire Council and where a financial loss has been suffered.

14 Review of the Constitution

14.1 The Forum will review its constitution annually to ensure that it continues to meet statutory requirements and continues to proportionately represent the

education community of Buckinghamshire having regards to pupil numbers.



Report to Schools Forum

Date: 12th October 2021

Title: DfE Consultation – Fair school funding for all: completing our reforms to the National Funding Formula

Author: Liz Williams, Head of Finance (Children’s Services)
elizabeth.williams@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Recommendations:

Schools Forum is asked to note the response submitted to the DfE consultation *Fair school funding for all: completing our reforms to the National Funding Formula*.

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1. This report provides a copy of the Buckinghamshire response to the DfE consultation *Fair school funding for all: completing our reforms to the National Funding Formula*.
- 1.2. The response takes into account the views of Schools Forum members following the discussion at the meeting of Schools Forum Funding Group on 20th September. The invitation for this discussion was extended to all Schools Forum members because the main Schools Forum meeting was not scheduled within the timescale for responses.

2. Background

- 2.1. The DfE launched the consultation *Fair school funding for all: completing our reforms to the National Funding Formula* on 8th July 2021. The consultation closed on 30th September 2021.
- 2.2. This DfE consultation sought views on the next steps for moving towards a “hard” national funding formula (NFF) through which every school’s final funding allocation is determined by the same national formula and is not subject to further adjustment through a local authority formula. This means removing the role of the local

authority in determining schools' funding allocations and instead setting allocations nationally through the NFF.

- 2.3. The NFF applies to funding for mainstream schools and academies. Special schools are funded through the High Needs Block through a different funding mechanism.
- 2.4. Currently the NFF is used to determine the allocation of funding to local authorities however authorities still have the responsibility for setting a local formula to allocate that funding to schools. This means that schools in different local authority areas may receive quite different levels of funding.
- 2.5. Whilst there is still variation between local authority formulae, Buckinghamshire Council and Schools Forum have worked together to move the local formula towards the NFF in order to ensure that when the hard formula is implemented Buckinghamshire schools do not experience sudden turbulence in their funding.

3. Consultation Response

- 3.1. The Buckinghamshire response has been submitted to meet the consultation closure date and is attached as appendix 1 to this report. The response was drawn up in consultation with Schools Forum members and also takes into account the views of council officers, particularly on specific issues such as changes to central DSG and the common financial year for schools. Note that in some cases only straight yes/no answers were allowed however the rationale for the response has been included in brackets against these questions.
- 3.2. Buckinghamshire has already made changes to its local formula so that it now mirrors the current NFF formula factors and funding rates. This means there would be no material change in how primary and secondary school budgets in Buckinghamshire are calculated following a move to a nationally determined formula. There are a small number of locally agreed premises related factors in the Buckinghamshire formula:
 - Exceptional circumstances – supports a very small number of schools with rent costs (3 schools, total £87k)
 - Split site allowance – to support additional costs of schools operating across more than one site (5 schools, total £42k)
 - Small school factor (11 schools, total 80k)
- 3.3. Concerns about the impact on small schools of standardising these factors have been included in the response.
- 3.4. The proposed changes to the Central Schools Services Block will impact on Buckinghamshire and concerns/questions about the potential implications are highlighted in the response. It is noted that there will be further consultation on some of these issues.



DfE Consultation

Fair school funding for all: completing our reforms to the National Funding Formula

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Consultation Response



Appendix

Main Elements of the Consultation

The main elements of the consultation can be split into themes as follows:

1. Completing the National Funding Formula (NFF) reforms

Questions in the section relate to:

- The scope of the directly applied (“hard”) NFF
- Growth and Falling Rolls funding
- Next steps in transitioning to the hard NFF

2. Completing other elements of funding reform

Questions in this section relate to:

- The Central Schools Services Block (CSSB)
- A consistent funding year for all schools

Scope of the Hard NFF

- The aim of the NFF is to embed the following principles into the funding system:
 - **Fairness** – each mainstream school funded on a consistent basis, to reflect their needs and circumstances.
 - **Simplicity and transparency** – every individual mainstream school’s funding calculated through a single national formula transparent to all in the system.
 - **Efficient and predictable** – a single national formula through which funding is matched to relative need, creating greater predictability in funding and ensuring resources are distributed and used across the system as efficiently as possible

Proposal

- Subject to the further development of premises and growth funding factors, it is proposed to include all NFF funding factors – pupil-led and school led – in the hard formula, without further local adjustment through local formulae.

Page 2 Questions

Q1. Do you agree with the aim to include all pupil-led and school-led funding factors in a hard formula, without further local adjustment through local formulae?

- Yes (agree in principle with the move to a national formula and have been working towards this)

Q2. Do you have any comments on how premises funding could be reformed during the transition to the directly applied NFF?

- We have some concerns about the ability to standardise a formula to adequately reflect the local and individual school circumstances in over 20,000 schools and await the further consultation on these specific issues. Specific factors in the Buckinghamshire formula support split site and small schools and we would want to ensure that any standardised formula will not disadvantage small schools

Growth Funding

Proposal

- To use national, standardised criteria to allocate all aspects of growth and falling rolls funding on a lagged basis, including funding for growth to meet basic need for new schools (including start up, growing schools and falling rolls funding).

Questions

Q3. Do you agree with the proposal to use national, standardised criteria to allocate all aspects of growth and falling rolls funding?

- No (see comments to Q4)

Q4. Do you have any comments on our proposed approach to growth and falling rolls funding?

- We support increased standardisation in allocation of growth funding for new schools as it will improve consistency in how new schools are supported.
- There are potential risks to ensuring sufficiency of school places if local funding discretion is removed from discussions around place planning. This would particularly apply in situations where local flexibility is required to meet pressure on places in a particular area, for example a need for an additional class.
- We disagree with the proposal to target growth funding for schools which have seen an increase in popularity towards academies only. School improvement is driven by high quality school leadership and teaching, which can occur irrespective of a school's governance structure, so funding to reflect an increase in pupil numbers due to popularity should be accessible to all schools.
- Not all authorities currently operate a falling rolls fund. Where it is in place it is often to reflect specific local circumstances which would be difficult to reflect on a standardised basis

Next Steps towards a Hard NFF

Proposal

- There is recognition that there is increasing alignment between many local funding formulae and the National Funding Formula. Intention over the coming year is to increase that alignment.
- No changes planned for 2022/23, however, for 2023/24 intent is to make all local formulae factor match existing NFF factors and remove flexibility around EAL factor regarding number of years assessed.
- Where LAs aren't already closely aligned to NFF, it is proposed to require values to begin to align by 10% in 23/24, 15% in 24/25 and 20% in 25/26 (subject to review).
- There is recognition that some variance could still exist in the interim due to affordability gap.
MATs will be permitted to continue to fund schools through a local assessment of need.

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Questions

Q5. Do you agree that in 2023-24 each LA should be required to use each of the NFF factors (with the exception of any significantly reformed factors) in its local formulae?

- Yes

Q6. Do you agree that all LA formulae, except those that are already 'mirroring' the NFF, should be required to move closer to the NFF from 2023-24 in order to smooth the transition to the hard NFF for schools?

- Yes

Next Steps towards a Hard NFF

Questions

Q7a. Do you agree that LA formulae factor values should move 10% closer to the NFF, compared with their distance from the NFF in 2022-23?

- Yes

Q7b. If you do not agree, can you please explain. [N/A](#)

Q8. As we would not require LAs to move closer to the NFF if their local formulae were already very close to the NFF, do you have any comments on the appropriate threshold level?

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[No further comments \(BC already mirrors the NFF\)](#)

Q9. Do you agree that the additional flexibility for LAs in the English as an Additional Language (EAL) factor, relating to how many years a pupil has been in the school system, should be removed from 2023-24?

- [Yes \(BC already uses the factor that is proposed as it recognises and funds pupils for their first 3 years in a school\)](#)

Q10. Do you agree that the additional flexibilities relating to the sparsity factor should remain in place for 2023-24?

- [Yes \(BC gains from this proposal as more schools are in scope\)](#)

Central School Services Block (CSSB)

- Through the move towards a hard NFF the DfE intends to review the way in which funding for central school services should work, with local authorities having less flexibility to determine how the DSG allocated to them is used.
- The DfE will review central DSG spend and set out a clearer list of services that can be funded centrally and what services can be de-delegated (from maintained schools) or traded. A more technical consultation on the future of central school services will be issued.
- It is possible that, after reviewing central school services, there may be a decrease in services remaining with the LA that are centrally funded with more services de-delegated or traded. Under such a scenario the DfE would consider whether the local authorities' funding for those should become part of MHCLG's Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS) rather than a reduced CSSB. This will impact on funding for those services as DSG is a ringfenced grant whilst funding allocated through the Local government Finance Settlement will not be specifically identified.
- The document also confirms the DfE intention to continue to reduce funding for Historic Commitments and remove it by the hard NFF is introduced (the document does not confirm which year this will be). Within that, there is likely to be a grant to replace funding for any Premature Retirement Costs in schools currently funded from the central DSG.

Central School Services

Questions

Q11. Are there any comments you wish to make on the proposals we have made regarding ongoing central school services, including on whether in the future central school services funding could move to LGFS?

- We await further clarity from the Department on those services which will continue to be centrally funded and those which are to be funded through de-delegation or top-slice, or through traded services. It is difficult to comment fully on the proposals prior to that. There are financial efficiencies to be gained through holding funds centrally following de-delegation and it is important that this facility remains for some activities.
- Moving the funding for delivery of centrally provided statutory education functions into the non-ringfenced general fund would result in a transfer of financial risk to the LA if these areas faced pressures and would also be impacted by the wider pressures faced by LAs to make savings. Consideration should also be given to any wider impacts of transferring funds on the methodology of general fund allocation.

Q12. Do you agree with the proposal for a legacy grant to replace funding for unavoidable termination of employment and prudential borrowing costs?

- Yes (These are unavoidable costs therefore it is important to continue to fund)

Consistent Financial Year

- Maintained schools and academies currently operate different financial years.
- The consultation states that the DfE wants to explore the pros and cons of whether funding for maintained schools should be allocated on an academic year basis following the move to a hard NFF, to give a consistent financial year for all schools.
- Whilst schools will plan their staffing and resources on an academic year basis this would have the potential to cause some complications with accounting and financial reporting as maintained schools would still be operating within the local authority financial year for accounting purposes.

Questions

Q13. How strongly do you feel that we should further investigate the possibility of moving maintained schools to being funded on an academic year basis?

- Agree (note - the document is not specific on what this would look like but we are interpreting it as a simple arrangement similar to how we currently account for post-16, meaning it should be a straightforward system to operate)

Q14. Are there any advantages or drawbacks to moving maintained schools to being funded on an academic year basis that you feel we should be aware of?

- We agree that schools tend to plan on an academic year basis and therefore a consistent funding year has some advantages.
- There will be a lag in the first year as maintained schools move from receiving updated funding allocations in April to receiving their new allocation in September. This is a disadvantage to growing schools in that first year.
- We are making the assumption that the administrative and accounting arrangements will be similar to those for post-16 funding in maintained secondary schools and therefore systems and processes can be put into place to enable a financial reporting year to be different to the funding year – it would be helpful for any further proposals to include more detail.

Equalities Impact

Q15. Please provide any information that you consider we should take into account in assessing the equalities impact of the proposals for change. Before answering this question, please refer to Annex (C) of the consultation document.

- In supporting the principle of moving towards the hard NFF we expect that the formula will continue to be kept under review especially in relation to how the formula targets support for disadvantaged pupils

Comments

Q16. Do you have any further comments on our move to complete the reforms to the National Funding Formula?

- We are in support of the progression towards a hard NFF to enable consistency and fairness in funding for schools. We have been moving towards mirroring the NFF over time.
- It is essential that the formula continues to be kept under review. In supporting the principles of a hard NFF we would expect that the formula continues to develop to effectively target funding to need.
- The document flags a number of further consultations to follow and these will be important in bringing detail to some of the key issues raised.
- The document does not give clarity on the timelines for the implementation of a hard NFF other than to suggest a start to move closer from April 2023. Timelines for changes to both the formula and to central schools funding will be important to support local authorities in planning ahead.

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Report to Schools Forum

Date: 12th October 2021

Title: National Funding Formula and Operational Guidance 2022-23

Author: Liz Williams, Head of Finance – Children’s Services

Recommendations:

- a. To note the information contained in this report.
- b. To agree the principles to be applied for the 2022-23 local funding formula.
- c. To agree any consultation to take place over the autumn term for the potential to move funding between Blocks.
- d. To note that the local funding formula for 2022-23 will be brought back to Schools Forum for consideration in December.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to update Schools Forum on Department for Education’s (DfE) Operational Guidance on schools revenue funding for the 2022-23 financial year and to agree principles for the local funding formula in 2022-23.

2. Background

- 2.1. In July 2021 the DfE published, the Schools Revenue Funding 2022 to 2023 Operational Guide. This guide is provided to help local authorities, and their schools forums, to plan the local implementation of the funding system for the 2022 to 2023 financial year.
- 2.2. The guidance confirms that in 2022 to 2023, as in previous years, each local authority will continue to set a local schools funding formula, in consultation with local schools.
- 2.3. In July 2021, the DfE also published a consultation on proposals for completing the reforms of the funding system, whereby individual schools budgets would be set directly through one single national formula, rather than local funding formulae. This consultation proposes that, from 2023 to 2024, local authorities will be required to bring their own formulae closer to the schools NFF, to smooth the

transition. These proposals do not apply in 2022-2023 and Buckinghamshire already mirrors the NFF.

3. Schools Block – key changes for 2022-23

3.1. Key changes in the operational guidance are:

- a) NFF factor values have increased by:
 - £10,000 to the maximum sparsity values
 - 3% to basic entitlement, free school meals at any time in the last 6 years (FSM6), income deprivation affecting children index (IDACI), lower prior attainment (LPA), English as an additional language (EAL) and the lump sum
 - 2% to the floor, the minimum per pupil levels and free school meals (FSM);
 - 0% on the premises factors, except for PFI which has increased by RPIX.
- b) Schools sparsity distances are now based on road distances, instead of straight-line distances, and a sparsity distance taper has been introduced, in addition to the existing year group size taper. Buckinghamshire will gain from this change as 16 schools will be in scope for sparsity funding compared to 5 schools under the previous rules.
- c) Data on pupils who have been eligible for FSM6 is now taken from the October 2020 school census instead of the January 2020 census, to make the factor more up to date and bring it in line with arrangements for other NFF factors as well as the pupil premium.
- d) In calculating low prior attainment proportions, data from the 2019 early years foundation stage profile (EYFSP) and key stage 2 (KS2) tests is used as a proxy for the 2020 tests, following the cancellation of assessment due to coronavirus (COVID-19).
- e) Pupils who joined a school between January 2020 and May 2020 attract funding for mobility based on their entry date, rather than by virtue of the May school census being their first census at the current school (the May 2020 census did not take place due to coronavirus (COVID-19)).
- f) Further to the consultation on changes to the payment process of schools business rates, schools business rates will be paid by ESFA to billing authorities directly on behalf of all state funded schools from 2022 to 2023 onwards. Further details on this will be issued separately within the formal consultation response over the summer.
- g) Minimum per pupil levels (MPPLs) will remain mandatory, at the new NFF values.
- h) Local authorities have the freedom to set the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) in local formulae between +0.5% and +2% per pupil.

- i) Local authorities continue to be able to transfer up to 0.5% of their schools block to other blocks of the DSG, with schools forum approval. A disapplication is required for transfers above 0.5%, or any amount without schools forum approval; this applies to any transfers even if the minister agreed an amount in previous years.

4. Schools Block - Principles to be applied to the local funding formula in 2022-23

- 4.1. Last year Schools Forum agreed the following principles to be adopted for 2021-22 within the over-arching principle that the local funding formula reflects the NFF:
 - a) Adopt the National Funding Formula factors.
 - b) Adopt the Minimum Per Pupil funding levels at the values defined in the NFF and prorate (scale) of all other factors in the formula to match the available allocation of funding from the DfE. (In 2021-22 Buckinghamshire formula factor rates are in line with the published NFF values.)
 - c) Set a Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) at +0.5%.
 - d) Use capping of gains per pupil to pay for the cost of protecting schools where the formula reduces their budget by more than the MFG of 0.5%.
- 4.2. Schools Forum is asked to confirm the principles for the local funding formula.
- 4.3. Schools Forum is asked to confirm any consultation that needs to take place during the autumn term. A consultation would need to take place for:
 - Any proposal to move funding between DSG blocks – no proposal to move funding between blocks has been brought forward to this meeting.
 - Proposals for De-delegation – a separate report on this agenda includes a proposal to consult with the Maintained Schools Sub-Committee on de-delegation for 2022-23.

5. High Needs Block – key changes for 2022-23

- 5.1. The operational aspects of high needs funding and the process for finalising local authority allocations of high needs funding and institutions' allocations of place funding remain largely unchanged from 2021 to 2022.
- 5.2. The funding floor factor in the high needs national funding formula for 2022 to 2023 provides for every local authority to receive an underlying increase of at least 8% per head of 2 to 18 population. The provisional high needs allocation for Buckinghamshire in 2022-23 is £107.3 million, an increase of £8.1 million compared to the current year.
- 5.3. The minimum funding guarantee for special schools remains at 0% in 2022-23 and therefore a disapplication request will be required if funding for any special school

falls below the guaranteed level. The approved disapplication for 2021-22 was only for one year and therefore a further request will be required to support the agreed transitional arrangements for the implementation of banded funding across our special schools. The financial modelling to support this will be brought to the next meeting.

6. Central Schools Services Block (CSSB)

6.1. The CSSB continues to provide funding for local authorities to carry out central functions on behalf of maintained schools and academies, comprising two distinct elements:

- ongoing responsibilities
- historic commitments

6.2. Local authorities will continue to be protected so that the maximum per-pupil year-on-year reduction in funding for ongoing responsibilities is -2.5%, while the year-on-year gains cap will be set at the highest affordable rate of 6.45%.

6.3. In 2022-23 historic commitments funding will be reduced by 20%. The indicative impact on the historic commitment allocation for Buckinghamshire Council is a reduction of approximately £631k and savings proposals will be brought to Schools Forum in December and January as part of the budget setting process.

7. DSG Deficit Balances

7.1. Starting in 2020 to 2021, DfE extended the rules under the DSG conditions of grant, they now provide, that any local authority with an overall deficit on its DSG account at the end of the 2020 to 2021 financial year, or whose DSG surplus has substantially reduced during the year, must cooperate with the department in handling that situation by:

- providing information as and when requested by the department about its plans for managing its DSG account in the 2021 to 2022 financial year and subsequently
- providing information as and when requested by the department about pressures and potential savings on its high needs budget
- meeting with officials of the department as and when they request to discuss the local authority's plans and financial situation
- keeping the schools forum updated regularly about the local authority's DSG account and plans for handling it, including high needs pressures and potential savings
- the guidance in relation to managing DSG deficits remains in place

7.2. DSG management plans should be discussed with the schools forum on a regular basis and should set out the local authority's plans for bringing the DSG spend back into balance. The DfE expects the DSG management plan to be co-produced. Relevant leads in the finance and special education needs (SEN) areas should sign off each version, (with sign off to be at least at assistant director level).

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Report to Schools Forum

Date: 12th October 2021

Title: De-Delegation Proposals 2022-23

Author: Liz Williams, Head of Finance – Children’s Services

Recommendations:

To continue with the arrangements agreed last year, that the details of any de-delegation proposals for 2022-23 be considered at a meeting of the maintained schools subcommittee with recommendations to be brought back to Schools Forum for final decisions.

Reason for decision: to enable consideration of the de-delegation levels for 2022-23.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to set out the details for existing de-delegations and former ESG funded services de-delegations 2022-23 for consideration by Schools Forum. The latest DfE Operational Guide published in August 2021 makes no changes to the De-delegation definition or guidance.
- 1.2. It is proposed that, as in previous years, a Maintained Schools sub-committee is established to consider the detailed proposals.

2. Background

- 2.1. Last year Schools Forum referred the de-delegation proposals to the Maintained Schools subcommittee and its recommendations were taken back to schools forum for a final decision. A paper setting out the services and the rates for ‘Existing’ delegation and services previously funded from the general funding rate of the ESG (for maintained schools only) was discussed at the subcommittee meeting. The Schools Forum constitution requires any final decision to be made at a formal Schools Forum meeting. Only maintained school representatives may vote on de-delegation proposals affecting their schools.

3. “Existing” De-delegated Services

- 3.1. Existing’ de-delegated services are for maintained schools only; funding for de-delegated services must be allocated through the formula but can be passed back, or ‘de-delegated’, for maintained mainstream primary and secondary schools with schools forum approval. This type of de-delegation does not apply to special schools, nursery schools, or PRUs.
- 3.2. Any decisions made to de-delegate in 2021-22 related to that year only. New decisions will be required for any service to be de-delegated in 2022-23. Schools Forum members for primary maintained schools, and secondary maintained schools, must decide separately for each phase whether the service should be provided centrally. They must decide on fixed contributions for these services so that funding can then be removed from the formula before school budgets are issued. There may be different decisions for each phase.
- 3.3. De-delegated has historically been agreed for:
 - 3.3.1. Contingencies (including schools in financial difficulties and deficits of closing schools)
 - 3.3.2. Staff costs supply cover (for example, long-term sickness and maternity, trade union and public duties).
- 3.4. Appendix A details the de-delegated services and associated amounts for the current year. In the current year it was decided not to de-delegate funding for “Contingency – Deficits in Closing Schools” or “Staff Costs – Union Facilities”. It was agreed that this should be reviewed for 2022-23.
- 3.5. It was further decided to reduce the rate of de-delegation for “cover for small schools” in 2021-22 to £0.20 per pupil.

4. Former ESG funded Services

- 4.1. Local authorities can fund services previously funded from the general funding rate of the ESG (for maintained schools only) from maintained school budget shares, with the agreement of maintained school members of the schools forum.
- 4.2. The relevant maintained schools members of the schools forum (primary, secondary, special and pupil referral units (PRUs), should agree the amount the local authority will retain. A single rate should be set (per 5 to 16 year old pupil) for all mainstream maintained schools. Local authorities can choose to establish differential rates for special schools and PRUs expressed per-place rather than per-pupil and this will 4 x per pupil funding.
- 4.3. Appendix B provides further details of the current year de-delegation at the 2021-22 rates of £3.50 per pupil in primary and secondary maintained schools and £14 per place in special schools and PRUs.

5. Pupil Numbers

5.1. The following data will be used for modelling purposes for 2022-23. The figures are based on the October 2020 census, updated for expected academy conversions. The final number will be updated for the October 2021 census:

	October 2020 Census	Estimated Academy Conversion Pupil Numbers	Revised Pupil Numbers for 2022-23 modelling
Primary	33,660	1,554	32,105
Secondary	6,052	924	5,129
	39,712	2,478	37,234

5.2. For ESG de-delegation the number of special school and PRU places will also be required. This is currently estimated as 1,229.

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Appendix A: Existing De-delegated services

De-delegation Area	Agreed 2020-21 rates	2021-22 Agreed Rates		Estimated Primary Total	Estimated Secondary total	Total £	Comments
		Proposal Primary £ per pupil	Proposal Secondary £ per pupil				
A. Contingency	Primary : £7 per pupil Secondary £8.75 per pupil	7.00	8.75	249,200	55,125	304,325	
B. Contingency- deficits of closing schools	No de-delegation in 2021-22	-	-	-	-	-	To be reviewed annually
c. Union Facilities	No de-delegation in 2021-22	-	-	-	-	-	To be reviewed annually
D. Cover for small schools	30p per pupil	0.20	0.20	7,120	1,260	8,380	Rate as per 2020-21.
Total - Maximum		7.20	8.95	256,320.00	56,385.00	312,705.00	

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Appendix B: Former ESG funded Services - Current Rates

De-delegation Area (former ESG)	Notes	2021-22 Rates	Primary	Secondary	Special & PRU	2021-22 rates estimated budget
Finance Support Specialist Finance support for schools with deficit budgets (Services provided by BLT have now transferred to BCC)	The service helps identify financial risk and provides targeted support to schools in managing budgets to avoid deficits. Schools needing support outside of the targeted support as detailed above will need to purchase the relevant support package from BC.	£2.50 per pupil primary and secondary/ £10 per place Special and PRU	£89,000	£15,750	£12,000	£116,750
Educational Visits (Evolve) Service provided by Buckinghamshire Council	The current traded offer to academies from September 2021 is £50 per school plus £1 per pupil/ £4 per place for specials/PRUs. The difference between traded services to Academies and maintained schools through de-delegation is the £50 per school fee which covers administration costs of supporting academies.	£1.00 per pupil primary and secondary/ £4 per place Special schools and PRUs	£35,600	£6,300	£4,800	£46,700
Total			£124,600	£22,050	£16,800	£163,450

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Report to Schools Forum

Date: 12th October 2021

Title: Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Deficit Management Plan

Author and contact officer: Liz Williams, Head of Finance (Children's Services)

Recommendations: Schools Forum is asked to note the areas of priority for further development agreed by the DSG Spending Review Group.

Reason for decision: For Information and discussion

Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. This report provides an update on the work of the DSG Spending Review Group and the priority areas identified for the development of proposals to support early intervention for pupils with SEND.

Background

- 1.2. The DSG is a ring-fenced specific grant that must be used in support of the schools budget for the purposes defined in the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations. Any LA with an overall DSG deficit must co-operate with the Department for Education (DfE) in handling that situation.
- 1.3. In order to ensure that this work is prioritised, managed and appropriately scrutinised the Council established a DSG Recovery Board comprising representatives from Schools Forum, council officers and from the post-16 college. The group will report to each Schools Forum meeting on its work. Note that following consideration and agreement of the terms of reference for this group it has been renamed The DSG Spending Review Group.
- 1.4. Initial financial modelling of projected demand was reported to the June meeting of Schools Forum and highlighted that the unmitigated projection of the impact of demand could increase the high needs deficit to £16.7m over the next 5 years (summarised in the following table).

Table 1

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Cumulative DSG Deficit at start of year	1.795	1.549	4.388	9.605
In year forecast overspend (Underspend)	(0.246)	2.839	5.217	7.167
Estimated year end deficit position (unmitigated position)	1.549	4.388	9.605	16.771

1.5. This will be impacted by the final expenditure position in the current year and funding allocations for future years however it clearly demonstrates the risk to the high needs block in Buckinghamshire if action is not taken to manage the deficit.

Update on Priority Workstreams

1.6. The DSG Spending Review Group met on 21st September to focus on two of the priority workstreams:

- **Workstream 3:** EHCP Demand Management (SEN Support)
- **Workstream 4:** Financial Impact of the SEND Sufficiency Strategy

1.7. To support the discussion reference was made to a number of case studies published by the DfE in the following document [Sustainable high needs systems - case studies \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk) which provides case studies of actions taken by other local authorities to support their DSG management plans and to reduce spend in a sustainable way.

EHCP Demand Management (SEN Support)

1.8. Key themes discussed by the Spending Review Group included

- Specialist support for schools and individual pupils to be targeted earlier
- Development of centralised roles to support schools

1.9. Based on those discussions, a number of further proposals will be considered by the DSG Spending Review Group in November and recommendations brought to Schools Forum. These will include a focus on funding to support earlier intervention, for example:

- Increasing the capacity within the council for whole school SEND strategic support;
- Increased early support for pupils, for example increased speech and language support.

1.10. The group also considered how the impact of any actions could be measured.

Initial indicators could include numbers of EHC Plans and numbers of pupils transferring to specialist provision. Further work will take place to consider how the impact of earlier intervention could be measured.

SEND Sufficiency

1.11. The group considered the initial outcomes of the SEND Sufficiency consultation and the potential costs and benefits that could arise from the proposals. The Consultation Outcome Report will be published in January 2022 and recommendations for the development of provision will be phased.

1.12. Detailed proposals will need to be developed for all recommendations and this will include financial modelling of the likely costs (revenue and capital) and potential savings. Savings are likely to be a mixture of cashable savings and cost avoidance through the reduction in demand for external placements in future years.

1.13. The Spending Review Group considered initial modelling based on current unit costs for different types of provision for each primary need. A summary to enable comparison of unit costs in different types of provision has been developed in order to show indicative cost savings that could arise from developing more local provision within Buckinghamshire schools. This is included as Appendix 1 to this report. It is important to note that this is based on current average costs and an estimate of the average bands for different types of need within special schools and ARPs. Actual costs and savings for any changes in provision would reflect the costs/bands associated with individual pupils which may vary from this average.

1.14. These average unit costs could be used to model indicative savings from the development of new provision arising from the sufficiency proposals. For example, the development of a new 18 place secondary inclusion unit for pupils with autism could achieve full year savings as follows:

Proposal	Additional Places created	Place Funding £	Top Up Costs £	Total annual cost/ (saving) when fully implemented £
Develop a new Communication and Interaction (Autism) 18 place Inclusion Unit in a mainstream secondary school Assumes average top up Band 2	18	£108,000	£106,599	£214,599
Estimated costs avoided of 18 places within Independent provision			-£979,481	-£979,481
Total	18	£108,000	-£872,882	-£764,882

Note the financial impact in this example is based on revenue costs of provision when full. It assumes all places occupied therefore place funding is £6k per place and assumes an average band value per need type (in this case Band 2). The comparison is against

the average unit cost of provision in the independent sector for pupils with a primary need of Autism. In this example independent sector costs of £979k per annum would be avoided, giving a net saving of £765k per year.

Any new provision will fill over a number of years rather than have all places filled in year 1. A more detailed financial model will therefore be required for each proposal within the strategy to include all revenue and capital costs and the potential savings/cost avoidance of developing in house provision

Next Steps

- 1.15. The DSG Spending Review Group will consider proposals to target funding towards earlier intervention and agree impact measures to support those proposals. These will be brought back to Schools Forum in December.
- 1.16. The updated DSG Management Plan and financial projection will be reported to the December meeting of Schools Forum.
- 1.17. The consultation outcome report for the SEND Sufficiency Strategy will be published in January 2022 and will include phased proposals for the development of provision within Buckinghamshire. Detailed financial modelling will be carried out to quantify the costs and potential benefits of those proposals.

HIGH NEEDS UNIT COSTS

	Primary Need	Estimated top-up Band	Funding Type	Mainstream	ARP	Special School	OLEA Special School	Independent School	Buckinghamshire College Group	OLEA Post 16 College	Independent Specialist College
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder	Band 2	Place	£0	£6,000	£10,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
			Top-up	£5,862	£5,922	£5,922	£17,573	£54,416	£21,962	£11,926	£54,555
			Total funding	£5,862	£11,922	£15,922	£17,573	£54,416	£21,962	£11,926	£54,555
HI	Hearing Impairment	Band 2	Place	£0	£6,000	£10,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
			Top-up	£5,128	£5,922	£5,922	£17,573	£55,432	£21,962	£11,926	£54,555
			Total funding	£5,128	£11,922	£15,922	£17,573	£55,432	£21,962	£11,926	£54,555
Medical	Medical	Band 2	Place	£0	£6,000	£10,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
			Top-up	£5,805	£5,922	£5,922	£17,573	£12,334	£21,962	£11,926	£54,555
			Total funding	£5,805	£11,922	£15,922	£17,573	£12,334	£21,962	£11,926	£54,555
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulties	Band 1	Place	£0	£6,000	£10,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
			Top-up	£5,939	£0	£0	£17,573	£31,692	£21,962	£11,926	£54,555
			Total funding	£5,939	£6,000	£10,000	£17,573	£31,692	£21,962	£11,926	£54,555
PD	Physical Disabilities	Band 3	Place	£0	£6,000	£10,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
			Top-up	£7,649	£9,870	£9,870	£17,573	£42,650	£21,962	£11,926	£54,555
			Total funding	£7,649	£15,870	£19,870	£17,573	£42,650	£21,962	£11,926	£54,555
PMLD	Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties	Band 4	Place	£0	£6,000	£10,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
			Top-up	£8,490	£19,741	£19,741	£17,573	£63,069	£21,962	£11,926	£54,555
			Total funding	£8,490	£25,741	£29,741	£17,573	£63,069	£21,962	£11,926	£54,555
SEMH	Social Emotional and Mental Health	Band 2	Place	£0	£6,000	£10,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
			Top-up	£6,191	£5,922	£5,922	£17,573	£66,494	£21,962	£11,926	£54,555
			Total funding	£6,191	£11,922	£15,922	£17,573	£66,494	£21,962	£11,926	£54,555
SLCN	Speech Language and Communication Difficulties	Band 2	Place	£0	£6,000	£10,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
			Top-up	£5,208	£5,922	£5,922	£17,573	£35,565	£21,962	£11,926	£54,555
			Total funding	£5,208	£11,922	£15,922	£17,573	£35,565	£21,962	£11,926	£54,555
SLD	Severe Learning Difficulties	Band 4	Place	£0	£6,000	£10,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
			Top-up	£5,200	£19,741	£19,741	£17,573	£82,088	£21,962	£11,926	£54,555
			Total funding	£5,200	£25,741	£29,741	£17,573	£82,088	£21,962	£11,926	£54,555
SPLD	Specific Learning Disability	Band 2	Place	£0	£6,000	£10,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
			Top-up	£4,681	£5,922	£5,922	£17,573	£27,228	£21,962	£11,926	£54,555
			Total funding	£4,681	£11,922	£15,922	£17,573	£27,228	£21,962	£11,926	£54,555
VI	Visual Impairment	Band 3	Place	£0	£6,000	£10,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
			Top-up	£8,921	£9,870	£9,870	£17,573	£39,451	£21,962	£11,926	£54,555
			Total funding	£8,921	£15,870	£19,870	£17,573	£39,451	£21,962	£11,926	£54,555

Notes

Costs for ARPs and Special schools use the 2021-22 Band funding rates. The ARPs place rate is for places known to be filled at the time of the October census
 Costs for Post 16 colleges, OLEA special schools use averages annual unit costs based on funding data from 2020-21

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