

## Appendix B: Reasons for 'Yes' or 'No' response to consultation

In response to question 1: **Do you agree that the Local Authority should propose to the Schools Forum a transfer of up to 0.50% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block to support the High Needs budget in 2024-25, if sufficient funding is available without affecting the 'hard' NFF allocations to schools?**

	Responses	%
Yes 0.5%	15	39
Yes 0.25%	3	8
No	20	53
<b>Total</b>	38	100

### **Reasons for 'Yes' responses:**

Higher than ever levels of acutely needy pupils entering the mainstream school system means that high needs funding will be more appropriate than ever.

The SEND needs in school are increasing exponentially

Currently have high levels of SEN and EHCP

The increase in EHCP's and need across Warwickshire means further funding is needed.

Knowing how tight the high needs budget is, I believe it is fair for all schools to contribute towards this. However, all schools are also struggling and a 0.25% is a fair compromise.

The high needs block needs this financial support in order to continue provision.

We are seeing - since the pandemic - that we are presented with more SEND challenges with smaller school budgets. This is having a negative affect on our children with needs and the provision we can provide them. It is very difficult to ensure quality EDI across our provision when we are given less money to do so.

From a moral perspective I cannot see how anyone could object to this if it is NOT affecting the budget of their own school?

The high level of SEN pupils means that more budget is required.

Slippery slope argument - it might not affect 'hard' NFF funding this year but what about in subsequent years.

Our school cannot afford to take any loss to our budget, it is too great. We have to manage SEND provision in our school ourselves for the majority as the EHCP process is so long and slow. This means that we need all of our funding to support those children, this includes staffing.

This funding needs to be ring fenced as other SEN funding is not

**Reasons for 'No' responses:**

Costs associated to supporting children through High Needs block funding are incredibly high with reducing services outside of school available. More funding is essential and must be diverted from elsewhere.

Funding in the Schools Block should be maximised

The school cannot afford a budget cut and it is not clear that the higher needs money is well managed.

The school cannot afford a budget cut and not is not clear how well the higher needs budget is managed.

We are facing extreme pressures from the number of FAP students who we are having to take on roll, many of whom have been permanently excluded. These students often need alternative provision or SEND support to enable them to be successful, we will use our funds for this. We are looking to expand our alternative curriculum and we use alternative provision effectively, which has prevented many permanent exclusions. We cannot afford for money to be taken out of our High Needs budget if we are to continue to develop our provision.

From our individual school's point of view neither option makes a financial difference.

I don't think the money should be transferred from school block - because we have to show the government that we do not get enough in Warwickshire in our SEND funding - if we take it from school block then school block may be reduced by the government as it is not really spare money as our schools are going into bigger deficit budgets than ever.

If we contribute, we are covering up the need for additional funding plus we don't directly impact- my budget is for my pupils.

I am unaware of how this money is going to be used in Warwickshire in schools

This action will hide a significant national issue of underfunding SEND services.

If we contribute, the true nature of the SEND funding crisis will not be evident. More SEND funding is needed in schools to support high needs children

The loss of school revenue will put severe pressure on our ability to manage budgets.

The NFF is a very imperfect system to allocate funding that delivers the MFG or below for some schools and slightly above for some others who have a significant level of other factors which require expenditure to support. This is a National problem of underfunding for all Warwickshire Schools compared to the median amount per School nationally. In an ideal world the SEND budget would be fully funded centrally and we would ordinarily support that but in the current economic climate a loss of circa £70k in terms of our School would require redundancies at the School, probably from the pastoral and SEND team who are currently dealing with a significant increased demand as Schools battle to respond to a reduction of central services and a higher threshold of need. That increasing demand is also causing significantly more stress and pressure on an already stretched team of dedicated professionals. A reduction in funding is likely to exacerbate that pressure. It is also likely that any reduction in our provision due to funding would potentially increase our call on the central SEND funding for additional alternative provision or EHCP support. It seems counter intuitive, unfair and disproportionate to penalise those Schools with significant other factors, and demands, which generates higher funding with a reduction in funding allocated when it is not required in the NFF and the subsequent impact upon those Schools whilst other Secondary Schools suffer no impact by contributing zero towards the transfer to the HNB. This seems an inequitable solution. A loss of circa £350k over our 5 years would significantly impact the viability of the School with 83% of our costs spent on teaching and educational support staff in a climate of rising staff costs and rising overheads at the same time as only a 1.9% AWPU increase being offered from the DfES for 24/25 and lower for some factors in the NFF.

Money in the schools block should be used for all schools currently, rather than cover debt of overspend of the high needs block.

The consultation document states that there is an expected gap of £11m between HN expenditure and funding by 2024/25. The proposed changes will raise an estimated £2.225m (for 0.5% transfer) or £1.127m (for 0.25% transfer). It is not clear from the consultation document how far this transfer will address the funding gap, and what other steps are being taken to address the gap if the proposed transfer does not cover the full gap. Without this information, it is difficult for our Governing Body to assess what benefits to High Needs support across the LA area, and for our Trust's school population, will result in and what action is being taken avoid the need for further transfers in future.

In addition:

The proposed amounts are based on the incorrect DfE estimates for the NFF that have since been corrected - our Trust will be further affected with funding reduced by around £60k by our estimates.

We are already investing heavily in support and arrangements for our students with SEND and those who have non-statemented needs. The proposed transfer will put further pressure on our ability to fund this support with no clear information about how LA investment in support for mainstream settings will bring benefits to offset the increased funding pressures on our local provision.

Having consulted with our school leaders and SENCOs, we do not believe that the transfer of funds is a effective use of resources. This is because we do not believe that this would lead to schools benefiting from any increased or improved front-line SEND provision or services from the LA, leaving children worse off, and school leaders and staff in an ever-challenging situation in trying to meet needs.

With more schools going into deficit every year, unfunded teacher pay rises, rising supplier costs, growing SEN needs within our own school and preschool, time and money spent fighting for EHCPs with the LA, and barely managing to balance our budget last year for the next 3 years, our school needs all of its budgetary resource as it is. We continue to channel a lot of resource into early identification and intervention of SEN needs for children at the very beginning of their education.

The SEN funding crisis has been years in the making, and is only getting worse. Taking yet more money away from school budgets at a time when they are under the severest of strains risks pushing us, along with many other schools, into deficit.

In response to question 3: **Do you agree that the Local Authority should propose to the Schools Forum a transfer of up to 0.50% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block to support the High Needs budget in 2024-25, even if this will affect (i.e. reduce) the ‘hard’ NFF allocations to schools?**

	Responses	%
Yes 0.5%	10	26
Yes 0.25%	7	18
No	21	55
<b>Total</b>	38	100

**Reasons for ‘Yes’ responses:**

Increased funding is essential.

I completely acknowledge the challenges the LA are under but there is real conflict between the school losing money to fund this initiative, while at the same time having an significant increase in pupils with SEN needs. With many of them not qualifying for any external additional funding. I also struggle with a perceived perception that Primary can accommodate these pupils but as soon as they get to High School age then specialist provision is the only avenue considered.

The increase in EHCP's and need across Warwickshire means further funding is needed.

Knowing how tight the high needs budget is, I believe it is fair for all schools to contribute towards this. However, all schools are also struggling and a 0.25% is a fair compromise.

The high needs block needs this financial support in order to continue provision.

From the perspective of my 3 tiny schools, a drop in funding of only a few thousand does affect our ability to provide adequate support for all pupils, both those with and without special needs. The NFF has (on the whole) had a positive effect on small schools, so anything that threatens that upward trend is concerning. Of course, we all want adequate funding for EHCP children, and places in resource provision for those children who would benefit, but my answer to this question is selfishly being driven by the context of the budgets in my schools.

Very High level of SEND requires more funding.

I recognise the need for additional funding and the document presents the need well but I also know that schools still bear the brunt of the majority of funding for SEND. The funding from an EHCP does not cover the additional spend needed and there are MANY students for whom we do not get additional funding yet their needs require additional money in order to support them i.e Dare to dream is being heavily promoted by WCC but at a cost of £250 per session it is very costly. To meet this spend money must go to to schools therefore I support the 0.25 transfer as this supports WCC whilst also recognising that schools require money to fund the support of a growing number of students.

Our school cannot afford to take any loss to our budget, it is too great. We have to manage SEND provision in our school ourselves for the majority as the EHCP process is so long and slow. This means that we need all of our funding to support those children, this includes staffing.

Most LSA are paid through high needs funding anyway

**Reasons for 'No' responses:**

School budgets are stretched to the limits. This cannot impact on them - there needs to be a separate funding stream.

No - not fair and equitable for other recipients of this funding.

Funding in the Schools Block should be maximised

If we contribute, we are covering up the need for additional funding plus we don't directly impact - my budget is for my pupils.

I am unaware of how this money is going to be used in Warwickshire in schools

Reduction in funding will not enable schools to support SEND provision.

I am unsure but there is not an option. It depends on the govts publication of funding per pupil which has not been finalised

Money in the schools block should be used for all schools currently, rather than cover debt of overspend of the high needs block.

Having consulted with our school leaders and SENCOs, we do not believe that the transfer of funds is a effective use of resources. This is because we do not believe that this would lead to schools benefiting from any increased or improved front-line SEND provision or services from the LA, leaving children worse off, and school leaders and staff in an ever-challenging situation in trying to meet needs.

With more schools going into deficit every year, unfunded teacher pay rises, rising supplier costs, growing SEN needs within our own school and preschool, time and money spent fighting for EHCPs with the LA, and barely managing to balance our budget last year for the next 3 years, our school needs all of its budgetary resource as it is. We continue to channel a lot of resource into early identification and intervention of SEN needs for children at the very beginning of their education.

The SEN funding crisis has been years in the making, and is only getting worse. Taking yet more money away from school budgets at a time when they are under the severest of strains risks pushing us, along with many other schools, into deficit.

In response to question 5: **Do you think that a transfer of a different % should be proposed to the Schools Forum?**

	Responses	%
Yes	7	18%
No	31	82%
Total	38	100%

**Reasons for 'Yes' responses:**

Up to 2% if possible

0.1% or any points below 0.25%

A much higher percentage with 20% on SEN register and 6% with an EHCP this should be factored into mainstream school budgets and allocation of funds.

Unsure - further information is needed about the impact of the corrected NFF estimates, and further information about how the £11m funding gap will be addressed beyond using transfers from the Schools Block and clarity on the benefits that a funding transfer could bring to support in mainstream settings through improvements in support and co-ordination.

**Reasons for 'No' responses:**

At this stage I feel we are in a better position to use our High Needs funding to support our students and those that we take to support the wider network of schools.

However, schools should have enough notice of changes to plan their budgets accordingly.

I would be nervous of saying anything! We need so much more money on SEND budget - mainstream schools with a high number of EHCP's cannot manage. I need guarantee that funding is for the children that need it whatever school they go to!

More funding for SEND is desperately needed. Any reduction will severely impact the provision that can be provided.

I don't know so have responded no

If money was to be transferred then it should not be on a percentage basis but on a contribution basis with all Schools in each key stage pay the same flat fee contribution or that the maximum any School can pay is capped at an affordable level. Applicable to all Schools regardless of impact upon the MFG position. Preferably for all the reasons stated it would be best to leave the funding devolved to the Schools to manage their SEND and pastoral support appropriately.