



Agenda

Meeting: Doncaster Schools Forum

Date/Time: Thursday 26th June 2025 08:30

Venue: The Laurel Academy

Items for Discussion		Time
1	1.1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair 2025-2027 1.2. Apologies 1.3. Substitutes 1.4. Observers 1.5. To consider the extent, if any, to which the public and press are to be excluded from the meeting. 1.6. Declarations of interest 1.7. Minutes of last meeting & matters arising	
2	2.1 Families First Partnership <i>[Rebecca Wall – verbal discussion]</i> 2.2 Doncaster Schools Forum Constitution 2025-2027 2.3 Update from Martyn Owen, Strategic Lead - Education 2.4 Doncaster Schools Forum Name Change <i>[Stephen Boldry Verbal Discussion]</i> 2.5 High Needs Funding Evaluation Report <i>[Martyn Owen]</i> 2.6 Dedicated Schools Grant Quarter 4 revenue monitoring 2024-25 <i>[Stephen Boldry]</i> 2.7 Education Capital Sub-Group <i>[Martyn Owen – verbal discussion]</i>	08:40 09:20 09:35 09:40 09:50 10:20 10:30
3	Any other Business	
4	Dates and times of next meeting Thursday 18th September 2025 at 8:30am The Laurel Academy	

Schools Forum
Membership List 2025-27

Schools Members

Maintained Members

Primary

Main Member

Rachel Train	Warmsworth Primary
Amanda Painter	Tickhill Estfeld Primary School

Governor Member

Janine Reid	Copley Junior School
-------------	----------------------

Special School

Headteacher Main Member

Paul Scotting	Stone Hill School
---------------	-------------------

Governor Special Member

Vacant	
--------	--

Pupil Referral Unit

Hannah Buchanan	The Levett PRU
-----------------	----------------

Academy Members

Primary

Main Member

Andy Hibbitt	Exceed Learning Partnership
Matthew Ridley	Shaw Wood Academy
Nevine Towers	Diocese of Sheffield Academy Trust
Rebecca Broadbent	Venn Academy Trust
Bernadette Nesbit	Holy Family Catholic School
Helen Broad	Intake Academy

Secondary

Main Member

Richard Brooke	Delta
Lesley Bailey	Delta
David Bisley	Armthorpe Academy
Lisa Fox	The Hayfield School
Katy Taylor-Clarke	The Laurel Academy

Special School

Karen Smith	Nexus Multi Academy Trust
-------------	---------------------------

Alternative Provision Academies

Dirk Pittard	St Wilfrid's Academy
--------------	----------------------

Non-Schools Members

Diocesan Representatives

Philip Patterson	Diocese of Hallam
Philippa Cousins	Diocese of Sheffield

Early Years, Private, Voluntary & In 2 main, 1 substitute

Lesley Clark	Little Oaks
Adie Brown	Sticky Mits Childcare Centre
Alison Wilkinson	Hatchell Wood Pre-school

16-19 Providers

Julie Kaye	Doncaster College
------------	-------------------

CITY OF DONCASTER COUNCIL

SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the Schools Forum held at The Laurel Academy on Thursday 6th February 2025, commencing at 08:30am.

PRESENT: A Painter, N Towers, R Train, R Brooke, K Davis, D Pittard, P Cousins, L Clark, A Brown.

APOLOGIES: R Harvey, S Swain, P Scotting, P Patterson, J Kaye, L Bailey, M Ridley, J Reid, L Hornsby.

1 SUBSTITUTES

None

2 OBSERVERS

S Farmer, S Boldry, K Hawker, M Lowe, M Owen, J Reed, A Tomes, .

3 DECLARATIONS OF BUSINESS INTEREST & OTHER MATTERS

There were no declarations of specific business interest in respect of any item on the agenda or raised at the meeting.

4 MINUTES 14 November 2024

RESOLVED (1)

- a) That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2024 be agreed as a true record.

5 MATTERS ARISING

Members were informed that two review groups are now running alongside the schools forum, the High Needs Review Group and the Early Years Review Group.

6 UPDATE FROM JANE REED ON BEHALF OF LEANNE HORNSBY, SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION & SKILLS

- 6.1 Members were reminded of the recent ILAC inspection and thanks went out for the systems and support. The LA are pleased with the process, education features strongly and the results should be published mid-March. Early Help was also featured heavily, and thanks also went out to those schools that helped during the inspection.

- 6.2 Members were also informed that the pyramid funding panels have been taking place which are identifying new and emerging cases.

7 EARLY YEARS NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA (EYNFF) AND EARLY YEARS PUPIL PREMIUM (EYPP) FUNDING RATES 2025/26

Members were presented with a report outlining the funding rates for 2025/26.

Discussion took place on the following issues: -

- 7.1 Members were informed that the local authority funding rates were published by the government in December and the funding rates have increased for 2025/26.
- 7.2 Following a consultation with providers, shown at appendix A, the following rates have been agreed: 3- & 4-year-olds Basic rate will increase to £5.27 with the supplements remaining the same - Deprivation £0.28 and flexibility £0.24. 2-year-olds receiving additional support £8.20 with no supplements, 2-year-olds of working families £7.95 with no supplements and 9 months to under 2's of working families £10.82 with no supplements. The formula makes sure that at least 96% of the funding is passed through to providers.
- 7.3 Members were also informed of the increase in funding for the Disability Access fund from £910 to £938 annually, and the Early Years Pupil Premium hourly rate from 68p per hour to £1.00 per hour.
- 7.4 The hourly rate and the pressures on providers were discussed. It was mentioned that there is a good working relation between providers and the LA.
- 7.5 Members discussed the Early Intervention Allowance and if the rate of £10 per hour was going to be updated as it is not enough. It was agreed that a report would go to the High Needs Review Group to discuss. EIA is referred to as SENDIF by central government and Doncaster fund this through the High Needs Block whereas a lot of other LA's fund this through the Early Years Block.

RESOLVED (2)

- a) That the update be received and noted.
- b) That the new EY rates have been agreed and will be published
- c) That a report on EIA will be produced and discussed at the High Need Review Group.

8 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (DSG) INITIAL BUDGET 2025-26

Members were presented with a report to outline the proposed initial DSG budget for 2025/26.

Discussion took place on the following issues: -

- 8.1 Members were informed that the School Block Budgets have been sent to the DfE to go through the final checks and should be approved and sent out to schools by the end of February.
- 8.2 Members were reminded that the Central Schools Services Block is still subject to the copyright license being agreed which is done nationally.
- 8.3 The High Needs Budget has the provisional funding allocations but will not be confirmed until March 2025.
- 8.4 The Early Years Budget has the provisional funding allocation but is subject to adjustments in July 2025 based on the January 2025 census.
- 8.5 Members were asked to consider whether to approve an increase to Caretakers' rent for 2026/27 of 2.7% in line with the proposal for other council house rents. AGREED.
- 8.6 Caretakers rent led to discussions around the use of caretaker bungalows and whether the empty ones could be used for other purposes such as SEMH, other types of provisions and wraparound for Early Years. The next round of capital funding for the early year's wraparound might be out in April so this could be considered.

RESOLVED (3)

- a) That the reports be received and noted.
- b) With reference to 8.5 members approved an increase of 2.7% (subject to Full Council Approval) to Caretakers' rents for 2025/26.
- c) Further work to be looked at in relation to the landscape of school bungalows and how they could be used for other purposes.

9 FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM 2025/26

Members were presented with a report detailing the proposed meeting dates for the next year.

Discussion took place on the following issues: -

- 9.1 Members were informed of the proposed dates for the four meetings in 2025/26. The date for June was an issue so this has been rearranged for the 26th of June 2025.
- 9.2 Meetings will be held at The Laurel Academy, meeting requests will be sent out to add these to individual calendars.
- 9.3 Members were also reminded that the new 2-year term for membership will be starting, and members will be contacted to seek continuation along with going out to all providers for interest.

RESOLVED (4)

- a) That the report be received and noted.
- b) Change the date for the June meeting to 26th June 2025

10 High Needs Element 3 Funding Update

Members were presented with a Power Point document outlining the high needs Element 3 funding update.

Discussion took place on the following issues: -

- 10.1 Members were informed that 17 locality panels are now in place which was previously discussed at Schools Forum regarding agreement to devolve funding to localities. This is a long-term project which is about ownership around schools and providing support. The LA are pleased with how it has gone so far and schools are bringing strong cases to the panels. There is also now a complex needs panel for cases that cannot be met through the standard process.
- 10.2 There has been a lot of learning and consultations with schools, 300-400 children that have received support through the process so far. There will be surveys sent to a selection of schools via google forms, with a review of the data and impact and analysis of the time and cost. A report will be written up and taken to the High Needs Review Group then discussed at the June School Forum meeting.
- 10.3 Funding schools is better and easier and the DfE are interested and keen to see the output as part of the government solution.
- 10.4 Members received feedback from maintained heads on the new process for the locality panels: There is a lot for SENCOS to do and to meet the level of training, some attend with SLT. The representation for maintained schools at the Pyramid panels feels unbalanced as half of the pyramid are trust representatives. There is a feeling of being judged with work being pulled apart and throw away comments being made. Clarity is needed going forward on the timing of the meetings, as some knew and others didn't, they were termly but now annually with 6 weeks mop up meetings. Members were informed that the dates are going out to schools in next couple of days and that there is a need for training to understanding thresholds.
- 10.5 Although schools can now get funding quicker there are still things to iron out through the High Needs Sub Group project. We need to work together to get the balance right and build relationships, this should be reflected in the report – who attends, work around language and rules of engagement. The idea is for Pyramids to own and understand the demand and discuss examples of working together. There will be more to share at next meeting.
- 10.6 The next High Needs Review Group is on the 24 March, if anyone else would like to attend please get in touch.
- 10.7 Maintained schools need to be aware of funding for budget setting before April, there is a SEND quality assurance panel end of February.

RESOLVED (5)

- a) That the reports be received and noted.
- b) A report will be written up and taken to the High Needs Review Group then discussed at the June School Forum meeting.
- c) Members to get in touch if interested in attending the High Needs Review Group.

11 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT REVENUE MONITORING QUARTER 3 2024-25

Members were presented with a report outlining the forecast outturn for the DSG in 2024/25 as at Q3.

Discussion took place on the following issues: -

- 11.1 Members were informed that the forecast in-year overspend is now £13.9m, with High Needs Block £14.1m overspend offset slightly by an underspend on the Growth Fund payments.
- 11.2 The current High Needs Medium Term Financial Plan is forecast to be overspent by £39.2m by the end of 2024-25, with total overspends of £7.4m expected in the year of 2025-26, with total DSG overspends of £46.6m expected at the end of 2025-26 and total overspends of £52.2m by 2027-28.
- 11.3 Members discussed how this is being managed. They were informed that demand for High Needs is far exceeding and happening everywhere. The LA are working to obtain an additional 400 specialist places over next 5 years and that there has been a change in need at special schools. The national deficit is out of control and is unlikely to change until there is a change in national policy.
- 11.4 Members discussed taking the data behind the figures to discuss at the High Needs Review Group mentioning how early intervention is working, creating a sufficiency report to explore the data and possible reviewing the last 15 cases to look at the reasons for them being OOA.
- 11.5 It was also mentioned that some of the costs are due to parental choice with them going to tribunal and the LA loses. There needs to be better communication with parents. The SENCO will use the need descriptors, a parent handbook and toolkit are being sent out and the framework is changing.
- 11.6 CPDs through funding panel. Ethos and tone need to be professional, and all follow the same system. The work is around the 'Doncaster child' and it was mentioned that Doncaster is good at supporting children back into a mainstream setting.
- 11.7 It was also suggested about the caretaker bungalows possible being used for specialist accommodation.

RESOLVED (6)

- a) That the reports be received and noted.

- b) Further information on the data of the High Needs overspends to be discussed at the High Needs Review Group

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Strategic event next week looks at concept of school alliance. When looking at agenda planning for the schools forum need to feed into programme planning and priorities from PLACE. Need to look at curriculum lead financial planning and shared commitments.

It was discussed at the Early Years Review Group about changing the name of the school forum to something like education forum which other LAs are doing as this is more inclusive.

KPI - Richard Brooke to produce draft development plan for secondary schools as a templet to start from. Create a working group for proposal and feed in from other representatives.

The next date for the Early Years Review Group was 22nd May 2025 but this needs to be rearranged.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next full meeting of the School Forum will be held on Thursday 26 June 2025 at The Laurel Academy at 08:30am.



REPORT TO THE SCHOOLS FORUM

Schools Forum Constitution 2025-2027

Purpose

1. The report provides details on the membership of the Forum and the updated Schools Forum constitution.

Recommendation

2. That Schools Forum:
 - a) notes the report;
 - b) elects to the positions of Chair and Vice Chair;
 - c) considers the draft Schools Forum Constitution, detailed in Appendix A;
 - d) considers reforming sub-groups of the Forum, determines membership of these sub-groups and proposes dates;
 - e) considers whether to increase the Heads' rate of reimbursement.

Background

3. Under sections 47(1) and 47A of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 (as amended) and the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012, all Local Authorities are required to implement a body called the "Schools Forum". This body, which must contain Head Teachers, and can also include School Governors and nominated "non-school" members, has a formal legal standing and must be consulted by the LA on issues such as:-
 - The Funding Formulae;
 - Arrangements for pupils with SEN;
 - Pupil Referral Units and education otherwise than at school;
 - Early years provision;
 - Centrally Administered Grants paid to schools via the Council;
 - Issues relating to the Minimum Funding Guarantee;
 - Certain contracts funded from the Schools Budget.
4. Schools Forum also have specific powers, which are as follows:-
 - Approve decisions on de-delegation of funding.
 - Approve various centrally retained DSG budgets.
 - Approve changes to The Scheme for Financing Schools.
 - Approve whether to carry forward a deficit on central expenditure DSG to the next financial year.
5. Schools Forums can only exercise their powers in relation to proposals put forward by their local authority.

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

6. For the current membership period (1 April 2025 to 31 March 2027), decisions will need to be made in respect of the positions of Chair and Vice Chair. All members are asked to consider nominating for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair. These positions must be elected from the membership, and in the event of there being more than one nomination for either position, a vote must take place at this meeting. The previous Chair and Vice-Chair are eligible to stand once again.

Membership Arrangements

7. In the current membership the principal groupings of representatives relate to Primary and Secondary Schools/Academies where seats allocated are proportionate to the number of pupils in each group. Representatives include Head Teachers, Head Teachers representatives and School Governors. Representation is also provided from the Special Schools, but this is not necessarily proportionate to pupil numbers. Pupil Referral Units and Alternative Provision Academies are also represented as per Regulations. There are also some non-school members on the Schools Forum, namely Diocesan Authorities, 16-19 Providers and the Early Years PVI sector.
8. For the new membership period the members on Schools Forum are summarized in the table at 3.1 in appendix A. Membership has been increased by an additional Academy member due to more schools going academy. The Quorum for the Forum is set at 40%, this equates to 10 members based on the membership structure. Any substitutes attending will be counted for quorum, but vacancies and observers will be discounted.
9. The Forum also includes the following observers: Elected Member, Local Authority Officers and Trade Union representative. Executive elected members and officers who are not members of the Schools Forum have a right to attend and speak at Schools Forum meetings. The Education and Skills Funding Agency can also send a representative to observe meetings.
10. The following summarises the current position regarding the appointment of schools members:
 - There is currently one vacant position, one Special Governor Member.

Reimbursement of Expenses

11. The regulations require the Council to fund “reasonable” expenses for Forum Members. In line with other Council bodies all Forum Members are entitled to travel and subsistence payments.
12. For LA Officers, attendance would be considered part of their general working duties and as such they would receive travel and subsistence payments in line with the Council’s prevailing expenses policy. The preparation work carried out by LA Officers and clerking of the meetings will be charged to the Schools Forum budget. The cost of producing and distributing papers, room hire and refreshments will also be charged to the Forum budget.

13. For Headteacher representatives (including from Pupil Referral Units & AP academies) it is considered appropriate to fund a degree of supply teacher costs with such payments accruing to the school, not the individual. The current rate of £200 is paid to the school/academy/PRU for each meeting attended, unless Members think the rate needs to be revised.
14. The reimbursement for Heads also applies to sub-group or training attendance as well as the Chair & Vice-Chair pre-meeting reviews.

Constitution

15. Local authorities are required to make a written record of the composition of the Schools Forum. This must include the methods by which each group elects and nominates their representatives and the manner in which the local authority seeks nominations for the non-school member representatives on their Schools Forum. The record includes the numbers of schools members and non-schools members. The proposed constitution document is shown in Appendix A. The document has been updated to reflect all recent changes to the membership and regulations. Future updates shall be made as and when required during the membership period.

Membership Period

16. The current membership period is for two financial years starting on the 1 April 2025. There are no proposals to change this approach at this time.

Sub-Groups of the Schools Forum

17. In the previous year, sub-groups of the Forum included the High Needs Review Group and the Early Years Review Group. Members should give consideration to the need for these review groups, and if they are to be reformed, the membership of the groups should be determined. For information, Schools Forum members who were part of the groups previously are as follows, however any school forum member may request to become part of a group at any time:-
 - High Needs Review Group –P Cousins, L Bailey, D Pittard, R Train, A Painter.
 - Early Years Review Group - P Cousins, L Clark & A Brown
18. Consideration should also be given to appropriate dates for the sub-group meetings.

Conclusion

19. For the new membership period the constitution has been revised as a result of changes to the regulations and other updates. The election of the Chair and Vice-Chair will be required for the new membership period. The need for sub groups of the Forum is also considered, as is the rate of reimbursement for Headteachers.

Author and Contact Officer:

Rebecca Brookes

Senior Finance Officer – Children, Young People and Families

01302 737165

rebecca.brookes@doncaster.gov.uk

DONCASTER SCHOOLS' FORUM
CONSTITUTION

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Doncaster Schools Forum was established to meet the requirements of sections 47(1) and 47A of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 (as amended) and the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2002 (as amended)¹. The constitution and terms of reference of the Doncaster Schools Forum may be amended at any time to meet changes to the primary legislation or to the Regulations. Doncaster Schools Forum has a formal legal standing.
- 1.2. Doncaster Schools Forum aims to provide clear professional advice and strategic direction to the Council to aid decisions regarding education funding, and ensure that optimum value is obtained from the limited resources available for a positive impact on teaching and learning.

2. FUNCTIONS OF THE FORUM

- 2.1. To serve as the main mechanism for consultation on such matters concerning the funding of schools as the Council shall see fit and in particular in relation to the matters specifically detailed below.
- 2.2. To be consulted by the Council on any changes to its school funding formulae (Schools, Early Years and High Needs Blocks). This would include changes to factors and methodology and also in the choice of relative factors within the formulae. The Council shall consult with the Forum in sufficient time to allow the view expressed to be taken into account.
- 2.3. To be consulted annually on financial issues related to the Schools Budget, which will include:
 - 2.3.1. arrangements to be made for the education of pupils with special educational needs, in particular the places to be commissioned by the LA and schools and the arrangements for paying top-up funding;
 - 2.3.2. arrangements for the education of children otherwise than at School and the use of Pupil Referral Units, in particular the places to be commissioned by the LA and schools and the arrangements for paying top-up funding;
 - 2.3.3. arrangements for early years provision;
 - 2.3.4. administrative arrangements for the allocation of central government grants paid to schools via the Council;
 - 2.3.5. proposed exclusions from the Minimum Funding Guarantee;
 - 2.3.6. other matters as the Council sees fit concerning funding.
- 2.4. To be consulted at least one month prior to the issue of invitations to tender on the terms of any proposed contract for services or supplies to be funded from the schools budget where the estimated value exceeds the threshold determined under regulation 8 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (as amended).

¹ The latest Regulations to be enacted are the Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012 No. 2261

2.5. The LA will decide on central spend on licenses negotiated centrally by the Secretary of State and children and young people with high needs, although Schools Forum will be consulted.

2.6. Schools Forum has specific powers, which are as follows:-

2.6.1. Decide on the de-delegation for mainstream schools for:-

- I. Contingencies;
- II. Administration of Free School Meals;
- III. Insurances;
- IV. Licenses & Subscriptions;
- V. Staff Costs – Cover Supply;
- VI. Support for Ethnic Minority Pupils/Under achieving Groups;
- VII. Behaviour Support Services;
- VIII. Library & Museum Services;

2.6.2. Approve central spend on:-

- I. Growth Fund (basic need including pre-opening & diseconomy of scale costs); *(Schools Forum also approves the criteria for allocating funding)*
- II. Falling rolls fund for surplus places in good or outstanding schools; *(Schools Forum also approves the criteria for allocating funding)*
- III. Equal pay back pay;
- IV. Places in independent schools for non-SEN pupils;
- V. Early Years Expenditure;
- VI. Admissions;
- VII. Servicing of Schools Forum;
- VIII. Capital expenditure funded from revenue;
- IX. Contribution to combined budgets;
- X. Termination of employment costs²;
- XI. Prudential borrowing costs³;
- XII. SEN transport costs;

2.6.3. The Schools Forum must also approve changes proposed by the Local Authority to The Scheme for Financing Schools, following consultation with all maintained schools.

2.6.4. The Schools Forum also decides whether to carry forward a deficit on central expenditure to the next financial year, to be funded from the schools budget.

² Expenditure in respect of dismissal or premature retirement of, or for the purpose of securing the resignation of, any person employed in a maintained school where the revenue savings that will be achieved are equal to or greater than the costs incurred.

³ Borrowing money for the purpose of facilitating the modernisation and rationalisation of the school estate, where the revenue savings that will be achieved are equal to or greater than the costs that will be incurred in borrowing the money.

3. MEMBERSHIP

3.1. There are currently 24 members of the Forum as follows:-

Type of Member	Group	Position	Places
School Members	Maintained Primary	Primary Heads/representatives	2
		Primary Governors	1
	Maintained Special	Special Head/representatives	1
		Special Governor	1
	Pupil Referral Units	PRU Head	1
	Academies	Academy Heads/representatives	11
Non-school Members	Special Academies	Academy Heads/representatives	1
	AP Academies	AP Academy Heads	1
	Diocesan Representatives		2
	Early Years PVI Sector		2
	16-19 Providers		1

- 3.2. The number of maintained headteacher members will reflect the proportion of pupils in schools maintained by the LA. The number of Academy members will also be determined in the same manner. There shall be one representative for Special schools.
- 3.3. If the number of academies increases over the duration of the membership period, the membership structure will be reviewed and, if necessary, amended accordingly. The total number of members is not expected to change but the ratio between maintained school members and academy members could alter.
- 3.4. Non-schools members will constitute a maximum of one-third of the total membership of the Forum to represent relevant bodies as defined in the regulations. Any Excepted relevant officers shall be nominated by the Director for Children's Services.
- 3.5. Within one month of the appointment of any non-schools members Doncaster Council shall inform Schools Forum members of the name and the group being represented.
- 3.6. Elected members or relevant officers⁴ of Doncaster Council may not be appointed as a member of Schools Forum.
- 3.7. The Schools Members Headteacher positions (including substitutes) will be elected on the following basis⁵ unless there is only one eligible candidate, in which that candidate is automatically elected to the Schools Forum:
- 3.7.1. Nomination forms circulated by the Clerk of the Schools Forum to all potential candidates four weeks prior to the deadline for nominations to be received.
 - 3.7.2. If nominations are equal to the number of places available then all nominations will be endorsed, with no further action required.
 - 3.7.3. If there are more nominations than places an email will be sent by the Clerk of the Schools Forum to all Heads in the relevant sector (excluding those nominated)

⁴ Relevant Officer means the Director of Children's Services or representative or any officer whose work involves the management of, or advice on, school funding.

⁵ Full details of the procedure will be distributed with the nomination forms at the beginning of the process.

asking them to vote (a ballot form will be issued with the email). The vote will not be invalidated by a low turnout.

- I. All ballot forms will be counted by the Clerk of the Schools Forum and verified by the Directorate Finance Manager (or representative). The candidate with the most votes will be elected, followed by the candidate with the next most votes and so on until all available positions are filled. Once all positions are occupied any remaining candidates will not be elected to the Schools Forum.
 - II. In the event of a tie between two or more candidates, the successful candidate(s) will be determined by the drawing of lots, which will be undertaken by a member of the Financial Management Team and witnessed by the Clerk of the Schools Forum and the Directorate Finance Manager (or representative).
- 3.7.4. If there are insufficient nominations, all those nominations received will be endorsed. The remaining places will be reviewed to ensure the membership is representative of all types of schools and if necessary there will be a Second stage nominations process to target the areas with low representation.
- 3.8. The Schools Members Governor positions will be elected using the same basis as School Member Headteacher positions and contacted via schools.
- 3.9. The Non-schools members will be elected on the following basis:
- 3.9.1. Diocesan representatives will be nominated by their respective Diocese (Catholic Diocese of Hallam and C of E Diocese of Sheffield).
 - 3.9.2. Early Years PVI representative will be nominated through communication arranged by the Early Years Service.
 - 3.9.3. 16 – 19 providers representative will be determined through communication between the Clerk of the Schools Forum and the eligible candidates.
- 3.10. If nominations for any group do not take place by the date set by Doncaster Council, membership will be determined in a manner deemed appropriate by the Council.
- 3.11. The term of office for schools and non-schools members of Schools Forum shall be 2 years. After which, all members can be re-nominated and re-elected for the next membership period.
- 3.12. Schools and non-schools members shall remain in office until:
- 3.12.1. he/she ceases to hold the office by virtue of which he/she became eligible for appointment to the forum
 - 3.12.2. his/her term of office as a schools or non-schools member comes to an end, or
 - 3.12.3. he/she resigns his/her office as a schools or non-schools member.
 - 3.12.4. Replacement members may be nominated or elected in accordance with the procedures above and will service the remainder of the Term, not the full two years.

4. ADMINISTRATION

- 4.1. A member of the Financial Management (LOCYP) team will act as clerk to Schools Forum, which is an important role ensuring that meetings are well organised and run smoothly. The clerk will notify members of the meeting dates, circulate agendas and reports, record and circulate minutes and process expenses to the Schools Forum budget. The clerk will also be responsible for ensuring the Council website is kept up to date with the relevant Schools Forum information and for circulating a Schools Forum newsletter to all relevant parties following each meeting. All papers for the meetings will be sent to members at least 6 working days prior to a meeting. In some urgent cases the Chair may agree to information being tabled at a meeting.
- 4.2. Notices of appointment, resignation or removal shall be sent to the clerk in writing.
- 4.3. The minutes of the Schools Forum meetings will be formally approved at the subsequent meeting.
- 4.4. The clerk will provide copies of agendas, reports and minutes considered at a meeting when requested. Previous agendas, reports and minutes will be available via the Council's website.
- 4.5. The Council will be responsible for setting the Schools Forum agenda and the dates of meetings. However, members can make suggestions and the views of members will be taken into consideration when finalising agendas and the dates of meetings.

5. CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

5.1. Timing and Frequency of Meetings

Meetings of the Forum will take place at least four times a year (generally, one meeting in the spring term, two in the autumn term and one in the summer term). All meetings must be public meetings. When a member of the public requests to attend a meeting they are provided with the 'Information sheet for members of the public attending schools forum' shown at appendix A. The programme of ordinary meetings will be agreed on an annual basis and any changes will be agreed by Forum. The volume of business may require additional meetings to be arranged; these will be notified and agreed with the Forum.

5.2. Extraordinary Meetings

The Chair of the Forum or one third of Forum members may call an Extraordinary Meeting of the Forum. Notification must be sent to the clerk to the Schools Forum, who will arrange the meeting in accordance with the directions received.

5.3. Quorum

In accordance with the regulations, the Quorum of a Forum meeting is 40% of the voting members (10 members if no vacancies); this excludes any observers and the membership count excludes vacancies but includes substitutes in attendance. Inquorate meetings may proceed, but decisions cannot be agreed.

5.4. Substitutes

Members should contact the Clerk to the Schools Forum if they are unable to attend a meeting. The Clerk to the Schools Forum will then contact a substitute, where appropriate, and notify the Chair of the Forum prior to the start of the meeting. If there are no nominated substitutes for a particular group then that member may send an appropriate substitute on their behalf (i.e. a member of their schools management team), but this must only be by exception and must also be agreed by the Chair of the School Forum. The Clerk needs to be informed no later than 6 working days before the meeting. This does not affect any individual's right to attend the School Forum as an observer.

5.5. Voting

Schools Forum shall aim to arrive at a consensus decision in the first instance. Where consensus agreement cannot be reached any matter will be decided by a simple majority of those members voting, present in the room at the time the question was put unless the Chair decides that a secret ballot is appropriate. If there are equal numbers of votes for and against, the Chair will have a second or casting vote. Where considered appropriate by either the Chair or the Clerk, details will be taken of votes cast by constituency (e.g. Primary, Secondary etc). Records of named votes will only be recorded with the agreement of the Forum through a formal vote.

Voting/approval on some items is restricted to certain members. For example, changes to The Scheme for Financing Schools must be voted on/approved by maintained school members only, and apart from the Early Years PVI member, all non-schools members are excluded from voting on/approving matters relating to the funding formulae. Restrictions would also apply to decisions on de-delegation.

5.6. Declarations of Interest

Where a member has a personal or pecuniary interest (either as an individual or as a headteacher/governor of a school) in a matter to be discussed at a meeting of the Forum or a sub-committee, the member concerned must declare the interest at the beginning of the meeting or as soon as the matter in which they have an interest is raised. The Forum will then decide whether the declared interest is of a significant nature and that the member should either withdraw from the meeting during the consideration or remain but have no vote on the matter. Members will have an interest in a number of discussions that take place at Forum but should not have a greater interest than other members of the sector e.g. all primary members will have an interest in discussions on primary school funding.

5.7. Observers and Right of Attendance

The following persons may attend as observers and speak at Schools Forum meetings, even though they are not members of the Schools Forum:-

- 5.7.1. Director of Children's Services or their representative(s)
- 5.7.2. Chief Financial Officer or their representative(s)

- 5.7.3. An elected Member of the Council who has primary responsibility for Children's Services or Education or responsibility for the resources of the Council
- 5.7.4. Any person who is invited by the Forum to attend in order to provide financial or technical advice to the Forum
- 5.7.5. An observer appointed by the Secretary of State
- 5.7.6. Any person presenting a paper or other item to the Forum that is on the meeting's agenda, but that person's right to speak shall be limited to matters related to the item that the person is presenting.

In addition to the above list, the following can attend the Doncaster Schools Forum as observers:-

- Trade Union Representative;
- 3x School Business Managers/Finance Officers – one from each of the primary, secondary and special sectors. Election to these positions will follow the procedure adopted for the Headteacher elections.

5.8. Record of Attendance

Each member of the Forum attending a Meeting of the Forum or of any of its Committees or Sub-Committees of which he/she is a member, shall sign his/her name in the Attendance Book or sheet provided for that purpose.

5.9. Members Conduct

If the Chair is of the opinion that a member has behaved improperly or offensively or deliberately obstructing the business, the Chair may notify the Meeting of that opinion and may take any of the following courses of action either separately or in sequence:-

- 5.9.1. Member not to be heard further
- 5.9.2. Move that the member be not heard further. If seconded the Motion will be voted on without discussion. If carried, the member shall not speak further at the Meeting.
- 5.9.3. Move that the member leaves the Meeting. If seconded, the Motion will be voted on without discussion. If carried the member shall immediately leave the Meeting.
- 5.9.4. Adjourn the Meeting for 15 minutes or such period as he/she considers appropriate.
- 5.9.5. Order the member to leave the Meeting or, if necessary, the member to be removed.

If there was a general disturbance making orderly business impossible, the Chair may adjourn the meeting for as long as he/she thinks necessary.

5.10. Sub-groups

Schools Forum may establish sub-groups to work on specific matters as deemed necessary and shall decide the terms of reference and schools membership.

5.11. Chair/Vice Chair

The Forum shall elect a Chair and Vice-Chair for the membership period (two years) at the first meeting of the new membership period by a majority of votes cast. It is not necessary to vote if there is only one nomination.

If the Chair or Vice-Chair leaves during the membership period a new Chair or Vice-Chair will be nominated on the same basis at the next meeting and will serve the remainder of the membership period.

If the Chair or Vice-Chair isn't present at the meeting Forum Members will elect a member to preside.

The Chair or Vice-Chair can not be an elected member or officer of Doncaster Council.

5.12. Invalidation of Proceedings

The proceedings of the Forum are not invalidated by:-

- 5.12.1 Any vacancy among their number
- 5.12.2 Any defect in the election or appointment of any member
- 5.12.3 Any defect in the election of the Chair

6. SCHOOLS FORUM BUDGET/MEMBERS EXPENSES

- 6.1. Each year the Forum will agree its annual budget for the forthcoming financial year, taking into account the estimated number of meetings and all direct costs, plus any special projects that are to be commissioned.
- 6.2. The clerk to the Forum will produce an annual statement showing the cost of the Forum for the previous financial year.
- 6.3. For Headteacher attendance Reimbursement of average main pay scale supply teacher costs payable direct to the employing school in half day blocks based on meetings attended.
- 6.4. Governors are entitled to reimbursement for travel expenses incurred; this will be paid at the same rates paid to staff in accordance with the Council's policy.

7. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

- 7.1. Any change to this constitution will be recommended by Doncaster Council and passed by two thirds majority of the members present in person and voting at a meeting of the Forum of which notice has been given specifying the matter to be discussed. The final decision of any proposed change rests with Doncaster Council.

APPENDIX A

INFORMATION SHEET FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING SCHOOLS FORUM

1. About Schools Forum

The Schools Forum was established to meet the requirements of sections 47(1) and 47A of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 and the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2002.

Schools Forum aims to provide clear professional advice and strategic direction to the Council to aid decisions regarding education funding, and ensure that optimum value is obtained from the limited resources available for a positive impact on teaching and learning.

2. Functions of the Forum

To serve as the main mechanism for consultation on such matters concerning the funding of schools as the Council shall see fit and in particular in relation to the matters specifically detailed below.

To be consulted by the Council on any changes to its school funding formulae (Schools, Early Years and High Needs Blocks). This would include changes to factors and methodology and also in the choice of relative factors within the formulae. The Council shall consult with the Forum in sufficient time to allow the view expressed to be taken into account.

The Schools Forum must approve movement of up to 0.5% from the schools block to other blocks.

To be consulted annually on financial issues related to the Schools Budget, which will include:

- arrangements to be made for the education of pupils with special educational needs, in particular the places to be commissioned by the LA and schools and the arrangements for paying top-up funding;
- arrangements for use of pupil referral units and the education of children otherwise than at school, in particular the places to be commissioned by the LA and schools and the arrangements for paying top-up funding;
- arrangements for early years provision;
- administrative arrangements for the allocation of central government grants;
- other matters as the Council sees fit concerning funding.
- exclusions from MFG for application to DfE.

To be consulted at least one month prior to the issue of invitations to tender on the terms of any proposed contract for services or supplies to be funded from the schools budget where the estimated value is in excess of the EU procurement thresholds.

The LA will decide on central spend on licenses negotiated centrally by the Secretary of State and children and young people with high needs, although Schools Forum will be consulted.

Schools Forum has specific powers, which are as follows:-

Decide on the de-delegation for mainstream schools for:-

- Contingencies;
- Administration of Free School Meals;
- Insurances;
- Licenses & Subscriptions;
- Staff Costs – Cover Supply;
- Support for minority ethnic;
- Pupils/Under achieving Groups;
- Behaviour Support Services;
- Library & Museum Services;
- School improvement

Approve central spend on:-

- Funding for significant pre-16 pupil growth, including new schools set up to meet basic need, whether maintained or academy
- Funding for good or outstanding schools with falling rolls where growth in pupil numbers is expected within three years
- Early Years block provision;
- Funding to enable all schools to meet the infant class size requirement;
- Back-pay for equal pay claims;
- Remission of boarding fees at maintained schools and academies
- Places in independent schools for non-SEN pupils;
- Admissions;
- Servicing of Schools Forum;
- Contribution to responsibilities that local authorities hold for all schools;
- Capital expenditure funded from revenue;
- Contribution to combined budgets;
- Existing termination of employment costs ;
- Prudential borrowing costs ;

The Schools Forum must also approve changes proposed by the Local Authority to The Scheme for Financing Schools, following consultation with all maintained schools.

The Schools Forum also decides whether to carry forward a deficit on central expenditure to the next financial year, to be funded from the schools budget and any brought forward deficit on de-delegated services which is to be met by the overall schools budget.

3. Rules about members of the public speaking at meetings

Meetings of the Schools Forum are open to the public. A member of the public can attend as an observer. Observers do not have an automatic right to speak at meetings, but the chair may allow contributions where appropriate.

The public and press may however be excluded from the meeting or part of the meeting if confidential information is likely to be discussed or considered.

Everyone in attendance at a Schools Forum meeting will be treated with courtesy and respect.



Doncaster Council

REPORT TO THE SCHOOLS FORUM

High Needs Funding Evaluation Report June 2025

Purpose:

1. This report evaluates the progress so far with Doncaster's devolved funding panels and provides information to support Schools Forum, with recommendations, to outline improvements to this way of working.

Executive Summary:

1. Schools Forum have supported an initiative to ensure that schools can access additional High Needs Funding based on the needs of students.
2. Following a lengthy development period, panels were introduced across 17 pyramids within the city, from January 2025. As part of this, the local formula for 'notional' funding has been consulted on and updated.
3. This process has injected a significant increase in funds to support schools at an earlier point than would normally require an EHCP, through a devolved formula. There are many strengths with the model, including the increased collaboration between schools to support each other with meeting student needs.
4. There have been a number of areas for improvement identified by schools and professionals. These include:

Administration. Ensuring sufficient capacity to oversee the system. Schools need a single 'statement' of all panel outcomes and element 3 decisions.

Workload. Reducing the burden for SENDCOs and ensure moderation of cases prior to panels.

Oversight. Ensuring that schools have oversight of the larger budget decisions to support devolution of funds. Panels to be aware of the financial context of each school when making decisions. Schools to play a larger part in overseeing the process.

Decision Making Process. The overall decision-making process and panel structure has not been apparent to schools. Schools should play a greater role at all stages of SEND decision making. Panels have some guidelines around parameters of financial contribution to each school.

Training. Ensure that all SENDCOs can access more training around funding requests. Work with secondary SENDCO group to understand how the process can work more effectively at this level.

Context:

2. The National context around high needs funding has become increasingly challenging since 2019, as demand has risen significantly and most authorities now find themselves in a deficit scenario. Doncaster has worked, through Schools Forum in order to ensure transparency and oversight over this period of time. As with most areas there are a number of drivers behind the increased spending. These include a growth in independent placements, limited local capacity, and the unintended long term impacts of the changes in national policy in 2014/15. These challenges have been echoed in the findings of several national reports published since September 2024, including the National Audit Office's report [Support for children and young people with special educational needs](#) and the Educational Policy Institute's SEND Report ([SEND-Final-Report-version-FINAL-04.02.2024-2.pdf](#)), both of which urge policy makers to consider improving the consistency and funding of the mainstream school offer.
3. Doncaster set up a SEND transformation programme in September 2022, in order to improve the impact of the local SEND system. A new SEND Strategy was launched at this point, following work with all key stakeholders. The new strategy was predicated upon a set of principles that were developed by local school leaders, which set out a need to ensure that as much as possible there is a focus on early intervention and that, 'resources are moved towards schools and settings'. School leaders were keen to increase motivators for inclusion, including increasing the amount of financial support available.
4. At this point, Doncaster participated in the delivering 'Better Value in SEND' project with DfE and its partners. Several working groups were instigated. Much of this work has created the local SEND procedures, such as the Graduated Approach, Ordinarily Available Provision tools and The Needs Descriptors documents, which now form the basis of our SEND Toolkit ([SEND Toolkit - Home - City of Doncaster Council](#)).
5. Schools Forum consulted with schools in May 24 regarding the formula for element 2 'notional' funding in Doncaster. Schools agreed a new formula which saw the overall share of Element 2 within school budgets increase from around 8% to around 12%.
6. Following a review of the national research, including the DfE publication 'High Needs Budgets: Effective Management in Local Areas', our SENDCO working group explored methods of devolving increased funding to our local school partnership. Having reviewed mechanisms in other authorities, they described a basic model of locality funding decision making which could be used in Doncaster. This method included the dissemination of funds to localities within Doncaster based on a clearly evidenced level of need, with practitioners working together as decision makers and peers. This would allow increased funding to support children, young people and schools at an earlier point, than acquiring funding through Education, Health and Care Plans. SENDCOs agreed the following 'bare bones' of a future model:

- Budget devolved to localities on basis of simple formula agreed by SF.
 - Specialist support services to offer more support to schools, but also moderate bids across city for consistency. Panel in each locality consists of locality SENDCOs (plus outreach/ SEND School Improvement Officers/ E.P.s) Annual 'bid' process with emergency panels
 - Use existing documents- EHCP, SEND K plans, provision map. Schools evidence notional spend and have agency support including LA outreach. Together with a simple assessment framework for each need type. Bids for 3 terms with review, supported by outreach. Transition bids for 5 terms
7. Following a succession of discussions at Schools Forum and frequent briefings with the school system through 2024, this evolved into the Doncaster Pyramid Funding panels, which began in January 2025.
8. As part of this work, the partnership developed the following principles:
- L.A. distribute money in a fair and logical way.
 - L.A. distribute extra resources towards pupils who need them most.
 - L.A. SEND funding arrangements are transparent and easy to understand and explain.
 - To support a diverse range of school provision; and provide value for money and ensure proper use of public funds.
 - Funding can be allocated without the need for an EHCP.
 - Changes in need can be funded quickly.

January 2025 Model:

9. Following consultation with schools in Spring 2024 and the introduction of a new set of needs descriptors, the new model came into being in January 2025. This involved an overall amount being devolved to the pre-existing pyramids on a simple formula. A new pyramid was established for those with boroughwide catchments, who had not previously been assimilated into the pyramid structure. Schools were asked to bring funding requests for SEND K pupils whose levels of need could be demonstrated to require support above the funding that schools were allocated within their notional budget. The Local Authority employed independent chairs for this process to support decision making, with the understanding that, over time, school groups would increasingly work collectively to share resources within their localities. Decision making would be supported through the advice and guidance of peers and professionals that knew the schools. After the initial round of panels, further 'Emerging Need Panels' have taken place. Throughout the year, the LA have monitored comments through the Pyramid Funding inbox and through surveys and discussions with schools and trusts.
10. Doncaster is one of 15 authorities who are currently trialling a similar approach, distributing funding to 'clusters' within it's authority area.

Impacts:

High Level data and observations:

- ▶ To May 2025, 413 children supported so far through this process. 360 individuals and 53 through group requests. The number of CYP supported through SEND DSG funding has increased from 1900 to 2426
- ▶ Overall, the amount of funding deployed in mainstream schools from the high needs block has shifted from £5.5m to over £9m
- ▶ 4 Pyramids (Adwick, Balby, Danum, Don Valley) had under £5k left following 2 rounds. Demand was very challenging in Danum and Balby with a high number of cases and limited resources. This became difficult for pyramids to make decisions on, with 'scale back' options being deployed.
- ▶ At the same point, 7 Pyramids had over 20k left- Boroughwide, Hayfield, Hungerhill, Ridgewood, Hall Cross, Armthorpe.

Financial detail:

11. Access to funds differed greatly between secondary and primary schools, with secondaries applying for significantly less funding and only seeing minimal increases in funds. Of the 7 schools who did not access any additional funds, 6 were secondary and one was a primary in a deprived area. The increase in funding per head of the (school) population at secondary was only £12.36, as opposed to £63.95 in primary.
12. Of the top ten most disadvantaged schools, all increased funding by at least £28 extra per head of the pupil population. Six exceeded the average per head spend (above £63 p/h), with three gaining by over £100 p/h.
13. Eighteen schools improved overall SEND funding by over £100 p/h. Of these 13 were in above average areas of deprivation.
14. There were some disproportionalities in the amount of funding one school would receive in comparison to its share of the pyramid overall population. Several factors would determine this, including reputation, historical practice, confidence levels of SENDCOs and funding and deprivation. 13 schools received over 10% higher share of funds than their NOR would suggest and 10 received lower- 7 of which were secondary schools.

Views of Schools:

What has worked well:

- ▶ Highly visible process. 'Fair and transparent decision making'. 'I enjoyed the whole process - very informative.'
- ▶ Good CPD- seeing each other's work. Sharing ideas.' Hearing of similar cases at other colleagues' schools and seeing how they are using the provision they have, to meet need'

- ▶ Peer to peer and external professional collaboration. Sharing advice. 'great support and challenge between SENDCOs and professionals'
- ▶ Working in pairs went well. More time to do this would help.
- ▶ Peer support and networking.
- ▶ Ability to get support for children without
- ▶ Knowledge of children who are emerging through the system will support transition over time.
- ▶ 'Quality needs to be maintained to ensure the procedure is robust. Having served on the HNF panel, this way of working felt much fairer.'

What should be improved?

- ▶ **Timescales** too tight and this has put pressure on SENDCOs. An annual calendar of times would be helpful. Can the amount of evidence be reduced?
- ▶ Clarity and communication. Panel **processes** not clear and required updating throughout the year.
- ▶ **Consistency** of chairing and decision making between panels.
- ▶ Some of the **info** provided by schools was too detailed and some was not detailed enough. This absorbed time during panel meetings, as we tried to either deal with detail or elicit it.
- ▶ **Greater planning and oversight** around amounts of money devolved to each pyramid. Schools could take ownership of this process and hold a contingency
- ▶ **Paperwork** heavy- Some schools referred too many cases.
- ▶ Some SENDCOs were put under pressure by HTs to acquire resources, which undermined the sense of collective responsibility and trust.
- ▶ **Panel continuum** is complex and not easy to understand. Processes above the PFP should be published. LA panels should be open to schools as per pyramid funding.

Other impacts:

15. The number of requests exceeded the **volume and amounts** modelled the previous year. We anticipated a relatively low number of high costs applications, assuming that many high needs cases would have already received funding through existing routes. This placed pressure on the high costs panels and reduced efficiency. It also allowed the LA to reflect on the decision making pathways and consider improvements.
16. **High Needs Spending Growth.** High needs spending on Element 3 has increased, but overall high needs deficit growth has slowed. The 2024 outturn is £37m actual against £50m predicted by DFE in 2022. Predicted deficit for 26-27 looks like 50m Vs around £70m unmitigated projection from DFE and £55m mitigated against our DBV plan. This corresponded to improving processes, some improvements in other financial packages alongside increasing early intervention.
17. **Requests** for EHCPs have slowed slightly over the last year (by around 1%, with the proportion of parental requests increasing), as have the number of plans issued. In 2024-2025, the % of decisions to proceed for parents was 31% and 53% for schools. The EHCP growth rate has reduced but has done so in line with national averages

(11.12% in 2023 to 10.99% in 2024). There has been a slight reduction in the overall number of advices produced by our EP team. It is too early to tell how much of this is related to the existence of pyramid panels.

Overall observations:

- 18.** The introduction of this process corresponded to what is largely perceived as a national crisis in SEND funding. Schools are struggling with limited budgets and high levels of need. Despite high levels of communication between 2023 and early 2025, we had to 'live through' the reality of the process in order to learn from it. Partners were keen from the inception to build a sense of collective responsibility and allow schools to support each other, augmenting existing work in pyramids. There has been much to assimilate, which SENDCOs have managed despite highly challenging roles in schools. A number of schools have been frustrated around communications- the LA will revise all communication channels to schools and will develop improved forums for decision making through Schools Forum and other channels.
- 19.** On the other hand, most school leaders have been positive about the benefits of this process in terms of supporting early intervention and developing practice. Money is now available to support schools and schools can use this flexibly, working together. There are signs that this will enable less traffic through the statutory pathway, where needs can be met without it. A significant investment has been made in the local system. Use of needs descriptors has given schools a clear sense of proportion to guide strategies and funding. Building on this going forward, it will make sense to offer more opportunities to SENDCOs in helping the LA manage and shape the process.
- 20.** The L.A. underestimated the volume of cases and enquiries that would be triggered. A small central team struggled with this. We aim now to streamline this so that processes are simpler and more efficient going forward. The LA will now be able to model likely pressures and predict them so that it can match resources more closely to demand.
- 21.** It is important now that schools have more of a voice in shaping and evolving this process, having oversight of spending and use of resources, working with the L.A.
- 22.** The connection between SEND K and EHCP funding has been a barrier to simplifying the system. In future, we will reference these funding decisions in pyramid panels to ensure oversight but decisions on Section F will be made by the LA, working with stakeholders.
- 23.** Throughout the process the Local Authority has worked with other authorities who are introducing similar processes. A Community of Practice has been set up and Doncaster will attend and contribute.

Key Issues to Resolve:

- ✓ School leaders would like to see greater collaboration and ownership of the process across the system.
- ✓ School leaders have suggested that they oversee the overall amounts devolved into the system and hold a contingency for situations where this is needed.
- ✓ Schools have suggested that there is a clear and visible continuum of panels published, which outlines how schools present and make decisions in each.
- ✓ Schools would like a clear continuum between low and high needs panels to limit referrals to other panels
- ✓ Panels would be keen to allow moderation of requests prior to panel to ensure greater efficiency.
- ✓ Reduce paperwork for SENDCOs
- ✓ Improve consistency of requests via training.
- ✓ Improve decision making by referencing school funding context and history when making decisions.
- ✓ Schools have requested that a single 'statement' is sent out to schools on a termly basis, covering all SEND funds.
- ✓ Very few transition requests were made. It would be useful to re-consider this.

Recommendations:

- Schools Forum set up a group, meeting termly, with proportionate representation from phases and types of school to decide on formula, oversee the panels and monitor impact.
- LA develop a new panel continuum and publish to schools and on The SEND toolkit. The L.A. to publish the dates of panels (and other key events) at the start of the academic year. Schools, working with the LA to review the functions of inclusion panel to understand if there gaps within the panel continuum and gaps which do not adequately serve the needs of schools in making appropriate provision for CYP.
- Complex Needs Panel for mainstream to be made up of representatives from each locality from Autumn term. Schools present on this, following ratification from each pyramid group. Above group (to be set up by school's forum) to decide upon an allocation of additional high needs funding for this cross- borough panel, requiring that more High Needs funding is devolved for this purpose.
- Introduce moderation process prior to Autumn panel in 2025.
- To finance a school SENDCO from each pyramid to support moderation and communication in the cluster, working with LA officers, funded from the Schools Forum budget at a cost of £40,000 for the 2025-26 academic year. LA to support each pyramid for 10 days to allow this. SEND School Improvement Officers to support this with frequent meetings. Administration and co-ordination to be undertaken through additional roles in SEND Team.

- LA to review request forms to reduce the amount of paperwork, working with a small group of SENDCOs. Reduce number of panel meetings to 3 from 6. Reduce the number of pyramids by one in order to reduce the amount of planning and preparation.
- Training and 'lessons learned' for SENDCOs in October 2025. Best practice examples to be used.
- LA to publish school by school breakdown of element 2 and 3 funding for each pyramid in autumn 25.
- LA to ensure a single system for collating financial info and delivering a termly statement with pupil names, amounts and duration made clear to be in use from Sept 25.
- Pyramids to be given basic guidelines re proportionality to limit perverse incentives. For example, panels to identify where there is a 10% differential between NOR and overall amount. Panels can override this but should be aware of it.
- Hold all information on Teams channels in order to limit concerns regarding GDPR and efficiency of other means.
- Update the process to ensure that Autumn panels are able to evaluate the efficacy of funding already deployed.
- Review the process for Transition Requests in the Autumn term, including revising the join between schools funding and the Early Years.
- Work with secondary SENDCOs to understand barriers to them requesting and accessing Pyramid funding.

Author and Contact Officer on behalf of the High Needs Sub Group of Doncaster Schools Forum

Martyn Owen – Strategic Lead, Education

01302 735674

martyn.owen@doncaster.gov.uk



Doncaster Council

REPORT TO THE SCHOOLS FORUM

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Outturn Report 2024/25

Purpose

1. This report details the actual outturn for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budgets for the year 2024/25.

Recommendation

2. That Schools Forum notes the report.

Background

3. All Local Authorities receive a ring-fenced Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) from the Department for Education (DfE) for their schools provision. For 2024/25 the DfE funding settlement received in December 2023 was based on October 2023 census.
4. The DSG is split into 4 blocks, as presented in Appendix A:
 - Schools Block
 - Central Schools Block
 - High Needs Block
 - Early Years Block

Issues for consideration

5. The attached report at Appendix A shows the budget, actual outturn and year-end variance for 2024/25.
6. The report shows a final outturn overspend of £12.315m for 2024/25 creating an overall DSG overspend of £37.637m, carried forward to 2025/26.

7. The variances against 2024/25 expenditure budgets, by DSG block, making up the £12.315m in-year overspend are detailed in Appendix A with main variances highlighted below.

Schools Block

8. The Schools Block budget overall is showing a (£413k) underspend for the year which has arisen due to previously reported underspends within growth fund expenditure (£451k) offset by overspends against the Staff Absence Compensation budget £39k.

Central Schools Block

9. The Central Schools Block budget is showing an underspend of (£33k) due to previously reported underspends against the Schools Forum budget.

High Needs Block

10. The High Needs Block budget overall overspent by £13,052k overspend for the year. This has mainly arisen due to a rebasing of the 2023-24 budget on the 2024-25 budget with an overspend of £8,023k. Other overspends incurred on Schools EHCP (Statementing) Top Up and other additional payments to mainstream schools £2,864k, additional payments to Special Schools £1,828k, Specialist Post 16 FE & Specialist Post 16 Institutions £522k and Alternative Provision tuition £699k. This has been offset by underspends against Pupils Educated Out of Area CWD (£905k), Pupils Educated Out of Area DCST (£143k), Big Picture Learning (£156k) and other small underspends as listed in appendix A.

Early Years Block

11. The Early Years Block budget overall is showing a £290k underspend, of which (£156k) is against the Early Years 2, 3 & 4 year olds budgets and an underspend within the Disability Access Fund budget and Early Years Pupil Premium budget.

Maintained School Balances at 31st March 2025

12. A summary of the school balances can be found at Appendix D. Please note that we do not hold academy school balances. Overall, surplus revenue balances held by maintained schools increased by £0.354m from 2023/24 to 2024/25. The number of schools with a surplus revenue balance decreased by 4 in this period to 18. The number of schools with a deficit revenue balance is 9, an increase of 1, and the total deficit revenue balances having increased by £364k from 2023/24 to 2024/25 overall.
13. School revenue balances, expressed as a percentage of budget share, have decreased for all schools from 2020/21 levels.
14. There are now 10 maintained schools with a surplus revenue balance above 12% of budget share at the end of 2024/25 (there were 8 in 2023/24).

15. Of the 10 schools, 7 of these schools also had a balance above 12% in 2023/24.
16. Schools that have a balance over 12% will be written to and asked to provide details of their spending plans, this information will then be sent onto the Standards and Effectiveness team so the lead Standards and Effectiveness Officers can challenge the schools as part of the Standards & Effectiveness function. Those schools which held a balance over 12% as at 31st March 2025 as well as 31st March 2024 will be asked to confirm if their spending plans submitted last year were actioned.
17. The review of this information will also inform the allocation process for payment of Growth Fund which stipulates that a school with a balance greater than 12% must have a plan for their balance which has been agreed by Forum as reasonable in order to receive a payment from the fund.
18. School balances are also planned to be discussed at the school improvement meetings with the schools during the year so that there is further challenge to ensure the funding benefits the children for whom the funding was intended.

Consultation

19. Individual budget holders have considered the outturn. The revenue monitoring position for Children's Services has been reported to the Executive Director of Children, Young People and Families and management team through the monthly reporting process for Children and Young People's budgets.

Conclusion

20. The final DSG outturn position for 2024/25 shows an overspend of £12.315m which has been carried forward into 2025/26 alongside previous year overspends giving a total DSG overspend of £37.637m.
21. Surplus School Balances will be reviewed and schools will be written to and asked to provide details of their spending plans.

Author and Contact Officer(s):

Stephen Boldry – Finance Manager
01302 737671
stephen.boldry@doncaster.gov.uk

APPENDIX A
Revenue Monitoring 2024/25 Month 12

APPENDIX A

Service	DSG Budget for Year	Month 12 Actual	Actual DSG Variance	Notes	Month 9 Actual Budget	Month 9 Actual	Month 9 Variance	Difference
	£'000	£'000	£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
HIGH NEEDS BLOCK DSG								
High Needs Contingency/Unallocated	(8,023)	0	8,023	Original budget overcommitted based on original estimates	(8,023)	0	8,023	0
Pupils Educated Out Of Area - LA SEN	13,062	13,162	99	There are currently 190 children in placements. At Q3 it was predicted that 196 children would be placed in SEN OOA however due to leavers during the spring term and less growth than expected this figure has reduced to 190.	13,062	13,270	208	(109)
Pupils Educated Out Of Area - LA CWD	706	563	(143)	At 31st March 2025 there were 2 children in placement, 2 less than at Q3 and overall 3 less since 1st April 2024. The underspend is a result of the decrease in the number of children within a CWD placement including education.	706	702	(4)	(139)
Pupils Educated Out Of Area - Social Care	2,644	1,739	(905)	Reducing split of packages relating to Education with reducing DSG spend proportion of costs (figures as per Month 12 Social Care Ladder) There are currently 12 LAC children requiring education support as at the 31st March 2025.	2,644	1,920	(724)	(181)
Specialist Post 16 Institutions	6,567	7,089	522	The projection in Q3 was based on current pupils of 228 and an estimated net growth of 6 for the remainder of the year, however the end of year position is 228 children in Specialist Post 16 institutions therefore net nil growth in last quarter..	6,567	7,255	688	(166)
Post 16 FE Colleges	319	298	(21)		319	341	22	(43)
Mainstream EHCP Banded Top Up funding	6,558	7,769	1,211	Actual based on amounts paid to mainstream schools for children with EHCP.	6,558	7,381	823	388
SEN Children additional Funding	3,479	5,133	1,653	Actuals for SEN AP, Tuition and additional payments for mainstream children above EHCP allocations including the expenditure to schools from the locality funding panels from January 25.	3,479	5,424	1,945	(292)
Special Schools - ISB	10,625	12,453	1,828	Overall overspend of £1.8m due to additional places agreed at Bader, North Ridge and Pennine View (unbudgeted for) This alongside additional payments being made for specific children within special schools is causing the overspend. Future growth numbers subject to agreement by the Service.	10,625	12,416	1,791	37
Other LA recoupment	794	795	1		794	861	67	(66)
PRUs Incl. Mulberry Unit	2,995	3,249	254	Actuals based on revised pupil numbers at Levett of 35 from January 25 following consultation exercise compared to the budget set at 32 places from September 24. Figure also includes additional payments being made for specific children within PRU agreed through the SENQA panel.	2,995	3,215	220	34
SEMH Provision	998	999	1	Cost increases from those originally expected to be commissioned (£168k on top of original £175k per hub, approved until August 25, projection includes full year) plus additional payments agreed through SENDQA panel for specific children. (Consideration required if any knock on impact on potential new capital plans for additional SEMH hubs).	998	1,084	86	(85)
North Bridge Enterprise College	852	1,617	765	Budget based on 24 places from Sept 24 however 48 places now occupied. Confirmation required from Service on future numbers at this provision.	851	1,662	811	(46)
Big Picture Learning	2,212	2,055	(156)		2,212	2,212	0	(156)
Specialist AP provision	885	565	(320)		885	680	(205)	(115)

APPENDIX A
Revenue Monitoring 2024/25 Month 12

APPENDIX A

Service	DSG Budget for Year	Month 12 Actual	Actual DSG Variance	Notes	Month 9 Actual Budget	Month 9 Actual	Month 9 Variance	Difference
	£'000	£'000	£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Pre-School Inclusion - Portage/SEN	1,220	1,302	82		1,220	1,324	104	(22)
Children's Specialist Equipment	168	160	(8)		168	168	0	(8)
ASD Schools Support	444	438	(6)		440	445	5	(11)
HI Schools Support	827	707	(120)	Staffing underspends with the Service	825	747	(78)	(42)
VI Schools Support	526	546	20		525	535	10	10
Primary Outreach	376	385	9		375	388	13	(4)
Secondary Outreach	114	114	0		114	114	0	0
Learning & Behaviour Support Service	1,355	1,621	266	Overspend due to payments to schools for work connected with the reduction in permanent exclusions offset by payments expected for the Day 6 provision.	1,355	1,623	268	(2)
Pupils Educated At Home	100	98	(2)		100	100	0	(2)
Independent Behaviour Provision (Tops Team)	178	185	6		186	185	(1)	7
Contributions to Centrally Retained & De-delegated Budgets	90	82	(8)		90	90	0	(8)
HIGH NEEDS BLOCK Sub-total	50,070	63,121	13,052		50,070	64,142	14,072	(1,020)
SCHOOLS BLOCK DSG								
Individual School Budgets	29,889	29,888	(0)		30,942	30,942	0	(0)
Staff Absence Compensation - Maternity	207	246	39		207	214	7	32
Staff Absence Compensation - TU Facility	56	56	0		56	56	0	0
Museums-Art Gallery(Education Service)	28	28	0		28	28	0	0
EMTAS & GRT Virtual School	86	86	(0)		86	86	0	(0)
Other Insurances	6	4	(2)		6	6	0	(2)
Free School Meals Eligibility	20	20	0		20	20	0	0
Support for Schools in Financial Difficulty (Causing Concern)	44	44	0		44	44	0	0
Growth Fund	740	289	(451)	Actual figures based on the October 24 census, which were lower than originally budgeted for. Actual pupils admitted into the new classes were accurate however numbers leaving schools from other year group account for this difference to budget. Underspend due to	520	290	(230)	(221)
Additional school improvement services (incl. Maths/Literacy Lead)	64	65	0		64	64	0	0
Education functions for maintained schools (former ESG general duties)	118	118	0		118	118	0	0
SCHOOLS BLOCK Sub-total	31,259	30,845	(413)		32,091	31,868	(223)	(190)
CENTRAL SCHOOL SERVICES BLOCK DSG								
Servicing of Schools Forum	35	10	(25)	Underspend against the Schools Forum budget due to no payments of meeting space required	35	20	(15)	(10)
School Admissions	314	314	0		314	314	0	0
Miscellaneous Provision (Safeguarding)	23	23	0		23	23	0	0
Recharges Corporate Services/Management	91	91	0		91	91	0	0
ICT revenue funding	99	99	0		99	99	0	0
National Copyright Licences	316	316	0		286	315	29	(29)
Education functions for all schools & academies (former ESG retained duties)	855	847	(8)		864	864	0	(8)
Learning & Behaviour Support Service	57	57	0		57	57	0	0
CENTRAL SCHOOL SERVICES BLOCK Sub-total	1,790	1,757	(33)		1,769	1,783	14	(47)
EARLY YEARS BLOCK DSG								

APPENDIX A
Revenue Monitoring 2024/25 Month 12

APPENDIX A

Service	DSG Budget for Year	Month 12 Actual	Actual DSG Variance	Notes	Month 9 Actual Budget	Month 9 Actual	Month 9 Variance	Difference
	£'000	£'000	£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Nursery Education Fund - 2 year olds	9,008	8,882	(126)	The 2024-25 early years funding allocations are based on the January 2024 census and have been updated in January 2025 to show the adjustments for the summer 24 and autumn 24 terms. We expect further funding announcements (based on January 2025 census data) in July 2025. Payments to providers are made based on termly headcount data compared to allocations received from the DfE based on January 24 (5/12 of headcount data) and January 25 census (7/12 of headcount data)	9,692	9,692	0	(126)
Nursery Education Fund - 3 & 4 year olds	18,291	18,532	241	The 2024-25 early years funding allocations are based on the January 2024 census and have been updated in January 2025 to show the adjustments for the summer 24 and autumn 24 terms. We expect further funding announcements (based on January 2025 census data) in July 2025. Payments to providers are made based on termly headcount data compared to allocations received from the DfE based on January 24 (5/12 of headcount data) and January 25 census (7/12 of headcount data)	19,251	19,251	0	241
Under 2 Year Olds	5,379	5,108	(271)	The 2024-25 early years funding allocations are based on the January 2024 census and have been updated in January 2025 to show the adjustments for the summer 24 and autumn 24 terms. We expect further funding announcements (based on January 2025 census data) in July 2025. Payments to providers are made based on termly headcount data compared to allocations received from the DfE based on January 24 (5/12 of headcount data) and January 25 census (7/12 of headcount data)	3,694	3,694	0	(271)
Early Years Retained Duties	838	838.0	0		838	838	0	0
Early Years Pupil Premium	412	386	(25)		519	523	4	(29)
Early Years Contingency	0	0	0		0	(4)	(4)	4
High Needs Block transfer to EY Block - Early Help funding	0	0	0		0	0	0	0
Disability Access Fund	265	156	(109)	Payment for DAF funding is made following receipt of DLA evidence received from providers. Underspend due to lack of claims from providers for children eligible for DLA (perhaps because paperwork not received from parents)	265	265	0	(109)
EARLY YEARS BLOCK Sub-total	34,192	33,902	(290)		34,259	34,259	0	(290)
EARLY YEARS BLOCK DSG								
Grand Total	117,310	129,626	12,315	In-year 2024/25 overspend of £12.315m	118,189	132,052	13,863	(1,548)

APPENDIX B

4.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	Price inflation used in 24/25 council budget/MTFS report (as at Nov 23) with 3% estimate future years.
5.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	Pay inflation used in 24/25 council budget/MTFS report (as at Nov 23).
3.4%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	DSG increase as per DfE - applies to Special/PRU/EHCP.

Colour coded to show how we have applied price, pay and DSG inflation to future years expenditure forecasts below

Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block Medium Term Financial Plan (2023/24 - 2026/27)

	2021-22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
High Needs Block Funding							
Initial DSG Settlement	42,747,785	48,504,344	54,023,648	56,270,393	60,822,903	62,647,590	64,527,018
less High Needs Places deductions (Academies)	-6,670,669	-6,881,335	-7,124,168	-7,499,168	-8,176,668	-8,176,668	-8,176,668
Agreed 0.5% contribution from the Schools Block Budget	0	0	1,217,806	1,298,568	1,407,229	1,449,446	1,492,929
less HN funding transfer to EY block (Early Help Strategy)	-450,000	-450,000					
	35,627,116	41,173,009	48,117,286	50,069,793	54,053,464	55,920,368	57,843,279
High Needs Block Expenditure Projections							
Pupils Educated Out Of Area - LA SEN	7,147,810	9,624,414	12,093,990	13,161,581	12,263,527	11,738,779	11,785,021
Pupils Educated Out Of Area - LA CWD	1,776,110	1,632,233	1,143,073	563,035	579,926	597,324	615,244
Pupils Educated Out Of Area - Social Care	4,210,670	5,038,802	2,342,680	1,738,957	1,791,126	1,844,859	1,900,206
Specialist Post 16 Institutions	3,197,460	5,163,864	5,900,865	7,088,880	7,952,935	6,746,687	6,723,161
Post 16 FE Colleges	453,680	290,108	284,958	297,903	349,335	359,815	370,609
Mainstream EHCP Banded Top Up funding	5,985,557	5,356,168	6,342,486	7,769,193	5,603,391	5,172,399	5,327,571
SEN Children additional Funding	799,619	1,826,270	3,365,010	5,132,831	5,138,231	4,280,547	4,408,963
Special Schools - ISB	7,458,037	8,623,897	9,850,545	12,453,209	13,286,805	13,685,409	14,095,971
Other LA recoupment	561,130	568,586	767,614	794,519	818,354	842,905	868,192
PRUs Incl. Mulberry Unit	3,023,770	3,236,451	3,280,263	3,248,599	2,501,353	2,576,394	2,653,686
SEMH Provision	0	0	265,050	998,561	762,715	785,596	809,164
North Bridge Enterprise College	1,171,600	1,186,812	1,281,746	1,617,182	877,300	221,846	0
Big Picture Learning	418,470	749,410	1,321,419	2,055,262	2,598,196	3,058,640	3,150,399
Specialist AP provision	721,310	623,597	654,062	564,569	1,256,381	1,423,692	1,466,408
Pre-School Inclusion - Portage/SEN	915,500	994,319	1,180,767	1,301,575	1,319,607	1,337,999	1,364,759
Children's Specialist Equipment	100,000	161,176	161,180	160,000	164,800	169,744	174,836

Actual activity as at end 23/24	Projected activity as at end 24/25	Projected activity as at end 25/26	Projected activity as at end 26/27	Assumptions
				25/26 onwards assumed only 3% increase in DSG grant as per DfE advice. Place funding at Academy Specials (DfE recoup to pay direct, instead of LA). Agreed by School Forum for 24/25. The 0.5% top-slice could be increased from 25/26. This would need secretary of state approval (and also consultation politically and with School Forum). Decision may also depends on government, funding envelope, DSG statutory override and if Doncaster became a Safety Valve LA (DfE fund the cumulative deficit). Funded by Council general fund 23/24 onwards 24/25 = 19 leavers (expected). Vega/BPL expansion to negate any net growth (per Nov 23 Cabinet report), therefore 19 potential gross/new starters but 3 of them to go to Coppice additional places, leaving 6 new OOA starts in year. 25/26 = 7 leavers (expected) with 7 new/gross starters (as Vega/BPL to negate any net growth), however Delivering Better Value work also meant to save £2m from Sept 25 (equating to c.30 places in SEN OOA). 26/27 = 22 leavers (expected) with 22 new/gross starters (as Vega/BPL to negate any net growth). RISK - DBV can only prevent new starters, therefore with only 7 gross growth in 25/26 to go towards 30 places we are expected to save, might go into 26/27 when expect 22 gross growth. However DBV isn't specific to OOA so will need to monitor if savings are made lower down DSG care ladder. Future assumptions based on known leavers, costs dependant upon level of need/provision required which can be variable. Numbers as per Social Care Ladder MTFS for external LAC placements, however not all will include Education (if separate education provided will be against relevant budget). RISK - 24/25 still includes assumptions around in house residential placements savings delayed from 23/24. 24/25 = 93 leavers (expected). 16 additional specialist places through Doncaster College from Jan 25 to negate any net growth (per Nov 23 Cabinet report), therefore 93 potential gross/new starters but 12 of them to go to Stonehill additional places from Sept 24, leaving 81 new SPI starts in year. 25/26 = 69 leavers (expected). 16 further additional specialist places through Doncaster College (total 32 by Sept 26) to negate any net growth (per Nov 23 Cabinet report), therefore 69 potential gross/new starters but 12 of them to go to Stonehill (further 12) additional places from Sept 25, leaving 57 new SPI starts in year. 26/27 = 38 leavers (expected) with 38 new/gross starters (zero net growth). RISK - additional places being available on time. Increases from Jan 25 (+16 additional places) and by Sept 26 (further +16 additional places, to total of 32), as per June 24 cabinet report. Mainstream EHCP funding to be devolved to locality panels from Sept 24 (possibly Jan 25 TBC) with expectation that budget does not increase from that point (as per Nov 23 cabinet report). Uncertain what impact will be on EHCP numbers, as funding report No end of March 24 breakdown of numbers, however budget expected to form part of devolved mainstream EHCP funding to locality panels from Sept 24 (possibly Jan 25 TBC). New classes agreed May 24 for Bader (9) & Northridge (8) from Sept 24/Jan 25 plus previously agreed additional places at Coppice from Sept 24. No net growth assumed in future years as Special Schools full. Figures assume zero growth in 24-25 onwards as no known change. Increase to figures reflect price inflation estimates only. Levett expected to be 35 places from January 25, Maple currently funded for 57 places (54 filled including Mulberry) potential additional 10 places now expected from late Autumn 2024. 3 Primary and 1 Secondary SEMH from Spring 2024 (additional 40 places in total), expected to be at full capacity by March 2025. Reduction in places as per November 23 cabinet report. Revised Q1 24-25 Expected increase in numbers at Big Picture and VEGA college. Number dipped in 23-24 due to Inclusive Panel Review. Numbers increasing in 24-25 as per Nov 23 cabinet report as additional AP required for children who would have previously been going to NBEC. Assumes summer 23 staffing establishment with pay inflation only. Figure assumes no growth in EIA with mainstream EIA still potentially to be devolved from Sept 24. Typically the trend is an increase in EIA numbers for the Summer term, to meet the criteria for providers to apply for continuation into FS2. For 2023-24 the EIA numbers were 257 Summer 23, 204 Autumn 23 and 233 for the Spring 24 terms.
193	196	161	161	
5	5	5	5	
12	12	29	29	
204	234	222	222	
0	112	128	128	
883	971	971	971	
731	788	788	788	
70	65	65	65	
92	92	92	92	
13	42	40	40	
48	50	24	24	
50	75	75	75	
18	49	61	61	
233	250	250	250	

	2021-22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
High Needs Block Funding							
ASD Schools Support	691,680	695,800	419,383	437,997	446,757	455,692	464,806
HI Schools Support	773,330	753,490	785,901	707,178	721,321	735,748	750,462
VI Schools Support	323,180	421,445	499,578	545,700	556,614	567,746	579,101
Behaviour Outreach Team - Primary	308,960	351,397	357,471	385,149	392,852	400,709	408,723
Behaviour Outreach Team - Secondary	107,000	109,000	109,000	114,000	116,280	118,606	120,978
Learning & Behaviour Support Service	891,580	885,760	1,290,145	1,620,803	1,653,219	1,686,283	1,720,009
Pupil Educated At Home	83,180	88,266	94,927	97,630	99,582	101,574	103,605
Independent Behaviour Provision (Tops Team)	150,080	154,762	176,969	184,663	188,357	192,124	195,966
Contributions to Centrally Retained & De-delegated Schools	73,730	87,094	90,098	82,468	82,468	82,468	82,468
Budgets							
Gross Expenditure	41,333,443	48,613,120	54,059,201	63,121,443	61,521,436	59,183,584	60,140,304
High Needs Budget Variance (in Year)	5,706,327	7,440,111	5,941,915	13,051,650	7,467,966	3,263,216	2,297,025
DSG Schools Block, Early Years Block Variance	-1,130,173	-1,253,982	-432,727	-736,339			

Actual activity as at end 23/24	Projected activity as at end 24/25	Projected activity as at end 25/26	Projected activity as at end 26/27	Assumptions
---------------------------------	------------------------------------	------------------------------------	------------------------------------	-------------

Overall DSG Balance	13,626,072	19,812,201	25,321,390	37,636,700	45,104,666	48,367,881	50,664,906
---------------------	------------	------------	------------	------------	------------	------------	------------

Summary table

Description	2022/23 £000's	2023/24 £000's	2024/25 £000's	2025/26 £000's	2026/27 £000's	2027/28 £000's
DSG High Needs Block grant (after deductions)	41,173	48,117	50,070	54,053	55,920	57,843
High Needs Block expenditure	48,613	54,059	63,121	61,521	59,184	60,140
In year High Needs Block variance (less other DSG underspends)	6,186	5,509	12,315	7,468	3,263	2,297
Overall DSG Balance	19,812	25,321	37,637	45,105	48,368	50,665

2024/25 Q3 projection			2024/25 £000's	2025/26 £000's	2026/27 £000's	2027/28 £000's
Description	2022/23 £000's	2023/24 £000's				
DSG High Needs Block grant (after deductions)	41,173	48,117	50,070	54,520	56,387	58,310
High Needs Block expenditure	48,613	54,059	64,142	61,966	59,640	60,610
In year High Needs Block variance (less other DSG underspends)	6,186	5,509	13,863	7,446	3,253	2,300
Overall DSG Balance	19,812	25,321	39,185	46,636	49,884	52,184

Change from Q3 to Q4			-1,548	-1,528	-1,516	-1,519
----------------------	--	--	--------	--------	--------	--------

Overall revenue impact of Capital Bid / current demand issues

	2024/25 £000's	2025/26 £000's	2026/27 £000's	2027/28 £000's
Assuming Sept provision (start date for all)				
Revenue costs - pro rata		4,039	6,971	11,858
Cost savings - pro rata		-786	-1,297	-2,612
Net revenue costs of the provisions proposed - pro rata		3,253	7,674	9,346
Cost if provisions not approved (Cost avoidance pro rata)		4,643	9,786	12,150

taken from belo 20/1/25

[SEN Capital \(Final Projects for year on year scoping\) 17.12.24](#)

Summary table (including sufficiency plan places (with provisions as proposed in capital plan - pipeline for 25/26)

Description	2022/23 £000's	2023/24 £000's	2024/25 £000's	2025/26 £000's	2026/27 £000's	2027/28 £000's
DSG High Needs Block grant (after deductions)	41,173	48,117	50,070	54,053	55,920	57,843
High Needs Block expenditure	48,613	54,059	63,121	65,275	66,857	69,486
In year High Needs Block variance (less other DSG underspends)	6,186	5,509	12,315	11,221	10,937	11,643
Overall DSG Balance	19,812	25,321	37,637	48,858	59,795	71,438

20,773

20,773 Check

Appendix C: Growth Fund Payments																		
Growth Fund Payments for Financial Year 2024/25																		
School	Criteria met	Increase in PAN per year group	Year Groups increase applies to	£ AWPU per pupil increase	Original PAN	Increased PAN - Agreed by LA, from Sept 2024	Final October Census 2024 pupil numbers Reception	actual pupil number increase on original PAN	Total pupils Oct 23 (excl. nursery)	Total pupils Oct 24 (excl. nursery)	Funded increase in pupil number (Capped at overall increase from Oct 23 to Oct 24 census)	Minimum Funding (Average Taught Cost for 7 months) for Criteria 1 ONLY	Maintained / Academy	Growth Fund payment for period Sept 24 - March 25 (7 months)	Growth Fund payment for period April 25 - August 26 (5 months) ACADEMIES ONLY	Growth Fund payment for period April 24 - August 25 (5 months) CRITERIA 1	NOTES	End Date
Don Valley	1	16	7	£5,022	224	240	235	11	1114	1107	-7	£24,410	Academy	£24,409.58	£17,435.42	£0	New class for year 7 pupils to increase pupil numbers by 30	AY 25-26
Ridgewood	1	25	7	£5,022	240	265	253	13	1203	1199	-4	£24,410	Academy	£24,409.58	£17,435.42	£0	New class for year 7 pupils to increase pupil numbers by 30	AY 25-26
Hayfield	1	30	7	£5,022	210	240	237	30	1071	1085	14	£24,410	Academy	£41,013.00	£29,295.00	£0	New class for year 7 pupils to increase pupil numbers by 30	AY 25-26
														£89,832.17	£64,165.83	£0	Total Payments 24/25 Growth Fund	
																	£153,998	
AWPU Rates 2024-25 APT																		
Primary (Years R-6)	£3,562.00													Financial Year breakdown		24-25	25-26	
Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9)	£5,022.00													Apr - Aug 24	£199,375.00			Growth Fund 23-24 (Apr - Aug 24 payments)
Key Stage 4 (Years 10-11)	£5,661.00													Sept - Mar 25	£89,832.17			Growth fund 24-25 (Sept 24 - March 25 payments)
														Apr - Aug 25		£64,165.83		Growth Fund 24-25 (Apr - Aug 25 payments)
														CN029	£289,207.17	£64,165.83		

School Balances at 31st March 2025

Only those schools maintained by the Local Authority as at 2nd April 2025 are included in this analysis.

No. of Schools in Surplus/Deficit - Revenue Balances only	2024/25		2023/24		2022/23		2021
	Surplus	Deficit	Surplus	Deficit	Surplus	Deficit	Surplus
Primary Schools	16	8	20	7	28	3	30
Special Schools	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
Pupil Referral Units*	1	1	1	1	1	1	2

Total Value of Surpluses/Deficits - Revenue Balances only	2024/25		2023/24		2022/23		2021
	Surplus	Deficit	Surplus	Deficit	Surplus	Deficit	Surplus
Primary Schools	3,567,665.29	468,212.66	3,213,094.44	202,401.69	3,689,257.82	24,507.95	3,755,726.35
Special Schools	216,222.00	0.00	73,551.46	0.00	72,259.48	0.00	333,973.67
Pupil Referral Units	239,575.89	468,997.33	62,023.24	370,576.85	123,110.06	162,336.92	108,060.42

	2024/25		2023/24		2022/23		2021
	Balances £	% of Budget Share	Balances £	% of Budget Share	Balances £	% of Budget Share	Balances £
Total balances as a % of Budget Share - Revenue Balances only							
Primary Schools	3,099,452.63	9.83%	3,010,692.75	8.82%	3,664,749.87	9.43%	3,677,279.65
Special Schools	216,222.00	6.87%	73,551.46	2.88%	72,259.48	3.16%	333,973.67
Pupil Referral Units	-229,421.44	-7.00%	-308,553.61	-10.20%	-39,226.86	-1.35%	108,060.42

Schools with a revenue balance above 12%	No. of Schools 2024/25	No. of Schools 2023/24	No. of Schools 2022/23	No. of Schools 2021/22	No. of Schools 2020/21	No. of Schools 2019/20	No. of Schools 2018/19
Primary Schools	9	8	10	9	14	10	7
Special Schools	0	0	0	1	1	1	3
Pupil Referral Units	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

/22	2020/21		2019/20		2018/19		2017/18	
Deficit	Surplus	Deficit	Surplus	Deficit	Surplus	Deficit	Surplus	Deficit
4	34	3	28	11	37	9	43	10
0	1	0	1	0	4	0	4	0
0	2	0	1	1	2	0	1	1

/22	2020/21		2019/20		2018/19		2017/18	
Deficit	Surplus	Deficit	Surplus	Deficit	Surplus	Deficit	Surplus	Deficit
78,446.70	4,479,591.71	57,595.10	3,031,087.70	347,012.57	2,878,511.91	396,146.06	3,092,505.56	308,769.72
0.00	376,523.91	0.00	246,940.97	0.00	914,038.78	0.00	754,827.83	0.00
0.00	110,845.51	0.00	10,173.62	41,029.84	41,828.55	0.00	23,689.51	29,838.26

/22	2020/21		2019/20		2018/19		2017/18	
% of Budget Share	Balances £	% of Budget Share	Balances £	% of Budget Share	Balances £	% of Budget Share	Balances £	% of Budget Share
9.12%	4,421,996.61	10.56%	2,684,075.13	6.15%	2,482,365.85	4.84%	2,783,735.84	4.86%
15.91%	376,523.91	18.68%	246,940.97	12.41%	914,038.78	11.36%	754,827.83	9.65%
3.82%	110,845.51	3.94%	-30,856.22	-1.10%	41,828.55	1.58%	-6,148.75	-0.25%

No. of Schools 2017/18
3
1
0