

Schools Forum

Date: Thursday 28 September 2023

Time: 2.00 pm

Venue: Microsoft Teams

Items on the agenda: -

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------------|
| 1. | Apologies and membership update (Stephanie Phillips) | Verbal Report |
| 2. | Voting and Actions from the Last Meeting (Chair) | 5 - 10 |
| 3. | Introduction from Director of Education | Verbal Report |
| | Matters for Decision | |
| 4. | De-delegation 2024-25 (Brian Smith) | 11 - 16 |
| | Matters for Information/Comment | |
| 5. | DSG 2023-24 Monitoring Report (Brian Smith) | 17 - 24 |
| 6. | 2024-25 National Funding Timetable (Brian Smith) | 25 - 28 |
| 7. | Estimated Schools Budget 2024-25 (Stephanie Phillips) | 29 - 32 |
| 8. | Consultation on Schools Advance Process (Stephanie Phillips) | 33 - 34 |
| 9. | Early Years Sufficiency Inc 30 hours (Mandy Latham) | 35 - 38 |
| 10. | Academy Update (Stephanie Phillips) | 39 - 40 |
| 11. | SEND Funding (Ross Caws) | 41 - 56 |
| 12. | Forward Plan (Stephanie Phillips) | 57 - 58 |
| 13. | Chair's Business | |

Date of Next Meeting:

Thursday 16 November 2023, 2:00pm to 4:00 pm (TBC)
Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams.

Monica Fogarty
Chief Executive
Warwickshire County Council
Shire Hall, Warwick

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WARWICKSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM**Voting and Actions of the meeting held on 22nd June 2023****Meeting Place: Harris Sports Centre 79 Mellish Rd, Rugby 14:00 – 16:00 pm****SCHOOL FORUM MEMBERS**

Alison Davies	The Avon Valley School (Maintained)
Amy Woodward	North Leamington School (Academy)
Andy Mason	Stratford Upon Avon School (Academy)
Avie Kaur	Representative from a Teacher's Union
Claire Jeffs-Watts	Bridgetown School (Maintained Primary School)
Jane Burrows	Myton School (Academy)
Joss Andrews	Dunchurch Infant School and Nursery (Maintained)
Julia Lucas	Coventry Church of England Diocese Representative
Mary Anne Burrows	PVI-The Burrow Nursery & Pre-School
Michael Cowland	The Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust
Nicci Burton	Atherstone and Bedworth Heath Nursery School (Maintained)
Paul Hostead	The Warwickshire Academy (Special Academy)
Philip Johnson	Whitestone Infant School (Maintained Governor)
Rebecca Harrison	Park Hill Thorns Federation (Maintained)
Sarah Bromley	PVI - Castle Nursery
Siobhan Roberson	Harris Church of England School (Academy)

OFFICERS/OBSERVERS

Andrew Felton	Assistant Director - Finance
Brian Smith	Education, Children and Families Technical Specialist
Councillor Kam Kaur	Portfolio Holder for Education
Dalbir Kaur	Accountant, Children & Education - Clerk to Schools Forum
Ross Caws	Strategy and Commissioning Lead
Sophie Thompson	School Improvement Networks Lead Officer

1. Apologies and welcomed two new members (Chair)**Apologies were received from the following members and Officers:**

Alison Ramsay	Nicholas Chamberlaine School (Academy)
Bern Timings	Education Capital, Sufficiency, and Admissions Lead Commissioner
Carrie Clare	Park Lane Primary & Race Leys Junior
Duane Chappell	Strategy & Commissioning Manager (SEND)
Emma Basden-Smith	Education Capital, Sufficiency and Transport Lead Commissioner
Jane Carter	Education Delivery Lead
Johnny Kyriacou	Assistant Director - Education Services
Kamaljit Kaur	Senior Accountant (Team Lead) Children & Education
Mandy Latham	Early Years Entitlement, Sufficiency and Business Lead Commissioner
Nick Evans	Evergreen School (Special Maintained)
Paul Gillett	Representative from a Teacher's Union
Peter Husband	16-19 Partnership Sector
Purnima Sherwood	Service Manager for Finance
Ricky Emms	The Priors School (Academy)
Sybil Hanson	Coventry Church of England Diocese Representative

Note: Chair welcomed the two new members - Claire Jeffs-Watts and Paul Hostead to schools forum.

The following members did not attend and did not give their apologies:

Catherine Crisp
Rose Gunn

Hillmorton Primary School Rugby (Maintained)
Arden Forest Infant School (Maintained)

2. Voting and Actions from the Last Meeting (Chair)

Agreed

Matters for decision:

3. Update on Schools Forum membership (Dalbir Kaur)

We had four vacant posts in March. Clerk sent email to the relevant sectors to call for expression of Interest.

The Primary Maintained Schools post and Special Academy post is filled now. The two new members are:
Claire Jeffs-Watts – Business manager at Bridgetown School (Maintained Primary School)
Paul Hostead – Headteacher at The Warwickshire Academy (Special Academy)

We did not receive any interest from Secondary Academy Schools. Therefore, there are still two vacant posts for Secondary Academy School's head teachers or representatives.

4. De-delegation & Disapplication Consultation Timetable 2024-2 (Brian Smith)

Recommendation:

The Representatives from maintained schools are asked to approve:

- a) The timetable for de-delegation Consultation for 2024-25.

Voting: Approved by Maintained school representative unanimously

Schools Forum (SF) member asked to add an article about the de-delegation consultation in heads Up

Action: SF clerk sent this article to Heads Up

All Schools Forum representatives are asked to approve:

- b) The estimated timetable for any potential need to consult with schools on the National Funding Formula and any potential transfers between funding blocks, for example, from the schools Block DSG to the High Needs Block.

Voting: Approved by all school representative unanimously

Schools Forum (SF) members asked/discussed:

- If part of 0.5% can go to Early Years (EY) as well. Also, SF members recognise that the High Needs is difficult area
- SF members want transparency on 0.5% block movements
- Warwickshire County Council (WCC) Officer's reply for the two points above - we are open to discussion on this, such movements can be requested for specific reasons/demand/pressure in a particular block but at end of the day all the transfer does is contribute to/support the

overall budget of the recipient block. EY block is participation-based funding, means that funding is based on actual pupil numbers in LA which includes all maintained schools, academies and PVI's therefore Early Years will not be under pressure.

- What and where Resource provision are in schools
- What is the capital planning for the next few years for schools
- WCC Officer's reply for the two points above, The Council is opening four more resourced provisions in Rugby and Nuneaton in September. The Council has a 5-year capital strategy which is focussing on expanding resourced provision (with an emphasis on secondary resourced provision) as well as expanding Evergreen and Oak Wood special schools.
- SF Like to see speedy resolution to High need deficits
- Schools Forum member asked - do we just nod to everything and sit here for two hours - Clerk will send Schools Forum operational and Schools forum power and responsibilities document. Also it can be accessed by clicking [here](#). The Local Authorities have responsibility for establishing schools forums

Action: SF Clerk to send Schools Forum operational and Schools forum power and responsibilities document

5. Update on Section 48-Scheme for Financing Schools (Brian Smith)

Recommendations:

The **maintained school representatives** are asked to approve:

- a) The maintained school representatives of Schools Forum are asked to approve the updated Scheme (which reflects the same proposed changes brought to March's Schools Forum meeting).

Voting: Approved by Maintained school representative unanimously

Schools Forum (SF) member discussed:

- Section 48-Scheme for Financing Schools has very important information
- Schools Governors/leaders should read Scheme for financing of schools. Any deficits in schools should be highlighted at early stage and remedial action taken
- WCC picks up bills of forced academisations of school when they have deficits

Action: No Action

Matters for Information/Comment:

6. Dedicated School Grant Outturn Position 2022-23 (Brian Smith)

Recommendations:

The Schools Forum is recommended to note:

- a) The DSG financial outturn position for 2022/23.
 - The total DSG allocation for Warwickshire was £523.653M
 - The final DSG outturn position for 2022/23 is an overspend of £3.930m
 - The DfE have required all local authorities to complete a recovery plan should the expenditure variance on the DSG exceed 1%

- The outturn position of £3.930m equates to a 0.79% overspend of the total original DSG allocation, which is within the DfE threshold
- This is primarily due to increase in placements on ISP's and Mainstream top ups within the High Needs Block
- The pressures on the High Needs Block is a national issue
- The financial position is being closely monitored as part of the DSG recovery plan.
- There is a small underspend of £0.103m on the Schools block
- High Needs overspend of £4.436m. This overspend excludes the £15.980m cumulative deficit from previous years
- Overall, Early Years underspent by £0.408m net position
- There are small overspends of £0.006m in Central Schools Services Block

Schools Forum (SF) members asked/discussed:

- If Early Years reserves are ring fenced
- WCC Officer's reply – Legally and in final accounts of WCC the DSG reserve is a single reserve. However, WCC does track/keep a record of the amounts each blocks year end variance to budget has contributed to the overall DSG reserve
- There was only 70% up take for Early Years Recovery fund. We anticipated that all providers would take up the offer. The offer was for 6 types of Training packages to support improvement and capacity by all providers
- The High Needs Block table is not on the report – Clerk to re-send Item 6 with the draft voting and action paper
- Could all reports show underspend in black not in red. (and vice versa). This will be the format taken going forward

Action:

1. Clerk to send Item 6 DSG 2022-23 Outturn report (that includes the High Needs table) to all Schools Forum members with voting and actions paper
2. Future reports to show underspend in black not in red

7. DSG Recovery Plan (Ross Caws)

Recommendations:

The Schools Forum members are asked to note the verbal update on the SEND & Inclusion Change Programme.

First, Ross Caws explained that this is a time to reflect on the SEND & Inclusion Change Programme and plan for a new phase of work this is due to:

- Changes in leadership - Duane Chappell has left Warwickshire County Council and Ross Caws is Acting Head of SEND & Inclusion
- The Council is about to start the DfE Delivering Better Value scheme (which is to produce an action plan very similar to the Change Programme with associated funding)
- Broadly speaking, the change programme is nearing completion of many stage 2 projects and not started original phase 3 projects
- The Council is reconsidering its governance for SEND as it nears completion of the Written Statement of Action
- The long-term financial forecast on the High Needs Block is being updated

Ross Caws also brought attention to:

- The system is under pressure with increases in permanent exclusions, referrals for children unable to attend school for health reasons and requests for EHC needs assessment and specialist provision
- The High Needs Block is overspent. The outturn of over £4m overspend was less than originally forecast at the start of the SEND & Inclusion Change Programme, but still adds to a cumulative deficit
- It remains that changing practice in Warwickshire can reduce the current overspend on the High Needs Block but not eradicate it

Schools Forum (SF) member discussed/asked:

- How long the alternative provision should be used for
- WCC officer's reply - Alternative provision should be used for 10 weeks at a time or as part of a transition; the spend on alternative provision has significantly increased in the last year and needs to be looked at again
- SF Member asked - What do you want us to do with recovery plan
- WCC officer's reply - Schools Forum must agree recovery plans and then hold officers to account for delivery of recovery plans
- What progress was made with the change programme, why it is stopped and why the system is not working
- WCC officer's reply - No new projects are being started in the Change Programme for the moment. It is an expectation of the DfE that we take part in the Delivering Better Value scheme. It should also allow the Council to access additional funding (the Council has funded £3m of transformation work so far). Costs of independent specialist provision are increasing
- Place funding for state special schools has not changed since 2014
- We are seeing a higher level of need coming through in our Early Years cohorts. Specialisms in early years settings still require further exploring, in particular with our nursery schools.
- The national system for SEND is recognised as broken and unsustainable. The DfE has plans in place, but there is likely to be a long timeline on implementation of these plans

Action: We want stability in this area especially in SEN change programme and that is what we are working on

8. Forward Plan (Dalbir Kaur)

The next SF meeting is on 28th September via Teams.

There is one paper for decision. It is on De-delegation for 2024-25 and five items for information and comments.

The next meeting after this will be in November (TBC) – to request transfer of 0.5% from the schools Block DSG.

If there is any item that schools forum members want to add to the agenda or to the forward plan, please send it to schoolfunding@warwickshire.gov.uk email address with the relevant information.

Also, Schools Forum members can send me an email if they want any specific information on reports or if they have any questions on reports.

9. Chairs Business (Philip Johnson)

Chair thanked Duane Chappell for her work over the years who has moved to a new adventure.

Chair also, thanked Kamaljit Kaur for her service. Kamaljit provided a cover for Stephanie Phillips during her maternity leave is leaving in July 2023. Stephanie Phillips will be back in July 2023.

Meeting concluded at 15:45pm.

Next Meeting on Thursday 28th September 2023, 2:00pm to 4:00
Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams

DRAFT

Schools Forum

28 September 2023

De-Delegation of Schools Block Budgets for 2024-25

This report relates to representatives of maintained schools only and is for decision.

Recommendations

1. The representatives of maintained primary schools on the Schools Forum are asked to decide whether to support the continued de-delegation of the following services in 2024-25:
 - Free School Meal Eligibility
 - English as an Additional Language
 - Trade Union Facility Time Funding
 - School Improvement
 - Gypsy and Romany Travellers
 - Behaviour Support Services
 - Medical Referrals for Employees

2. The representative of the maintained secondary school on the Schools Forum is asked to decide whether to support the continued de-delegation of the following services in 2024-25:
 - Free School Meal eligibility
 - English as an additional language
 - Trade Union facility time funding
 - School Improvement

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. De-delegation is an option that enables some services to maintained schools to be provided centrally and the funding to do so be retained by the local authority. If de-delegation stops then the centrally retained funding would be delegated in the main school budget and the local authority would either stop providing or charge for the

service. The purpose of the report is for the Forum to agree whether to continue the de-delegation of a range of services for 2024-25.

- 1.2. De-delegation is a series of decisions which the Schools Forum is required to take on an annual basis.
- 1.3. A consultation with maintained schools seeking their views on the continuation of the de-delegation of funding has been undertaken to provide supporting evidence to the Forum in coming to a decision. The report also provides feedback on the results of the consultation.
- 1.4. Representatives from maintained schools need to consider the views of schools who responded to the consultation when voting.

2. Consultation

- 2.1. The consultation on de-delegation was sent to all maintained schools on Monday 26 June 2023, with a closing date of Friday 15 September 2023.
- 2.2. As of 2 September 2023, Warwickshire has 109 Maintained Primary Schools and 1 Maintained Secondary School.
- 2.3. Responses have been received from 64 maintained primary schools and 1 maintained secondary school. This represents 58.72% of maintained primary schools. Last year 47 maintained primary schools returned their response.
- 2.4. The one maintained secondary school responded to the consultation and voted to support continued de-delegation across 3 of the 4 categories. The category **not** supported in the consultation is School Improvement. This category was added this year for Secondary school.
- 2.5. The following sections take each of the service areas in turn, providing a brief summary of the service provided and the results from primary schools of the consultation for that particular service.

3. Free School Meals Eligibility - £0.65 per pupil

Phase	Yes	No
Primary	100.0%	0.0%

This funds the administration process of free school meals. Services are also traded through Warwickshire Education Services.

If schools did not support continued de-delegation, as with academy schools where Warwickshire's service is not purchased, schools will need to develop their own systems for receiving applications and checking eligibility. Schools will need to check eligibility on a regular basis and respond to any queries or complaints from parents. Parents will no longer be able to apply for Free School Meals via Warwickshire County Council's Customer Service Centre or website and schools will not have access to real-time eligibility data or the dedicated Department for Work and Pensions helpline (only available to Local Authorities). Should funding not be de-delegated the Local Authority will offer no guidance or support on Free School Meals eligibility.

4. English as an Additional Language (EAL) - £4.48 per pupil

Phase	Yes	No
Primary	84.4%	15.6%

Support involves capacity building training to skill up key practitioners in schools to carry out EAL assessments, identify learning targets, classroom strategies and provide effective inductions for EAL newly arrived learners from overseas. All assessment resources are provided as part of the training and ongoing advice and guidance for trained schools is available.

Schools with trained practitioners in place can refer EAL learners deemed as complex cases for EAL-SEND assessment, support with EHCPs, multi-agency work (e.g., Early Help), home-school liaison, etc.

Included in the offer are three EAL Network meetings delivered once a term.

5. Trade Union Facility Time - £2.75 per pupil

Phase	Yes	No
Primary	82.8%	17.2%

The Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 creates a statutory right for Union Representatives of recognised unions to reasonable paid time off from employment to carry out trade union duties and to undertake trade union training. The County Council recognises the following Unions: NASUWT, NUE, ASCL, NAHT, VOICE, GMB, Unison and Unite.

In order to comply with these Regulations, WCC operates a county wide "pool" arrangement covering all maintained schools, whereby appointed union representative(s) of each of the recognised unions attend consultative meetings (e.g., policy implementation) on a county basis and are also called upon to represent

members in individual schools. This pool arrangement avoids schools needing to establish individual bargaining arrangements for each school.

Where appointed representatives are absent from the classroom to attend to their union duties, the school where they are employed are reimbursed from this centrally held budget, for the cost of a supply/cover teacher.

The implications of this budget being delegated to schools would be that there would be no further reimbursement of supply cover arrangements which would have a disproportionate effect on the schools that employ union representatives leaving these schools financially disadvantaged.

Additionally, if a maintained school were not entering in the pooled facilities funding arrangements it is possible that trades unions might choose not to recognise the consultation undertaken centrally on policies as being applicable for a school that does not de-delegate. This would potentially need an individual school to consult on each employment related policy with the regional officials of the various unions at school level before it can implement thus avoiding unnecessary misunderstandings and disputes. Currently the de-delegated funding ensures this is all undertaken centrally on behalf of those schools.

In summary schools need to be aware of the following if they chose not to de-delegate:

- School-based representatives would be required to be trained to the same level as current county-level union officials in order to be accredited and indemnified from their respective organisations for casework and in order to be mandated to consult and negotiate on pay and conditions of service matters.
- School-based representatives would be required to attend regular update training, requiring time-off.
- School-based representatives are entitled to reasonable paid time off to carry out their duties.
- Although the training is currently provided free of charge, the estimated overall release time costs to a school for fully trained representatives for the three major teaching unions alone working to the required standard is in the region of £7,500 to £10,000. This estimate excludes any time a school representative would need to meet with County or Regional Officials and Health and Safety training or refresher courses. If appropriately trained school-based representatives are not available:
- Case work would need to be managed by regional officials. Regional officials do not have local knowledge nor local working relationships. Such knowledge and relationships can often be helpful in managing a case to a successful resolution. It

should also be noted that the involvement of a full-time regional officer prematurely can have the effect of escalating the situation in an unhelpful way.

- The resolution of low-level issues requiring negotiation is likely to be prolonged due to the need to wait for availability of a regional officer.
- Regional officials cover the whole of the West Midlands region, and their availability will be limited. There may be delays in holding hearings and meetings.

6. School Improvement - £6.75 per pupil

Phase	Yes	No
Primary	89.1%	10.9%

This funding buys in support from system leaders for schools where some intervention or assistance may be required. It does not support staffing but without the funding, the staff employed by the LA to carry out statutory intervention work would have no resources to offer practical support to schools, such as training and development, support for maintained school inspections or ad hoc advice and assistance.

Whilst there is a risk to vulnerable schools if this funding is delegated, the LA would still be able to carry out its statutory functions.

Please note the Secretary of State has the power to approve this de-delegation contrary to the decision of Schools Forum. This is to ensure councils are adequately funded to exercise their core school improvement activities. WCC would apply to the Secretary of State if Schools Forum did not approve the de-delegation of this item.

7. Gypsy and Romany Travellers - £3.74 per pupil

Phase	Yes	No
Primary	79.7%	20.3%

This service provides three locally based, experienced GRT education support officers who work in partnership with schools, families and services to improve outcomes for children from Traveller communities. Nationally, these pupils are the most underperforming group across every key stage. If this service was not provided centrally, then schools may well see an increase in costs with these children attending less and having lower attainment. Someone from the school would need to contact/visit these families to get the pupil back into school or trace their whereabouts. The service also delivers cultural awareness training that schools would need to provide or source themselves.

8. Specialist SEND Support Services - £1.07 per pupil

Phase	Yes	No
Primary	95.3%	4.7%

This money is paid directly to primary schools for pupils at SEN Support without an Education, Health & Care Plan, who meet the criteria for additional support at the point of transition from Early Years' settings into Reception or following assessment by Specialist Teaching Service is in need of additional support.

Often the pupils concerned are unexpected arrivals with complex home circumstances and it is crucial to ensure the child, school and family receive appropriate support rapidly.

Not having this facility would introduce a detrimental delay that could see placement breakdown at home and school.

9. Medical Referral of Employees - £0.46 per pupil

Phase	Yes	No
Primary	95.3%	4.7%

WCC manages a contract for the provision of Occupational Health Services. Schools access this service, and a budget is held centrally to which the costs of the medical referral of school-based staff are charged. This relates to both the costs of pre-employment medical checks and the referral for medical advice in the management of short term and long term medically related absences from the workplace. The referral process is accessed by all school-based staff.

Should the budget be delegated then schools would be invoiced separately for their usage of the service.

Brian Smith

Finance Portfolio Lead for Education, Children & Families

Email: briansmith@warwickshire.gov.uk

Schools Forum**28 September 2023****2023/24 Dedicated Schools Grant Financial Monitoring Report**

This report relates to both maintained and academy schools and all members of the Schools Forum and is for information and comment.

Recommendation

Schools Forum is recommended to:

- Note the DSG forecast financial outturn position for 2023/24, as at Period 4
- Note the forecasted outturn position of the DSG reserve for 2023/24, as at Period 4.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report provides an update on the 2023/24 forecast outturn position of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).
- 1.2. The total 2023/24 DSG allocation for Warwickshire, reported to Schools Forum in March 2023, was £542,787m (shown in the original allocation column in Table 1 below).
- 1.3. Since then, the DSG allocation has been updated to reflect the Academy/High Needs recoupment. Table 1 and Appendix A shows the latest allocations to reflect these changes.

Table 1: 2023/24 Revised DSG Allocations	Original Allocation	Change	Latest Allocation	Reason for Change
	£m	£m	£m	
Total Schools Block	425.638	0.000	425.638	
Less: NNDR	(3.719)	0.000	(3.719)	
Less: recoupmnt	0.000	(281.640)	(281.640)	Academy recoupmnt
Schools Block	421.919	(281.640)	140.278	
Total High Needs	94.682	0.000	94.682	
Less: recoupmnt	(15.840)	(0.891)	(16.731)	High Needs recoupmnt
High Needs Block	78.842	(0.891)	77.951	
Early Years Block	37.924	0.000	37.924	
Central School Services Block	4.102	0.000	4.102	
Total DSG Allocation	542.787	-282.531	260.256	

2. 2023/24 Forecasts

- 2.1. Table 2 summarises the 2023/24 forecast position by DSG Block, as at the end of July 2023 (Period 4), and Appendix A provides a detailed breakdown:

Table 2: 2023/24 Forecasts	Latest Allocation	Drawdown from Reserves	Forecast @	Variance
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Schools Block	140.278		140.336	0.058
High Needs Block	77.951		86.709	8.758
Early Years Block	37.924		38.260	0.335
Central School Services Block	4.102		4.102	(0.000)
Total DSG Allocation	260.256	0.000	269.407	9.151

- 2.2. It should be noted that historically the DfE have required all local authorities to complete a recovery plan should the expenditure variance on the DSG exceed 1%. The forecast position of £9.151m equates to a 1.69% overspend, which exceeds the DfE threshold. Due to exceeding the 1% threshold in previous years, WCC does have a recovery plan – on which regular updates are provided to Schools Forum.
- 2.3. Although the total DSG position of the four blocks is used to calculate whether the DSG overspend is above the 1% threshold, the financial reporting is separated into the 4 Blocks. This is because in reality, we are not able to move funding between blocks without Schools Forum/Secretary of State approval (disapplication process).

The key financial risk to be highlighted in Table 2 is the £8.758m overspend in the High Needs Block.

3. DSG Reserve position

- 3.1. Table 3 below shows the opening position of the overall DSG reserve as at the 1st April 2023, any draw down from reserves noted in Table 2 and the forecasted effect of outturn that informs the forecasted closing balance of the reserve on 31 March 2024.

Table 3: 2023/24 Reserves	Opening Balance 01/04/2023	In Year Drawdowns	Effect of outturn	Forecast Closing Balance as at 31/03/2023
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Schools Block	0.494		0.058	0.436
High Needs Block	(20.416)		8.758	(29.174)
Early Years Block	3.341		0.335	3.006
Central School Services Block	0.484		(0.000)	0.484
Total DSG Allocation	(16.097)	0.000	9.151	(25.248)

4. Explanations for Variances

The sections below explain the main reasons for the variances across the Blocks. A detailed breakdown of variances is shown in Appendix A.

Schools Block (£0.057m overspend)

- 4.1. The overspends on the Schools Block mainly relate to the Growth fund overspending by £0.045m, other forecasted overspends relate to DBS checks.

High Needs Block (£8.758m overspend)

- 4.2. The main area of ongoing concern is the High Needs Block where the forecast overspend is £8.758m. This forecast net overspend consists of a number of significant budgets which are subject to interventions by the SEND & Inclusion Change programme (SICP). The over-arching aim over the long term (as funding for SEND is a national issue) is to reduce high costs volumes while increasing lower costs areas of service. For example, reducing the reliance of Independent Specialist Provision and increasing "SEND Top-ups" to mainstream and special schools. A decision taken at the inception of the SICP to set budgets for individual services as they might be after several years of the change programme (i.e., aspirational) does lead to several large over/underspends because budget is set for the future while the forecasted costs are for the present. Therefore, a holistic view is best taken.
- 4.3. Areas of overspend include:

- £2.045m on Mainstream Schools, the budget was constructed with the knowledge that there would be a £0.767m gap due to insufficient available funds, £0.331m Alternative Provision expenditure pressure, £0.076m pressure on the therapies and support element of the budget and a £0.872m pressure on general Mainstream support top up funding.
- £6.740m on SEN - Independent Schools as the budget was built with a £6.300m shortfall in funding, based on known placements known at the time. The budget was built on 355 ISPs at £0.062m but forecast is 368 ISPs at £0.060m per place. Forecast anticipates a minimum of 7 new places taken every month from October until March. This will be regularly monitored, and variances reported.
- £1.126m in Specialist Resource Provision. This forecast pressure includes a funding shortfall in the budget of £0.708m. The budget assumed 189 FYE places at £9,145 per place The forecast is 181 FYE at £11,900.
- £0.069m in SEND Integrated service due to staffing pressures

4.4. The forecast overspends are partly offset by the following underspends: -

- £0.020m on Special School EHCP Top Ups
- £0.090m on CAMHS - Hospital Tuition, this is volatile area and metrics are not available at this stage.
- £0.977m on Alternative provisions & ABP £0.377m of this is generated by budgeted training activity that will not now take place. £0.537m underspend declared represents the element of the budget which has been earmarked for top up funding costs at a new AP school that is awaiting creation.
- £0.152m on Post 16, The true figures will not become known until after the half term in October.

Early Years Block (£0.335m overspend)

- 4.5. The Early Years Block is forecasting an overspend of £0.335m net position. This primarily relates to planned one off expenditure of £0.390m, which consists of the release of Covid recovery related grants available to all EY providers and mainstream nurseries. It is not therefore a recurrent financial pressure.
- 4.6. There is a forecast underspend of £0.337m on 3&4 year old provision and overspends of £0.128m on 2 years old provision and £0.226m on Pupil Premium.
- 4.7. There are minor overspends of £0.036m on EY Sufficiency & Business support due to expected new government reform within Yearly years provision- more staff required to support the transitions and capacity in the planned increase in free early years provision from 2024/25.
- 4.8. There are minor underspends of £0.068m that relate to staff vacancies across the service.
- 4.9. Schools Forum is asked to note that the Early Years forecast variance will change to reflect the updated allocation following the release of the January 2024 census data.

(We are anticipating the release of the January 2024 Census data and updated allocation in February 2024.)

Central Schools Services Block- CSSB (£0)

4.10. The Central School Services Block is currently forecasting a £0 variance to Budget.

Impact of DSG overspend

4.11. The overall size of the DSG overspend has increased significantly and will impact on the overall recovery plan and the contributions from the Council's MTFs to cover the cumulative deficit. The key will be to continue momentum with the recovery plan and to achieve future years savings. The growth in the overspend may be mitigated by recent greater than expected (but with conditions) growth on the HNB DSG grant for 2023/24. The key is also to ensure that growth in HNB spend does not match the unexpected growth in the funding.

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Note that there may be rounding differences between the figures presented in this Appendix compared to the Tables in the body of the report.

Schools Block	Latest Budget	Latest Forecast @	Forecast Variance
	£m	£m	£m
Mainstream Individual School Budgets	136.040	136.040	0.000
Growth Fund (exceptional pupil numbers)	3.471	3.515	0.045
Schools Block Transfer to High Needs Block	0.000	0.000	0.000
De-delegated budgets			
School Performance	0.189	0.189	0.000
Early Intervention Service	0.030	0.030	0.000
Ethnic Minority & Traveller Achievement Service	0.235	0.245	0.010
Free School Meals	0.019	0.019	0.000
Teaching Union Cover	0.064	0.064	0.000
Non-Teaching Union Cover	0.016	0.016	0.000
HR – Occupational Health (Primary Only)	0.013	0.013	0.000
Central Establishment Charges	0.039	0.039	0.000
Education Functions - DBS	0.163	0.165	0.003
Total Schools Allocations	140.279	140.336	0.057

High Needs Block	Latest Budget	Latest Forecast @	Forecast Variance
	£m	£m	£m
SEN – Place Funding for Maintained Mainstream, Special and Resourced Provision	6.133	6.133	0.000
SEN Top up – Mainstream Schools & Academies	13.355	15.400	2.045
SEN Top up – WCC Special Schools & Academies	20.812	20.792	(0.021)
SEN Top up – Independent & OLA Special Schools	16.167	22.907	6.741
Tier 4 Hospital Education	0.400	0.310	(0.090)
Resourced Provision – SEN Support	1.411	2.536	1.126
SEND Speech & Language	0.000	0.000	0.000
Post 16 Funding	9.400	9.248	(0.152)
SEND Commissions	1.450	1.450	0.000
SEND Integrated Services (Low incidence SEND)	1.094	1.163	0.069
SEND Integrated Services (Flexible Learning)	0.883	0.914	0.031
Area Behaviour Partnerships (Primary and Secondary Exclusions)	2.911	2.471	(0.440)
Contribution to Early Intervention Behaviour Panels	0.064	0.064	0.000
SENDAR Alternative Provision	0.904	0.366	(0.538)
SEND Integrated Services (Specialist Teaching Service)	1.055	1.041	(0.014)
Integrated Disability Service SEN Inclusion Grant (EY)	0.485	0.485	0.000
High Needs Contingency/ (Shortfall)	0.000	0.000	0.000
Central Establishment Charges	1.428	1.428	0.000
High Needs Allocations	77.951	86.709	8.758

Early Years Block	Latest Budget	Latest Forecast @	Forecast Variance
	£m	£m	£m
Nursery Funding 3&4 year olds	21.949	21.152	(0.798)
Nursery Funding 3&4 year Olds (Additional 15 hours)	9.797	10.218	0.421
Maintained Nursery Supplement	0.931	0.931	0.000
DSG Pupil Premium	0.227	0.453	0.226
Funded 2 year olds	3.160	3.288	0.128
Disability Access Fund	0.200	0.148	(0.052)
IDS TL Early Years	0.967	0.957	(0.010)
Early Years - Sufficiency & Business Support	0.282	0.319	0.036
Early Years Quality & Development	0.097	0.090	(0.006)
Early Years Contingency/ (Shortfall)	0.000	0.390	0.390
EYB Central Establishment Charges	0.314	0.314	0.000
Early Years Allocations	37.924	38.260	0.335

Central Schools Services Block	Latest Budget	Latest Forecast @	Forecast Variance
	£m	£m	£m
Children's Mental health	0.000	0.000	0.000
Admissions	0.799	0.799	0.000
Heads Termly / SACRE	0.000	0.000	0.000
DSG SF Allocation - Historic Pension Contribution	0.737	0.737	0.000
DSG SF Allocation - North Leamington School Prudential Borrowing	0.266	0.266	0.000
DSG SF Allocation - Copyright Licences	0.527	0.527	0.000
Employers Liability Insurance	0.045	0.045	0.000
Teachers Pensions Employer Contribution Grant (TPECG)	0.424	0.424	0.000
CSSB Contingency	(0.086)	(0.086)	0.000
Cost of support services for Education Functions	0.663	0.663	0.000
CSSB Central Establishment Charges	0.727	0.727	0.000
Central Schools Services Allocations	4.102	4.102	0.000
2021/22 DSG Total	260.256	269.407	9.150

Schools Forum

28 September 2023

2024-25 National Funding Formula and Budget Setting Timetable

This report relates to all members of Schools Forum and is for information and comment.

Recommendations

Schools Forum is asked to:

- Note the timetable for agreeing allocations for DSG funded services for 2024-25 as set out in Appendix A.

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. The purpose of the report is to outline for the Schools Forum the planned timetable for approving the use of Dedicated Schools Grant in Warwickshire for 2024-25. Note that the DfE have not released all required information for 2024-25 at the time of drafting the report and as such the proposed timetable is subject to change.
- 1.2. If any information is released which suggests a revised approach is needed prior to the January meeting of the Schools Forum a note and revised timetable will be circulated to Forum members.

2. NFF Consultations

2021 Consultation

- 2.1. During the summer of 2021, the ESFA conducted a consultation on “Fair schools funding for all: completing our reforms to the National Funding Formula”. This focused on the principles of moving to a direct formula and following consultation feedback the government published its response which confirmed their commitment to the direct NFF and encouraged Local Authorities to move to the ‘hard’ National Funding Formula as quickly as possible.

- 2.2. Schools Forum members will be aware that Schools Forum and Warwickshire County Council both agreed to move to the 'hard' National Formula Funding in January 2018, subject to affordability within the school block DSG.

2022 Consultation

- 2.3. During the summer of 2022, the ESFA has conducted a further consultation on: "Implementing the Direct National Funding Formula". This focused further on the detail of the implementation of the direct NFF, and also sets out proposals to continue to have flexibility within the funding system to transfer funding from the school block to the high needs block, subject to appropriate approvals.
- 2.4. The consultation proposed a short list of options on how adjustments could be made to school budgets to enable a transfer:
- A percentage reduction in all mainstream schools' NFF allocation.
 - A percentage reduction in the NFF funding that mainstream schools attract through the basic entitlement factor (rather than additional needs factors) – this would be of relative benefit to schools with high proportions of pupils with additional needs.
 - A percentage reduction in the NFF funding that schools attract through additional needs factors.
- 2.5. It should be noted that our estimated funding of Primary and Secondary Units of Funding (PUFS and SUFs) suggest that we should be able to replicate the 'hard' National Funding Formula in 2024-25.
- 2.6. However, like 2023-24 we do not currently anticipate either reserve balances or a school block surplus to be available to fund a transfer of up to 0.5% from the school block DSG to the high needs block, although this will be subject to the financial implications of the October 2022 census data. Therefore, if approved, it is likely that a transfer of up to 0.5% would have an impact on 2024-25 school budgets. There is another report on today's agenda which provides an update to the DSG Recovery Plan and how previous 0.5% transfers have been utilised and the impact they have had.

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2024-25 National Funding Formula and Budget Setting Timetable

Note that, as the DfE have still not issued the outcome of their recent consultation on the NFF or confirmed their deadlines for the disapplication process, this timetable is still subject to change.

Date	Responsibility	Process
2023		
18 September	WCC SEND and Inclusion	Send out consultation to schools on movement of 0.5% from the school block to the high needs block. Consultation will run for 6 weeks.
5 October	School	Schools' Census date.
27 October	WCC SEND and Inclusion	Return deadline for consultation on 0.5% disapplication.
1 November		Final day for census data sent to the ESFA of numbers on roll in individual schools.
16 November	Schools Forum	Provisional meeting date to discuss and agree/disagree 0.5% transfer from school block to high needs block.
17 November	WCC Finance	Assumed deadline for submitting any disapplication to the ESFA to move up to 0.5% of funding from the school block DSG to the high needs block DSG.
Mid December	ESFA	Revised Authority Pro-forma Tool (APT) is sent to Local Authorities with October 2023 census data and indicative schools block DSG. At this point WCC Finance re-models the funding for individual schools.
2024		
11 January	Schools Forum	Takes decisions on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2024-25 National Funding Formula 2024-25 Early Years Funding Formula 2024-25 Pupil Growth Fund
22 January	WCC Finance	APT is sent back to ESFA outlining our proposed funding formula for 2024-25.
23 January	WCC Cabinet	Approves: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2024-25 National Funding Formula 2024-25 Early Years Funding Formula 2024-25 Pupil Growth Fund
February	ESFA	Confirm our funding formula meets ESFA validation checks.
8 February	WCC Council	Agree the County Council's budget for 2024-25
By 28 February	WCC Finance	Send out individual mainstream school budgets for 2024-25 together with indicative budget allocations for 2025-26 and 2026-27
21 March	Schools Forum	Agree detail of Central Services Block DSG allocations for 2024-25

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Item 7

Schools Forum**28 September 2023****Estimated Schools National Funding Formula 2024-25**

This report relates to both academy and maintained mainstream schools and is for the information all school and PVI members of Schools Forum.

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. Inform Schools Forum of the Estimated Schools Block DSG Allocation for 2024-25 and how it will be allocated to schools using the 'hard' National Funding Formula (NFF).
- 1.2. It should be noted that the proposed budgets and figures within this report are an estimate and currently based on current year pupil data. An update will be completed following the October Census and the release of the December Authority Proforma Tool (APT). This will form the final schools budgets which will come to Schools Forum in January 2024.

2. National Funding Formula 2024-25

- 2.1. The schools block DSG allocation for 2024-25 is £444.3m and is an increase of £18.7m (4.2%) from the 2023-24 allocation and is due to several reasons.
- 2.2. Firstly, minimum pupil funding for 2024-25 is £4,655 in Primary Schools and £6,050 in Secondary Schools. This represents an increase of 5.68% and 5.86% above 2023-24 funding levels.
- 2.3. Secondly, pupil led funding formula factors were increased by between 1.79% and 19.42% above 2023-24 funding levels. A breakdown of how much each factor has increased by is outlined in Appendix 1. Also, Minimum Funding Guarantee has been set at +2.00% again.

2.4. The Estimated DSG allocation for 2024-25 has allowed the Local Authority to continue to apply the 'hard' NFF in 2024-25 as follows:

- Set the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) rate in line with the 'hard' NFF.
- Use all Deprivation rates (Free Schools Meals and Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index) in line with the 'hard' NFF.
- Allocate funding for English as an additional language for the maximum 3 eligible years in line with the 'hard' NFF.
- Prior attainment set at 100% in line with the 'hard' NFF.
- All schools are allocated a lump sum of £135,700, in line with the 'hard' NFF.
- Split sites allocated £38,500 per site and this is a local factor.
- Business Rates are fully funded and this is mandatory.
- Funding to meet minimum per pupil funding (£4,655 for primary school pupils and £6,050 for secondary school pupils) in line with the 'hard' NFF.
- Set the Minimum Funding Guarantee at +2.00% in line with the 'hard' NFF.
- Confirmation of the Growth Fund value has yet to be confirmed and is currently estimated as the same as 2023-24.

3. **School Supplementary Allocations 2024-25**

3.1. When calculating schools block DSG the ESFA use the January census data to calculate individual local authority allocations. These are known as Primary Units of Funding (PUFS) and Secondary Units of Funding (SUFS).

3.2. Therefore, the schools block DSG allocations for 2024-25 are calculated using January 2024 census data. Schools block DSG allocations are announced in December each year and are based on the preceding October census data. If there have been any significant changes in census data between January and October these can be covered by increasing DSG.

3.3. We will inform Schools Forum of any schools supplementary allocation for Warwickshire schools and academies for 2024-25 in January.

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Appendix 1

NFF Factors 2023-24 and 2024-25				
Factor	2023-24	2024-25	Change	
AWPU	£	£	£	%
Primary basic entitlement	3,395	3,597	202	5.95%
KS3 basic entitlement	4,780	5,072	292	6.11%
KS4 basic entitlement	5,380	5,717	337	6.26%
Minimum Per Pupil Funding				
Primary Minimum Per Pupil funding	4,405	4,655	250	5.68%
Secondary Minimum Per Pupil funding	5,715	6,050	335	5.86%
Deprivation				
Primary FSM	480	490	10	2.08%
Secondary FSM	480	490	10	2.08%
Primary FSM6	695	830	135	19.42%
Secondary FSM6	1,015	1,210	195	19.21%
Primary IDACI F	230	235	5	2.17%
Primary IDACI E	280	285	5	1.79%
Primary IDACI D	435	450	15	3.45%
Primary IDACI C	475	490	15	3.16%
Primary IDACI B	510	520	10	1.96%
Primary IDACI A	660	685	25	3.79%
Secondary IDACI F	330	345	15	4.55%
Secondary IDACI E	440	455	15	3.41%
Secondary IDACI D	610	635	25	4.10%
Secondary IDACI C	670	695	25	3.73%
Secondary IDACI B	720	750	30	4.17%
Secondary IDACI A	915	950	35	3.83%
English as an Additional Language				
Primary EAL3	580	595	15	2.59%
Secondary EAL3	1,570	1,605	35	2.23%
Low Prior Attainment				
Primary LPA	1,160	1,185	25	2.16%
Secondary LPA	1,730	1,790	60	3.47%
Mobility				
Primary mobility	175	970	795	454.29%
Secondary mobility	250	1,395	1,145	458.00%
Lump Sum				
Primary lump sum	127,500	135,700	8,200	6.43%
Secondary lump sum	127,500	135,700	8,200	6.43%
Sparsity				
Primary sparsity	56,000	57,700	1,700	3.04%
Secondary sparsity	81,000	83,900	2,900	3.58%

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Schools Forum

28 September 2023

Consultation on Schools Advance Process

This report relates to representatives of maintained schools only and is for information.

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. This report is to inform Schools Forum about a consultation that will be going out to Maintained Schools in October 2023.
- 1.2. The consultation will collate the view of Maintained schools in regard to a proposal to change the current Monthly Advance payment process of the Schools DSG budget to a quarterly in Advance Process.

2. Summary

- 2.1. The Local Authority has been transferring Schools DSG budgets to schools as part of a Monthly process for many years.
- 2.2. The current process sees payments to Schools going out 13 times a year with adjustments 4 times a year to account for revised payroll figures.
- 2.3. The proposal within the consultation will be to reduce this to 5 payments, 4 quarterly with 1 year end adjustment, made at the following points in the year:
 - 1st April
 - 1st July
 - 1st October
 - 1st January
 - 31st March
- 2.4. It is anticipated that doing this will provide some of the following benefits:

- Allow for the Local Authority to provide a breakdown of the payments to give greater clarity to the schools on the breakdown of the income, Payroll costs and any other adjustments included within the payment.
- Adjusting for the payroll at each quarter and at year end should provide a more uniform distribution of the adjustments across the year and solve the issue of large adjustments having to be made in March during year end processing.
- As funding is being paid quarterly in advance, this should mean greater resource for the schools to aid cashflow.

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Schools Forum - Autumn 2023

Early Years & Childcare Update – Early Education Entitlements and New Entitlements

This report is for all schools forum members and it is for information and comment

Overview

The 30 hours extended entitlement offer was introduced for eligible 3 and 4 year old children in 2017 and is now well embedded. This added to the existing Universal 15 hour offer for all 3 and 4 year old children and both entitlements can be accessed from the term following the child's 3rd birthday. Hours are available for 38 weeks per year or stretched for fewer hours of more weeks (570 / 1140 hours).

Sufficiency of these entitlements are statutory duty functions for LAs alongside the sufficiency of places for eligible funded 2 year olds and childcare for working parents, and are defined in the Childcare Acts 2006 & 2016.

To access the 30 hours extended entitlement the parents / carers must meet a specific eligibility criteria, apply for a 30 code via HMRC and where approved, use this code at a registered early years provider to access the additional 15 hours alongside their 15 hours of universal entitlement.

The entitlement is in place to support working families and to make re-joining the workforce more financially viable for none or part time working parents / carers.

In the March 2023 Central Government Spring Budget announcements, new entitlements are now to be available to parents / carers that meet the same working criteria as for the current 30 hour offer for 3 and 4 year olds. The funded place entitlements will now become available as follows: -

- April 2024 – 15 hours x 38 weeks for eligible working parents of 2 year olds
- September 2024 – 15 hours x 38 weeks for eligible working parents of children 9 months +
- September 2025 – 30 hours x 38 weeks for eligible working parents of children from 9 months + to primary school age

There will also be an increase to the requirements of place needs for school aged children with the requirements that from: -

- September 2026 – all schools to be able to offer 8am to 6pm wraparound – own delivery or via partners.

Engagement of Existing Entitlements

Warwickshire continues to see good engagement with the current 30 hours entitlements with a higher than expected increase for the current year of 5.8%. This is believed to be from an increase in occupation of new housing developments alongside the ongoing pressures from COVID, and the Cost of Living crisis.

	Total Hours*	Children*
Summer Term 2019	743,823	4477
Summer Term 2023	898,460	5301

*Based on actual take up, WCC internal data

Take up of funded places by 3 and 4 year olds from the term after their 3rd birthday overall sees ongoing positive take up: -

- Spring 2023 – 101% ([Local authority interactive tool \(LAIT\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#))

Take up of the funded 2 year old places for disadvantaged children, meeting eligibility criteria, continues to improve year on year with 6.7% growth: -

- Spring 2023 – 72.6%
- Spring 2022 – 65.9%

([Local authority interactive tool \(LAIT\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#))

We predict that the new entitlements, due to start rollout in Spring 2024, will see initial conversion of fee paying children to funded places. It is estimated that longer term, as engagement grows and the entitlements embed we may see a similar engagement to that of the current 30 hours for working parents which is approximately 33% of the relevant child population (with variance as age increases - lower take up for younger age children (9 months+)).

We continue to work with the DfE regarding expected engagement and demand / place sufficiency needs.

Place Delivery

The Warwickshire Early Education Funding directory of providers continues to operate with an annual number of 500 + funded providers delivering the 2, 3 and 4 year old entitlements with around 85% of these settings offering the current 30 hours extended entitlement.

30 hour places are offered by all types of Ofsted registered provision – nurseries, childminders, preschools and out of school clubs and providers exempt from registration in the form of maintained nursery classes, maintained nursery schools and schools (including academies) delivering school run early years provision. The varied offer ensures choice for parents / carers.

Warwickshire has developed an implementation plan to support the roll out of the new entitlements which will be updated and further developed once the direct details of the new entitlements are released by the DfE. This is expected during Autumn Term 2023.

It is reasonable to expect that longer term the new entitlements will see an increased demand for places which will be considered as part of place planning by relevant teams including school place planning.

WCC teams await more details from the DfE regarding the expectations of the new entitlements to then engage with our delivery partners regarding planning and implementation.

Challenges

Warwickshire continues to consider a wide range of factors when monitoring place sufficiency requiring a flexible process and interpretation to monitor need and guide planning. These remain consistent to recent previous years.

Key considerations:

- Five districts and boroughs - substantial differentiation in demographics
- Varied economic impact and work drivers based on district / borough
- Key employment sites in e.g. hospitals and food business distribution
- Financial impact for providers based on location e.g. early education funding rates are standard for all however running costs differ substantially between districts
- Take up of each entitlement varies based on demographics
- Increasing demand for places

Risks

Place sufficiency continues to see pressures from the ongoing wider factors that have remained ever increasing both during and following the Covid-19 pandemic.

The most recent Childcare Sufficiency Assessment is due to be published by end Autumn Term 2023 with a change to data collections to the Spring Term giving a mid-academic year reflection of occupation and vacancies.

Early analysis indicates that Warwickshire continues to remain overall sufficient for places, however spare capacity is now reducing in some specific areas and is being monitored to inform actions needed.

As with 2022, there continues a trend of a very small numbers of nursery closures, however all have been replaced with new provision. We continue to see some small standalone businesses sell to medium sized chain provision with places remaining constant at sites which provides stability and resilience for these settings.

Ongoing monitoring continues:

- Recruitment – continued growing national pressure, increasing numbers of providers are reporting this as a significant issue and for some a barrier to offering their full places
- Implementation of the new funded entitlements – place sufficiency and provider engagement
- Implementation of the new funded entitlements and impact on the existing offers – ensure we maintain ongoing increased engagement with disadvantaged funded 2 year old places and Universal 3 and 4 year old offer
- Increasing demand for Universal and Extended Entitlement 3 and 4 year old hours – more families returning to the workforce due to financial pressures and increased population due to housing build out
- Ongoing impact of the energy crisis on delivery costs and then increase to session charges for parents / carers
- Early Education Funded Entitlement rates
- Decline in childminder numbers

Place Creation & Opportunities

As a county we continue to work collaboratively with School Place Planning to ensure new school provision is being developed with early years premises on site with new provision opening this year in Rugby, followed by additional early years settings in the Leamington Spa area in 2024 with other sites due 2025 / 26.

Item 9

This sits alongside proactive use of developer funding to support local projects as they arise with opportunity to maximise collaboration with delivery partners creating new places within existing provision along with new service opportunities.

The team continues to receive small numbers of enquiries from new providers wishing to open provision across Warwickshire and regular registrations of new childminders, support is proactively provided for these interested parties.

The newly released Childminder Start Up Grant being managed by central government provides a positive opportunity to re-engage new childminders into Warwickshire. A marketing / promotional campaign has recently been released including targeted social media campaigns to key areas of the county. [New animation shows residents the benefits of becoming a childminder – Warwickshire County Council](#)

September 2023 saw a mid financial year increase to funding rates for 2, 3 and 4 year old entitlements as part of the central government Spring 2023 budget announcements, this sits alongside the indication of further uplifts for the 2024 / 25 financial year.

The financial investment has seen the ability to increase hourly funding rates in Warwickshire via the allocated Early Years Supplementary Grant (for remainder of 23 / 24 financial year) as follows: -

- Funded 2 year olds - £7.81 (increase of £1.91)
- Funded 3 & 4 year olds - £4.98 ((increase of £0.47) inc allocated TPPG £0.03) = £5.01)
- Maintained Nursery School Supplementary Funding (Universal 3 / 4 yr hours - £4.01 (increase of £0.21)
- Early Years Pupil Premium - £0.66 (increase of £0.04)
- Disability Access Fund - £858.92 (increase of £30.92)

Evaluation

At the current time available information indicates a relatively stable market with sufficient availability of all funded entitlement places, which in the main meets demand. Increased pressures are being noted for SEND places and in key areas of housing growth across the county.

Early Years and childcare place sufficiency for all entitlements will continue to be monitored closely, with process and actions adapted on a term by term basis as required where information identifies a specific areas of concern.

As key information is shared by the DfE regarding the new entitlements a proactive campaign will be implemented to work with our existing delivery partners and parents / carers as key stakeholders along with new provision that develops.

Report Author:

Mandy Latham, Lead Commissioner Early Years & Childcare Entitlements, Sufficiency & Business

14th September 2023

Item 10

Schools Forum**28 September 2023****Academy Update**

This report relates to maintained and academy schools and is for information and comments.

Recommendation

Schools Forum is recommended to:

1. Note the number of maintained schools, academy schools and new conversions.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Schools Forum receives update reports on the number of maintained schools, academy schools and any new or expected conversions when conversions take place.

2. The current position

- 2.1 The table below details the current profile of Warwickshire Schools including the two new schools Oakley school (All Through) and The Griffin Primary School.

Table 1: Current schools' breakdown in Warwickshire as of 2 September 2023.

School Type	Maintained	Academies	Total (All schools)
Primary	109	86	195
Secondary	1	35	36
All-through	0	2	2
All-through Special	2	7	9
Primary Special	0	1	1
Secondary Special	0	1	1
TOTAL	112	132	244

Note that Maintained Nursery Schools are not permitted to convert to Academy status.

- 2.2 This now means that 54.10% of Warwickshire maintained schools have converted to academy status.
- 2.3 There have been 6 schools converting to academy status since the last schools forum report in September 2022.

Table 2: Schools converted to Academy Status.

School Name	Date
Telford Junior	01/09/2023
Dunchurch Boughton C.Of E. (Voluntary Aided) Junior School	01/09/2023
Dunchurch Infant School	01/09/2023
Provost Williams C.Of E. Primary School	01/09/2023
Moreton Morrell C.Of E. Primary School	01/03/2023
Newbold And Tredington C.Of E. Primary School	01/11/2022

- Telford Junior joined Elm Tree Multi Academy Trust
- Moreton Morrell C. Of E. Primary School and Newbold And Tredington C. Of E. Primary School joined The Fosse Multi Academy Trust

Also, Arley Primary School is planning to convert to academy status by 1 January 2024.

- 2.5 There are currently 109 maintained schools in the primary phase in Warwickshire, comprising 18 infant schools, 11 Junior schools and 80 primary schools.

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Audit and Standards Committee

21 September 2023

SEND Funding

Recommendation

That the Audit & Standards Committee notes and comments upon the growth in SEND provision and expenditure.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Children and Families Act 2014 brought significant reforms to the area of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The Act introduced Education, Health and Care plans for children and young people with SEND and extended the age range from 0-25. Local authorities are responsible for funding provision for children with Education Health and Care (EHC) plans from the High Needs Block (part of Dedicated Schools Grant allocated by Department for Education).
- 1.2 The proportion of school age children in England with SEND has risen from 2.9% in 2018 to 4.3% in 2023, and in Warwickshire it has grown from 3.1% to 3.9% over the same time period.
- 1.3 In Warwickshire, our children, and young people with SEND progress well and achieve above average attainment and remain in education employment and training. Furthermore, a higher proportion of young people with SEND achieve a level 3 qualification than other areas.
- 1.4 There are areas for improvement however, with the number of children being permanently excluded from school having increased and the number of children persistently absent and severely absent from school is too high. This is for children with SEN and children with an EHC plan.
- 1.5 There is growing demand for support with an increase from 2021 to 2022 of 690 to 1,349 requests for EHC needs assessments and over 800 requests for special school provision considered at the Council's High Needs Provision Panel in 2022/23. The Council takes over 5,000 decisions each year which can be appealed to the SEND tribunal should the family disagree with the decision.
- 1.6 From a financial perspective, the County Council Network reported a £2.4bn cumulative deficit on High Needs Block funding in 2022/23. The Council identified pressures on the High Needs Block in 2020 and set up the SEND and Inclusion Change Programme in response. Through a combination of additional funding from

Department from Education, moving allowable funds between Schools Block and High Needs Block and the impact of the SEND and Inclusion Change Programme, the forecast in-year deficit was significantly reduced in 2021/22 and 2022/23. However, forecasts for 2023/24 show an increased deficit once more, partly in response to growing demand. More detailed financial implications for Warwickshire are set out below.

- 1.7 Warwickshire is currently taking part in the Delivering Better Value programme set up by the Department for Education for 55 local authorities to identify areas to improve value for money funded by the High Needs Block (HNB).
- 1.8 Warwickshire is subject to a SEND local area inspection by Ofsted which could take place at any time within the next four years. At the previous inspection in 2020, Warwickshire was directed to implement a 'Written Statement of Action' with five issues to be addressed. The department for Education has acknowledged the good progress made on all areas.
- 1.9 In 2023, the Department for Education set out proposed changes to the national system in the SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan, to be delivered by 2025.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 The Council continues to expect the cost of funding schools and relevant pupil-related services to be contained within the level of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). This is in accordance with Schools and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations. Deficits must be carried forward to be dealt with within the schools budget. However, the existing and predicted increase in the DSG HNB debt (cumulative deficit) is a pressure on the Council since it is necessary to ensure the Council's overall financial resilience is maintained.
- 2.2 Should the Council wish to fund any part of the deficit from sources other than the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) then it must apply to the Secretary of State to disregard the regulations. The position of the Council is not to make such a request. There is a collective view across local authorities (see section 4 below) that the funding deficit has been created through insufficient funding from central government to implement national reforms at a local level. Whilst the SEND and Inclusion Change Programme seeks to ensure financial sustainability and value for money, from the outset it has been clear that a balanced budget in the High Needs Block is not achievable. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities require local authorities to hold DSG deficits in a separate reserve up to and including the accounts for 2025/26. Councils are awaiting central government proposals for funding DSG deficits at a national level before the statutory override ceases at the end of 2025/26, but there remains a risk that Councils may be asked to fund historic deficits.

- 2.3 The Council has set aside sufficient funding in reserves to create an equal and opposite position to offset up until the end of 2022/23 (£20.416m). This is an accounting measure to ensure a balanced budget. The approved (current) MTFS allocations include continued yearly contributions to this “matching” reserve of the following amounts (until a sustainable solution is in place).

£m	
2023/24	4.855
2024/25	5.992
2025/26	2.394
2026/27	1.394
2027/28	1.394
Total	16.029

- 2.4 Based on the current Q1 forecasted overspend of £8.732m, it will be necessary to further top up the matching reserve by £2.913m bringing the top up reserve to £29.148m. Future years’ overspends in excess of the amounts planned into the MTFS (table above) would need similar timed top ups adding to the pressures on the MTFS.

3. Environmental Implications

- 3.1 Environmental implications will occur where the Council seeks to build new schools or extensions to existing schools as part of the Capital Programme. These will be explored and assessed within each capital project.

In addition to this, when children are unable to attend their local school and must travel across the county or into other local authorities for specialist provision, then there are both environmental and financial implications.

4. Supporting Information

National system

- 4.1 In March 2023, the Government published the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan. It reflects on the current national system stating:

The SEND and Alternative Provision Green Paper identified 3 key challenges facing the system:

- *The system is failing to deliver improved outcomes for children and young people with SEND. Children and young people with SEND are not consistently*

being helped to fulfil their potential.

- *Parents' confidence in the system is in decline. Too many parents have lost faith in a system that is not sufficiently responsive to them, which is increasingly adversarial, and in which they face long waiting times to access information and support for their children, including accessing therapists and mental health support.*

- *Despite substantial additional investment, the system has become financially unsustainable. The government has increased investment in high needs by over 50% from 2019-20 to 2023-24, with no marked improvement in outcomes or experiences.*

- 4.2 County Councils face particular challenges, especially with regard to access to local provision and transport. In response to the SEND & AP Improvement Plan, the County Council Network (CCN) commented:

County leaders have consistently argued that there needs to be more clarity on what support is reasonably expected for children with SEND bearing in mind the funding envelope local authorities are working from. Therefore, the plans to provide clarity for parents and professionals are an important step, as is the investment in new specialist schools and staffing.

However, local authorities are already struggling with the deficits built up in the system meeting the statutory demands from the 2015 reforms – CCN warned last year these are set to balloon to £3.6bn by 2025 on current projections. Reform will only be successful if it builds on an existing system that is stable and CCN urges the government to ensure it expands the safety valve programme.

- 4.3 Warwickshire is also in the f40 group – a group of 42 local authorities with the lowest education funding. The impact of being in the lowest group of education funding is twofold as schools receive less funding to provide targeted SEND support and the local authorities receive less in their High Needs Block allocation.

- 4.4 Organisations such as County Council Network, f40 group and the Local Government Association continue to make representations for sustainable funding to be allocated to local authorities for children and young people with SEND. Participation in schemes such as Delivering Better Value (see appendix 1) are helping to build the evidence base for what a sustainable level of funding is.

Growing demand

- 4.5 As noted above, the number of children with SEND has grown year on year both nationally and locally. There are two levels of SEND. The lower level is referred to as Special Educational Needs (SEN) School Support. The number of children at SEN

School Support has increased from 9,592 in 2019 to 11,596 in 2023 (20.9% increase). Children with high level needs are supported with an EHC plan, with provision funded by the local authority (through the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant). At school age this number of children has risen from 2,599 in 2019 to 3,497 in 2023 (34.6% increase). Over the full age range of 0-25, Warwickshire support 5,314 children and young people with EHC plans. The top 3 primary needs for those with an EHC plan are Autistic spectrum disorder (27.4%), Social, emotional, and mental health (17.6%) and Severe learning difficulty (15.9%).

- 4.6 In terms of population within the County, Warwick district has 1,775 children and young people with EHC plans (31%), Nuneaton and Bedworth 1,610 (28%), Rugby 924 (16%), Stratford 701 (12%) and North Warwickshire 514 (9%).
- 4.7 This growth is due to a number of factors including higher levels of need, improved infant mortality and population growth. A summary by the Local Government Association provides a more detailed view of the reasons for growing demand and is attached at Appendix 2.

Positive outcomes

- 4.8 There are a number of achievements by our children and young people with SEND to celebrate.
- 4.9 Young people with SEND in Warwickshire achieved higher Attainment 8 scores (the measure to compare attainment scores at the end of Key Stage 4 when GCSEs are taken) than national average. In 2021/22, our young people with an EHC plan achieved 14.7 at the end of the Key Stage 4 compared to national average of 14.3 (although the scores of young people with EHC plans is lower than statistical neighbours of 14.9).
- 4.10 More of our young people with SEND achieve a level 3 qualification at aged 19 (16% with an EHC plan) compared to national averages and statistical neighbours (both 14%).
- 4.11 A lower percentage of 16–17-year-olds with SEND are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), (4.7% with an EHC plan) compared to national average (6.9%) and statistical neighbours (6.7%).
- 4.12 The number of children with EHC plans in local mainstream settings has increased from 31.3% in 2021 to 34.1% in 2023 (2.8% increase).

Areas for improvement

- 4.13 There remain areas for improvement, however. For example, less children in Warwickshire with EHC plans make good progress at the end of the Early Years

Foundation Stage (5%) than the national average (7%).

- 4.14 Attendance is a particular issue. In Autumn 2022, 7.6% of children in Warwickshire with an EHC plan were severely absent compared to 5.4% nationally. Further to this, the number of permanent exclusions of children with SEND has increased from 4 children in 2020/21 to 13 children in 2022/23.

Recent changes

- 4.15 In July 2020 Cabinet agreed to invest in the SEND and Inclusion Change Programme and £3.9m has been invested since 2020. This was in response to financial forecasting that predicated a cumulative overspend on the DSG High Needs Block of £105m by 2028 if no action was taken. Following the inception of the SEND and Inclusion Change programme as well as additional Department for Education funding the prospective cumulative deficit has reduced considerably to approximately £38m (£67m decrease) but is still of great concern.
- 4.16 The programme identified a number of key priority areas to support the delivery of the vision and objectives:
- Improve outcomes for our children and young people with SEND by changing the conversation in local schools.
 - Intervening earlier and providing clear pathways of support, taking decisions in a clear, fair and transparent way by reforming our decision-making panels.
 - Ensuring that systems are sustainable, so that we are working within our allocated funding. This includes investing in new SEND provision in mainstream schools and specialist provision.
 - Securing education, employment and training and young people with SEND (aged 16-25).
- 4.17 To achieve this the programme proposed whole system change through a series of projects. The focus was on the maintenance of 'promoting inclusion' in mainstream settings, giving schools the skills and resources to meet the needs of learners in their local schools and building the confidence of parents and carers. The programme also sought to establish further resourced provision and specialist provision in line with population growth and the changing needs of the cohort.
- 4.18 So far the programme has 16 completed projects with 7 still live. The project has delivered a number of improvements to the local system including:
- Establishment of a new Parent Carer Forum – Warwickshire Parent Carer Voice.
 - Opening of a new 80 place special school, The Warwickshire Academy at

Exhall on the former RNIB Pears Centre site, acquired by the Council through a capital investment over £15m

- A capital strategy for SEND, leading to the opening of 8 new SEND resourced provisions since September 2022 and agreed expansion of two special schools (Evergreen and Oak Wood).
- Issuing of new SEND and Inclusion Guidance to schools, as well as guidance on transitions between settings and the use of alternative provision.
- New processes for decision-making panels - reducing the number of panels from 9 to 3 and increasing the number and percentage of children with SEND supported in their local mainstream school.
- Launching of the new Local Offer website.
- Piloted the 'Inclusion Framework' with schools in Rugby to improve early identification and early intervention.
- Devised a new 'top-up funding' system to ensure schools receive the right funding at the right time.
- Streamlined processes for SEN transport and changed the model of delivery for independent travel training.
- Introduced a quality assurance process for EHC plans.
- Robust financial management through new synergy finance module (now live).
- Increased skills and knowledge of teaching staff (Inclusion Framework project staff confidence increased from 40% to 60% in using the SEND guidance 2022/23).

4.19 A smaller number of projects remain live. The 'Service Reviews' project is focussed on changing how Council services operate to ensure they support early identification and early intervention through a 'graduated approach'. Other projects involve the extension of the Inclusion Framework trial, the roll-out of the new top-up funding arrangements, emotionally based school avoidance and resolving disagreements (123 appeals to the SEND tribunal were lodged in 2022 in respect of Warwickshire). In addition, there are projects focussed on 16-25 aged young people with SEND - 'Preparation for Adulthood' and 'Supported Internships.'

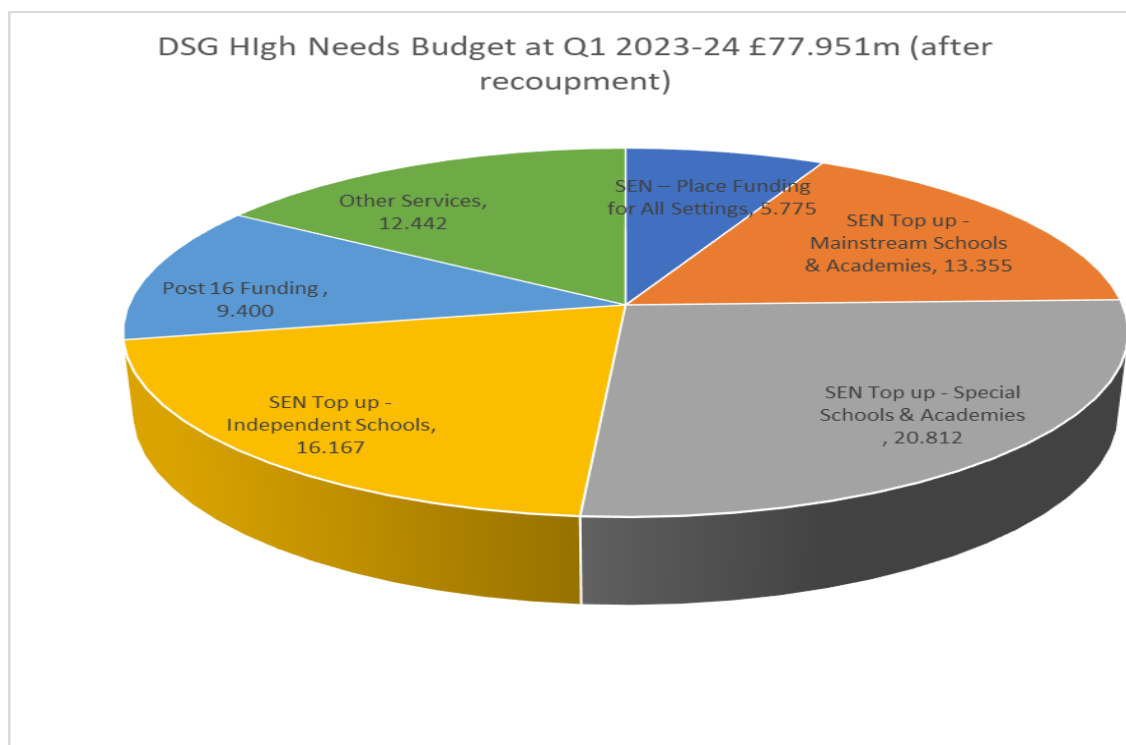
4.20 In addition to this, significant activity has taken place under the 'Written Statement of Action' to introduce an Inclusion Charter into local schools, improve our communication and co-production with parents and carers and young people and reduce waiting lists for autism assessment.

How the funding works

4.21 The majority of expenditure in SEND is from the High Needs Block (HNB) of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

4.22 The total DSG HNB for 2023-24 is £94.682m. The Education and Skills funding Agency (ESFA) then deduct £16.731m for Academy School Recoupment (the ESFA pay those schools directly). This leaves £77.951m of the High Needs Block in 2023/24 which is

distributed as set out below:



4.23 The spend from the High Needs Block for SEND is broken up into five broad areas:

4.24 *Place funding* - special schools and resourced provision are allocated per place at:

- £6k for resourced provision in mainstream schools / academies
- £6k for all mainstream school / alternative provision / further education post-16 places
- £10k for pre-16 alternative provision (including resourced provision at alternative provision)
- £10k for special schools (including Post-16 at special school)

This covers general education costs, and a part of the additional needs for a child with an EHC plan.

4.25 *Top-up funding* – maintained schools and academies are paid an additional amount to fund the interventions required for needs identified in EHC plans, above the level covered by the place funding (in a special school) or the notional funding (in a mainstream school). This amount varies for each child

but averages £8,218 across Mainstream Schools and £12,581 across Special Schools.

- 4.26 *Independent specialist provision* is used when a child's needs cannot be met in a Warwickshire school. In these cases, Warwickshire will be invoiced by the school and will pay them directly to place and support the child. These costs, again, can vary greatly and average £60,377 per student for the independent sector.
- 4.27 *Post 16 placements* – this is a mixture of place and top-up funding for young people in college placements and post-16 special school placements.
- 4.28 *Other services* funded from the HNB include the Integrated Services (such as the Specialist Teaching Service and Flexible Learning), the Area Behaviour Partnerships and Resourced Provision.
- 4.29 Since the introduction and ring fencing of the 4 DSG blocks, the DSG HNB has over-spent. The in-year deficits and overall debt (also known as cumulative deficit) is illustrated in the following table.

£m	Reserve Balance overdrawn (start of year)	Out-turn (23/24Q1 forecast)	Reserve Balance Overdrawn (end of year)
2019/20	0.000	5.240	5.240
2020/21	5.240	8.610	13.850
2021/22	13.850	2.130	15.980
2022/23	15.980	4.436	20.416
2023/24 (forecast)	20.416	8.732	29.148

- 4.30 It should be noted that between 2019 and 2021 the number of requests for EHC needs assessment reduced from 827 to 690. However this increased in 2022 to 1,349 (95.5% increase, although this is mitigated by a change in recording). This led to an increase in the number of EHC plans issued from 492 in 2021 to 661 in 2022 (34.4% increase). In addition, there has been an increase in requests for specialist provision which has led to increased use independent specialist provision in 2022. More children and young people with EHC plans and more of those in independent specialist provision, along with increased unit costs, have led to a marked increase in the forecast overspend in 2023/24 which may worsen.

- 4.31 The Council has set aside sufficient funding in reserves to create an equal and opposite position as noted in the Financial Implications section of this report.
- 4.32 It is clear that if the current forecasted 2023/24 position continues then an increase in the 2023/24 contribution to the reserve may be required, and possibly increases to future years contributions.

Going forward

- 4.33 The Council has paused any new projects in the SEND & Inclusion Change Programme for a variety of reasons:
- The Council is taking part in a Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme commissioned by the Department for Education for 55 local authorities with significant cumulative overspend in the High Needs Block. Warwickshire is in tranche 3 (see Appendix 1).
 - The latest needs assessment and data requires a rethink of current priorities (eg. data on severe absence).
 - The SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2019-23 has come to an end and a new strategy is being developed.
 - A new local area inspection framework has been published and partners are working together to prepare for inspection.
 - There have been changes in leadership within the Council's Education Services.

5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps.

- 5.1 There is significant activity in autumn term 2023 reflecting on how the current local system is working to achieve outcomes for our children and young people with SEND and the value from High Needs Block expenditure. Predominantly this reflection is through the DBV programme and the development of a new SEND & Inclusion Strategy. The DBV programme is scheduled to finish first, leading to a wider strategy and delivery plan being presented to Cabinet in early Summer 2024.

Appendices

1. Appendix 1: Delivering Better Value
2. Appendix 2: LGA SEND System Recap

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s):

Other members:

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Appendices

1. Appendix 1: Delivering Better Value

Warwickshire County Council is set to take part in a government programme to drive forward its commitment to improve services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Warwickshire is one of 55 local authorities participating in the Delivering Better Value (DBV) for SEND programme which has been created to identify the highest impact changes that can be made to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND, and to optimise the use of finances.

By participating in the programme, the Council will receive dedicated support from Newton Europe, a transformation and improvement partner, and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), the local government accounting standard setter in the UK. They will provide valuable expertise and skills on identifying opportunities for change. In addition, there will be the opportunity for the Council to bid for grant funding from the Department for Education (DfE) to support the implementation of any proposed changes.

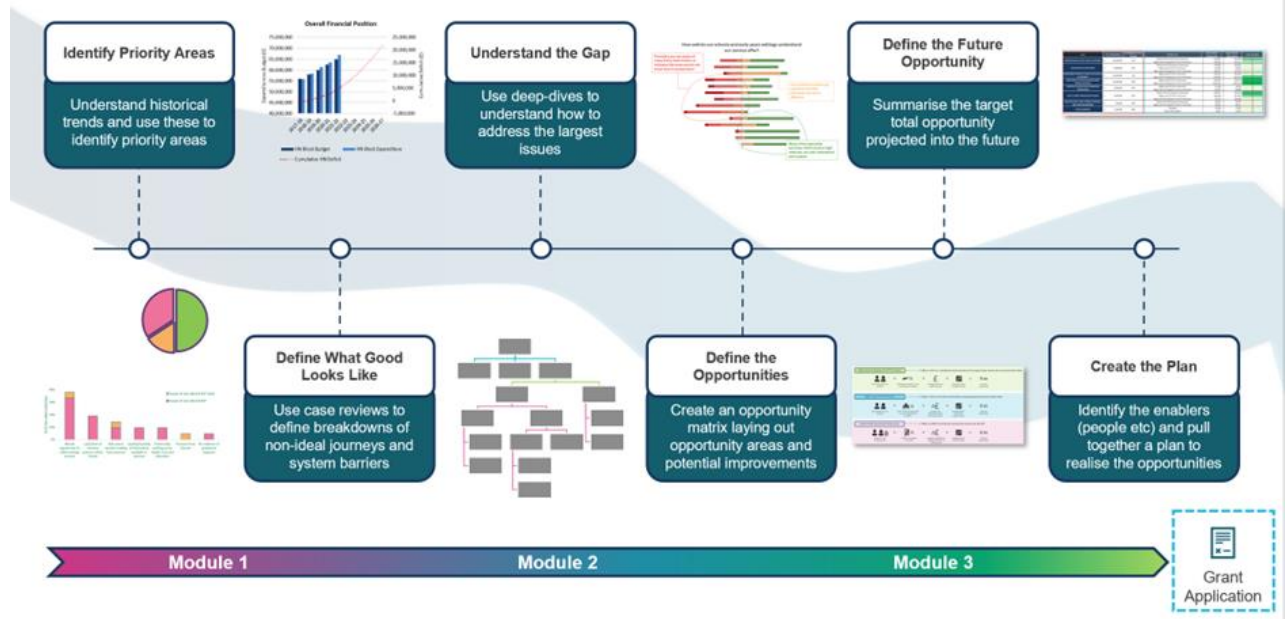
To help identify opportunities for change, the programme will draw on the expertise of local partners and practitioners from across education, health and social care and will engage with parents, carers, and children and young people to hear their views. Listening to these experiences will help the Council to build a clear evidence base which will then be used to explore options for change.

Throughout the course of the programme, there will be a range of opportunities for people to participate in workshops, drop-in and focused studies. There will also be surveys for people to fill in. Some of the activities will be targeted at specific groups identified by the CIPFA.

Following this initial engagement activity, a plan will then be created to deliver any improvements identified across the local system. Through all the activity the programme will place children and young people with SEND at the centre of the approach and decision making.

The DBV programme is a modular approach, incorporating training, data analysis and engagement activities. This is not a 'one size fits all' approach the support is tailored to each local authority, within this framework, to ensure everyone receives the best outcome.

● **DBV Diagnostic: Illustrative Local Authority Experience**



Appendix 2: Local Government Association – SEND System Recap (2021)

Demand has gone up

As of January 2021, the number of children and young people with an EHC plan has increased by 11 per cent (60,000) over the previous 12 months alone.

This unprecedented demand for additional SEND support has been caused by a perfect storm of factors:

- **More pupils:** school census data shows that between 2014 and 2018 the number of pupils in all schools in England grew by just over 600,000 – an increase of 7.5 per cent, with some local areas having experienced much higher population growth than others.
- **A change in expectations:** the Children’s and Families Act 2014 rightly raised the expectations of parents and the aspirations of pupils through a existing code of SEND practice expecting all children to receive the best possible education and support.
- **Extended eligibility:** many more young people aged 16 to 25 are now on EHC plans.
- **More children with complex needs:** advances in life expectancy, more awareness and better diagnoses means there are now more children and young people with needs that are difficult to meet within mainstream schools.
- **Current secondary school attainment measures:** do not currently reward schools with a high degree of inclusion.

Funding has stagnated

Councils have overspent their allocated budgets for children with SEND, known as the High Needs Block, for the last four years.

This has seen them ‘top up’ budgets with funding from elsewhere such as general schools budgets. However this flexibility to transfer funding has now been significantly curtailed by government restrictions, further exacerbating pressures on councils.

This makes it more difficult to invest in the early support services that can help children and young people integrate into a mainstream education rather than need more expensive specialist support, such as family-based early help services, speech and language therapies, physiotherapy and occupational services and child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS).

This significant growth in demand has left councils struggling to provide the vital support children with SEND need.

Schools are under increasing pressure

At the same time, funding pressures on mainstream schools as a result of inflation, increasing teachers’ pay and higher pension contributions for support staff, mean that many can’t provide extra support for complex needs.

By pursuing an EHC plan schools receive further funding from councils. But schools must meet the first £6,000 of any additional support required, leaving increasing numbers of pupils without the help they need.

There are many more children and young people who have special educational needs, but who fall below the threshold required for an EHC plan. The funding for the additional support they need to fulfil their potential is met from mainstream school budgets.

Following the 2021 Spending Review, the Government announced £2.6 billion for new school places for children with SEND. Whilst this announcement was welcomed, further support for children with SEND is urgently needed to help address lost learning during the pandemic.

The Department for Education (DfE) has allocated an additional £780 million for high needs budgets in 2022/23, but it is vital that councils are provided with long-term sufficiency of, and certainty over, funding to support children with SEND. To ensure this, the Government must urgently conclude its ongoing review of the SEND system.

High needs specialist provision has increased

Specialist schools are largely full and councils have found it difficult to create new provision.

Over the last five years 164,500 pupils with EHCPs, around 50 per cent, are being educated in specialist schools.

Many have to travel long distances, at great expense to councils, often to more costly independent provision, as a result of earlier cuts to specialist services. We are now in the second year in which there are more children and young people with EHC plans in such schools than there are in mainstream education.

Councils are now reaching a tipping point

Whilst it is encouraging that the Government has allocated additional funding of £780 million for high needs budgets in 2022/23, it isn't enough to provide councils with long-term certainty and funding, particularly considering councils' existing High Needs Block deficits which we estimate to be around £600 million.

There is simply not enough money to keep up with demand, leaving many councils concerned that they will be unable to meet their statutory duties and meaning children with high needs or disabilities could miss out on a mainstream education.

Many children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities could miss out on the high quality education they need if councils aren't given adequate funding to manage the unprecedented rise in demand. **This is why we are calling on Government to provide councils with long-term certainty for funding.**

Item 12

Schools Forum – Forward Plan 2023-24

The table below contains provisional items for the Schools Forum for the next year. This table will be updated and reported to each meeting of the Forum.

Date	For Decision	For Information / Comment
16 November 2023 - Extraordinary (date is Subject to change) 2pm to 4 pm Microsoft Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.5% transfer (if required) 	
11 January 2024 2pm to 4pm Microsoft Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2024-25 National Funding Formula 2024-25 Early Years Funding Formula 2024-25 Pupil Growth Fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DSG 2023-24 Forecast DSG Recovery Plan Update
21 March 2024 2pm to 4pm Microsoft Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DSG 2024-25 Budget Section 48 – Scheme for Financing Schools (subject to any ESFA guidance changes) Annual review of future meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DSG Recovery Plan Update 2023-24 SF Membership update Update on Academisation of Schools
20 June 2024 (TBC) 2pm to 4pm Face-to-Face (TBC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> De-delegation & Disapplication Consultation Timetable 2025-26 Section 48 – Scheme for Financing Schools (subject to any ESFA guidance changes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DSG 2023-24 Outturn DSG Recovery Plan Update
26 September 2024 (TBC) 2pm to 4pm Microsoft Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> De-delegation 2025-26 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DSG 2024-25 Forecast 2025-26 National Funding Formula (year 6) Timetable and consultation Estimated Schools Budget 2025-26 DSG Recovery Plan Update Academy Update Early Years & Childcare Place Sufficiency

Further meetings will be set up once dates for Cabinet have been set so as to avoid any meeting conflicts.

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