

**Schools Forum**  
**Wednesday, 8 March 2023 at 8.00 am**

**VENUE: Remote Meeting –**  
[Webcast library - Bradford Council Webcasting \(public-i.tv\)](#)

**PLEASE NOTE**

All meetings will be held in public; the agenda, decision list and minutes will be publicly available on the Council's website and Committee Secretariat, Room 112, City Hall, Bradford.

The taking of photographs, filming and sound recording of the meeting is allowed except if Councillors vote to exclude the public to discuss confidential matters covered by Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. Recording activity should be respectful to the conduct of the meeting and behaviour that disrupts the meeting (such as oral commentary) will not be permitted. Anyone attending the meeting who wishes to record or film the meeting's proceedings is advised to liaise with the Forum Clerk Asad Shah who will provide guidance and ensure that any necessary arrangements are in place. Those present who are invited to make spoken contributions should be aware that they may be filmed or sound recorded

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Director of Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer) will report the names of alternate Members who are attending the meeting in place of appointed Members.

**2. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

To receive disclosures of interests from Members on matters to be considered at the meeting. The disclosure must include the nature of the interest.

An interest must also be disclosed in the meeting when it only becomes apparent to the member during the meeting.

**3. MINUTES OF 11 JANUARY 2023 & MATTERS ARISING**

1 - 34

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2023 be signed as a correct record.

4. **MATTERS RAISED BY SCHOOLS**

Members will be asked to consider any issues raised by schools.

5. **STANDING ITEM - DSG GROWTH FUND ALLOCATIONS (a)**

There are no new allocations for 2022/23 presented to this meeting.

6. **SCHOOLS BLOCK FALLING ROLLS FUND ALLOCATIONS 2022/23 (a)** 35 - 42

The Principal Finance Officer (Schools) will present a report, **Document PR**, which provides an update for the Schools Forum on the application, in the 2022/23 financial year, of the Schools Block Falling Rolls Fund for mainstream primary phase maintained schools and mainstream primary phase academies.

**Recommended –**

**The Schools Forum is asked to note that, as set out in Document PR, and following the agreed established criteria, there are no allocations to be made from the Schools Block Falling Rolls Fund in 2022/23.**

**The Forum is asked to note that the sum of £500,000 is confirmed as unspent within the Schools Block and is carried forward into 2023/24 as a ring-fenced sum.**

(Jonty Holden – 01274 431927)

7. **SEND - 2021/22 EXCLUSIONS REPORT (i)** 43 - 56

The 2021/22 Exclusions Report will be presented, **Document PS**.

This report is presented as per the High Needs Block schedule of information agreed with the Schools Forum on 14 October 2020.

**Recommended –**

**The Schools Forum is asked to consider and to note the information provided in the report.**

(Niall Devlin – 01274 431356)

8. **MATTERS CONCERNING THE DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (i)** 57 - 60

The Business Advisor (Schools) will present a report, **Document PT**, which provides an update on a number of matters relating to the

Dedicated Schools Grant.

**Recommended –**

- (1) **The Schools Forum is asked to consider and to note the information provided in the report.**
- (2) **That the Chair, on behalf of the Schools Forum, writes to the Secretary of State on the issue of the Early Years Block funding settlement that Bradford has received for 2023/24.**

(Andrew Redding – 01274 432678)

**9. MATTERS CONCERNING SCHOOL AND ACADEMY BUDGETS (i) 61 - 68**

The Business Advisor (Schools) will present a report, **Document PU**, which provides an update on matters concerning school and academy budgets. This includes an update on the position of the conversion of maintained schools to academy status and on the general forecasted position of school and academy budgets over the 2023-2026 3-year period.

**Recommended –**

**The Schools Forum is asked to consider and to note the information provided in the report.**

(Andrew Redding – 01274 432678)

**10. SCHOOLS FORUM STANDING ITEMS (i)**

Updates on the following Forum standing items will be provided verbally where these have not been covered within other agenda items:

- Schools Forum membership
- Update from the High Needs Block Steering Group
- Update from the Schools Financial Performance Group (SFPG)
- Update on School / Academy Budgets
- Update from the Early Years Working Group (EYWG)
- Update from the Formula Funding Working Group (FFWG)
- Update on Primary School Places
- Update on Academies & Free Schools

**The Forum is asked to note the information provided.**

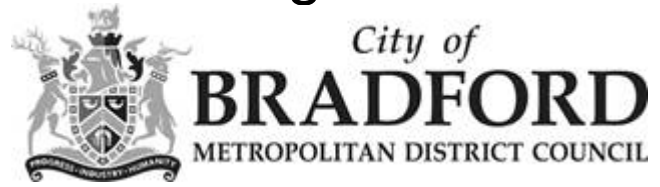
(Andrew Redding – 01274 432678)

**11. AOB / FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Members will be asked for any additional items of business, for consideration at a future meeting.

**12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next Forum meeting is planned for Wednesday 17 May 2023.



**Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Schools Forum on 8 March 2023**

## Schools Forum meeting held at City Hall on Wednesday 11 January 2023

Commenced 08:10  
Concluded 10:40

### RECORD OF MEETING ATTENDEES, APOLOGIES AND ABSENCES

#### Schools & Academies Members

##### IN ATTENDANCE

<b>Member</b>	<b>Membership Group</b>
<b>Ian Morrel (Chair)</b>	<b>Maintained Secondary Schools – Headteacher</b>
Ashley Reed (Vice Chair)	Academies Member
Wahid Zaman	Academies Member
Helen Williams	Academies Member
Brent Fitzpatrick OBE	Academies Member
Richard Bottomley	Academies Member – Alternative Provision Academies
Bev George	Maintained Nursery Schools – Governor
Sian Hudson	Maintained Nursery Schools - Headteacher
Graham Swinbourne	Maintained Primary Schools - Headteacher
Kathryn Swales	Maintained Primary Schools - Headteacher
Jonathan Nixon	Maintained Primary Schools - Headteacher

##### APOLOGIES RECEIVED

<b>Member</b>	<b>Membership Group</b>
Heather Lacey	Academies Member
Amanda Sloney	Academies Member
Mathew Atkinson	Academies Member
Melanie Saville	Academies Member
Victoria Birch	Academies Member
Michael Thorp	Academies Member
Michelle Farr	Academies Member – Special School Academies
Emma Hamer	Maintained Primary Schools – Governor
Nicky Kilvington	Maintained Primary Schools - Headteacher
Lyndsey Brown	Maintained Special Schools - Headteacher

##### NOT IN ATTENDANCE (WITHOUT APOLOGIES RECEIVED)

<b>Member</b>	<b>Membership Group</b>
Andrew Morley	Academies Member
Kirsty Ratcliffe	Pupil Referral Unit (maintained)

## Non-Schools Members

### IN ATTENDANCE

<b>Member</b>	<b>Membership Group</b>
Tom Bright	Teaching Unions
David Johnston	Officer Representing Vulnerable Children

### APOLOGIES RECEIVED

<b>Member</b>	<b>Membership Group</b>

### NOT IN ATTENDANCE (WITHOUT APOLOGIES RECEIVED)

<b>Member</b>	<b>Membership Group</b>
Junaid Karim	Council for Mosques (Bradford)

## Substitute Members present at the meeting as a Member (not as an Observer)

<b>Substitute Member</b>	<b>Membership Group</b>

## Substitute Members present at the meeting as an Observer (not as a Member)

<b>Substitute Member</b>	<b>Membership Group</b>

## Local Authority Officers present at the meeting

<b>Officer</b>	<b>Position</b>
Niall Devlin	Assistant Director, SEND and Inclusion
Asad Shah	Committee Secretariat
Marium Haque	Strategic Director, Children's Services
Dawn Haigh	Principal Finance Officer (Schools)
Jonty Holden	Principal Finance Officer (Schools)
Andrew Redding	Business Advisor (Schools)

**40% of the School Forum's membership (filled membership positions) must be present for a meeting to be quorate. This meeting was quorate, with 48% of members present (13 out of 27 currently filled membership positions).**

In introducing the meeting, the Chair explained:

- This is the main annual recommendations and decisions meeting for the Forum for the 2023/24 financial year.
- As we've done in previous years, agenda item 12 pulls together all the recommendations and decisions into one document (Document PQ). The agenda items running up to this provide updates and little more information, which will aid Members' understanding of the recommendations and decisions that they are now asked to take. So we will run through these documents (relatively quickly) and then turn the Forum's attention at agenda item 12 to the recommendations and decisions. We have previously approached decision making 'by exception', section by section.

- There are no particular ‘surprises’ being presented today, with the main themes of the decisions and recommendations being as we have presented and discussed across the autumn term. We are however:
  - Presenting the Early Years settlement and consultation document on our proposed Early Years Single Funding Formula for the first time.
  - It is also the case that, following the December settlement announcements, we have been allocated more High Needs Block money, alongside a new funding condition that has been set by the DfE relating to special schools and PRUs / Alternative Provision Academies.
  - The cost of our Schools Block funding formula has also quite substantially changed, as a result of the October 2022 Census requiring the use of Schools Block reserve.

These matters require highlight and consideration, though the Chair explained that none of them really materially alter the decisions we take for 2023/24.

- Members may feel that they need more time to consider some of the final recommendations and decisions. If so, the provisional meeting next Wednesday is available.

## 655. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

The following members declared interests for agenda item 5 (Growth Fund allocations): Ian Morrel, Helen Williams, Ashley Reed.

## 656. MINUTES OF 7 DECEMBER 2022 & MATTERS ARISING

The Business Advisor (Schools) reported on progress made on “Action” items from the 7 December meeting. He reported that:

- **Item 643 (Schools Block Growth Fund)** – we are re-presenting to this meeting, under agenda item 5, now fully confirmed Growth Fund allocations for 2022/23.
- **Item 644 (Early Years Block)** – The Early Years Block settlement and operational guidance was finally announced on 16 December and this is presented under agenda item 6.

The Business Advisor then reported the following:

- On 16 December, the DfE announced a new additional grant for mainstream primary and secondary schools and academies, termed **the Mainstream Schools Additional Grant (MSAG)**. This is a non-ring-fenced grant. A primary focus of the Grant is providing on-going support for energy costs, replacing the government’s current energy protection scheme, which reduces

in scale and scope at the end of March 2023. As such, schools will need to assess the extent to which this Grant constitutes 'new money' into their budgets, or just replaces existing energy costs financial support. There is a link to the DfE's announcement on MSAG available via BSO latest news and updates.

- In the DSG settlement for 2023/24, that was announced on 16 December 2022, **an additional £400m of High Needs Block funding** has been allocated to local authorities. This comes from the additional £2bn for the national schools budget that was announced by the Chancellor on 17 November 2022. Bradford's share of the £400m is £4.76m. This is allocated into our High Needs Block, mostly for us to use according to local circumstances and pressures. An additional DSG Condition of Grant however, has been established by the DfE. The purpose of the Condition is to require local authorities to pass through to Special Schools, Special School Academies, PRUs and Alternative Provision Academies an additional + 3.4% in funding per place, using a proportion of the £4.76m to do so. The increase is set at 3.4%, as this is the average additional % increase in funding that mainstream primary and secondary schools and academies are receiving via the new Mainstream Schools Additional Grant (MSAG). We present estimated details of this allocation under agenda item 10.
- Also on the 16 December, the DfE confirmed that **Pupil Premium Grant** rates of funding for 2023/24 are increasing, by 5.00% (rounded). These increases are reflected in the indicative modelling that is presented to the Forum at this meeting.
- So far, we cannot see that the DfE has announced the post-16 funding settlement for the 2023/24 academic year.

**Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2022 be signed as a correct record.**

#### **657. MATTERS RAISED BY SCHOOLS**

A member representing maintained primary school headteachers asked for information on how many primary schools are reducing their Published Admission Numbers (PANs) this year.

**Resolved – That information be provided on how many schools have reduced their Published Admission Number (PAN) this year.**

#### **658. STANDING ITEM - DSG GROWTH FUND ALLOCATIONS**

As presented by the Principal Finance Officer, in Document PJ, Forum Members were asked to agree proposed allocations, from the 2022/23 Schools Block Growth Fund, to maintained secondary schools and to secondary academies. These allocations were agreed. Members did not have any comments and did not



ask any questions.

**Resolved –**

- (1) The Schools Forum agreed to allocate a total of £590,715 from the Growth Fund in 2022/23 to maintained secondary schools and secondary academies, as set out in Document PJ.**
- (2) Members noted that an indicative total sum of £1,319,606 of surplus balance of Growth Fund is ring-fenced and is forecasted to be carried forward into 2023/24 within the Schools Block.**

**LEAD:           PRINCIPAL FINANCE OFFICER (SCHOOLS)**

**659.   CONSULTATION – EARLY YEARS BLOCK FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS 2023/24**

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented a report, **Document PK**, which presented the Authority’s consultation on proposals for Bradford’s 2023/24 Early Years Single Funding Formula. It was explained, subject to the Forum’s agreement, that this consultation will go live immediately following this meeting and will have a closing date for responses of 6 February 2023. The Business Advisor explained that this consultation follows from discussions in the 7 December Schools Forum meeting about the knock on implications for our decision making timetable of the late publication by the DfE of the 2023/24 Early Years Block settlement and operational guidance. These were published by the DfE on 16 December. The Early Years Working Group will meet on 16 January.

The Business Advisor explained to the Forum how our Early Years Block settlement for 2023/24 is extremely disappointing. He explained that a 1% settlement, at a time of significantly increasing costs, will create a very challenging financial environment for early years providers across the District. It is disappointing that the DfE has fully implemented the proposals that were set out for consultation in the summer, without adjustment (despite our response), and also that, despite additional funding being made available nationally for early years funding (as a result of the 17 November Autumn Statement), Bradford’s settlement has remained at 1%, which is the lowest settlement that is being received by local authorities in 2023/24.

Members did not have any significant comments on our EYSFF proposals. The Forum offered its support for these and agreed for the consultation document to be published. The member representing maintained nursery school governors suggested, and it was agreed, that it would be better (and more accurate) for the new ‘Quality’ Supplement to be re-worded to be called e.g. the ‘Teacher Pensions Employer’s Contribution Supplement’.

**Resolved –**

- (1) That the information presented in Document PK be noted.**

**(2) That the Schools Forum supports the proposals for the Early Years Single Funding Formula for 2023/24 that the Authority puts forward within the consultation document.**

**(3) That the document (Appendix 1) be published and that a consultation takes place with providers, as set out in Document PK.**

**LEAD: Business Advisor, Schools**

#### **660. UPDATED 2023/24 DSG POSITION**

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented a report, **Document PL**, which updated Forum Members on the position of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for the 2023/24 financial year. This is a main reference document for this meeting.

Members did not have any comments and did not ask any questions.

**Resolved – That the information presented in Document PL be noted.**

#### **661. UPDATED 2022/23 DSG SPENDING AND BALANCES FORECAST**

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented statements, **Document PM Appendices 1 and 2**, which updated Forum Members on the forecasted spending positions of each of the DSG Blocks for 2022/23, on the estimated values of balances to be carried forward into 2023/24, and on the proposed uses of these balances. These statements replaced the initial indicative forecasts that were presented to the Schools Forum on 7 December (in Document PG).

Members did not have any comments and did not ask any questions.

**Resolved - That the information presented in Document PM be noted.**

#### **662. CENTRALLY MANAGED AND DE-DELEGATED FUNDS 2023/24**

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented statements, **Document PN Appendices 1, 2 and 3**, which set out proposed Schools Block, Central Schools Services Block and Early Years Block centrally managed and de-delegated funds for the 2023/24 financial year. The statements at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 replaced the indicative information that was presented to the Schools Forum on 7 December (in Document PI). Appendix 3 newly presented the contributions to be made by each maintained primary and secondary school to de-delegated funds held within the Schools Block and how these compare with the contributions made in 2022/23.

A member representing maintained primary school headteachers asked why further funding is being taken from the 2023/24 Schools Budget for the Growth

Fund, when £1.3m is being carried forward. The Business Advisor (Schools) responded to explain that the value of new budget being taken is reduced, but that the Authority's view is that we would wish to see how the expected new flexibilities, in Growth and Falling Rolls funding as a result of National Funding Formula changes in 2024/25, could be used, in particular to support the primary-phase, before committing the Growth Fund balance (as well as the Falling Rolls Fund balance) elsewhere to more general formula spending.

The member also asked about the position of funding maintained schools for exceptional circumstances, including supporting the financial difficulties that they may face in 2023/24. The Business Advisor explained that the only route for such funding for maintained schools is via a de-delegated fund, and, as members can see in the reports, the Authority does not hold much funding. It would not be permitted to use Growth Fund or Falling Rolls fund balances to support budget pressures in just maintained schools, as academies have contributed to these balances too. There is no mechanism for the Authority to allocate exceptional funding to academies (academies would need to apply to the ESFA). So, although these matters can be considered further, the extent to which the DSG can offer additional widespread financial support for increased levels of financial challenge is very limited.

The member also asked about the proposal to continue the de-delegated fund for the replacement of the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant (SIMB). The Business Advisor confirmed that the SIMB Grant will fully cease at the 31 March 2023. He also confirmed that the de-delegated fund pays for the additional cost of school-to-school improvement support, rather than covering the salaries costs of the Authority's school improvement officers.

**Resolved - That the information presented in Document PN be noted.**

**663. INDICATIVE BUDGETS, FUNDING RATES AND PRO-FORMAS 2023/24**

The Principal Finance Officers (Schools) and the Business Advisor (Schools) presented the report, **Document PO, with Appendices 1-6.**

Appendices 1a, 1b and 1c showed the indicative values of allocations to be delegated to individual primary and secondary maintained schools and academies within the Schools Block.

Appendix 1d provided an analysis of the change in cost of Schools Block formula funding following the use of the data collected in / based on the October 2022 Census. Modelling previously presented to the Forum has been based on October 2021 Census data.

Appendices 2a, 2b and 2c showed the proposed indicative rates of funding for early years settings for the 2023/24 financial year. These rates were shown, prior to the completion of the consultation on our Early Years Single Funding Formula (which closes on 6 February). Appendix 3 provides a more detailed analysis of how the High Needs Block planned budget has been constructed at individual setting level.

Appendices 4 and 5 showed the draft Primary and Secondary and Early Years pro-formas, which summarise the Authority's proposed formula funding arrangements.

Appendix 6 provided more details of the additional place-led allocations to Special Schools, Special School Academies, PRUs and AP Academies, as directed by the DfE's change in DSG Grant Conditions that was announced on 16 December.

Members did not have any comments and did not ask any questions on this modelling.

**Resolved – That the information presented in Document PO be noted.**

#### **664. UPDATED DSG MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented a report, **Document PP**, which was an updated version of the Authority's Management Plan for the Dedicated Schools Grant. This Plan was first presented to the Schools Forum in January 2021. The Plan explains the general management principles that guide our decision making and then focuses on High Needs Block matters. Alongside this Plan was presented a list of specialist places planned to be commissioned in 2023/24 and a future year forecast of the High Needs Block.

In summarising the Plan, the Business Advisor explained that our forecast, which is based on estimates, currently identifies that there is clear risk of a cumulative deficit building within our High Needs Block by the end of the 2025/26 financial year, as a result of recurrent structural in-year over spending. The risk of cumulative deficit by the end of the 2026/27 financial year is then high. As such, our forecast identifies at this time that mitigating action will need to be taken in order to prevent the accrual of a cumulative deficit balance. This will be a piece of work for the Authority to discuss within the Schools Forum during 2023.

The Forum engaged in discussion about the growth in spending on placements in independent and non-maintained settings; the causes and how this can be controlled and reduced. The Assistant Director, SEND and Inclusion, explained that the cost of places has significantly increased, especially around social care, where the DSG picks up the education cost element. The continuing creation of local specialist places, as well as success in our bid for a new Special School Free School, are important factors. The Business Advisor added that the growth in spending on independent placements has also come from significant increases in charges per place, and is a national issue, which looms large within the DfE's March 2022 SEND Green Paper. This Paper offers elements of a national solution e.g. bringing independent schools into a national EHCP banded funding system.

The Chair asked for clarification on where decision making within the High Needs Block sits – with the Schools Forum or with the Authority. It was clarified that the Authority is the decision maker, but also that the Authority would wish to work in partnership with the Schools Forum. The Chair asked then that the Authority presents to the Forum, for discussion, its mitigation plan for the avoidance of a cumulative High Needs Block deficit. The Assistant Director, SEND and Inclusion, responded to explain that the key elements of a mitigation plan are: continuing to increase the number of locally available specialist places in special schools and in

resourced provisions, applying for a Special School Free School, continuing to work with social care to look at the number of children and young people in care and where they are placed, looking to establish local care homes and further developing services so that health needs are met locally. The Chair thanked the Assistant Director for this outline and asked for a report to be presented giving a more detailed mitigation plan.

Referring to the warnings that are given in DSG Management Plan, and in the budget forecast, about the estimated and uncertain nature of the High Needs Block going forward, a member representing maintained primary schools expressed concern about how this Plan, which may not be accurate, is preventing the allocation of the High Needs Block surplus balance to schools to support children and young people now. The Business Advisor responded, accepting the estimated nature of the forecast, to explain its basis, in particular that the forecast estimates the continuation of existing levels of growth in numbers of EHCPs (not new higher levels), which our data currently does not say is an inaccurate position to take. The Advisor also highlighted that the forecast does not include the revenue budget of a new Special School Free School and, whilst we would expect a Free School to start to deliver savings e.g. in the cost of placements in independent provisions, these will take time to materially impact. As such, though based on estimates and with significant uncertainties, the future position of our High Needs Block currently looks very challenging and the Authority's view is that the surplus balance will be needed to manage this.

**Resolved –**

**(1) That the DSG Management Plan presented in Document PP be noted.**

**(2) That the Local Authority presents to, and discusses with, the Forum its 'mitigation plan', which is to be developed in response to the deficit that is forecasted to grow within the High Needs Block over the next 3 years.**

**LEADS:**     ***Business Advisor, Schools***  
                  ***Assistant Director, SEND and Inclusion***

## **665. FINAL DECISION AND FORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS 2023/24 DSG**

**Resolved –**

**These are the decisions and recommendations that the Schools Forum has made in supporting the Local Authority to establish the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) planned budget and formula funding arrangements for the 2023/24 financial year. The Forum has taken decisions (as required by the Regulations), and has made formal recommendations, which will go forward for presentation to the Executive on 21 February 2023.**

**Important points of note, which help explain the rationale for decisions / recommendations, are also recorded.**

## **1. Schools Block Centrally Managed Funds 2023/24 (DECISION)**

### **Schools Block De-Delegated Funds 2023/24 (DECISION)**

Document PN Appendices 1 – 3.

**1.1 Schools Members representing maintained primary & secondary schools agreed as follows the values of de-delegated funds, and the contributions to be taken from the 2023/24 formula funding allocations of maintained primary & secondary schools.**

**All items were agreed unanimously.**

- a) School Re-Organisation Costs (Safeguarded Salaries) (Primary & Secondary): agreed to continue de-delegation from both the primary and secondary phases for the actual cost of continuing safeguarded salaries in maintained primary and secondary schools.**
- b) School Re-Organisation Costs (Sponsored academy conversions budget deficits) (Primary phase only): agreed to continue to ‘pause’ de-delegation from the primary phase, meaning that no new contribution is taken in 2023/24. Review again for 2024/25. The Schools Forum will be provided with monitoring reports where this fund’s brought forward balance is used in 2023/24 for this purpose.**
- c) Exceptional Costs & Schools in Financial Difficulty (Primary phase only): agreed to continue de-delegation from the primary phase at the 2022/23 per pupil value.**
- d) Costs of FSM Eligibility Assessments (Primary & Secondary): agreed to continue de-delegation from both the primary and secondary phases at the 2022/23 per FSM6 values, with contributions continuing to be taken using Free School Meals (FSM) Ever 6 data.**
- e) Fisher Family Trust (Primary phase only): agreed to continue de-delegation from the primary phase, recovering the cash value to match the actual cost, which is still to be confirmed. *Please note that the Schools Members representing maintained primary schools decided on 12 October 2022 to continue de-delegation in 2023/24 for the purposes of subscribing to FFT. As such, this decision is repeated here only for reference and for completeness.***
- f) Trade Union Facilities Time – Negotiator Time (Primary & Secondary): agreed to continue de-delegation from primary and secondary phases at the 2022/23 per pupil value.**
- g) Trade Union Facilities Time – Health and Safety Time (Primary & Secondary): agreed to continue de-delegation from primary and secondary phases at the 2022/23 per pupil value.**
- h) School Maternity / Paternity ‘insurance’ fund (Primary phase only): agreed to continue de-delegation from the primary phase at a value forecasted to afford the scheme for a full year. The £app cost is shown**

in Document PN Appendix 2 (£26.44 per pupil, which is + 30% on 2022/23). The £26.44 per pupil value includes the release, on a one off basis, of £0.10m of balance brought forward within this fund. It is estimated that the scheme will cost £0.75m in total in 2023/24.

- i) **School Staff Public Duties and Suspensions Fund (Primary phase only):** agreed to continue de-delegation from the primary phase on the same £app basis as 2022/23.
- j) **School Improvement (Replacement of the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant) (Primary & Secondary):** agreed to continue de-delegation from primary and secondary phases at the 2022/23 per pupil value. Based on estimate of the cost of the Authority's school improvement programme, and of the total income that will be available (incorporating the mid-year conversion of maintained schools to academy), £0.122m of balance brought forward will be used within this fund in 2023/24, alongside new year contributions.

**1.2 Schools Members representing maintained primary & secondary schools agreed the principles behind the management of the Schools Block de-delegated funds listed in paragraph 1.1:**

- a) **Any over or under spend within these funds will be written off from, or added back to, the DSG's de-delegated funds in 2024/25 on a phase specific, fund specific, basis i.e. if primary schools overspend in the maternity / paternity insurance scheme fund the value of the fund created through de-delegation in 2024/25, support by available surplus balances brought forward, will need to compensate for this.**
- b) **These decisions set the position for the 2023/24 financial year only.**
- c) **The funds will be managed and allocated according to their applicable criteria as set out in the autumn 2022 consultation document (meaning that the criteria to be used in 2023/24 are unchanged from 2022/23).**

**1.3 The Schools Forum noted that a total net surplus balance of de-delegated funds of £0.797m is forecasted to be carried forward within the Schools Block into 2023/24. As such, the Schools Forum is not asked to write off from the 2023/24 Schools Budget any deficit associated with de-delegated funds. Within the 2023/24 proposals, £0.100m of the £0.797m is specifically earmarked to support the cost of the school maternity / paternity insurance fund and £0.122m is earmarked to support the cost of the school improvement fund. On this basis, it is estimated that the balance of de-delegated funds held within the Schools Block at the end of the 2023/24 financial will reduce to £0.575m.**

### **Schools Block Growth Fund 2023/24 (DECISION)**

**Document PN Appendix 1 (full list of DSG centrally managed funds)**

Document PQ Appendix 1 (list of allocations from the Growth Fund to existing expanding schools and academies for the Forum's approval).

**All Forum Members by consensus agreed:**

**1.4 The allocations from the 2023/24 Schools Block Growth Fund to existing expansions and existing bulge classes, as listed in Document PQ Appendix 1. Members noted:**

- a) There are 15 allocations with a total gross value of £0.571m. 6 Primary schools / Primary academies; 2 all through academies; 7 Secondary academies.
- b) The allocations to the all through academies and to the secondary academies simply complete, for the full 2022/23 academic year, the growth fund allocations that are set out in Document PJ (presented under agenda item 5), which cover the period up to 31 March 2023. Appendix 1 does not include allocations from the Growth Fund to the secondary phase for the 2023/24 academic year. Allocations for both continuing and new expansions and bulge classes in the secondary phase for the 2023/24 academic year will be funded from the provision explained in paragraph 1.5 below and will be presented to the Schools Forum for agreement in December 2023, following the collection of the October 2023 Census.
- c) The £0.374m for academies for the period April to August 2023 will be reimbursed back to the Schools Block via the ESFA's academy recoupment process. As such, the £0.374m does not represent a cost to our 2023/24 Schools Block. So, although the Forum is asked to approve allocations totalling £0.571m, as listed in Document PQ Appendix 1, the actual net cost of these allocations to the 2023/24 Schools Block is £0.571m minus £0.374m = £0.197m.

**1.5 A further planned budget of £0.600m be taken from the 2023/24 Schools Block for the Growth Fund to cover new allocations to be agreed during 2023/24. This planned budget is only for growth in the secondary-phase i.e. no new budget provision is taken from the 2023/24 Schools Block for primary-phase growth. All new in-year allocations from the Growth Fund will be agreed by the Schools Forum, prior to confirmation these with the receiving school or academy. Growth Fund allocations will continue as a standing Schools Forum agenda item to enable this. The Forum also noted and agreed:**

- a) Recognising: that the pupil population in the primary-phase is reducing, as a consequence of demographic trends, and that a value of £1.320m of balance held within the Schools Block is forecasted to be carried forward into 2023/24, that no new budget has been taken from the 2023/24 Schools Block allocation for the purposes of funding growth in the primary-phase. A proportion of the £1.320m balance instead will be available to be used to meet any costs of new growth that may be agreed for the primary-phase in 2023/24.



- b) £0.600m will fund 8 additional forms of entry or bulge classes in the secondary phase at September 2023 (for the period September 2023 to 31 March 2024). By comparison, the Authority has funded 9 forms of entry, in total, for the period September 2022 to March 2023. As above with the primary-phase, recognising that a value of £1.320m of balance held within the Schools Block is forecasted to be carried forward into 2023/24, a reduced budget has been taken from the 2023/24 Schools Block allocation, for the purposes of funding growth in the secondary-phase, with a proportion of the £1.320m balance being available to meet any additional cost above 8 forms of entry. In doing this, the Authority seeks to use the existing balance to maximise the value of 2023/24 Schools Block funding that is available to be allocated to other purposes, including in support of continuing to afford our full mirroring of the National Funding Formula for mainstream primary and secondary schools and academies.
- c) The Authority does however, also recognise that new flexibilities (for the management of growth, falling rolls and ‘surplus places’) are expected to be brought into Schools Block arrangements in 2024/25, following the most recent National Funding Formula (NFF) consultation. This consultation quite clearly put forward the view that local authorities should retain Growth Fund responsibilities under the NFF. Retaining a surplus balance into 2024/25 will help therefore, given that there are uncertainties currently about how growth will be funded (with the concern that we expressed in our consultation response; that the proposed ‘netting off’ of pupil numbers ‘growth’ from ‘reduction’ may result in insufficient funding being available to support either issue). Falling rolls is also a significant issue for the primary phase, in particular, and we take the view that we would wish to see how the expected new flexibilities could be used, before committing the Growth Fund balance (as well as the Falling Rolls Fund Balance – see below) elsewhere to more general formula spending. However, also in the context of our overall Schools Block spending position in 2023/24, following a £1m cost of ‘data lag’ (this is explained further in section 7), we may wish to consider using the Growth Fund (and Falling Rolls Fund) reserve balances in future years to support the overall cost of our mainstream formula, prior to the full implementation of the NFF.

1.6 To use the criteria for the allocation of the Schools Block Growth Fund in 2023/24, as set out in the autumn 2022 consultation document, which are the criteria used in 2022/23.

### **Schools Block Falling Rolls Fund 2023/24 (DECISION)**

Document PN Appendix 1 (full list of DSG centrally managed funds).

All Forum Members by consensus agreed:

1.7 To continue the Falling Rolls Fund for the primary phase for the 2023/24 financial year. Whilst we have concluded that the Falling Rolls Fund currently holds limited value, as it is not a mechanism that will

support the vast majority of primary-phase schools and academies, it is a mechanism that was developed following close review. As such, the Authority does not wish to remove this mechanism entirely from our Schools Block funding approach.

1.8 To use the criteria for the allocation of the Schools Block Falling Roll Fund in 2023/24 as set out in the autumn 2022 consultation document, which are the criteria used in 2022/23 (with the reference points moved on one year in time).

1.9 That the cost of the 2023/24 Falling Rolls Fund be met from the balance that will be brought forward from 2022/23, rather than by taking new budget from the 2023/24 Schools Block. Forum Members noted that actual allocations from the Falling Rolls Fund for this current financial year will be presented to the Schools Forum in March 2023. The final value of balance that will be carried into 2023/24 therefore, will be confirmed at this point. On current modelling however, the Authority anticipates that there will not be any allocations from this fund for the 2022/23 financial year. Therefore, the balance carried forward is expected to be £0.500m.

1.10 To continue to retain this balance in 2023/24, to be available to support costs in 2023/24, but also to be available to support schools and academies via the new flexibilities (for the management of falling rolls) that are expected to be brought into Schools Block arrangements in 2024/25. Falling rolls is a significant issue for the primary phase, in particular, and we take the view that we would wish to see how the expected new flexibilities could be used, before committing this balance (as well as the Growth Fund balance – see above) elsewhere to more general formula spending

## **2. Early Years Block Centrally Retained Funds 2023/24 (DECISION)**

Document PN Appendix 1 (full list of DSG centrally managed funds).

All Forum Members by consensus agreed:

2.1 The retention of funds for central management within the Early Years Block, as listed in Document PN Appendix 1, as follows:

- a) £0.037m (continuation) for the Early Years Block's contribution to the DfE Copyright Licences charge.
- b) £0.119m (continuation) for access by maintained nursery schools to Schools Block de-delegated funds (Trade Union Facilities Time, Maternity / Paternity Insurance Scheme, Staff Public Duties and Suspensions). A breakdown of the £0.119m is given in Document PN Appendix 2. This budget counts within the maximum 5% of 3&4-year-old entitlement funding that the Authority is permitted to centrally retain within the Early Years Block.
- c) £0.650m (continuation) for the estimated cost of allocations to early

years providers from the Early Years SEND Inclusion Fund (EYIF). This budget is increased on the £0.500m that was held in 2022/23, in response to a growth in the number of claims (and in anticipation of an on-going higher claim level) The £0.650m budget is split £0.100m for 2-year-olds and £0.550m for 3&4-year-olds. The criteria to be used to allocate the SEND Inclusion Fund are set out in our consultation on Early Years Single Funding Formula arrangements for 2023/24. Please see Document PK. These criteria are the same as currently used in 2022/23. The consultation is currently live and closes on 6 February. At this time, we are establishing the planned budget for the Early Years Block on the basis that the Authority's proposals will be agreed and implemented.

Although the £0.650m budget is shown here as centrally retained, the full value is intended for allocation to providers during the year. As such, the £0.550m proportion of this budget, to be allocated to eligible 3&4-year-olds, does not count towards the maximum 5% of 3&4-year-old entitlement funding that can be retained centrally within the Early Years Block. Although this will also be passed out to providers, because it is not allocated in respect of 3&4-year-olds, the £0.100m EYIF budget for 2-year-olds does count towards the 5%.

The School Forum is asked to note that the Early Years Pupil Premium (£0.437m) and Disability Access Fund (£0.120m) budgets, shown in Document PN Appendix 1, are funds that are also allocated to providers during the year, following the conditions set by the DfE, and these funds also do not count towards the maximum 5% central retention restriction.

- d) £0.216m (continuation) for the Area SENCOs function that is managed by the Local Authority in respect of Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) early years providers. This budget, over the COVID-19 pandemic period, was temporarily charged to the High Needs Block, but was returned to the Early Years Block at April 2022. The budget for 2023/24 includes an allowance for pay award / inflation.
- e) £0.366m (returned to the Early Years Block) for the Early Years Block's contribution to early years SEND support services, including portage. Prior to April 2021, the contribution to early years SEND support services, was charged to the Early Years Block. In seeking to protect the Early Years Block, during the COVID-19 pandemic, we transferred this cost to be met by the High Needs Block, with the intention to transfer the cost back at an appropriate time. In now managing the financial pressure that is increasing within the High Needs Block, in the context of the current more secure position of the Early Years Block, this contribution is returned to the Early Years Block in 2023/24. We will keep this position under review for future years. The budget for 2023/24 includes an allowance for pay award / inflation.
- f) £0.530m (continuation and increase), as presented to the Schools Forum on 7 December (Document PI), for the Early Years Block's contribution to the cost of the Authority's early years entitlement

funding and provider support services. The Authority delivers support services for provider sustainability, quality (including Ofsted support), as well as the delivery of the Early Years Single Funding Formula and related advice, support, monitoring, compliance and intervention. The Forum agreed a new contribution to these services, of £0.100m in 2022/23, which we stated we wish to further review, as the full cost of these services is substantially higher and as there is growing need to ensure that sufficient capacity is available in response to increasing demands and complexities. We have increased this contribution from £0.100m to £0.530m in 2023/24. This is intended to meet the staffing costs of the early years entitlement and quality support teams, inclusive of estimates of pay award / inflation. As we presented to the Forum on 7 December, in the context of financial benchmarking, and the Council's budget position, which is very challenging, whilst being very aware of the need to continue to maximise the funding rates for entitlement providers, the Council is seeking to achieve an increased contribution from the Early Years Block to the cost of these provider support services and functions, on an on-going basis, so that these functions can be sustained. An increased contribution will bring us more in line with the position in other local authorities.

2.2 The Schools Forum noted that a total of £1.368m of the centrally retained budgets listed in paragraph 2.1 count towards the 5% of 3&4-year-old entitlement funding central retention restriction. As shown in the Early Years Pro-Forma (Document PO Appendix 5), we calculate on this basis that 96.7% of our estimated 2023/24 3&4-year-old entitlement funding (excluding the allocation of brought forward balances) will be passed-through to providers; or, to put it another way, 3.3% of our estimated 2023/24 3&4-year-old entitlement funding will be either be centrally retained or will be used otherwise than for funding the 3&4-year-old entitlement and the 3&4-year-old Early Years SEND Inclusion Fund. The equivalent figure for 2022/23 was 97.2%.

2.3 The Schools Forum noted that it is not expected that the balance of Early Years Block centrally managed funds held at the end of the 2022/23 financial year will be a deficit. As such, the Schools Forum is not asked to write off from the 2023/24 Schools Budget any deficit associated with an Early Years Block fund.

### **3. The Central Schools Services Block 2023/24 (DECISION)**

Document PN Appendix 1 (full list of DSG centrally managed funds).

All Forum Members by consensus agreed:

3.1 The allocation of the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) for 2023/24, as listed in Document PN Appendix 1, as follows:

- a) Schools Forum Running Costs: continue at £11,700, which is the 2022/23 value of £11,000 plus an allowance for pay and inflation. This budget contributes to the costs of running the Schools Forum that are

met by School Funding Team and by Committee Secretariat.

- b) **Pupil Admissions:** continue at £0.987m, which is the 2022/23 value of £0.931m plus an allowance for pay award and inflation. Forum Members will recall that the Pupil Admissions budget was substantially increased in 2022/23 in response to service pressures.
- c) **DfE Copyright Licences:** a value of £0.406m. *The cost of copyright licences for primary and secondary schools and academies is met from the CSSB. This is not a matter for decision for the Schools Forum, as the DfE negotiates the price and top-slices our DSG. The costs for early years and high needs providers are charged within our DSG model to the respective blocks. The DfE confirmed the 2023/24 costs on 21 December 2022; increased in total by 10.6% on 2022/23.*
- d) **Education Services Grant (ESG) Statutory Duties:** continue at £1.559m, which continues to passport to the Local Authority's budget the 2022/23 committed cash budget. This is the former ESG Centrally Retained Duties Grant that was transferred into the DSG at April 2017 and is now allocated in support of the statutory duties that are delivered by the Local Authority on behalf of all state funded schools and academies. A list of statutory activities was presented to the Forum on 7 December 2022 in Document PI Appendix 3.
- e) **Education Access Officers:** continue, and be uplifted in 2023/24 to £0.500m (from £0.472m held in 2022/23) for pay award / inflation.
- f) **Education Services Planning:** continue at £0.148m, which is the 2022/23 value of £0.140m plus an allowance for pay award and inflation.

3.2 The Schools Forum noted that there is no transfer of CSSB funding to any other DSG block. The full value of the 2023/24 CSSB funding settlement is allocated to spending within the CSSB. The Schools Forum also noted that CSSB spending for 2023/24 is funded without any reliance on any other DSG block. However, the total cost of the funds listed in 3.1 above is £3.612m, which exceeds the 2023/24 CSSB allocation by £0.054m. The £0.054m is met from the surplus balance that is forecasted to be carried forward into 2023/24. Please see section 5.

#### 4. The High Needs Block 2023/24 (RECOMMENDATION)

- Document PL (the 2023/24 DSG summary, which summarises the planned High Needs Block budget).
- Document PP (the DSG Management Plan, which includes an updated view of the estimated High Needs Block future year trajectory and a list of planned commissioned specialist places).
- Document PO Appendix 3 (which shows in more detail how the High Needs Block planned budget for 2023/24 has been constructed at individual setting and budget heading level).
- Document PO Appendix 6 (which shows estimated allocations to special schools, special school academies, PRUs and alternative provision

academies, as a result of the new condition that is attached to the additional £4.76m High Needs Block funding).

**4.1 All Forum Members by consensus agreed that the formula approach (the High Needs Funding Model) that the Authority proposed in our autumn term consultation, and that was reported back to the Schools Forum on 7 December 2022 (Document PE), is used to delegate High Needs Block funding to high needs providers, mainstream schools and academies and other settings in the 2023/24 financial year. This approach includes the following significant elements:**

- a) The continuation, with uplift (ranging between 3.7% at Band 3L and 1.7% at Band 4H; 1.7% for the Day Rate Model), of our EHCP Banded Model and of our PRU / Alternative Provision Day Rate Model.**
- b) The continuation of the existing setting-led need factors as are currently applied to the funding of specialist provisions.**
- c) The continuation of the allocation to specialist provisions of the former Teacher Pay Grant and the former Teacher Pension Grant, separately from top up funding, using the method and values we used in 2022/23.**
- d) The continuation for an additional year of the SEND Funding Floor mechanism, in support of Element 2 funding for SEND and EHCPs in mainstream primary and secondary settings, with an adjustment (to increase – from median plus 1% to median + 3%) the thresholds that are used to calculate this Floor, in seeking to control the growth in the cost of this mechanism and to better retain the Floor’s original purpose, in keeping with the DfE’s expectations, which is to support a minority of schools and academies that have significantly greater numbers of pupils on roll with EHCPs. Despite this adjustment, we estimate that the cost of SEND Funding Floor in 2023/24 will be £0.785m higher than the 2022/23 planned budget estimate.**
- e) The amendment of our definition of Notional SEND budgets for mainstream schools and academies, to bring this definition more in line with the national picture and to improve fairness.**

**4.2 The Schools Forum noted that we have estimated allocations to special schools, special school academies, PRUs and alternative provision academies, as a result of the new condition that is attached to the additional £4.76m High Needs Block funding that has been allocated, following the 17 November Autumn Statement. Please see Document PO Appendix 6. We estimate that these allocations will cost £1.393m. This is an estimate only, based on the DfE’s directed methodology, with final allocations to be confirmed, including following consultation with the recipient settings. We will present confirmed allocations to the Forum on 8 March.**

**4.3 The Schools Forum also noted the following significant elements, estimates and assumptions, which are incorporated into the construction of the 2023/24 High Needs Block (HNB) planned budget that was presented**

to the meeting:

- a) **The 2023/24 High Needs Block planned budget is calculated without any transfers of funding in from other Blocks or out to other Blocks. The only transfer relates to the contribution to early years SEND support services, which represents a transfer of expenditure (rather than funding) from the High Needs Block to the Early Years Block. Please see section 2 for more details of this transfer.**
- b) **Forum members are reminded that the Authority presented reports in May (Document OM) and July (Document OR) 2022, following discussions regarding the use and retention of the High Needs Block surplus balance that was carried forward from the 2021/22 financial year. The July 2022 report set out a plan for £920,000 of investment, in 3 areas, in support of inclusion. This initial investment will run to the end of the 2022/23 academic year, where it has been agreed that a review of impact will inform whether the High Needs Block surplus balance continues its investment in these areas. Currently, for planning purposes, it is assumed that the £0.920m will continue for a full financial year in 2023/24 and this is built into the planned budget that is presented to this meeting.**
- c) **We estimate that, in addition to the £0.920m investment, we may need to deploy in the region of £3.280m of surplus balance brought forward within the High Needs Block to fully cover 2023/24 High Needs Block planned budget expenditure. This represents a significant over-spending, which we will need to respond to. The DSG Management Plan, presented in Document PP to this meeting, discusses the position of the High Needs Block in more detail.**
- d) **The Local Authority continues to take a prudent approach to the setting of the planned budget. The Forum is reminded that High Needs Block expenditure is more difficult to predict than that in other DSG blocks, and is more subject to changes during the year. This difficulty is especially present currently due to the amount of structural change that continues to be delivered, and the scale of growth in the numbers of children and young people with EHCPs.**
- e) **The 2023/24 planned budget that is presented to this meeting includes £4.23m of revenue budget for the further development of specialist SEND provisions. This is made up of full year (from April: +116 places) and part year (from September: +100 places) budget provision. This provision aligns with the SEND Sufficiency Statement, which was presented to the Forum on 7 December (Document PH). A list of planned commissioned places is presented in Document PP Appendix 1.**
- f) **The 2023/24 planned budget is constructed to support the building of sustainable capacity for the longer term, by seeking to avoid under-estimating the full final cost (when established and fully occupied) of new places. The planned budget is constructed therefore, on a 'full year full places occupancy' style basis. This is done with the understanding**

that the filling of newly established or establishing capacity will be achieved in a managed way, and that there will be some degree of fluctuation in the occupancy of both new and existing provisions during the year. Whilst the 2023/24 planned budget includes £4.23m of revenue provision for new specialist places therefore, it is expected that the actual spending on newly created places in 2023/24 will be lower than this, as places will be created and occupied at different points.

- g) Our planned budgets for the 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial years included an earmarked fund of £1.0m, which was to be available to cover further costs that may potentially come from the embedding of our recently amended EHCP Banded Model, especially from the further development of the 'stacking' facility. As our Banded Model will now be into its third year, and recognising that we are already estimating to overspend our High Needs Block allocation, we have removed the £1.0m fund from the 2023/24 planned budget. This means that all unexpected or higher than expected costs, that cannot be met by savings elsewhere within the High Needs Block in 2023/24, will need to be covered by the surplus brought forward balance.
- h) The 2023/24 planned budget for Alternative Provision / PRU provision continues to be based on the principle that our PRU / AP provisions, where funded from the High Needs Block, deliver Local Authority-commissioned provision for pupils permanent excluded. The planned budget for 2023/24 continues not to fund school-commissioned alternative provision. 160 permanent exclusion places are funded within the planned budget for the 2023/24 academic year, compared with 165 places that were funded in the 2022/23 planned budget. The DfE's SEND Green Paper, published in March 2022, proposes some significant changes to the way alternative provision is funded, and to the role of the High Needs Block, with greater emphasis on early intervention (the allocation of funding to prevent permanent exclusion) and movement towards fixed annual budgets for AP providers that are allocated according to a local plan rather than on numbers of pupils on roll. No changes are made to national systems for the 2023/24 financial year. Our current Day Rate Funding Model incorporates a floor, which ensures a minimum level of funding so that our PRU and AP Academy can retain capacity, irrespective of actual occupancy. This is an area that we will need to closely review, when the DfE announces the 'next steps' in the national SEND Review.
- i) The 2023/24 planned budget continues to be constructed incorporating the financial efficiencies that have come from the amalgamation of Bradford's hospital education, Tracks and medical home tuition provisions into a single Local Authority managed service. The DfE has not yet developed a national formula-based approach to the funding of these provisions, and continues to fund local authorities, through the High Needs Block, on historic information. As such, we receive £2.196m of funding in 2023/24, which is greater than our £1.583m estimated planned budget spending. This currently therefore, is an area of 'gain' for us within the High Needs Block, with this gain supporting



other High Needs Block expenditure. However, if and when the DfE alters the national funding methodology, this gain may no longer be present, and the loss of this will increase the financial pressure on the High Needs Block. This is not currently accounted for within the forecast that is presented in Document PP Appendix 2.

- j) **The 2023/24 planned budget is based on a general estimate that our spend on: a) pupils with EHCPs in mainstream settings, b) students in post-16 Further Education & SPI settings, and c) pupils placed in independent and non-maintained special school provisions and in out of authority maintained provisions, will continue to grow in 2023/24 at the same rate as in 2022/23, as estimated in December 2022. Simply put, we are estimating that our number of children and young people with EHCPs will continue to grow over the next 12 months at existing rates. Spending in these 3 areas has substantially increased during 2022/23, and combined, these are the major contributors to the forecasted overspending within the High Needs Block, in 2023/24 and on-going. This is discussed further in the DSG Management Plan that is presented in Document PP.**
- k) **How we have continued to uplift our existing EHCP Banded Model means that separate additional arrangements are not required in order for us to comply with the DfE's Minimum Funding Guarantee for special schools and for special school academies.**
- l) **Provision for SEND mainstream teaching support services held within the planned budget continues to incorporate the changes in structures that were agreed by the Executive back in 2018. The 2023/24 High Needs Block planned budget includes a large proportion of the £0.920m inclusion investment, as presented to the Schools Forum in July, and also incorporates an adjustment following the transfer of the contribution to early years SEND support services back to the Early Years Block. The total High Needs Block budget provision for these services in 2023/24, is £5.715m. This compares with the 2022/23 adjusted High Needs Block planned budget value of £4.683m (adjusted for the transfer of the early years SEND support services contribution).**
- m) **As we have previously reported to the Forum, the DfE's national SEND / EHCP / Alternative Provision system and funding reviews are very likely to have significant implications for our High Needs Block income and expenditure going forward. Whilst we have made some small adjustments in approach, which are aimed at supporting transition, for example, our adjustment to our definition of Notional SEND budgets and our control of the growth in cost of the SEND Funding Floor, we have not significantly adjusted our 2023/24 High Needs Block planned budget in anticipation of changes that may come. There are no changes in the national high needs funding system in 2023/24. The DfE currently indicates that an implementation plan for the SEND Green Paper will be published early in 2023. We will need to review this plan closely. In its autumn term messaging to local authorities, about High Needs Block management, the DfE has stressed that the SEND Green Paper represents a longer term programme of change. However, it is quite**

possible that changes to the high needs funding system may be directed for the 2024/25 financial year. As such, we anticipate that, alongside review work that will be necessary in order to manage our forecasted deficit position, we will also need to review our funding arrangements for 2024/25 in the light of directed changes.

## 5. The Allocation & Retention of Balances forecasted to be Brought Forward from 2022/23 (RECOMMENDATION)

Document PM Appendix 2.

All Forum Members by consensus agreed:

5.1 The treatment of the £35.665m of balances that are forecasted to be carried forward into 2023/24, as listed in the paragraphs below. £35.665m is 5.3% of the estimated 2023/24 DSG allocation.

5.2 In agreeing this treatment, the Forum noted that the figure of £35.665m is an estimate. The confirmed values of brought forward balances by DSG block will be presented to the Forum initially in July 2023 and then finally in September 2023 (the latter update incorporating the final adjustment to Early Years Block income).

5.3 It is forecasted that a balance of £0.281m will be carried forward from 2022/23 within the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB). The Schools Forum agreed, that:

- a) £0.054m is allocated to the 2023/24 planned budget, to continue existing commitments uplifted for an allowance for pay award and inflation, and to meet the increased cost (+10.6%) of copyright licences for mainstream primary and secondary schools and academies, in combination with the 2023/24 CSSB allocation received from the DfE.
- b) £0.227m is retained in support of CSSB expenditure in future years. In previous years, we have agreed with the Schools Forum that CSSB surplus balances be transferred for use within the Schools Block but that, where a CSSB surplus has been transferred previously, we also expect, if a deficit balance is subsequently held within the CSSB, the Schools Forum will agree for the Schools Block balance to write off this deficit, up to the cumulative value of the surplus balance previously transferred. We are not continuing this policy, meaning that the surplus balance that is forecasted to be held within the CSSB at 31 March 2023 is expected stay with the CSSB. This change of approach will better support us to meet the pressures that we anticipate will be present within the CSSB as a result of the movement to the final cessation of historic commitments funding, which was worth £0.23m in 2022/23 (reducing to £0.18m in 2023/24).

5.4 It is forecasted that a balance of £4.211m will be carried forward from 2022/23 within the Early Years Block. The Schools Forum agreed, that:

- a) The balance of £0.072m in de-delegated funds is ring-fenced and retained.
- b) A balance of £0.741m in the Disability Access Fund (DAF) is estimated to be carried forward into 2023/24. We have previously repeatedly under-spent this fund. We increased the value of the DAF allocation paid per child in 2021/22, from £615 to £1,000, and will increase the value again to £1,200 in 2023/24, with the expectations that this increase will help support provider costs, will complement the Early Years Inclusion Fund, and will also help to begin to release the surplus balance to providers. We will continue to keep this balance, and action to spend it, under review. As there is substantial cross-over between DAF and Early Years SEND Inclusion (EYIF) funds however, in 2023/24 we will use a proportion of the DAF balance that has accrued to help manage the cost of our EYIF fund, which is increasing due to a larger number of claims. In practical terms, this means using an estimated £0.120m of the DAF surplus balance to cover the cost of 2023/24 DAF allocations. As such, £0.120m of the £0.741m is allocated to the 2023/24 Early Years Block planned budget, which leaves a sum of £0.621m that is retained and carried forward.
- c) £0.837m is allocated into the 2023/24 Early Years Block planned budget to support the estimated cost of our Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF). Please see section 6. Whether this value of balance is actually needed (or whether a greater or lesser sum is needed) will depend on how spending develops during the year and how this compares against the entitlement delivery estimates used now. This is also subject to the outcomes of our consultation on our EYSFF.
- d) The remaining value of balance, currently estimated to be £2.561m, is retained to be used in support of the cost, including any unexpected or higher than expected cost, of the Early Years Funding Formula (EYSFF) in 2023/24 and going forward. £2.561m is 5.9% of the estimated value of our Early Years Block in 2023/24. The Authority has sought to explain in our Early Years Single Funding Formula consultation document for 2023/24 (Document PK) the financial position of the Early Years Block, how we are currently managing the structural issues that are present, whilst also continuing to seek to maximise the rates of funding allocated to providers for their entitlement delivery. The availability of reserves will be crucial to how these structural issues are managed and resolved over the next couple of years. The Authority is also conscious that the DfE has not yet confirmed the funding position of maintained nursery schools after 2024/25. Reserves held within the Early Years Block may be needed to support maintained nursery schools through transition that may be required.

5.5 It is forecasted that a balance of £25.830m will be carried forward from 2022/23 within the High Needs Block. The Forum noted and agreed the following, which sets out the position of this balance at this time:

- a) Forum members are reminded that the Authority presented reports in May (Document OM) and July (Document OR) 2022, following discussions regarding the use and retention of the High Needs Block

surplus balance that was carried forward from the 2021/22 financial year. The July 2022 report set out a plan for £920,000 of investment, in 3 areas, in support of inclusion. This initial investment will run to the end of the 2022/23 academic year, where it has been agreed that a review of impact will inform whether the High Needs Block surplus balance continues its investment in these areas. Currently, for budget planning purposes, it is assumed that the £0.920m will continue for a full financial year in 2023/24.

- b) When previously considering the balance held within the High Needs Block, the Forum has agreed with the Authority that this balance should not be allocated in support of on-going expenditure increases or pressures. This is because balances can only be spent once. However, it is not possible / realistic to take this position for the 2023/24 planned budget. We currently estimate that we may need to earmark an additional £3.280m of the balance to establish a planned budget for the High Needs Block for 2023/24 that balances back to zero. In total, with the addition of the £0.920m, we currently estimate that £4.200m (16% of the forecasted surplus balance) may be deployed during 2023/24. To highlight here: £0.920m of this estimated overspend is the result of deliberate additional inclusion plan spending, which is to be reviewed, and c. £4.23m is budget for new specialist places, which we do not expect to see full spending of in 2023/24 but which needs to be structurally built into the budget.
- c) On this basis, £21.630m of surplus balance would remain at March 2024. Our updated DSG Management Plan, presented in Document PP, includes a future year estimate of the High Needs Block. This estimate currently clearly indicates the continuation (and acceleration) of a substantial overspending in our High Needs Block, which will require significant mitigating actions, discussion on which will need to form part of our 2024/25 DSG budget setting cycle. We are moving into a period where the risk of cumulative deficit in our DSG account is high.
- d) In this context, the Authority at this time does not plan any other significant use of the High Needs Block surplus. The planned budget is constructed on a series of estimates and we try to take a prudent approach to these estimates. However, a first call on the £21.630m will be meeting in year the cost of change, as well as supporting any unexpected costs that may arise across 2022 and 2023 after the planned budget for 2023/24 has been agreed. The second, perhaps more important, call on the £21.630m balance will be supporting the avoidance of cumulative deficit in the High Needs Block over the medium term. We are also conscious of three significant uncertainties, that are likely to have financial implications for our High Needs Block going forward, a) the outcomes of the national reviews on SEND, EHCP and Alternative Provision systems and funding - it is likely that changes that come from these reviews will alter the cost base that our High Needs Block will need to manage, b) whether we are successful in our bid for a new special school free school, and c) whether the annual increase in High Needs Block funding allocated by the DfE keeps pace with increasing costs, linked with the rate of continued growth in our

costs, especially from the continued growth in the number of EHCPs and the number of specialist places created, which is uncertain. On current information, we would assume that funding will not keep pace with costs growth, and so reserves will be essential in this context.

**5.6 It is forecasted that a balance of £5.343m will be carried forward from 2022/23 within the Schools Block. The Schools Forum agreed, that:**

- a) £0.797m is retained as the ring-fenced balance of de-delegated funds. A breakdown of this balance is provided in the separate report (Document PN Appendix 2). Within the 2023/24 planned budget, £0.100m of the £0.797m is specifically earmarked for release to support the cost of the school maternity / paternity insurance fund and £0.122m is earmarked for release to support the cost of the school improvement fund. On this basis, £0.575m is retained and carried forward. However, this balance may also be used to support any costs arising from new deficits held by sponsored primary academy converters, as no new value of budget is de-delegated for this purpose in 2023/24. The rest of the balance is ring-fenced and is held in support of the cost of continuing de-delegated funds, in line with the principles set out in paragraph 1.2.**
- b) £1.320m is retained as the Growth Fund ring-fenced balance and will be used to support the cost of allocations in 2023/24 and on-going. Please see paragraph 1.5.**
- c) £0.500m is retained as the ring-fenced balance for the primary phase Falling Rolls Fund. Please see paragraphs 1.9 and 1.10.**
- d) £0.397m is allocated to cover the estimated change in the cost of NNDR (Business Rates) for maintained primary and secondary schools for the 2023/24 financial year. However, this is a 'holding position' only, as our Schools Block will be reimbursed for this sum in 2024/25, when we will have a choice about whether the £0.397m is returned to reserves or is allocated through our Schools Block planned budget. Rateable values nationally are being re-valued for April 2023 (5 year scheduled re-evaluation), and costs nationally are increasing by around 15%. NNDR accounting arrangements are now rather complicated. As we are a local authority, that is still uses the 'old' approach to billing for NNDR costs (rather than the ESFA's 'new' approach), whilst the cost of NNDR changes in academies does not affect our Schools Block spending position, changes in costs in maintained schools do, prior to our Schools Block being reimbursed in the following year. The £0.397m is based on an estimate of NNDR costs, and is subject to confirmation.**
- e) £1.390m in total is allocated into the 2023/24 Schools Block planned budget, in order to afford the mainstream primary and secondary funding formula, as we proposed in our consultation, now using the October 2022 Census dataset. Please see section 7 for further discussion on the allocation of the £1.390m and on the financial position of the Schools Block in 2023/24 following the use of the October 2022 Census dataset. The £1.390m includes the allocation of the £0.421m balance that relates to primary-phase £GUF monies. The**

£0.421m specifically is allocated to support the cost of the primary-phase funding formula, and to bring the 'excess' cost of this down so that this is equivalent with the secondary-phase.

- f) The remaining value of £0.939m is fully retained as a resilience reserve. £0.939m is 0.2% of the Schools Block.

## 6. Early Years Single Funding Formula and Pro-Forma 2023/24 (RECOMMENDATION)

- Document NK (EYSFF consultation proposals)
- Document PO Appendix 5 (Early Years Pro-forma, which summarises the proposed setting base rates, the mean Deprivation & SEND rates and maintained nursery school supplement funding).
- Document PO Appendices 2a, 2b and 2c (indicative provider funding rate modelling 2023/24).

**6.1 As part of the Authority's consultation, the Schools Forum resolved to support in full the Authority's proposals for the Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) to be used to fund all early years providers for their delivery of the 2, 3 & 4-year-old entitlements in 2023/24. The Forum agreed also for the Early Years Block planned budget for 2023/24 to be presented on this basis at this time.**

**6.2 In providing feedback now, the Forum noted that, due to the timing of the DfE's announcements on Early Years Block funding arrangements, wider consultation with providers on our 2023/24 EYSFF has not yet begun, but will begin immediately after the Forum meeting. Our consultation will run until 6 February 2023. Final proposals, incorporating any adjustments made in response to consultation feedback, will be presented to Executive on 21 February and then, subject to the Executive's resolution, to Council on 23 February for final decision. The Forum's next scheduled meeting is not until 8 March, so this means that final decisions will be taken before the Forum has had sight of any consultation feedback and any amendments from this. The Authority will send an email to Forum Members as soon as possible after 6 February to inform them whether the final proposed EYSFF, to be presented to the Executive / Council, has changed from what was proposed in Document PK.**

**6.3 The Schools Forum also noted:**

- a) Local authorities are not permitted to alter their EYSFF arrangements in year without DfE approval.
- b) Deprivation and SEND rates for individual providers will be confirmed once January 2023 postcode data is used to update the Index of Multiple Deprivation 3 year rolling averages. The figures shown in Document PO Appendices 2a, 2b and 2c, and in Document PO Appendix 5, are indicative for this reason. Funding rates are also indicative because they are subject to the outcomes of the

consultation.

- c) **With the transfer of the Teacher Pay and Pensions Grants for schools and academies into the EYSFF in 2023/24, and the proposed adoption of a “Quality” Supplement (A Teacher Pensions Employers’ Contribution Supplement), all maintained schools and academies with nursery schools must now cease to add these grant allocations into their funding forecasts.**
- d) **A series of estimates have been made in the 2023/24 Early Years Block calculations relating to both income and to the cost of the entitlements (the number of hours to be delivered across the coming year). By necessity, this approach requires end of year reconciliation and may require carry-over of either an under or an over spend into 2024/25.**
- e) **In previous years, we have established our EYSFF rates of funding incorporating the benefit that comes from our DSG Early Years Block being funded for a greater number of 3&4-year-old entitlement hours than providers actually deliver across the 3 terms. We removed this benefit from our calculations within our 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial year planned budgets. As explained in paragraph 2.2, cautiously, we have assumed that some benefit continues / has returned in the 2023/24 Early Years Block planned budget that is presented to this meeting.**
- f) **There is no specific unallocated contingency fund held within the 2023/24 Early Years Block planned budget.**
- g) **In 2023/24 we will use a proportion of the Disability Access Fund (DAF) balance that has accrued to help manage the cost of our Early Years Inclusion Fund (EYIF), which is increasing due to a larger number of claims. In practical terms, this means using an estimated £0.120m of the DAF surplus balance to cover the cost of 2023/24 DAF allocations.**
- h) **As shown in the Pro-Forma (Document PO Appendix 5), our Early Years Block planned budget complies with the DfE’s statutory restrictions for the funding of 3&4-year-old hours delivery concerning a) the minimum 95% pass-through and b) the maximum 12% spend on supplements. Our planned budget also complies with the DfE’s expectation that the specific Maintained Nursery School Supplement is allocated to protect maintained nursery school funding at pre-national reform (2016/17) rates.**
- i) **The Local Authority is now working to move schools and academies onto the Provider Headcount Portal for summer term 2023, using this Portal to collect entitlement delivery information (rather than using DfE termly census downloads). PVI providers already use the Portal. The Authority has begun to communicate with schools and academies on this transition.**

**7. Primary and Secondary Formula Funding and Pro-Forma 2023/24 (RECOMMENDED)**

**Schools and Academies Members (by consensus on a phase specific basis) agreed:**

**7.1 That the formula approach that the Authority proposed in our consultation, and that was reported back to the Schools Forum on 7 December 2022 (Document PC), is used to calculate core formula funding allocations for mainstream primary and secondary maintained schools and academies for the 2023/24 financial year. This approach includes the following significant elements:**

- a) No transfer of budget from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block.**
- b) Continue to fully mirror the DfE's National Funding Formula (NFF) at factor level.**
- c) Set the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) at positive 0.5%. Within the calculation of the MFG, we continue to exclude premises factors (NNDR Business Rates, split sites and PFI) in the baselines for both 2022/23 and 2023/24, so that we can continue to closely mirror the way the MFG is calculated within the National Funding Formula.**
- d) Continue to use our existing local formula approach for the funding of split sites, as this is not yet covered by the National Funding Formula.**
- e) Continue to pass through the specific BSF DSG affordability gap values using our current method, continuing the adjustment to ensure that the amounts passed on to academies by the ESFA on an academic year basis are equivalent to the amounts that the Authority requires academies to pay back on a financial year basis. Please see 7.2 below.**
- f) Continue to fund NNDR (Business Rates) at actual cost, with the cost currently estimated within the planned budget.**
- g) Amend our definition of Notional SEND budgets for mainstream schools and academies, to bring this definition more in line with the national picture and to improve fairness.**
- h) Retain, with their existing criteria and methodologies, the funds currently managed centrally within the Schools Block – Growth Fund, Falling Rolls Fund, De-delegated Funds.**

**7.2 That the value of the DSG's total contribution to the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) Affordability Gap for 2023/24 be set at £8.920m and split £8.003m Schools Block and £0.917m High Needs Block. These figures incorporate an 11.2% increase on 2022/23 for the RPIX. This represents a net increase (allowing for adjustments relating to the apportionment for academies) of £1.159m in cash budget terms on the 2022/23 cost. This contribution will be split between relevant schools and academies on the same % basis as in 2022/23 (based on the school's unitary charge value).**



For Secondary schools and academies, this contribution is expressed as a formula factor. For Special schools and academies, this contribution is managed as a central item within the High Needs Block.

7.3 The Schools Forum noted that, as shown in Document PL, the Schools Block planned budget exceeds the 2023/24 DSG Schools Block settlement by £01.787m. The £1.787m is made up of:

- £0.748m overspend in the primary phase formula (this figure is shown in section X of Document PL).
- £0.392m overspend in the secondary phase formula (this figure is shown in section X of Document PL).
- £0.397m increased spending on NNDR (Business Rates) for maintained primary and secondary schools, prior to our Schools Block funding reimbursing in 2024/25.
- £0.303m overspend in cross phase premises factors (the difference between our DSG funding for premises factors and our spend on premises factors).
- £0.053m underspend in cross phase Growth Fund (the difference between our DSG funding for growth and our estimated spend on growth from the 2023/24 planned budget).

Forum Members noted that, in material terms however, the true overspend is £1.390m, because the £0.397m NNDR overspend will be reimbursed in 2024/25.

Forum Members agreed the following position, which was recommended by the Authority: “Whilst we are concerned about the impact of data lag, for a second year, and whilst we would have preferred not to rely on this value of reserves again to manage this position, on balance, we are of the view that the most sensible, defensible and reasonable approach to take now, as we did in 2022/23, is to use a proportion of the Schools Block brought forward balance to implement our proposals in 2023/24, without alteration. This means that we fully mirror the National Funding Formula. This will support maximising the funds that are allocated now to schools and academies, who are currently facing financially challenging circumstances. Within this proposal for 2023/24, we allocate the remaining £0.421m of primary-phase £GUF monies. The allocation of this to the primary-phase formula brings the overspend in this element of the Schools Block down from £0.748m to £0.326m. £0.326m is broadly equivalent to the £0.392m overspend in the secondary-phase.”

7.4 The Schools and Academies Members (by consensus on a phase specific basis) gave their final approval to the Pro-Forma for the 2023/24 financial year, presented at Document PO Appendix 4.

7.5 The Schools Forum also noted:

- a) That the recommended approach for 2023/24 does further reduce the value of the reserve balance that we hold within the Schools Block and, as such, were we to face a similar issue in 2024/25 (e.g. a £1m cost of ‘data lag’), we might not be able to avoid making formula funding

adjustments for affordability reasons. One of the considerations, however, in the favour of using reserves, is that we are only 2-3 more years away from the National Funding Formula, at which point we will not have to locally manage the cost of Schools Block formula funding.

- b) The cost of NNDR (business rates) shown in the Pro-forma is based on estimated figures. The Authority's initial cost estimate for 2023/24 will be subject to changes during the year (with a final reconciliation of actual costs taking place early in 2024).
- c) In moving to using the National Funding Formula at local individual primary and secondary school level, the Schools Forum wished to more closely monitor the actual spending of the Schools Block by phase against the funding received within the Schools Block by phase i.e. phase ring-fencing within the Schools Block. An updated calculation of the position for 2023/24 is shown in section X of Document PL. Forum Members are reminded that premises-related costs and Growth Fund and Falling Rolls Fund costs are funded on a cross-phase basis so are not included in this calculation.
- d) There is no unallocated contingency fund held within the 2023/24 Schools Block planned budget.
- e) On the basis of the modelling presented to this meeting, the formula funding landscape in Bradford in 2023/24 is as follows:
  - Primary phase: 44 out of 156 schools (28%), including academies, are funded on the Minimum Funding Guarantee. 27 schools (17%), including academies, are funded at the £4,405 minimum per pupil level. All other schools and academies are funded above £4,405 per pupil.
  - Secondary phase: 4 out of 31 schools (13%), including academies, are funded on the Minimum Funding Guarantee. 1 academy (3%) is funded at the £5,715 minimum per pupil level. All other schools and academies are funded above £5,715 per pupil.
  - All through academies: None of the 4 academies are funded on the Minimum Funding Guarantee. All of these academies are also funded above their composite minimum per pupil funding levels.
  - In total, 48 out of 191 schools and academies (25%) are funded on the Minimum Funding Guarantee. This is reduced from 73 (38%) in 2022/23. In total, 31 out of 191 schools and academies (16%) are funded on the minimum per pupil funding levels. This is reduced from 36 (19%) in 2022/23.

**LEAD:** *Business Advisor, Schools*

#### **666. SCHOOLS FORUM STANDING ITEMS**

No matters were raised and no resolutions were passed on this item.

## **667. AOB / FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

The Vice Chair asked the Business Advisor (Schools) for further advice on how schools should budget for pay awards in 2023/24. The Business Advisor offered his 'informal' advice', but add that further information will be presented to the Schools Forum at the next meeting within the 'update on school budget matters' annual report.

## **668. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next scheduled is Wednesday 8 March January. This meeting will be held remotely.

For planning purposes, the provisional schedule for Schools Forum meetings for the 2023/24 academic year has now been set, as follows:

- Wednesday 13 September 2023, 8am
- Wednesday 11 October 2023, 8am
- Wednesday 6 December 2023, 8am
- Wednesday 10 January 2024, 8am
- Wednesday 17 January 2024, 8am PROVISIONAL MEETING
- Wednesday 6 March 2024, 8am
- Wednesday 22 May 2024, 8am
- Wednesday 10 July 2024, 8am

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Forum.

THESE MINUTES HAVE BEEN PRODUCED, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, ON RECYCLED PAPER

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**Primary Schools & Academies Pulbished Admission Number (PAN) Reductions)**

<b>Implementation Date of PAN Change</b>	<b>Primary/Secondary</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Number PAN reduced by</b>	<b>PAN change</b>	<b>Planning Area</b>
2022	Primary	Foundation	-30	90 to 60	South West 4
2022	Primary	Academy	-30	60 to 30	South East 1
2022	Primary	Academy	-15	60 to 45	North West 2
2022	Primary	Academy	-30	90 to 60	North West 1
2022	Primary	Voluntary Aided	-30	60 to 30	Bingley 1
2022	Primary	Academy	-30	60 to 30	Bingley 2
2023	Primary	Academy	-15	60 to 45	Keighley 2
2023	Primary	Academy	-15	60 to 45	Keighley 2
2023	Primary	Community	-15	60 to 45	Keighley 1
2023	Primary	Community	-30	90 to 60	North East 3
2023	Primary	Academy	-15	45 to 30	North West 2
2023	Primary	Academy	-30	90 to 60	North East 3
2023	Primary	Academy	-15	60 to 45	Shipley 2
2024	Primary	Academy	-30	90 to 60	South West 4
2024	Primary	Academy	-10	60 to 50	South West 1
2024	Primary	Academy	-15	45 to 30	Keighley 2
2024	Primary	Community	-15	75 to 60	Bingley 1
2024	Primary	Academy	-30	90 to 60	North West 4
2024	Primary	Academy	-15	45 to 30	Keighley 2
2024	Primary	Voluntary Aided	-15	60 to 45	Keighley 1
2024	Primary	Community	-15	45 to 30	South Craven

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## SCHOOLS FORUM AGENDA ITEM

For Action

For Information

**Brief Description of Item**

This report provides an update for the Schools Forum on the application in the 2022/23 financial year of the Schools Block Falling Rolls Fund for mainstream primary phase maintained schools and mainstream primary phase academies.

**Date (s) of any Previous Discussion at the Forum**

Allocations from 2021/22 Falling Rolls Fund were considered by the Schools Forum on 9 March 2022. Allocations from the 2022/23 Fund have not yet been considered.

**Background / Context**

The establishment of a Falling Rolls Fund within the Schools Block, for the primary phase, came out of the Forum’s consideration of the impact of ‘under-subscription’ in primary schools and primary academies. A key report was presented to the Forum on 19 September 2018 (Document JE). This report provides useful background.

Within its discussions, the Forum stressed the importance of resolving these situations as far as possible (and where evidenced by forecasted data) through PAN adjustments, rather than via on-going financial support. The Authority is actively engaged in PAN management.

The Forum did also consider how direct financial support could be provided from the DSG. The Falling Rolls Fund is the mechanism through which support can be provided to both maintained schools and academies and both are required to contribute to the cost of the Fund. This is the only route through which financial support can be provided locally from Bradford’s DSG to under-subscribed academies.

A Falling Rolls Fund, with a value of £250,000, was established for the primary phase for the first time for the 2019/20 financial year. A report was presented to the Schools Forum on 11 March 2020. No maintained schools or academies qualified for funding. The £250,000 was rolled forward and added to by a further £250,000 allocated from the 2020/21 Schools Block. No maintained schools or academies qualified for funding in 2020/21 or in 2021/22. To date therefore, there has been no spend. The Schools Forum agreed not to allocate any further funding for the Falling Rolls Fund from either the 2022/23 or the 2023/24 Schools Block allocation. Therefore, the current value of available funding (continued within the Schools Block brought forward balance) is £500,000.

Our Falling Rolls Fund mechanism and criteria applied for 2022/23 is presented at Appendix 1, for reference.

In initially establishing a Falling Rolls Fund for the primary phase, we identified that its value will be quite limited when looking purely at under-subscription. This is because the DfE has set strict eligibility criteria. The Fund’s purpose is to protect good and outstanding schools and academies against short term ‘blips’ in pupil numbers. One of the major restrictions is the mandatory requirement that only good or outstanding schools are eligible, meaning that a number of schools and academies that are currently under-subscribed cannot be supported. The other major significant restriction is the requirement that funding can only be allocated where under-subscription is demonstrably a ‘blip’ and not the result of a longer term and on-going change in demographic distribution.

It is helpful to remind the Forum, for reference, of the most recent position, presented on 9 March 2022, and how the DfE’s restrictions reduced the eligibility of schools and academies for support from the Fund in 2021/22:

- There were 37 primary schools and primary academies (out of 160) that had a number on roll at October 2020 that was not at least 90% of their Published Admission Number (PAN) capacity. This is trigger 2. The occupancy of 12 of these were between 85% and 89%; 19 were between 70% and 84%; 6 were lower than 70%.
- For all 37 however, the latest forecasted pupil intake data clearly indicated that their surplus capacity will not be needed within the next 3 years. This is trigger 4. Many of these 37 were also ineligible as a result of other triggers. A number of the 37 have already consulted, or were consulting at the time, on PAN reductions.

### **Details of the Item for Consideration**

We are now applying the criteria, as set out in Appendix 1, to determine eligible schools and academies and the values of funding to be allocated for the 2022/23 financial year.

The position for 2022/23, as set out below, is calculated on the Authority's latest pupil numbers forecast, which has been constructed using the October 2022 Census data, and which incorporates the latest confirmed PAN adjustments. On a general basis, this latest forecast confirms the continued forecasted reduction in pupil numbers across the primary phase. This position serves also specifically to reinforce the limited value of the Falling Rolls Fund at this time.

- As was the case in each of the last 3 years, no maintained schools or academies qualify for funding from the 2022/23 Falling Rolls Fund.
- There are 34 primary schools and primary academies (out of 160) that had a number on roll at October 2021 that was not at least 90% of their Published Admission Number (PAN) capacity. This is trigger 2. The occupancy of 14 of these were between 85% and 89%; 14 were between 70% and 84%; 6 were lower than 70%.
- For all 34, the latest forecasted pupil intake data clearly indicates that their surplus capacity will not be needed within the next 3 years. This is trigger 4. Many of these 34 are also ineligible as a result of other triggers. A number of the 34 have already consulted, or are currently consulting, on PAN reductions.

On this basis, the Forum is asked to note that the ring-fenced sum of £500,000 is unspent within the Schools Block and that this amount is carried forward to 2023/24, as agreed at the January 2023 Forum meeting.

The Forum may wish to consider this outcome and the calculations in more detail. If it does, we would suggest that the Forum's sub-group is re-convened.

The sub-group may also wish to take the opportunity to review the Falling Roll Fund as part of our formula funding review work for 2024/25. As we reported to the Forum in January, new flexibilities (for the management of growth, falling rolls and 'surplus places') are expected to be brought into Schools Block arrangements in 2024/25, following the most recent National Funding Formula (NFF) consultation. This consultation quite clearly put forward the view that local authorities should retain Growth and Falling Rolls Fund responsibilities under the NFF. Retaining a surplus balance into 2024/25 will help therefore, given that there are uncertainties currently about how growth and falling rolls will be funded (with the concern that we expressed in our consultation response; that the proposed 'netting off' of pupil numbers 'growth' from 'reduction' may result in insufficient funding being available to support either issue). Falling rolls is also a significant issue for the primary phase, in particular, and we stated to the Forum in January that we take the view that we would wish to see how the expected new flexibilities could be used, before committing the Growth Fund and falling Rolls Fund balances elsewhere to more general formula spending.

### **Implications for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) (if any)**

There is £0.500m of ring-fenced Falling Roll Fund monies held within the Schools Block brought forward balance. With no allocation from the Falling Roll Fund in 2022/23, this £0.500m will be fully carried forward into 2023/24 for use initially against the 2023/24 Falling Rolls Fund, which will be presented to the Schools Forum in March 2024.

### **Recommendations**

#### **Recommended –**

- (1) The Schools Forum is asked to note that there are no allocations to be made from the Schools Block Falling Rolls Fund in 2022/23.**
- (2) The Forum is asked to note that the sum of £0.50m is unspent within the Schools Block and is carried forward into 2023/24 as a ring-fenced sum.**

### **List of Supporting Appendices / Papers**

Appendix 1 – Falling Rolls Fund 2022/23



**Contact Officer** *(name, telephone number and email address)*

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# Schools Forum Document PR Appendix 1

## Primary-Phase Schools Block Falling Rolls Fund 2022/23

### 1. Background

- 1.1 Local authorities are able to top-slice the Schools Block in order to create a small fund to support good schools with falling rolls and surplus capacity. This is primarily intended for where population growth is expected in the near future but where a good and necessary school, or academy, currently has surplus places and faces an unmanageable financial position in the short term, where significant action (redundancies) would be needed, and additional costs incurred, to contain spending within budget.
- 1.2 The Falling Rolls Funds is ring-fenced. It operates in a similar way to the Growth Fund, in the sense that both maintained schools and academies are top-sliced for the cost of the Fund and both are eligible to receive support through it. The Falling Rolls Fund can work on a phase specific basis and we have established this for the primary phase only in 2022/23.
- 1.3 It is mandatory that the Falling Rolls Fund is restricted to:
  - 1.3.1 Good or outstanding schools or academies.
  - 1.3.2 Schools or academies where planning data shows that the surplus places will be needed within the next three financial years.
- 1.4 Local authorities are required to provide, on a transparent and consistent basis, the criteria on which any monies are to be allocated. The criteria should set out both the circumstances in which a payment could be made and the basis for calculating sums.
- 1.5 The Schools Forum is required to agree the criteria and the total sum to be held within the Schools Block. The criteria are vetted by the ESFA annually.

### 2. Guiding Principles

- 2.1 The approach to support funding must work within the rules set by the DfE. The Falling Rolls Fund cannot be a mechanism for supporting schools or academies that do not have a Good or Outstanding Ofsted judgement. This includes maintained schools that do not have Good or Outstanding judgements that have recently converted to academy under sponsored arrangements that are yet to be re-assessed. It also cannot be a mechanism for funding under-subscribed schools where planning data does not show that surplus capacity will shortly be needed.
- 2.2 Additional funding will be allocated in recognition only of exceptional circumstances and we would expect only a small number of schools or academies to qualify. The funding system (reliance on the October Census) is quite crude and many schools and academies manage effectively a level of fluctuation in pupil numbers during the year and between years. The system also runs on a lagged basis, meaning that there is already some protection for schools that are falling in numbers.
- 2.3 The cessation of a defined / planned bulge class (or half class) should not trigger Falling Rolls funding nor should a school or academy that is permanently reducing its PAN.
- 2.4 The Fund will support Reception to Year 11 only (not early years nor post 16).
- 2.5 Support will only be temporary / transitional. Funding will not support a situation that does not have a resolution (within three years).

2.6 The cost to the DSG (and therefore, the top-slice cost on other schools or academies) must be limited and controlled.

2.7 The option for providing additional funding must not relieve the school or academy of its responsibility to take action to manage its budget, which includes the use of surplus balances.

2.8 Funding must not reward poor performance or poor decision making on the part of the school or academy (the root of the circumstances should be factors not under the control of the school or academy).

2.9 The process of assessing a school's or academy's eligibility for funding will include the Local Authority's finance, school improvement and places planning officers.

2.10 Principles 2.1 to 2.9 mean we would wish to define:

2.10.1 Two key triggers for additional support to be a) a significant reduction in numbers on roll, together with b) a significant number of surplus places in total. It is important for a system to have both these triggers. The first trigger is important as it indicates that change has taken place and that action is now needed (reference paragraph 1.1).

2.10.2 Quite high qualification thresholds for these two trigger points, or setting these triggers to combine in such a way as, to ensure the fund only supports 'exceptional circumstances'.

2.10.3 A mechanism, which looks at the total position of the school or academy, rather than just the position in a single year group or key stage.

2.10.4 Additional criteria, which focus on requiring the school or academy to evidence the action that it has taken already as well as the action that will need to be taken to contain spending within budget. This would include how the school's or academy's reserve is being deployed. This would be part of a detailed budget discussion with the school or academy within the eligibility assessment process.

2.10.5 A formula basis for funding, but with some additional measures to control the cost of the Fund to other schools and academies, which includes:

2.10.5.1 The option to scale back allocations into an agreed budget.

2.10.5.2 Establishing a maximum value of funding allocated in any given year to a school or academy.

2.10.5.3 These control measures mean that allocations will not be confirmed with the school or academy until the end of the financial year and may be allocated retrospectively only with sight of the school's or academy's budget and surplus balances position as well as the number of schools or academies that are potentially eligible. This is an approach that appears to be followed by a number of the local authorities that operate a Falling Rolls Fund.

### **3. Criteria for allocations in 2022/23 (Primary Phase Only)**

3.1 The primary school or academy must meet all of the following 6 triggers (\* with the exception of schools and academies that are expanding or have recently expanded at the request of the Authority where trigger 1 will not apply):

3.1.1 Trigger 1: The total number on roll in October 2021 must have reduced by at least 3% on October 2020 (\* not applicable to schools and academies that are expanding or have recently expanded). This is an initial trigger identifying change; that either new budget action needs to be taken (to contain spending) or financial support could be allocated to protect capacity. Once a school or academy has met all eligibility criteria and receives Falling Rolls Funding (may have been in a previous year), this trigger is not again applied until the school's roll increases above the trigger 2 threshold (recognising that a school may have a blip of 2 years, which it will

carry and will need support for after its roll year on year has stabilised and then has begun to increase). For reference, 3% for a 1FE school = 6; 2FE = 13; 3FE = 19.

- 3.1.2 Trigger 2: The total number on roll at October 2021 must be lower than 90% of total PAN capacity number agreed with the Local Authority, with the capacity calculation adjusted where the school or academy is in the process of establishment or permanent expansion. For comparison, a 1FE primary school that achieves 27 in every year group (not 30) = 90% (189); 2FE with 54 (not 60) = 90% (378); 3FE with 81 (not 90) = 90% (567).
- 3.1.3 Trigger 3: Must be judged Good or Outstanding by Ofsted at the time funding is confirmed. For academies recently converted, and yet to be re-assessed, the Authority will apply the most recent Ofsted judgement the school received prior to conversion.
- 3.1.4 Trigger 4: The Local Authority's planning data must show that the surplus capacity is needed within 3 financial years i.e. either the school's or academy's intake number will recover back to PAN and / or the surplus places in later year groups are needed, within 3 years. This means that a 'blip' in intake number is limited to 2 censuses before recovery. More than 2 censuses = the school or academy is expected to take action to reduce spending, rather than be allocated additional funding, because the implications of the 'blip' are longer term. It is important to identify that even a 2 year blip in intake, depending on its size, could have a financial impact on a school or academy that takes up to 6 years to work its way through unless pupils are admitted post reception. Therefore, Falling Rolls Fund support may be committed for a longer period of time on a sliding-scale basis.

On indicative modelling of a 1FE primary school whose intake reduces from 30 to 15:

- A 2 year blip = 6 years of funding would required until the school's total NOR exceeds 90%
- A 1 year blip = no funding (the school's NOR does not drop below 90%)

On indicative modelling of a 2FE primary school whose intake reduces from 60 to 30:

- A 2 year blip = 6 years of funding would required until the school's total NOR exceeds 90%
- A 1 year blip = no funding (the school's NOR does not drop below 90%)

On indicative modelling of a 3FE primary school whose intake reduces from 90 to 60:

- A 2 year blip = no funding (the school's NOR does not drop below 90%)
- A 1 year blip = no funding (the school's NOR does not drop below 90%)

- 3.1.5 Trigger 5: That the reduction in number on roll does not come from the exit of an identified agreed bulge class or from the permanent reduction in PAN.
- 3.1.6 Trigger 6: That the school or academy evidences, with reference to detailed information, the budget action that has already been taken, how surplus balances are being used to support the budget position, and how the school's or academy's spending can still not be brought within budget without the need to deliver staffing re-structure, including redundancies, that will result in additional cost. Essentially, the school or academy is required to demonstrate that the Falling Rolls Fund is the 'value for money' option; the cost of Falling Rolls Funding is less than the cost of action that would need to be taken.

#### **4. Formula 2022/23 (Primary Phase only)**

4.1 A basic initial formula of: £base APP (AWPU) value x 80% x ((PAN x 90%) - NOR)

- 4.1.1 This has similarity with the approach taken in the funding of growth and bulge classes, which uses 80% of the £Base App value.
- 4.1.2 Funding will top up to 90% of NOR only (as trigger 2 is based on an assumption that all schools and academies will manage 10% under-occupancy within their own budgets).

4.1.3 Funding will be re-calculated annually based on latest Census numbers. Funding will reduce as numbers on roll increase on a sliding-scale basis.

4.2 However:

4.2.1 A maximum annual allocation value of £100,000 is set for any one school or academy.

4.2.2 Allocations can be scaled back to fit into budget. Essentially we will do this by reducing from using 80% of the AWPU value to e.g. 50%. We will discuss this with the Schools Forum when we present proposed allocations. It would be up to the Forum to decide whether to scale back or whether to allocate additional funding from the DSG to cover the full cost. To this end, and also to enable the most effective challenge under trigger 6, allocations will be presented to the Schools Forum in March 2023 (at the end of the 2022/23 financial year).

## SCHOOLS FORUM AGENDA ITEM

For Action

For Information

**Brief Description of Item**

This report is presented as per the High Needs Block schedule of information agreed with the Schools Forum on 14 October 2020. This is the 2021/22 Exclusions Report.

**Date (s) of any Previous Discussion at the Forum**

The 2020/21 report was presented to the Schools Forum on 9 March 2022.

**Background / Context**

The Authority presented to the Schools Forum meeting on 14 October 2020 a schedule of high needs financial information, which will be provided within the annual meetings cycle for the Forum’s review. An annual exclusions report is now presented as part of this schedule.

The Local Authority holds statutory responsibility to provide suitable full time education for pupils that have been permanently excluded, from the 6<sup>th</sup> day of their exclusion.

This provision is funded from the High Needs Block. Bradford’s 2023/24 planned budget includes financial provision for 160 permanent exclusion places in total on a full year basis (90 Park Aspire; 65 Bradford Alternative Provision Academy; 5 other alternative providers). Places are funded at £10,000 (as per the national model) plus ‘top up’ funding, which is allocated using the agreed Day Rate funding model. The total High Needs Block budget for 2023/24 is £4.067m, which is 3.5% of our High Needs Block funding allocation.

There is a national legal framework in place, which governs the exclusion of pupils.

The Financial Regulations require an adjustment to be made to core-formula funding and to Pupil Premium Grant (where relevant), meaning that a school’s or academy’s formula funding and PPG is reduced following the permanent exclusion of a pupil. This funding is then transferred to the including school or academy from the date of the pupil’s inclusion. The ‘balance’ (the funding associated with the period between exclusion and inclusion where the pupil is not on the roll of a mainstream school) is retained by the Authority to support the cost of alternative provision.

The Schools Forum is reminded that the Authority has re-structured the District’s alternative provision settings. Within this, the High Needs Block has ceased to fund alternative provision that is commissioned by schools rather than by the Local Authority.

**Details of the Item for Consideration**

Please see Appendix 1.

**Implications for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) (if any)**

The Local Authority’s provision for permanent exclusions is funded from the High Needs Block. Any ‘structural’ growth or reduction in the number of permanent exclusions has implications for this Block.

**Recommendations**

**Recommended – The Schools Forum is asked to consider and to note the information provided in the report.**

**List of Supporting Appendices / Papers**

Appendix 1 – Exclusions Report 2021/22

**Contact Officer** (name, telephone number and email address)

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# Annual Exclusion Figures 2021/22

This report includes a three-year comparison of data from September 2019 to July 2022

**Produced by Information Management Team and Exclusions Team**

*Education & Learning*

Department of Children's Services

## About the Bradford School Exclusions Team

**The Exclusions Team is committed to supporting the inclusion of children and young people and preventing exclusion from school. This cannot be done in isolation and we strive to develop and work in partnerships to achieve this and using data intelligently.**

Following a permanent exclusion an officer in the Exclusions Team will work with those involved to ensure that the statutory exclusion guidance is followed to **minimise disruption to a pupil's education so that exclusion from school does not mean exclusion from education.**

The Exclusions Team has the following responsibilities:

- Ensure that the Local Authority's statutory responsibilities relating to exclusion are met;
- Gives advice to schools, parents and carers and other professionals on statutory and non-statutory exclusion processes;
- Maintains an exclusions helpline 5 days per week;
- Provides statistical information to the DfE;
- Offers training to Governors and school staff on their statutory responsibilities connected to school exclusion;
- Offers advice to support schools in the use of alternatives to exclusion, such as a managed move, Pastoral Support Plan (PSP), phased reintegration and referrals to other supporting services;
- Reviews both suspensions and permanent exclusions;
- Advises and guides governors on all aspects of exclusion law;
- Attends permanent and over 15 days' suspensions Governing Board Meetings in maintained schools and where invited for Academy schools, as appropriate;
- Attends Independent Review Panel Hearings.

These responsibilities are derived from: *'Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England: Statutory guidance for those with legal responsibilities in relation to exclusion'* (DfE September 2017).

Officers dealing with pupil exclusions from school sit within Bradford's Children's Services and can be contacted for exclusion advice by emailing [exclusionsteam@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:exclusionsteam@bradford.gov.uk) or calling 01274 439333 / 432446 / 435293 to speak to an Exclusions Officer.

## A Note on Permanent Exclusions

Bradford provides education from day six of a pupil's permanent exclusion at either Park Aspire (Previously call Park Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)) or at Bradford Alternative Provision (AP) Academy. Park Aspire was rated 'Good' by OfSTED in 2020, and Bradford AP Academy was deemed 'Outstanding' at their last OfSTED inspection in 2015.

**The Exclusions Team, together with our AP and PRU providers, ensure that all of our permanently excluded pupils have provision on or before the 6<sup>th</sup> day after the permanent exclusion.**

Bradford, like other areas, had seen a rising trajectory in permanent exclusions over pre-pandemic years. Permanent exclusions reduced during 2019/20 and 2020/21 possibly due to school closures or reduced onsite attendance related to the Covid-19 pandemic, and a continued commitment to inclusion and partnership working. Permanent exclusions have increased for 2021/22.



## Notes on the Data and Approach Used in This Report

Schools emerged from the Covid 19 pandemic restrictions in the academic year 2021/22, thus comparing data to the previous two years needs to be viewed with caution as the past two years were unprecedented due to school closures and remote education.

The 2019/20 school year is not directly comparable to more recent or previous years, as there were no summer term 2019/20 permanent exclusions due to Covid-19 school attendance restrictions. Similarly, restrictions to attendance made in 2020/21 have impacted on exclusions made in the spring term.

To try and provide a more granular level of consistency that may be masked by reporting only on annual figures, the report (where appropriate) shows the data split by term as well as by school year. Where full academic year data is used (both in the narrative and supporting visuals), readers are requested to keep in mind the above caveat.

A notable consequence of splitting the data into terms is that the adding the pupil numbers across terms will not balance with the total figure reported for the year. This is due to the fact that the same child could be counted up to three times (once per term). However, this approach does allow for a clearer understanding of the number of pupils affected in each term.

The Exclusions data used in this report is taken from the Council's core education system which is updated with daily extracts from school MIS systems across the Bradford district. Please note, using live data has impacted on previously reported numbers due to technical issues with a small proportion of schools. January school census data is used to calculate the number of pupils on roll for Annex A and B. Regional, benchmark group, and national comparator data is taken from the *Local Authority Interactive Tool* (LAIT), published by the DFE throughout the year.

An expanded set of reason codes have been in place since 2020/21 to allow for an enhanced understanding of the reasons for exclusion, and to help support targeted interventions where appropriate: (PH) wilful transgression of protective measures; (LG) abuse against sexual orientation and gender; (DS) abuse relating to disability; (OW) offensive weapon or prohibited item. The 'Other' code was removed.

## Update of the behind the Blade project

In the previous Annual Report, we discussed the commencement of 'Behind the Blade', a pilot project led by our Youth Justice Service (YJS) to support schools, help reduce the need for suspensions and exclusions, and support young people make safe choices connected to bladed articles or offensive weapons as this was identified as an area of high exclusions, as well as placing pupils at significantly increased risk of exploitation and further criminalisation. Individual referrals were offered a 1-2-1 knife crime awareness intervention programme, delivered over 3-6 weeks, to local pupils found to be carrying knives at school, or considered at risk of doing so, with participants also offered a certificated first aid training on completion. In response to requests from schools, the YJS also delivered assembly-based knife awareness sessions, in partnership with local police and health services. Both the 1-2-1 programme, and the school assembly sessions, have proved popular across the city. Data details a decline from 16 exclusions in 20/21 to 6 this year for bladed articles/offensive weapons. This

partnership with our Youth Justice Service, police, school and education led to a submission to the Kathy Biggar Award by our Youth Justice Service as an outstanding initiative for Weapons Awareness Violence Reduction which was won. This is in addition to winning the Service Excellence Award in the category of Collaboration and Partnership.

## Permanent Exclusions

Please note that a school-level table of data related to Permanent Exclusions is provided in **Annex A** of this report. It is important to bear in mind that the data for 2019/20 will be incomplete due to Covid restrictions, and therefore any comparisons / trends should be considered with this in mind. Schools who did not issue any Permanent Exclusions in 2021/22 are listed in **Annex C** of this report.

### Overall Numbers

- **Bradford has an increasing number of permanent exclusions**, from 55 (0.06%) in 2019/20 to 71 (0.07%) in 2021/22 (also expressed as a percentage of the school population). **Bradford's rate is slightly below the national, regional and statistical neighbour rates in 2020/21**, as shown in Table 1 and Chart 1.
- There were 71 permanent exclusions in 2021/22, a **45% increase from 2020/21**. Without the data for the 2019/20 summer term, it is likely that without the partial school closure the overall number for 2019/20 may have been considerably higher (Table 1). The school population increased by 0.8% between January 2021 and January 2022.
- Permanent exclusions within the Primary phase increased by 167%, from 6 in 2020/21, to 16 in 2021/22. **The 2021/22 total has increased and is now higher than the 13 exclusions seen in 2018/19.**
- **Permanent exclusions within Secondary Schools have also increased**, from 32 in 2020/21 to 45 in 2021/22 (a **40.1% increase**). Exclusions made in All Through schools were made in the Secondary Year Groups, and these increased from 8 in 2020/21 to 10 in 2021/22 (a 25% increase). Therefore, **the overall percentage change of exclusions made in the Secondary phase represents a 37.5% increase, and the total number of 55 exclusions in the Secondary phase exceeds the 47 seen in 2018/19.**
- **Exclusions for pupils with no previous suspensions** (see annex A) has increased by 71% in 2021/22, from 7 in 2020/21 to 12. "Drug and Alcohol Related" was the most prevalent reason for a permanent exclusion where there had been no previous suspension in the year (3 out of the 12).
- **77.5% of Bradford schools (110) issued no Permanent Exclusions in 2020/21 (See Annex A).**

	2019/20				2020/21				2021/22			
	Autumn	Spring	Summer	Total	Autumn	Spring	Summer	Total	Autumn	Spring	Summer	Total
Primary	1	3		4	3	1	2	6	1	8	7	16
PRU	2	1		3	2	1		3				0
Secondary	24	16		40	18	5	9	32	13	20	12	45
All-Through	6	2		8	3	2	3	8	3	5	2	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>22</b>		<b>55</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>71</b>
<i>3yr Average</i>				<i>44</i>				<i>53</i>				<i>58</i>
<b>Bradford</b> - % of Number on Roll				0.06				0.04				0.07
<b>Yorkshire &amp; Humber</b> - % of Number on Roll (NOR)				0.06				0.05				-
<b>Statistical Neighbours</b> - % of Number on Roll (NOR)				0.1				0.07				-
<b>England</b> - % of Number on Roll (NOR)				0.06				0.05				-

Table 1: Permanent Exclusions - year & term by school phase; comparison to regional and national rates per school pop (January Census)



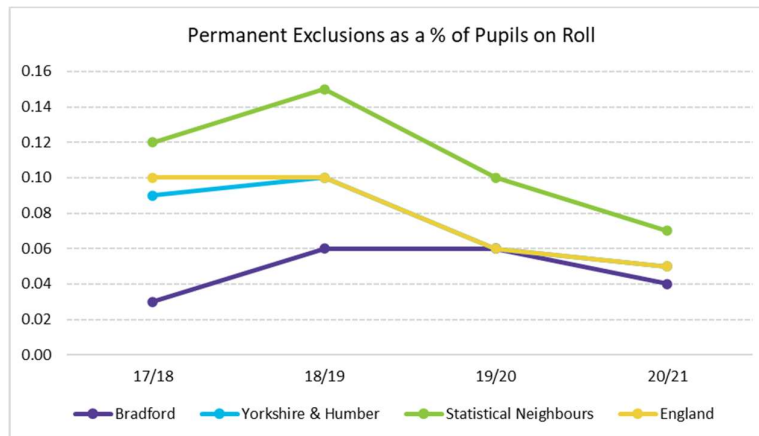


Chart 1: Permanent Exclusions as a % of Pupils on Roll – 2017/18 to 2020/21

Reasons for Permanent Exclusion (Primary Reason: DfE Taxonomy)

The withdrawal of the 'Other' code in 2020/21 means that a more accurate representation for the reason a pupil was excluded is now possible.

- The top three reasons for permanent exclusion in 2021/22 (Table 2) are:
  - **Persistent Disruptive Behaviour** (17 instances across all phases);
  - Physical Assault against a Pupil (15);
  - Physical Assault against an Adult (13).
- The most common reason given nationally in 2020/21 was Persistent Disruptive Behaviour, accounting for 29.7% of all exclusions made. Bradford had a smaller proportion of exclusions using this reason in 2020/21 (20.3%), though this has increased slightly in 2021/22 (23.9%).
- In 2020/21, Use/Threat of an Offensive Weapon was the most prevalent reason for permanent exclusions in Bradford (a rate of 27.1% compared to 10.5% Nationally). The number of exclusions for Use/Threat of an Offensive Weapon has dropped from 16 in 2020/21 to 6 in 2021/22, reducing the rate to 8.5%.
- The rate of drug and alcohol related exclusions made in Bradford in 2021/22 has halved in comparison to 2020/21 (4.2% compared to 8.4% previously), which is also lower than the 2020/21 national rate of 7.9%.
- The rate of exclusions relating to the physical assault of an adult has fallen again and accounts for 18.3% of exclusions made in 2021/22, which is still higher than the national rate of 11% in 2020/21.

		Primary				PRU				Secondary				All Through			
		19/20	20/21	21/22	Total	19/20	20/21	21/22	Total	19/20	20/21	21/22	Total	19/20	20/21	21/22	Total
Damage	DM								2			1	3				0
Drug & Alcohol Related	DA					1	1		2	3	4	3	10	1			1
Inappropriate use of Social Media	MT										1		1				0
Other	OT					1			1	2			2	2			2
Persistent Disruptive Behaviour	DB	2	1	2	5					15	6	9	30		2	6	8
Physical Assault - Adult	PA	2	2	3	7	1	1		2	9	4	9	22		2	1	3
Physical Assault - Pupil	PP		2	1	3					4	4	12	20	3	1	2	6
Racist Abuse	RA			1	1					2			2	2			2
Use / Threat of an Offensive Weapon	OW	1	1	2	4		1		1		11	5	16		3		3
Verbal Abuse / Threats - Adult	VA			2	2					3	1	3	7				1
Verbal Abuse / Threats - Pupil	VP			2	2						1	1	2				0
Bullying	BU												1				0
Abuse against sexual orientation and gender identity	LG			1	1							1	1				0
Sexual misconduct	SM			3	3								0				0
<b>Total</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>26</b>

Table 2: Permanent exclusions by school phase and primary reason – 2019/20 – 2021/22



### Permanent Exclusion Cohort

- The highest level of exclusions was seen for pupils in **Years 8 and 9** during 2021/22 (17 excluded in each year). Year 7 pupils followed as the third most excluded group in 2021/22 (Table 3).

	Female				Male				Total		
	19/20	20/21	21/22	Total	19/20	20/21	21/22	Total	19/20	20/21	21/22
R				0			1	1			1
1				0							
2						1	1	2		1	1
3				0			3	3			3
4				0	1	1	2	4	1	1	2
5				0	2	1	6	9	2	1	6
6 (Key Stage 2)				0	1	3	3	7	1	3	3
7		1	5	6	8	5	7	20	8	6	12
8		2	3	5	6	12	14	32	6	14	17
9	3	3	6	12	11	11	11	33	14	14	17
10	5	3		8	5	4	6	15	10	7	6
11 (Key Stage 4)		1	1	2	12	1	2	15	12	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>71</b>

**Table 3: Permanent Exclusions by Year Group and Gender – 2019/20 to 2021/22**

- The number of Year 11 pupils permanently excluded has seen a significant decline since 2019/20 (Table 3).
- For every 1 girl excluded, approximately 4 boys were excluded** in 2021/22, which is above the 2020/21 national rate of 1 girl to every 3 boys (Table 3).
- There were no Children in Care to the Local Authority or Special School permanent exclusions in 2021/22. 3 Children with a Child Protection Plan and 6 Children in Need were excluded within the same period.
- Pupils receiving **SEN Support in school account for under half of the permanent exclusion group** in 2021/22, whereas they have accounted for over half of the group in the previous 2 years (Table 4).

	2019/20				2020/21				2021/22			
	Autumn	Spring	Summer	Total	Autumn	Spring	Summer	Total	Autumn	Spring	Summer	Total
EHCP												
SEN Support	15	14		29	14	8	7	29	7	15	9	31
No SEN Support	18	8		26	12	1	7	20	10	18	12	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>71</b>

**Table 4: Permanent Exclusions by SEND Status – 2019/20 to 2021/22**

- In terms of ethnicity, pupils with **Mixed – White and Black African** heritage have a higher rate of exclusion as a proportion of their ethnicity groupings (Table 5).

Ethnic Group	Total Permanent Exclusions			As a % of Ethnic Group on Roll		
	19/20	20/21	21/22	19/20	20/21	21/22
Any other White background		3	6	0.07	0.14	
Irish						
Traveller of Irish Heritage						
Roma/Roma Gypsy	2	2	1	0.18	0.20	0.10
White Eastern European						
White British	32	24	43	0.08	0.06	0.11
<b>WHITE</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>50</b>			
Any other Mixed Background		2	2		0.1	0.09
White/Black African		1	1		0.22	0.22
White/Asian	6	1	4	0.25	0.04	0.16
White/Black Caribbean	2	2		0.16	0.16	
<b>MIXED</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>			
Any Other Asian Background						
Bangladeshi	1	1	2	0.03	0.03	0.06
Indian						
Pakistani	11	10	9	0.03	0.03	0.02
<b>ASIAN</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>			
African			1			0.07
Caribbean						
Any other Black background						
<b>BLACK</b>			<b>1</b>			
<b>CHINESE</b>						
<b>OTHER</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>		0.06	0.05
<b>REFUSED / NOT OBTAINED</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.16</b>	<b>0.23</b>	<b>0.14</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>0.06</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>0.07</b>

Table 5: Permanent Exclusions by Ethnicity and % of No on Roll – 2019/20 to 2021/22

#### Permanent Exclusions in Schools

- Annex A shows the rate of permanent exclusions range from 0.06 (when expressed as a percentage of those on roll), to 1.14 in 2021/22.

#### Permanent Exclusion Notifications Withdrawn

- The Exclusions Team, in partnership with our schools, parents and other education partners supported in the cases of 13 pupils who were permanently excluded then had it withdrawn by the head teacher as other support plans could be delivered.

#### Pupils Reinstated by the Governing Board

- Two pupils were reinstated at the pupil disciplinary governor meeting.

#### Independent Review Panels

- Two families requested an independent review of the governors' decision, one of which was quashed by the review for Governors to re-consider and the other upheld.

#### Vulnerable Group Support

- The Exclusions Team with wider partners worked 44 cases connected to vulnerable groups (those in care to the authority, with an education, health and Care (EHC) Plan or draft EHC Plan) at risk of exclusion to support.



## Suspensions (fixed period exclusions)

Please note that a school-level table of data related to suspensions is provided in **Annex B** of this report. It is important to bear in mind that the data for 2019/20 will be incomplete due to Covid restrictions, and therefore any comparisons / trends should be considered with this in mind. Schools who did not issue any Suspensions in 2021/22 are listed in **Annex D** of this report.

### Overall Numbers

- **The number of suspensions within Bradford increased significantly in 2021/22 in comparison to the previous 2 years.** There was a slight increase from 4913 in 2019/20 to 5326 in 2020/21 (8.4% increase), to 11236 in 2021/22 (111% increase) (Table 6). The number of suspensions in 2021/22 is 70.4% higher than 2018/19 when there were 6594 suspensions seen.
- When looking at the rate of suspensions in relation to the school population, **Bradford's suspension rate has increased in 2021/22 by 42.4%.** For comparison, the published data for 2020/21 shows Bradford's suspension rate increase by 7.6% from the previous year.
- Spring term 2020/21 is highlighted red in table 6 to indicate when physical attendance restrictions in schools may have had an impact on suspensions, and grey for Summer Term 2019/20 which was when schools were closed to most pupils. For 2021/22, there was a higher proportion of suspensions in the Spring Term when compared to the 2 previous year's data.
- **The number of average days lost per pupil has increased** from 4 days in 2020/21, to 5 days in 2021/22.
- There is a continual decline in pupil's suspension durations of over 6 days being issues (see Annex B).

	2019/20				2020/21				2021/22			
	Autumn	Spring	Summer	Total	Autumn	Spring	Summer	Total	Autumn	Spring	Summer	Total
Days Lost	6571	4430.5	10.5	11012	5396.5	976.5	4716	11089	5593	8810	6913	21316
No of Pupils	1693	1331	7	2440	1672	751	1317	2887	1791	2557	2059	4381
No of Incidents	2943	1961	9	4913	2538	502	2286	5326	3030	4575	3631	11236
<i>Average Days Lost per Pupil</i>				5				4				5
<b>Bradford</b> - % of Number on Roll				4.76				5.12				7.29
<b>Yorkshire &amp; Humber</b> - % of Number on Roll (NOR)				5.41				5.64				
<b>Statistical Neighbours</b> - % of Number on Roll (NOR)				4.13				4.62				
England - % of Number on Roll (NOR)				3.76				4.25				

**Table 6: Suspensions - year & term by aggregate loss; comparison to regional and national rates per school pop**



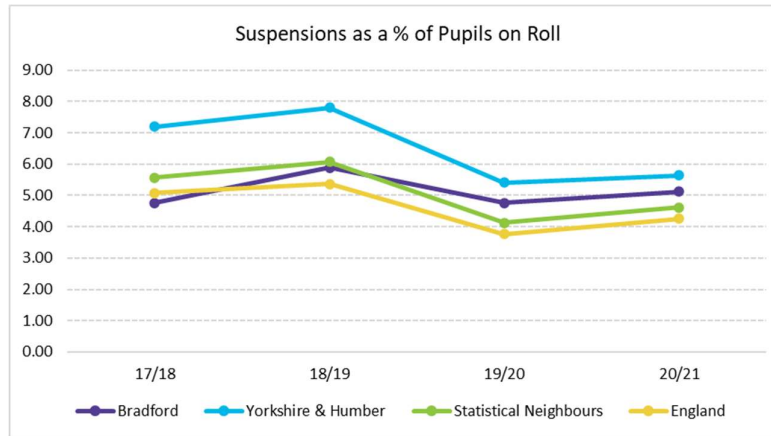


Chart 2: Suspensions as a % of Pupils on Roll – 2017/18 to 2020/21

Reasons for Suspension (Primary Reason: DfE Taxonomy)

- Overall, ‘**persistent disruptive behaviour**’ remains the most prevalent reason for a suspension, followed by ‘**physical assault against a pupil**’.
- Reasons for suspensions differ across the school groups with ‘physical assault against an adult’ most frequently seen in the Primary and PRU groups, and ‘persistent disruption’ given most frequently in the Secondary phase and All Through settings (Table 7).
- All school groups, except for Special Schools saw an increase in the number of days lost to suspensions from 2020/21 to 2021/22 (Table 7).

	Primary				PRU				Secondary				All Through				Special			
	19/20	20/21	21/22	Total	19/20	20/21	21/22	Total	19/20	20/21	21/22	Total	19/20	20/21	21/22	Total	19/20	20/21	21/22	Total
Abuse relati DS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6.5	7.5	15.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Abuse V/s rel IG	7	7	7	21.5	0	0	0	0	56	167.5	223.5	447.0	0.5	3	3.5	7.0	0	0	0	0
Bullying BU	6.5	5.5	9.5	21.5	2	0	0	2	41	112.5	122	275.5	1	9	9.5	19.5	0	0	0	0
Damage DM	35	28.5	31	94.5	24.5	0	5	29.5	239	225.5	464.5	929	11.5	66	47	124.5	20.5	8	28.5	57.0
Drug and alc DA	3	6	11	20	13	0	2	15	338.5	410.5	616.5	1365.5	60	98	86	244	19	19	19	57.0
Inapp use of MT	4	16.5	20.5	41.0	1	0	1	2	143.5	363	506.5	1013.0	18.5	12	30.5	61.0	0	0	0	0
Other OT	70.5	3	73.5	147.0	13	0	13	26.0	1434	220	1654	3314	220	12	232	552	8	8	8	24.0
Persistent di DB	157	201	319.5	677.5	15.5	1	18.5	35.5	2499.5	2499	6971	11261.5	422	365.5	1244.5	1689	28.5	7.5	36	72.0
Phys assault PA	986	81.5	322.5	1390	1190	18	145.5	1393.5	368	307	711	1386	43.5	48.5	112	204	3	16.5	2.5	22
Phys assault PP	182.5	29	322.5	764	44	7	46	97	1349	2163.5	3152	6664.5	168.5	246.5	497	1012	6	49	28	78
Racist abuse RA	12	22	33.5	67.5	29	0	3	32	165	219.5	379	763.5	16.5	27	60	103.5	2	2	2	6.0
Sexual misc SM	1.5	23.5	25	50	6	0	3	9	37.5	99.5	185.5	322.5	8	6.5	36.5	51	2	2	2	6.0
Theft TH	2	2	2.5	6.5	0	0	2.5	5	44.5	17	152.5	214	2	21	2	25	0	0	0	0
Use/Threat c/W	18	40	58	116	4	1.5	5.5	11	425.5	562	987.5	1975	58.5	109.5	168	336	3	3	3	9.0
V/A/T behavior VA	132.5	61.5	178.5	372.5	7.5	3	18.5	29.5	2164.5	1643	3023.5	6831	109.5	136	316	561.5	11.5	7.5	19	38.5
V/A/T behavior VP	22.5	43	77	142.5	7	0	4	11	253.5	363.5	541	1158	11	64.5	45.5	121	9.5	9.5	9.5	28.5
Willful trans PH	6.5	6.5	6.5	19.5	0	0	4	4	243.5	20	263.5	527	114	1	115	230	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1019</b>	<b>939.5</b>	<b>1584</b>	<b>3542.5</b>	<b>274.5</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>67.5</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>8930</b>	<b>8616</b>	<b>17037.5</b>	<b>34583.5</b>	<b>773.5</b>	<b>1340</b>	<b>2578.5</b>	<b>4692</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>161.5</b>	<b>48.5</b>	<b>225</b>

Table 7: Days Lost to Suspensions by school phase and primary reason – 2019/20 to 2021/22

Suspension Cohort

- **Children with SEN Support (at the time of suspension) in 2021/22 lost 5.3 days to suspension, compared to children with an EHCP losing 4.7, and children with no identified SEN losing 4.5 days (Table 8).**

		2019/20				2020/21				2021/22			
		Autumn	Spring	Summer	Total	Autumn	Spring	Summer	Total	Autumn	Spring	Summer	Total
EHCP - E	Days Lost	431	294.5		725.5	484.5	105	386	975.5	434	478	374.5	1286.5
	Incidents	222	144		366	224	56	184	464	230	265	204	699
	Pupils	115	89		157	129	58	106	206	133	160	117	271
SEN Support K	Days Lost	2698.5	1818	9.5	4526	1815	306.5	1592.5	3714	1976	2853	2198.5	7027.5
	Incidents	1227	754	8	1989	864	342	630	1836	1099	1556	1062	3717
	Pupils	632	480	6	890	533	248	422	921	583	780	630	1329
No SEN Support - N	Days Lost	3441.5	2318	1	5760.5	3096	561	2735	6392	3182	5479	4340	13001
	Incidents	1494	1063	1	2558	1449	275	1297	3021	1700	2843	2276	6819
	Pupils	978	797	1	1474	1037	452	801	1859	1092	1658	1339	2910

Table 8: Suspensions by SEND Status – 2019/20 to 2021/22

- While **boys** are approximately four times more likely than girls to be permanently excluded, this drops to **two times more likely for a suspension** (averaged across three years). When reviewed at primary and secondary level there is a **much higher likelihood that boys will be suspended for a fixed period than girls within the primary school group** when compared to secondary (Table 9).

	Female				Male				Overall	Male to Female Ratio
	19/20	20/21	21/22	Total	19/20	20/21	21/22	Total		
R			2	2	13	9	19	41	43	21
1	9	1	14	24	18	34	64	116	140	5
2	6	1	25	32	32	30	104	166	198	5
3	5	14	10	29	61	44	147	252	281	9
4	16	9	19	44	117	70	110	297	341	7
5	17	18	13	48	138	83	193	414	462	9
6 (Key Stage 2)	19	21	39	79	133	162	213	508	587	6
7	67	157	506	730	444	560	1223	2227	2957	3
8	222	314	789	1325	677	721	1226	2624	3949	2
9	322	396	883	1601	725	815	1425	2965	4566	2
10	338	357	949	1644	654	845	1705	3204	4848	2
11 (Key Stage 4)	265	157	493	915	613	508	1065	2186	3101	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1286</b>	<b>1445</b>	<b>3742</b>	<b>6473</b>	<b>3625</b>	<b>3881</b>	<b>7494</b>	<b>15000</b>	<b>21473</b>	<b>2</b>

Table 9: Instances of Suspensions by Year Group and Gender – 2019/20 to 2021/22

- Suspensions **have increased in 2021/22 for vulnerable pupils known to children’s social care** across all three categories of vulnerability, particularly for the CIN cohort. The number of days lost to suspension for vulnerable children has increased from 4 days in 2020/21 to 5 days in 2021/22 (Table 10).










		19/20	20/21	21/22	Trend
Children in Care - CiC	Days Lost	319.5	339.5	395	
	Incidents	165	184	192	
	Pupils	67	71	77	
Children with a Child Protection	Days Lost	427.5	353.5	464.5	
	Incidents	164	153	233	
	Pupils	72	82	102	
Children in Need - CiN	Days Lost	466.5	392.5	890.5	
	Incidents	219	188	465	
	Pupils	90	124	193	

Table 10: Suspensions by Vulnerability – 2019/20 to 2021/22

- In terms of ethnicity, pupils with **Roma/Roma Gypsy, Mixed White and Asian, and Mixed White and Black Caribbean** heritage have a higher rate of suspension as a proportion of their ethnicity groupings (Table 11).

Ethnic Group	Pupils with at least one Suspension			As a % of Ethnic Group on Roll		
	19/20	20/21	21/22	19/20	20/21	21/22
Any other White background	80	98	174	1.87	2.28	3.96
Irish	2	2	7	1.74	1.80	6.19
Traveller of Irish Heritage	1	1	2	3.57	2.94	5.41
Roma/Roma Gypsy	108	96	120	9.47	9.72	11.61
White British	1084	1217	1899	2.62	2.97	4.68
<b>WHITE</b>	<b>1275</b>	<b>1414</b>	<b>2202</b>			
Any other Mixed Background	47	58	89	2.33	2.80	3.94
White/Black African	7	13	26	1.61	2.89	5.68
White/Asian	99	128	195	4.08	5.12	7.66
White/Black Caribbean	53	52	99	4.22	4.13	7.65
<b>MIXED</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>409</b>			
Any Other Asian Background	17	34	40	1.41	2.80	3.32
Bangladeshi	52	40	76	1.57	1.24	2.41
Indian	11	16	28	0.55	0.83	1.42
Pakistani	740	967	1438	2.01	2.66	3.90
<b>ASIAN</b>	<b>820</b>	<b>1057</b>	<b>1582</b>			
African	24	44	43	1.82	3.31	2.84
Caribbean	9	13	9	3.57	5.96	4.19
Any other Black background	9	8	8	4.64	4.10	3.57
<b>BLACK</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>60</b>			
<b>CHINESE</b>		<b>1</b>			<b>1.09</b>	
<b>OTHER</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>1.53</b>	<b>2.34</b>	<b>2.39</b>
<b>REFUSED / NOT OBTAINED</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>5.71</b>	<b>3.80</b>	<b>5.50</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2440</b>	<b>2887</b>	<b>4381</b>	<b>2.42</b>	<b>2.87</b>	<b>4.33</b>

Table 11: Pupils with at least one Suspension by Ethnicity

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## SCHOOLS FORUM AGENDA ITEM

For Action

For Information



**Brief Description of Item** (including the purpose / reason for presenting this for consideration by the Forum)

**This report provides an update on a number of matters relating to the Dedicated Schools Grant.**

**Date (s) of any Previous Discussion at the Forum**

The Schools Forum made its recommendations on the 2023/24 DSG on 11 January 2023.

**Background / Context**

See the details for consideration below.

**Details of the Item for Consideration**

Shorter updates on a number of DSG matters

The Executive proposed to Council, un-amended, the School Forum's recommendations on the allocation of the 2023/24 Schools Budget. These recommendations were ratified by full Council on 23 February. Detailed budget information was published for schools, academies and for early years providers, on 24 February. Initial place-element funding for high needs providers was also published on this day.

Members may wish to raise, for the Forum's attention, any feedback that they have received directly on the 2023/24 DSG recommendations and / or on the budget and funding information that has now been published.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) has formally confirmed, again un-amended, its approval of our Schools Block Pro-forma for 2023/24 (our primary and secondary mainstream funding formula and Growth Fund / Falling Rolls Fund criteria).

At the time of writing this report, we await publication of the 'improvement plan', which the DfE stated would be published early in 2023 relating to the national SEND, EHCP and Alternative Provision reviews (the March 2022 Green Paper). We anticipate that consideration of the DfE's plan (and possible further consultation) will be included on the agenda of the School Forum's meeting scheduled for the 17 May. This will be alongside initial consideration of the Authority's emerging High Needs Block deficit mitigation plan.

We currently await final confirmation of our 2023/24 High Needs Block allocation, taking account of changes in deductions for academy places and the confirmed value of the import / export adjustment. A detailed forecast of the spending position of the High Needs Block, as part of our DSG Management Plan (which was re-presented on 11 January), will be provided for the Schools Forum in autumn, as usual. Also, as usual, the initial reconciliation of DSG balances held at 31 March 2023 will be presented to the Forum in July, following the 2022/23 year-end closedown, and then confirmed in September, following the DfE's final determination of Early Years Block funding for 2022/23.

Within the recommendations the Forum made for the 2023/24 financial year, the Falling Rolls Fund within the Schools Block is continued for the primary phase. A report on the application of this Fund for 2022/23 is presented to this meeting, under agenda item 6. Recognising the information that is required in order to finalise allocations, it is anticipated that any proposals for Falling Rolls funding for 2023/24 will be presented to the Forum in March 2024.

As usual, it is expected that new allocations from the established Schools Block Growth Fund will be presented to the Schools Forum in October (primary-phase) and in December (secondary-phase), subject to the timing of the release of the October 2023 census data.

The Government has confirmed that the 'statutory override' (the accounting provision, which means that any DSG account deficits must be held separately from a council's main revenue account and therefore, are not required to be offset by a council's revenue account) has been extended for 3 years, up to 31 March 2026. The override had previously been set to expire at the end of the 2022/23 financial year. This provision does not materially 'mean anything' for Bradford at this time, as our DSG account is not in deficit. However, this provision will be important if our DSG account does drop into deficit over the 2023-2026 period.

### Details of the Item for Consideration

#### DSG 2023-24 Summary

The table below was included in the report, which presented the DSG recommendations to Council. It is a useful simple summary of the 2023/24 Schools Budget.

Description	Early Years Block £m	Schools Block £m	High Needs Block £m	Central Schools Services Block £m	Total DSG £m
Estimated DSG available 2023/24	£43.371	£509.390	£116.884	£3.559	£673.203
Estimated DSG B'fwd from 2022/23	£4.211	£5.343	£25.830	£0.281	£35.665
<b>Total Estimated DSG (Schools Budget) 2023/24</b>	<b>£47.582</b>	<b>£514.732</b>	<b>£142.714</b>	<b>£3.840</b>	<b>£708.868</b>
Delegated to Schools / Providers	£42.103	£507.842	£108.163	£0.000	£658.108
Non-Delegated Items	£1.268	£1.547	£8.721	£3.559	£15.095
Allocation of One Off	£0.957	£1.787	£4.200	£0.054	£6.998
<b>Total Funding Allocated</b>	<b>£44.328</b>	<b>£511.177</b>	<b>£121.084</b>	<b>£3.612</b>	<b>£680.202</b>
<b>Difference (C'Fwd)</b>	<b>£3.254</b>	<b>£3.556</b>	<b>£21.630</b>	<b>£0.227</b>	<b>£28.667</b>

#### Outcomes of the Early Years Block Consultation 2023/24 & Letter to the Secretary of State

On 11 January 2023, the Schools Forum gave its support to the Authority's proposals for the approach to the funding of the early years entitlements (the Early Years Single Funding Formula) for the 2023/24 financial year. The Authority met with the Early Years Working Group on 16 January. The Authority completed, on 6 February, a wider consultation. 2 responses were received; both these supported the Authority's proposals (either strongly or 'on balance'), whilst making some comments about the insufficiency of the increase in provider funding rates in 2023/24 in relation to the scale of the increasing costs faced by providers.

Following the completion of the consultation, the Authority recommended to Council that the Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) that was set out in the Authority's consultation be used to calculate budget shares for all providers delivering entitlement provision for 2 and 3 & 4 year olds in 2023/24. This was agreed by Council on 23 February. The Authority expects to reconvene the EYWG soon to begin to discuss wider early years entitlement funding matters, leading into 2024/25 arrangements.

Within its discussion on the Schools Budget proposals, on 21 January, the Executive expressed its significant dissatisfaction with the 1% Early Years Block settlement that Bradford has received from Government; 1% falls well short of the high rising costs that are faced by early years providers, as well as by the Council. The Executive asked that the Schools Forum continues to closely consider and to highlight this issue. We suggest that the Chair, on behalf of the Schools Forum, writes to the Secretary of State, on this matter.

#### High Needs Block – Additional 3.4% Per Place allocation to Special Schools and PRUs / AP Academies

We reported on 11 January 2023 that the DfE has further increased our High Needs Block funding in 2023/24 via the allocation of £4.76m, which comes from the £2bn for the national schools budget that was announced by the Chancellor on 17 November 2022. We explained that the £4.76m is allocated into our High Needs Block, mostly for us to use according to local circumstances and pressures. An additional DSG Condition of Grant however, has been established by the DfE. The purpose of the Condition is to require local authorities to pass through to Special Schools, Special School Academies, PRUs and Alternative Provision Academies an additional 3.4% in funding per place. The increase is set at 3.4%, as this is the average additional % increase in funding that mainstream primary and secondary schools and academies are receiving via the new Mainstream Schools Additional Grant (MSAG). The DfE has set the methodology that local authorities must use to allocate this additional funding to specialist settings. The methodology is slightly different for special schools / special school academies than it is for PRUs / AP academies, but the purpose is the same – to allocate 3.4% in funding per place, in addition to 'normal' core place-element and top-up funding.

Following the 11 January Schools Forum meeting, the Local Authority has consulted with the eligible settings, who have responded to agree the methodology that is being used (which is the methodology that is set out by the DfE). Allocations in total are estimated to cost £1.392m in 2023/24, funded from the High Needs Block. This cost was included within the 2023/24 DSG planned budget. The final value of allocations for each eligible setting will be confirmed once March 2023 high needs monthly funding values are available (meaning that we can confirm 2022/23 full year financial year allocations on which the 3.4% increase is to be calculated). Allocations will then be paid in April 2023 (5/12ths) and in September 2023 (7/12ths).

## **Details of the Item for Consideration**

### **Uncertainty, Review and Response to Future System Change and Tighter Financial Settlements**

We continue to need to plan and to review our DSG allocation and formula funding arrangements, understanding that there is significant uncertainty for the future. Document PU discusses some of the main uncertainties as these affect school and academy budget planning across 2023-2026.

Most immediately for the Schools Forum and for the Authority, in our DSG management, is the lack of confirmed insight we currently have into the shape and value of our DSG and of the National Funding Formula at April 2024. We normally begin to receive detailed information from Government on the following's years DSG arrangements in June / July, which enables us to formulate plans for consultation, which we can then discuss with schools, academies and providers early in the autumn term. We currently are not clear about the Government's timetable for announcements associated with the 2024/25 DSG. However, it is reasonable to assume that the normal timetable will likely be followed.

For 2024/25, so far:

- The DfE has stated that an 'improvement plan', relating to the national SEND, EHCP and Alternative Provision reviews (the March 2022 Green Paper), will be published early in 2023. We anticipate that these reviews ultimately will bring far-reaching changes to SEND / EHCP / Alternative Provision funding systems, which we may need to begin to respond within our 2024/25 DSG and formula funding decision making cycle. We have already identified that, at the very least in the absence of nationally directed changes, we will need to continue to incrementally assess our definition of 'notional SEND budgets', as well as our SEND Funding Floor.
- Our DSG Management Plan, which we last presented to the Schools Forum on 11 January 2023, explains how there is high risk of our High Needs Block falling into cumulative deficit by the end of the 2025/26 financial year, requiring a mitigation plan. This plan is to be developed and discussed further, but is likely to have some impact on our 2024/25 high needs formula funding arrangements.
- The DfE has stated its aim of fully introducing the hard National Funding Formula in the Schools Block by 2027/28 at the latest. We expect further direction and restriction to affect 2024/25 mainstream formula funding arrangements. Changes, in the allocation of funds for centrally managed services, and in the role of the Schools Forum, are also expected, though these are likely to be more for the longer-term.
- The timescale for bringing PFI funding into the National Funding Formula is uncertain. We have recently been approached by a MAT in the Bradford District, with this MAT highlighting the cost pressure that it currently faces in relation to PFI costs. We have contacted the ESFA, including to request further exploration of this issue in the context of the National Funding Formula development.
- We know that the DfE continues to incrementally review and adjust the Schools Block National Funding Formula, and changes in formula factors may be adopted in 2024/25. The DfE has consulted already on amending Growth Fund, Falling Rolls Fund and Split Sites funding arrangements for the 2024/25 financial year, bringing these funds under the umbrella of the National Funding Formula. Whilst we await confirmed and detailed guidance, we expect new flexibilities for the management of growth, falling rolls and 'surplus places' within Schools Block arrangements and we expect to need to review our local arrangements for the 2024/25 financial year in response.
- We have identified that we must continue to review our Early Years Single Funding Formula in 2024/25, including specifically the continuation of the new 'Quality' Supplement (the Employers Teacher Pension Contribution Supplement) and our spending on the Deprivation and SEND Supplement. We know that the protection of maintained nursery schools will continue in 2024/25. However, we currently are quite uncertain more generally about rates of Early Years Block funding, and by how much our rates from Government will increase.
- The Spending Review 2021, and the Autumn 2022 Settlement Statement update, gave an indication of the cash budget growth nationally in formula funding for schools and academies for 2024/25. As we have previously warned, we anticipate more 'modest' percentage increases in DSG and formula funding in 2024/25. This is potentially across the board – mainstream primary and secondary formula funding, early years entitlement funding, high needs funding and post-16 funding. We are also aware that the employer's contribution to teacher pensions is next to be adjusted at April 2024. Commentators currently estimate that this contribution will increase. This is an important factor to consider in the context of the anticipated more modest national DSG and formula funding settlements i.e. to what extent will increases in funding in 2024/25 simply be allocated to higher teacher pensions costs, rather than being available either to support other pressures (from inflation and pay awards) or to materially increase in real terms the spending power of schools, academies and other providers?

**Implications for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) (if any)**

As set out in the report.

**Recommendations**

- (1) The Schools Forum is asked to consider and to note the information provided in the report.
- (2) That the Chair, on behalf of the Schools Forum, writes to the Secretary of State on the issue of the Early Years Block funding settlement that Bradford has received for 2023/24.

**List of Supporting Appendices / Papers (where applicable)**

none

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## SCHOOLS FORUM AGENDA ITEM

For Action

For Information



**Brief Description of Item** (including the purpose / reason for presenting this for consideration by the Forum)

**This report provides Members with an update on matters concerning school and academy budgets. This includes an update on the position of the conversion of maintained schools to academy status and on the general forecasted position of school and academy budgets over the 2023-2026 3-year period.**

**Date (s) of any Previous Discussion at the Forum**

The Schools Forum received a similar report this time last year on 9 March 2022.

**Background / Context**

The Authority's financial year runs from 1 April to 31 March. At the end of each financial year, maintained schools are required to 'closedown' their accounts and to finalise the values of balances held at this point. This information is forwarded to the DfE and is publicly published.

The Authority's Deficit Budget Protocol is in place to manage maintained schools that hold (or forecast to hold) deficit revenue balances. Maintained schools are permitted to carry forward surplus revenue balances. Currently, schools with revenue balances in excess of 4% (Secondary), or the greater of £60,000 or 6% (other schools), of funding must comply with the Authority's Surplus Balances Protocol, which requires schools to assign values of excess balances to spending on permitted schemes.

Academies and Free Schools are responsible to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (the ESFA) for their financial reporting, on an academic year basis. The Local Authority does not have a direct view of academy financial positions. The ESFA sets monitoring and reporting requirements and has oversight of academy balances. A key 'intervention tool' used by the ESFA is the issuance of a 'Financial Notice to Improve'. These Notices are posted on the ESFA's website for public record and scrutiny.

Deficit budgets, on the closure of a maintained school, revert back to the Local Authority and may be charged to the DSG if de-delegated arrangements operate to enable this. Surplus balances are credited to the DSG, but with regulations in place governing the treatment of balances where schools close and amalgamate. Any claw back of surplus balances from maintained schools, through the Intended Use of Balances process, increases the amount of funding available for the Schools Budget in the DSG.

On the conversion of a maintained school to academy status:

- A surplus is typically transferred to the academy trust (so there is no benefit to the Local Authority nor to the DSG), although there is provision for the Authority to retain surpluses held by sponsored academies.
- A deficit of a maintained school that is a 'converter' academy is also transferred to the academy trust (so there is no liability on the Local Authority nor on the DSG).
- A deficit of a maintained school that is a 'sponsored' academy reverts back to the Local Authority and may be charged to the DSG, if de-delegated arrangements operate to enable this. We have de-delegated arrangements in place for the primary phase.

Forum Members are reminded:

- The previously identified sum of £0.65m, held within the DSG Schools Block de-delegated funds (within balances carried forward at 31 March 2022) to support the cost of the deficit of a secondary school converting to academy status, has been deployed following the conversion of this school during 2022.
- Within the recommendations that were made by the Schools Forum on 11 January 2023, and that were agreed by Council on 23 February, is the continuation of the de-delegated fund for deficit provision for sponsored conversions in the primary phase. No new budget value has been retained in 2023/24 (but a balance is carried forward). A de-delegated fund for this purpose is not held in the secondary phase.
- Of the information that has previously been presented on how the Local Authority supports and challenges schools on their budget positions. The Authority also publishes a detailed guidance document for schools, which sets out expectations in preparation for financial close on academy conversion.
- That the deadline for the submission of governor approved budgets for 2023-2026 from maintained schools is 15 May 2023. It is these submissions that give the Authority a clearer view of the positions of school budgets going forward. A report on budget positions and balances held by maintained schools at the end of the 2022/23 financial year will be presented to the Schools Forum at the next meeting 17 May.

## **Background / Context**

- That the timing of a conversion is an important factor in the potential for liability related to deficit budgets of sponsored academies. For example, a school that has an in year deficit budget in 2023/24, and converts on 1 September 2023, may respond to this in year, but savings from curriculum restructure may only be implemented at the start of the new academic year. So, although the school's budget will balance in the full year, it is the academy's budget post 1 September that will benefit from these savings. The maintained school's budget may fall into cumulative deficit if the value of the school's balance held at the end of 2022/23 is not sufficient to meet the value of overspending in the first half of the year.
- That an update on the position of academy conversions is a standing item on Schools Forum agendas.
- That the Forum, in 2016, did established "a formal 'Panel' of Forum Members with the remit to discuss in detail the financial implications of academy conversions and any requests for financial support from the DSG that may be made. Following an initial 'scoping' meeting, the Panel recommended criteria that should be used in the consideration of requests that may be made to the Schools Forum for financial support related to academy conversion. The Forum agreed these criteria on 20 July 2016.
- Of the general warnings previously given, that the opportunity for liabilities to arise relating to deficit balances are greater when there are larger numbers of academy conversions.
- That it was reported to the Schools Forum on 22 May 2019 (Document KJ) that 3 sponsored primary schools were determined to hold deficit balances totalling £252,432, with this value charged to the de-delegated fund in 2019/20. This is the only time a charge has been made against the DSG's primary-phase de-delegated funds relating to deficits from academy conversion.

## **Details of the Item for Consideration**

### Summary Position - Academy Conversions

- At 1 March 2023, we have 75 maintained schools and 133 academies. Of the 75 maintained schools there are: 7 nursery schools, 61 primary schools, 4 secondary schools, 2 special schools and 1 PRU.
- There have been 9 conversions to academy status between April 2022 and March 2023: 6 primary schools, 2 secondary schools and 1 special school. Of these, 6 were 'converter' and 3 were 'sponsored' academies. The Local Authority has completed the necessary financial closes of 8 of the 9 conversions (1 conversion took place on 1 March 2023, so this financial close is in progress). Of the 7 conversions that have been completed, surplus balances were transferred to the academy trusts in 5 instances, a £0 balance has been finally determined for 1 conversion and a deficit balance was determined for 1 conversion (with the allocation of the £0.65m provision from the DSG in support of this and, as this was a 'sponsored' conversion, the remaining value of deficit that was held by the maintained school has been met by the Council).
- We have immediate sight of 13 maintained schools that are planning to convert to academy status during the 2023/24 financial year: 10 primary schools, 2 secondary schools and 1 special school. The position of conversions however, is moving regularly, and there likely will be other conversions in the next financial year that are not yet identified. All 13 of the currently identified schools are 'converter' academies, meaning that the Authority would be reimbursed for any deficits that might be held by them on financial close (with these deficits transferring to the academy trusts to be repaid to the ESFA).
- In terms of the financial positions of currently maintained schools, more generally, 2 schools held deficit revenue balances at the end of 2021/22. Based on quarter 3 budget monitoring information, we currently forecast that in the region of 8 schools (out of 75) may hold revenue deficit balances at 31 March 2023. The Schools Forum will receive a full report on 2022/23 final year-end balances, deficits and surpluses, held by maintained schools at the next meeting 17 May.

### School and Academy Budgets 2023-2026 – 'On the Horizon'

It is helpful to highlight some key matters and developments that are 'on the horizon' and that are likely to have budget implications for maintained schools and academies over the 2023-2026 period. Whilst a number of points listed below are uncertain, it will be helpful for schools and academies to consider these matters, as this will 'set the tone' for budgeting and forecasting at this time, and will help schools and academies in their financial risk management. Schools and academies continue to need to take prudent budget decisions, understanding that there is uncertainty for the near-future.

- The DfE has introduced a new grant for the 2023/24 financial year for primary and secondary mainstream schools and academies, known as the '[Mainstream Schools Additional Grant \(MSAG\)](#)'. This Grant comes from the additional £2bn, which has been added to the national schools budget, as announced by the Chancellor in the 17 November Autumn Statement. The MSAG is additional funding that is allocated to support costs, including energy costs. The energy costs protection scheme that has been in place during 2022/23 will [reduce in scale](#) from the end of March 2023, with the MSAG providing on-going financial support.

### **Details of the Item for Consideration**

Mainstream primary and secondary schools and academies should add their MSAG allocations into their funding forecasts, but should also review their estimates of energy expenditure at the same time. The MSAG is not ring-fenced and can be spent by schools and academies in support of their own priorities. MSAG monies will continue after 2023/24 and schools and academies should budget for this funding on an on-going basis. From April 2024 however, the DfE has indicated that the Grant will cease as a separate funding stream and instead will be merged into core formula funding, allocated through the National Funding Formula. Schools will recall that this is what has previously happened to the Teacher Pay and Pensions Grants and what has more recently happened to the Schools Supplementary Grant.

Please note that MSAG is not allocated in respect of early years (meaning maintained nursery schools will not receive it) or post-16 pupils, and is also not allocated to special schools or to PRUs. However, for special schools / academies and PRUs / AP Academies, local authorities are required to allocate an additional + 3.4% in funding per place, which is equivalent to the average additional increase that is being received by schools through the MSAG.

- The time-limited [COVID-19 Recovery Premium](#) continues in the 2022/23 and 2023/24 academic years. The DfE has also previously announced the continuation of the time-limited ring-fenced [School-Led Tutoring Grant](#) (now allocated under the 'National Tutoring Programme' umbrella) in the 2022/23 and 2023/24 academic years, but at reducing subsidy values. Schools must adjust their 3-year budget forecasts, firstly for the impact of the reducing value of COVID-19 pandemic educational impact support grant funding, but then ultimately for the final cessation of these time-limited grants, which is currently announced to be at the end of the 2023/24 academic year (so, affecting 2024/25 budgeting).
- At the time of writing this report, the continuation of the Universal Infant FSM Grant for the 2023/24 academic year is not yet confirmed. Schools and academies should look out for announcements from the DfE on this. The continuation of the PE & Sports Premium for the 2023/24 academic year is also not yet confirmed. Schools and academies should look out for announcements from the DfE on this and, in the meantime, should be cautious about entering into any new commitments that are funded by this Premium.
- The Government has re-affirmed its intention to implement a 'hard' National Funding Formula for mainstream primary and secondary maintained schools and academies. Further transition has been directed for the 2023/24 financial year, and more direction is expected for 2024/25 and 2025/26. Alongside wider changes to the National Funding Formula, the funding of split sites, and Growth and Falling Rolls Fund arrangements, are expected to change in 2024/25. We will address these changes within our consultation on formula funding arrangements, which will be published in autumn term 2023. The DfE's stated aim is for the 'hard' National Funding Formula to be fully implemented by 2027/28, at the latest. 'Hard' NFF will mean that Bradford Council will no longer decide locally how the primary and secondary funding formula operates. Further transition, over the next few years, may have implications for how much funding individual primary and secondary schools and academies receive. More than ever, it is important that schools and academies understand how they are funded by the current formula at 'factor level', so that they can understand the changes and the risks to their budgets. Schools and academies are advised to discuss in their Governing Boards a comparison at factor level (FSM, IDACI, EAL, Low Prior Attainment etc) of 2023/24 formula funding vs. 2022/23. Within this comparison, it is important for primary and secondary schools and academies to identify specifically whether they are currently funded via either of the two protection mechanisms - the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) and the Minimum Level of Funding (MFL). This is especially important in 2023/24, as these protection mechanisms are only increasing by 0.5% per pupil, whereas the headline for the wider financial settlement is 1.9%.
- A matter of significant uncertainty in recent years has been the settlement for maintained nursery schools. Bradford receives a discrete sum (a 'supplement'), which is used to protect our seven nursery schools at 'historic' funding levels. Without this supplement, these schools would each lose in the region of a third of their funding. The DfE has confirmed the continuation of this supplement for the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years, which is a positive step. The DfE has also stated that it remains committed to supporting nursery schools going forward. What this commitment means for funding after 2024/25 however, will be dictated by the next Government spending review.
- Pupil numbers in Bradford are reducing (numbers are currently increasing in secondary but are then expected to flatten out and then reduce). This is a result of demographic trends, which are now more widely affecting primary schools / academies and nurseries. It is important that all schools and academies understand their medium term forecast of pupil numbers (reception and year 7 intakes, as well as nursery and post-16 numbers) and that they bring this information into their budget planning. Critically, schools and academies must not simply assume that their current value of formula funding will continue, unaffected by reductions in pupil numbers. It also continues to be important for primary schools and academies with early years entitlement provision to monitor the school's / academy's early years provision as a 'mini budget', so that they understand the extent to which their nursery provision is either subsidising, or is being subsidised by, the school's larger budget. The same principle is also true for secondary schools and academies with post-16 provision.

### Details of the Item for Consideration

- The Spending Review 2021 (October 2021), updated in November 2022, gave an indication of the cash budget growth nationally in formula funding for schools and academies for 2024/25. From this information, we anticipate that increases in formula funding per pupil in 2024/25 will be more modest, when compared against the increases that have been seen in recent years, certainly between 2020/21 and 2022/23. This is potentially across the board – mainstream primary and secondary formula funding, early years entitlement funding, high needs funding and post-16 funding. Whilst this position is uncertain, the impact of possibly much tighter funding settlements for schools and academies e.g. settlements that are closer to an average of 1%, rather than to an average of 2-3%, increases in funding per pupil, must be assessed in the context of the likely continuing increases in costs, especially in salaries costs. It is important that schools and academies continue to model different budget scenarios going forward, modelling different assumptions for year on year funding and salaries costs increases. We are currently very uncertain about school funding after 2024/25, as this will be dictated by the next Government spending review.
- The employer's contribution to teacher pensions, which is currently 23.68%, is set for review at April 2024. Any change in this contribution will have some impact on school and academy budgets from 2024/25. This however, is currently a major element of budgeting uncertainty. Commentators do anticipate that the employer's contribution will increase. A critical aspect, if this does happen, is whether additional funding will be allocated to support the cost, and whether this comes from 'new money' or is taken from the cash increase in the national schools budget that has already been announced. Schools and academies will remember that, following the last pensions contribution review, at September 2019, the DfE established the Teacher Pensions Grant. However, although this gives some precedent, this does not mean that the same will happen at April 2024. This is definitely an aspect of school budgets that will need to be re-considered when further information is published.
- The DfE has now provided its recommendations on the September 2023 teachers' pay award to the STRB (these were published on 21 February). Schools should carefully consider what the DfE says in its [recommendations report](#) and should take the time to closely assess (and scenario model) financial impact. Whilst the DfE puts forward a recommendation for an overall 3.5% pay award at September 2023, the DfE states that changing financial conditions (especially where energy costs reduce) might allow for school budgets to accommodate a higher pay award. This factor produces an additional element of uncertainty about the award's budget impact. The DfE is quite clear however, that no further funding is available to support the cost of the final award, meaning that schools will be required to fully absorb this cost from their already announced delegated funding, even where this award is higher than 3.5%. This means that reductions in energy costs that may come during 2023 will likely be re-directed to facilitate the cost of a higher teachers' pay award, rather than delivering material savings for schools to 'bank'.
- On 23 February, the National Employers [announced their pay offer](#) for support staff / officers (the NJC pay award) for April 2023. The Employers' offer is similar to the pay award that was agreed for April 2022: £1,925 on all scale points (up to scale point 43 of the NJC scale), with a 3.88% uplift on all points above the NJC scale (point 43). This equates to a range of uplifts, between 9.42% at the bottom of the scale up to 3.88% at the top of (and above) the scale. This offer will now be considered by the Unions, and the final award will be determined following the established pay bargaining process. So, as confirmed by the Employers' offer, the shape of, and overall uplift applied by, the final agreed NJC pay award for April 2023, will be significant for school budgets, and this is an aspect that requires close assessment.
- The Government is [currently consulting](#) on the calculation of holiday entitlement that is received by part year and irregular hours workers, following the recent Supreme Court judgement in Harpur Trust v Brazel. The Harpur v. Brazel case itself, as well as the outcomes of the Government's consultation, are likely to have implications for salaries costs in schools and academies in both the short and medium terms (affecting staff, such as teaching assistants, who are employed on permanent term-time only contracts). We strongly advise schools and academies to talk to their HR advisors on this issue.
- All schools and academies are increasingly expected to bring [Integrated Curriculum Financial Planning \(ICFP\)](#) into their budget setting processes. In the context of changes in salaries costs, as well as changes in pupil numbers from demographic trends, ICFP is very relevant to schools and academies in Bradford. For schools and academies that have not previously used ICFP, this will alter how they construct and assess their budgets, especially their salaries costs, and their deployment of staff.
- Following the publication of the [SEND Green Paper](#) in March 2022, the DfE has stated that an 'improvement plan' will be published early in 2023, which hopefully will give further concrete information on the implementation of the proposals for SEND system reforms. These reforms are likely to have far reaching implications, quite possibly beginning April 2024. These reforms have the potential to significantly alter systems and the financial responsibilities that are placed on schools. They may have implications for areas such as: the £10,000 place-element value for specialist settings, the £6,000 SEND threshold, notional SEND budget definition, EHCP top-up funding and the use of banded models, the continuation of the SEND Funding Floor, and responsibilities for alternative provision. In constructing 2023/24 budgets, schools and academies should ensure that they continue to have good understanding of the following:

### Details of the Item for Consideration

- The school's notional SEND budget figure and how this is calculated (mainstream schools).
- How much of the notional SEND budget the school is currently spending and where this is being spent (mainstream schools).
- Whether the school receives additional 'SEND Funding Floor' monies (mainstream schools).
- How much funding per occupied high needs place the school currently receives (special schools, PRUs and mainstream schools and nursery schools with resourced provisions).
- How much funding the school receives for each Education Health and Care Plan, allocated via the Authority's EHCP Banded Model (all schools).
- How much the school spends on behaviour support and alternative provision (mainstream schools).
- How many children the school has excluded, either on a permanent or on a fixed term basis over the last 12-18 months (mainstream schools).

### 2023-26 Estimated Financial & Budget Climate and Context

Looking across the 2023-2026 budget period, it is important that schools and academies continue to manage their budgets prudently, with an understanding of the uncertainties, risks and opportunities.

Per pupil funding for schools and academies, across all sectors (mainstream, high needs and early years), has increased in 2020/21, in 2021/22, in 2022/23, and will increase again in 2023/24. There is consolidated, as well as further, improvement in the 2023/24 schools' funding settlement, as amended by the 17 November 2022 Autumn Statement. To summarise the main features of this improvement for Bradford:

- Mainstream primary and secondary schools and academies, that are now funded on the DfE's mandatory minimum levels of per pupil funding (MFLs), have seen significant growth in their funding levels since 2020/21. Whilst the increases in the MFL values in 2023/24 are modest (only + 0.5%), this recent significant growth has been consolidated.
- The vast majority of mainstream secondary schools and academies, and more than 70% of mainstream primary schools and academies, are funded in 2023/24 above the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG). The Schools Block National Funding Formula in 2023/24 has been weighted towards additional educational needs factors, and the Bradford District overall has benefited from this. The increases in per pupil funding for our primary-phase range between the MFG / MFL (at 0.5%) and 6.2% and, for our secondary-phase, between the MFG / MFL (at 0.5%) and 4.2%. Following the collection of updated pupil circumstances data, funding for individual schools and academies has responded again to increases in Free Schools Meals numbers, meaning that more funding is allocated in 2023/24 in support of this pupil-led need. Pupil Premium Grant allocations will also increase in response to this, and the DfE is increasing Pupil Premium Grant factor values by 5.0% in 2023/24.
- The additional funding from the Schools Supplementary Grant, which was newly allocated in 2022/23, has been added as a permanent on-going funding stream for mainstream primary and secondary schools and academies. This is despite the cessation of the National Insurance Social Care / NHS Levy, which the Supplementary Grant was introduced in part to support.
- Mainstream primary and secondary schools and academies will also now receive the Mainstream Schools Additional Grant (MSAG), which on average will be worth an extra 3.4% per pupil in 2023/24. The Government's energy cost protection scheme, though reducing in scale and scope, is continuing, and some schools and academies will continue to benefit from this.
- The COVID-19 pandemic grants – the Recovery Premium and the National Tutoring Programme – continue for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 academic years (though the subsidy of the cost of tutoring provided by the grants is reduced).
- Through our Banded Model, we continue to increase the value of top-up funding that is allocated to schools and academies in support of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). The uplifts in 2023/24 should be viewed in the context of the very significant increases that have been applied in 2020/21, 2021/22 and in 2022/23.
- Whilst we have adjusted the thresholds on which calculations in 2023/24 will be based, we continue to apply our strengthened SEND Funding Floor arrangement, which supports mainstream primary and secondary schools and academies to meet their responsibilities for the first £6,000 of the cost of the additional needs of all pupils.
- The funding received by special schools / academies will exceed the requirements of the DfE's 3% Minimum Funding Guarantee in 2023/24. Special schools / academies and PRUs / AP Academies will receive a further 3.4% increase in funding per place, in addition to place-element and top-up funding increases, as a result of the DfE's new condition of the Dedicated Schools Grant.

### **Details of the Item for Consideration**

- The historic higher funding levels of maintained nursery schools are secured for 2023/24 via the DfE's continuation of the Maintained Nursery School Supplement within the Early Years Block.
- The Early Years Single Funding Formula in 2023/24 will continue to allocate the former school-led Teacher Pension Grant to schools and academies via a new supplement.

However, the scale of the growth in costs that schools and academies in Bradford are absorbing – from inflation and from pay awards – has created a very challenging financial environment, which is expected to continue in 2023/24. It is expected that the funding increases in 2023/24 will be predominantly used by schools and academies to meet the increased costs of current activities, rather than permitting schools and academies to allocate substantial new sums to brand new activities. Individual schools and academies must continue to assess the sufficiency of their increases in formula funding against their increases in costs, especially in salaries costs. The health of the budgets of individual schools and academies will be additionally affected by variable factors. In terms of general, as well as specific variable, pressure points for Bradford in 2023/24, we highlight that:

- The Government's 2023/24 Early Years Block settlement for Bradford, at 1%, means that our Early Years Single Funding Formula will not keep pace on a like-for-like basis with the salaries increases, and increases in the prices of goods and services, that schools, academies and early years providers will need to continue to meet in 2023/24. In particular, the National Living Wage is increasing by 9.7% at April 2023. A further specific point to highlight is that early years providers will not receive the Mainstream Schools Additional Grant.
- Mainstream primary and secondary schools and academies, that are funded on either the Minimum Funding Guarantee or the Minimum Funding Level, will see only a 0.5% increase in their core formula funding per pupil, prior to the addition of the Mainstream Schools Additional Grant. This level of increase is very unlikely to keep pace with the salaries, and other inflationary cost, increases that these schools and academies will need to meet in 2023/24.
- Locally, all education budgets will still be required to fully absorb the impact of pay awards, incorporating the teacher pay award, the officer / support staff (NJC) pay award, the increase in the National Living Wage and employer contributions to staff pension costs. Salaries increases in 2023/24 will need to be met, in addition to education budgets having already absorbed a higher than planned for, and higher than DfE initially recommended (as affordable), teacher pay award at September 2022, and a substantial officer / support staff (NJC) pay award at April 2022. National decisions on pay awards to come will have a direct impact on the health of schools and academy budgets in 2023/24. The lack of certainty at this time about these awards creates a significant challenge for the school budget setting process.
- Whilst mainstream primary and secondary schools and academies will receive the Mainstream Schools Additional Grant, this Grant is allocated at the same time that the Government's energy costs protection scheme will reduce in scale and scope. It is likely therefore, for many schools and academies, that the MSAG may simply replace existing energy cost support, rather than the MSAG representing new funding to support growing pressures within school budgets.
- Demographic trends are reducing the numbers of early years children and primary-phase pupils across the District. The cash funding that some primary schools and academies receive will reduce, which will require structural spending adjustments, at the same time as increased costs are absorbed.
- Growth in the number of children and young people requiring higher needs support, and being put forward for assessment for EHCPs, is expected to continue, with school and academy budgets needing to continue to respond to this.
- The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have some implications for the budgets of schools and academies, especially because of additional expenditure that is being incurred, including in support of education recovery as well as absence cover. The reserves that are held by maintained schools, on current forecasts, are expected to have reduced during 2022/23, in particular as a result of the 2022 pay awards and increased energy costs.
- Schools and academies, in their management of their delegated funds, continue to need to take prudent decisions understanding that there is uncertainty for the near-future. This includes uncertainty regarding funding increases from April 2024, pay awards in 2023/24, and the financial implications of the major national SEND and Alternative Provision reviews.
- Given the potential for there to be significant differences between estimates of, and actual, teaching and non-teaching salaries costs in schools and academies, which will only likely become clear after budgets for 2023/24 have been initially agreed by Governing Boards, it is essential that all schools and academies robustly review both their 2023/24 budgets, and their 3 year forecasts, during the year.

**Implications for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) (if any)**

This is a report for information.

**Recommendations**

The Schools Forum is asked to consider and to note the information provided in the report.

**List of Supporting Appendices / Papers (where applicable)**

None

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