

Blackpool Council

11 January 2022

SCHOOLS FORUM

Tuesday, 18 January 2022 at 9.15 am
MS Teams Meeting

A G E N D A

1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare any interests in the items under consideration and in doing so state:

(1) the type of interest concerned either a

- (a) personal interest
- (b) prejudicial interest
- (c) disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI)

and

(2) the nature of the interest concerned

If any member requires advice on declarations of interests, they are advised to contact the Head of Democratic Governance in advance of the meeting.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 1 - 12)

To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2021 as an accurate record.

To consider any matters arising, not discussed elsewhere on the Agenda.

4 LOCAL AUTHORITY AND INCLUSION UPDATE (Pages 13 - 18)

To receive an overview of recent developments within the local authority for information.

5 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT BUDGET MONITORING 2021-2022 (Pages 19 - 22)

To consider the budget position and Dedicated Schools Grant reserves of the 2021-22 Dedicated Schools Grant as at 30 November 2021.

6 HIGH NEEDS UPDATE (Pages 23 - 30)

To consider the latest developments relevant to the High Needs budget.

7 EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES FUNDING (Pages 31 - 34)

To consider the background information on exceptional circumstances funding for mainstream schools and discuss the proposals for changes to the scheme.

8 DRAFT DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT BUDGET 2022-2023 (Pages 35 - 40)

To discuss the provisional estimates for the use of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) in 2022/23.

9 SCHOOLS FUNDING FORMULA 2022-2023 PROPOSALS (Pages 41 - 48)

To consider the local authority's proposal for the schools funding formula for 2022/23

10 DE-DELEGATION OF SERVICES AND RETENTION OF FUNDING FOR EDUCATION FUNCTIONS 2022-2023 (Pages 49 - 54)

Approval is sought for the de-delegation of services and the retention of funding for Education Functions.

11 COVID FUNDING UPDATE (Pages 55 - 58)

To receive an update regarding financial support provided in the education sector during the COVID outbreak for information.

12 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

To note the date of the next meeting as Tuesday 15 March 2022.

13 GLOSSARY (Pages 59 - 60)

A glossary of acronyms is included for information.

Other information:

For queries regarding this agenda please contact Danielle Bowater, Democratic Governance Adviser, Tel: 01253 477202, e-mail danielle.bowater@blackpool.gov.uk

Copies of the agendas and minutes of the Schools Forum are available on the Council's website at www.blackpool.gov.uk

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Public Document Pack Agenda Item 3

MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING - TUESDAY, 12 OCTOBER 2021

Present:

Maintained Primary School Head Teachers/Representative

Ms H Moreton, Holy Family

Primary Governor

Ms M Lonicon, Our Lady

Special School Academy Representative

Ms G Hughes, Park (Sea View)

Academy / Free School Representatives

Mr G Dow, Anchorsolme (Sea View)

Mr S Eccles, St Mary's (BEBCMAT)

Mr R Farley, Westminster (FCAT) (Chair)

Ms T Harrison, Thames / Roseacre (AtC)

Mr A Hussain, Highfield (Star Academies)

Mr M McIver, St George's/Baines Endowed (Cidari)

Mr E Vitalis, South Shore / Marton (Bright Futures)

Pupil Referral Unit

Ms V O'Farrell, Educational Diversity

Post-16

Ms J Gray, Blackpool Sixth Form

Non-Schools Members

Mr N Adams, UNISON

Ms A Baines, Staff/Teacher Associations

In Attendance:

Councillor J Hobson, Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care and Schools

Mr D Maddocks, Senior Accountant

Mr P Turner, Assistant Director – School Improvement and SEND

Ms E Valentine, School Funding Officer

Mrs H Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources

Mr A Kowzan, Education and Skills Funding Agency (Observer)

Mrs D Bowater, Democratic Governance Adviser (minutes)

1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Hilary Wood welcomed attendees to the meeting prior to the election of the Chair at item 2. New attendees including Councillor Jim Hobson (Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care and Schools), Abrar Hussain (Highfield and Star Academies), Victoria O'Farrell (Education Diversity) and Emma Valentine (School Funding Officer) were welcomed to the meeting.

It was noted that an observer from the Education and Skills Funding Agency, Alekander Kowzan, was in attendance at the meeting.

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Apologies for absence were received from Elaine Allen (St John Vianney), Neill Oldham (Highfurlong), Rachel Dey (Early Years), Angela Wellings (Interim Head of SEND), Victoria Gent (Director of Children's Services) and Mark Golden (Finance Manager).

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest noted at the meeting.

3 ELECTION OF CHAIR

The Forum considered the election of a Chairman of the Schools Forum until August 2022.

Resolved:

- **The Forum elected Roger Farley (Westminster (FCAT) Academy School Representative) as Chairman of the Schools Forum until August 2022.**

4 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

Having been elected, Roger Farley took the role of Chair from this point of the meeting. The Forum considered the election of a Vice Chairman of the Schools Forum until August 2022.

Resolved:

- **The Forum elected Edward Vitalis (South Shore / Marton (Bright Futures) Academy School Representative) as Vice Chairman of the Schools Forum until August 2022.**

5 POWERS RESPONSIBILITIES AND GOOD PRACTICE OF SCHOOLS FORUMS

(Matt McIver and Jill Gray arrived during this item)

Hilary Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources presented the report to remind members of the powers and responsibilities of Schools Forums. Members were requested to note the powers and responsibilities of a Schools Forum and to consider the characteristics of an effective relationship between the Schools Forum and the local authority.

The main powers and responsibilities outlined by the Department for Education included aspects that Schools Forum must be consulted on and those that they are able to decide on.

It was recognised that Schools Forum were consulted on changes to the Schools Formula, the minimum funding guarantee in schools formula, changes to the early years formula, and financial arrangements for pupils with SEND, in Alternative Provision and for Early Years provision.

It was further reported that Schools Forum must decide on financial movements from the Schools Block to other blocks up to 0.5%, on central spend and criteria for pupil growth and falling rolls, on other central spend, on de-delegation and education functions (maintained schools only), on the Scheme for Financing Schools (maintained schools only) and on the

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Election of chair and voting procedures.

It was noted that the Operational and Good Practice Guidance outlined some features that local authorities and Schools Forums should consider to make Schools Forums as effective as possible. The characteristics of effective relationships included challenge and scrutiny, partnership, effective support, openness, responsiveness and a strategic view.

It was recognised that the relationship between the local authority and Schools Forum had to be a partnership and provide effective support as well as presenting challenge and scrutiny. It was suggested that holding meetings virtually was less conducive to promoting discussion and debate than in-person meetings were.

Questions and comments were welcomed.

One member asked whether the Schools Forum were fulfilling the duties as required if the group were to be self-assessed and queried whether there was enough challenge. In response, Hilary Wood confirmed that the Schools Forum were undertaking their role as required but more discussion would be welcomed and suggested that face-to-face meetings might promote this.

Paul Turner commented that the emphasis should be placed on the whole budget and the impact decisions have on the budget as a whole. It was illustrated that where there was a deficit on the High Needs block, this would affect all of the school budgets as a collective. He urged members to acknowledge that the effect on schools was apparent and should be discussed through questions and debate.

It was further suggested that the reports could also highlight the impact on the total funds where a decision was taken on one aspect such as the High Needs block.

6 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 15 June 2021 were considered and agreed as an accurate record.

Matters arising from the minutes:

Moving on Up fund – a response from the Opportunity Area to ascertain whether funding was available for the Moving on Up programme was still awaited (Roger Farley), it was noted that no funds were available therefore it was agreed to close the item.

Discussion on SEND budgets to be scheduled for a Schools Forum meeting in early 2022 – It was noted that there were a number of items relating to SEND support including Early Help which were being reviewed and a more detailed overview would be presented to either the January 2022 or March 2022 Schools Forum meeting.

7 REVIEW OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP AND CONSTITUTION

Hilary Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources presented the report as the Schools Forum were required to review the membership each academic year. It was noted that the review should consider the proportion of primary, secondary and academy representatives in order to ensure that the proportions remained representative of pupil numbers in each phase.

The Schools Forum were asked to agree to the balance of representatives between primary, secondary and academy mainstream schools and agree to the continuation of arrangements in relation to provisions in the Constitution in respect of numbers of representatives from any federation, multi-academy trust or academy sponsor. It was reported that since the membership was last reviewed, there had been no further conversions of maintained schools to academies.

It was reported that in October 2014, Schools Forum agreed to relax constraints on federations, multi academy trusts and academy sponsors. The constitution now contained provisions to allow federations, multi-academy trusts or academy sponsors representing three or more schools in Blackpool to nominate up to two members of Forum. It was proposed that these provisions be retained.

No amendments to the constitution or terms of reference were proposed.

Questions and comments were welcomed.

It was commented that there was a drop in primary schools numbers. Hilary Wood acknowledged that primary school numbers had decreased however some primary school numbers would also be factored into Academy numbers, although it was apparent that the birth rate had decreased. In response it was also recognised that where there was a drop in school numbers, there would be a drop in funds allocated to schools.

Following discussion, it was agreed that no changes were required to the balance of representatives and the constitution.

Resolved:

- **The balance of representatives between primary, secondary and academy mainstream schools was unchanged.**
- **The continuation of arrangements in relation to provisions in the Constitution in respect of numbers of representatives from any federation, multi-academy trust or academy sponsor was unchanged.**

8 LOCAL AUTHORITY AND INCLUSION UPDATE

Paul Turner, Assistant Director for School Improvement and SEND presented the report to provide an overview of recent developments within the local authority. The report outlined that as schools had re-opened, a high percentage of attendance was reported. In relation to

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cases of covid-19 within schools, cases were low but increasing within school settings.

It was reported that Opportunity Area Year five was underway, with a number of programmes related to inclusion, literacy and careers being funded for a further year. The Literacy Strategy was launched at a well-attended event in September 2021. Also in September 2021 the Chef's Academy launched at Highfield Day Centre for those aged 14 to 16 years.

In relation to SEND, the draft SEND strategy was expected by the end of November 2021 and the SEND banding consultation process was ongoing. It was reported that use of The Oracle building for Park sixth form students was planned.

It was reported that there were three permanent exclusions noted in the secondary phase. Numbers at the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) were low at 118 and numbers accessing Elective Home Education (EHE) were considered high at 315.

It was noted that Blackpool Community Football Club Trust opened their independent school at the football stadium in September 2021, expanding the Alternative Provision offer in Blackpool with commissioned places at The Alternative School noted as low, but still necessary.

Questions and comments were welcomed.

It was asked what pressures were placed on the budget as the Elective Home Education (EHE) numbers were so high. In response, Paul Turner outlined that the EHE impacted on the High Needs block, particularly with reference to place plans and funding. When children were not educated in schools, the funds were not allocated to schools. Some funding for supporting EHE was from the Opportunity Area.

9 DSG BUDGET MONITORING 2021 - 2022

In the absence of Mark Golden, Darren Maddocks, Senior Accountant presented the report to outline the budget position of the 2021-22 Dedicated Schools Grant as at 31 August 2021 and the amount of Dedicated Schools Grant reserves as at 31 August 2021.

It was reported that the budget monitoring to the end of August 2021 was forecasting a £711k overspend against a deficit budget of £326k. Therefore, the total in-year shortfall was estimated at £1.037m. Added to the brought forward deficit of £5.766m, the resulting forecast DSG deficit by 31 March 2022 was £6.803m. The figures excluded the maintained schools reserves (£3.919m) and the specific Union Fees reserve (£44k).

The main pressures were identified as Post-16 placements with a demand of £209k being higher than budgeted. The overspend on Access and Inclusion was £115k, relating to increased costs for the Oracle building (£29k), and the extension of resilience coaches as approved at a previous Schools Forum (£86k). Special schools placement growth totalled £93k and exceptional circumstances costs were higher than budgeted by £91k.

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Questions and comments were welcomed.

One member asked what the longer term impact of the deficit was on schools. In response, Darren Maddocks indicated that a five year plan was in development looking at both numbers and unit costs to gain a more sophisticated view. Each DSG area was considered and the expensive ones viewed on how to reduce the associated costs. A lot of work was being undertaken and a forecast would be brought to the next meeting. Following this, there was a request that the paper focused on the quality of provision as well as the efficiency of the provision.

It was further commented that over the years, Schools Forum discussion surrounded how to cut the services and make savings and this was frustrating for members.

Action:

- **Future papers on DSG monitoring to consider the quality of provision as well as the efficiency of the provision.**

10 HIGH NEEDS UPDATE

Hilary Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources presented the report to update on the latest developments relevant to the High Needs budget.

As reported in previous meetings, Blackpool, along with many other areas around the country, was experiencing financial pressures on its High Needs Budget. In order to better understand Blackpool's financial position, a medium-term financial plan had been developed to monitor forecast expenditure against the High Needs Budget, and factor in predictions of where savings may be achievable.

It was noted that despite additional government funding in 2020/21 and 2021/22, pupil numbers in high cost placements continued to rise. Latest forecasts showed costs in 2021/22 would exceed the High Needs funding allocation by around £2 million. Despite transfers from the Schools Block and the Central Schools Services Block to offset pressures, the cumulative deficit against Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) looked set to increase by a further £1 million this year, reaching £6.8 million by March 2022, the equivalent to approximately 5% of the total DSG.

It was also noted that the provisional allocation of High Needs funding for 2022/23 had been announced, being the third and final year of the three-year settlement for schools and High Needs, with the increase for Blackpool equating to almost 11% compared to 2021/22. Assumptions had been made about inflationary uplifts on relevant expenditure lines in 2022/23, but no assumptions had yet been made about increases to income or costs beyond 2022/23.

Due to the deficit and the ongoing pressures on costs, it has been assumed that a 0.5% transfer from Schools Block would continue to be required in future years, subject to approval by Schools Forum each year. This was shown on the Medium-Term Financial Plan for illustration purposes in each year until 2025/26, the expected date for the direct

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National Funding Formula to be implemented.

It was reported that regardless of the additional income and the actions to address pressures, a cumulative deficit on overall DSG of £2.7 million would still remain at the end of 2025/26.

Hilary Wood also reported on further work to address the deficit. It was noted that all of the proposals from the Local Authority's Vision for SEND and Alternative Provision had been implemented, with the exception of the review of local post-16 specialist provision, for which more time was being taken to consider options.

The local authority continued to carry out detailed analysis and scrutiny of High Needs pupil number and cost trends with a view to refining a strategic plan for the commissioning of specialist places as well as looking at future forecasts.

In the short-term, an immediate need for additional space to accommodate pupils currently in Blackpool's special schools was identified. Plans to create additional capacity at the Oracle building for Park's post-16 students were under consultation. As well as accommodating the current high number of sixth form students, this solution will give the school the space to be able to accept pupils with a higher level of need than has previously been the case, given that it is now designated to meet the needs of pupils with Global Learning Delay. It is expected that this will contribute to the easing of pressure on demand for places at Highfurlong and Woodlands special schools.

It was noted that there was a need for more opportunities for SEND resource provision especially in secondary schools so that Blackpool children could access appropriate support within local mainstream settings as no such local provision currently exists.

Finally, it was reported that in summer 2021, the local authority consulted with schools on banded funding for pupils with SEND in special and mainstream schools. As the outcome was not conclusive further engagement with schools would be undertaken to establish a workable solution. It was highlighted that the primary purpose of the exercise was to introduce a system that facilitated flexibility for schools in their provision for individual needs, not to reduce the funding for pupils with Education Health and Care Plans.

Questions and comments were welcomed.

It was asked whether the High Needs Working Group could reconvene to support the work being undertaken in relation to the High Needs block. Hilary Wood confirmed that the local authority would welcome the working group being involved in the development of future plans. Paul Turner also indicated that some spends were policy driven whereas others were demand driven and a peer panel to discuss these areas would be welcomed. He suggested that the focus of the High Needs working group be expanded to look at the policy driven spends, the demand driven spends as well as the statutory and non-statutory spending and this would add value to the discussions.

A further question was raised as to the closure of the SEND provision at Boundary School.

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Hilary Wood confirmed that the local authority had received notice but further exploration would be needed on the issue.

It was commented that the number of pupils at the Pupil Referral Unit had reduced due to school-led solutions being identified and implemented.

11 SCHOOLS FUNDING FORMULA 2022 - 2023

Hilary Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources presented the report and the Forum considered the local authority's proposals for the allocation of schools funding in 2022/23.

It was reported that the local authority consulted on proposals for the 2022/23 schools funding formula on 1 September 2021 and the review has focused on the following areas:

- Continued replication of the National Funding Formula for Blackpool schools
- Transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block
- Growth fund contingency

The consultation closed on 24 September 2021, with nine responses received covering the views of 13 mainstream schools. From the consultation, respondents unanimously agreed that the National Funding Formula be replicated in Blackpool's local formula for schools and that Blackpool's local formula for schools in future years should continue to mirror as far as possible the NFF. All respondents also agreed that a transfer of 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block should be made in 2022/23.

When considering the method of transferring 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block using Option A (reduction to Basic Entitlement values) or Option B (cap on gains), the views of respondents were divided.

When asked whether any surplus funding available from the 2022/23 growth funding should be set aside in a growth fund contingency to be available for meeting any unfunded growth in future years, and that any shortfall in growth funding should be drawn down from the contingency, respondents to the consultation were unanimously in favour.

When asked whether the growth contingency continued to operate in future years as described in the Growth Funding section of the consultation, the majority of responses were in favour.

The Forum considered the local authority's proposals for the allocation of school funding in 2022/23 by applying the following principles:

- Continue to apply the National Funding Formula unit values;
- Set a minimum funding guarantee of 2% per pupil funding;
- Transfer 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block;
- Transfer any surplus from the growth funding allocation into the growth funding contingency.

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Following a vote including all school and early years members in attendance, the points above were agreed.

Resolved:

- **Following a vote including all school and early years members in attendance, the Forum agreed the local authority's proposals for the allocation of school funding in 2022/23 by applying the following principles:**
 - **Continue to apply the National Funding Formula unit values;**
 - **Set a minimum funding guarantee of 2% per pupil funding;**
 - **Transfer 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block;**
 - **Transfer any surplus from the growth funding allocation into the growth funding contingency.**

The Forum considered the transfer of 0.5% from the Schools Block by either a reduction to the Basic Entitlement factor values, or by the implementation of a cap on gains.

Prior to voting, one member asked what the characteristics of schools were that would gain from the different options. It was noted that under option B (implementation of a cap on gains), schools with a larger budget and higher percentage gains would tend to contribute more. It was noted that in both of the options, no school with protection would see a decrease in contributions.

A further question asked whether the effects on different schools could be identified but Hilary Wood confirmed that the amounts would differ when the final formula was run using up-to-date data from the October 2021 Census.

Another question asked whether the 2022/23 budget was based on the forecast or the current numbers, it was confirmed that it was based on the same pupil numbers used in the 2021/22 formula so that a like-for-like comparison could be made.

A final question asked whether the same percentage could be applied across schools. In response, Hilary Wood confirmed that this was the process for option A (Basic Entitlement factor values) aside from the schools that were protected. It was also confirmed that the same percentage for all schools would not be possible within the constraints of the formula.

Following the discussion, the Forum was asked whether they had received enough information to vote representing their sector, there were no objections. The Forum was recommended by officers on behalf of the local authority to vote for option A - transfer of 0.5% from the Schools Block by a reduction to the Basic Entitlement factor values; or option B - transfer of 0.5% from the Schools Block by the implementation of a cap on gains. Following a vote including all school and early years members in attendance, the majority of members in attendance entitled to vote chose option A.

Resolved:

- **It was agreed that the transfer of 0.5% from the Schools Block should be effected by a reduction to the Basic Entitlement factor values.**

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The Forum considered whether Blackpool's local formula for schools in future years continued to mirror as far as possible the National Funding Formula (NFF) each year, until such time as there was a national change in funding for schools, or other circumstances require a change to be made. This would mean that formula factor values would mirror those in the NFF, and that the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) would be set at the same level as the funding floor used in the NFF.

Resolved:

- **Following a vote including all school and early years members in attendance, the Forum agreed the local authority's proposal that Blackpool's local formula for schools in future years continued to mirror as far as possible the National Funding Formula (NFF) each year, until such time as there was a national change in funding for schools, or other circumstances require a change to be made. This would mean that formula factor values would mirror those in the NFF, and that the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) would be set at the same level as the funding floor used in the NFF.**

The Forum considered whether, in future years, any surplus NFF growth funding was set aside in the Growth Fund Contingency, and any shortfall in NFF growth funding would be initially met from the Growth Fund Contingency, until such time as there was a national change in funding for growth, or other circumstances require a change to be made.

Resolved:

- **Following a vote including all school and early years members in attendance, the Forum agreed the local authority's proposal that, in future years, any surplus NFF growth funding was set aside in the Growth Fund Contingency, and any shortfall in NFF growth funding would be initially met from the Growth Fund Contingency, until such time as there was a national change in funding for growth, or other circumstances require a change to be made.**

Following the report, Paul Turner requested that an overview be provided to understand the method of growth funding. It was reported that growth funding allowed for the allocation of funding to schools that were new or growing, in recognition that there is a lag between pupils starting to attend a school, and the allocation of funding through the formula.

No further questions were noted.

12 DIRECT NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA FOR SCHOOLS

Hilary Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources presented the report to update on the Department for Education *Consultation on Fair school funding for all: completing our reforms to the National Funding Formula*.

It was reported that the Department for Education consulted on its objective of moving to a direct National Funding Formula (NFF) for schools. It was recognised that the Department for Education had a few years to implement the changes and Blackpool was in a good

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position as its local formula already mirrored the NFF.

The areas consulted on were outlined as scope of the direct NFF, funding for premises factors, funding for growth, falling rolls funding, start up funding for new schools, transition to the new NFF, Minimum funding guarantee, English as an additional language, sparsity funding, pooling of funding for multi academy trusts, funding of central school services, implications of direct NFF on funding for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, the role of Schools Forums, and moving to a consistent school year. The responses submitted by the local authority were also included.

There were no questions following the update. Hilary Wood was thanked for the report.

13 COVID FUNDING UPDATE

Hilary Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources presented the report to update on financial support provided in the education sector during the COVID outbreak since the previous meeting.

The Department for Education Covid Recovery programme's overview was included in the report outlining the announcements made in June 2020, February 2021 and June 2021. It was also noted that details of allocations and reporting requirements had been published on 6 October 2021.

Following discussion, it was requested that information be presented at the next meeting to give further clarity on the tutoring grant and implications of school led tutoring on staff and clawback, as there was confusion regarding the rules of the scheme. It was agreed that such a paper would be presented at the next meeting.

One member commented that there was frustration with the funding streams as they were often linked to pupil premium eligibility and it was noted that all children had been negatively affected by the Covid 19 pandemic.

Action:

- **It was agreed that a paper be presented at the next meeting on the clawback process and implications of the Government's tutoring recovery programme.**

14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was noted as Tuesday 18 January 2022.

Following discussion as to the appropriate venue for the meeting, it was agreed to look at the possibility of a face-to-face meeting, with a hybrid option if feasible.

15 GLOSSARY

The glossary of terms was noted for information.

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Chairman

(The meeting ended 10.45)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:

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Report to: **SCHOOLS FORUM**
Relevant Officer: Paul Turner – Assistant Director
Date of Meeting: 18 January 2022

LOCAL AUTHORITY AND INCLUSION UPDATE

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To provide an overview of recent developments within the local authority to the Forum.

1.2 Action required:

- For information (no decision required)

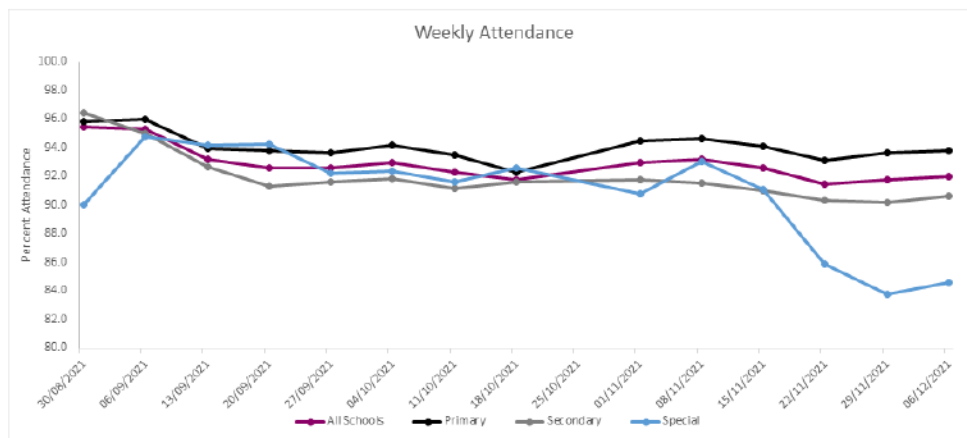
2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 The report is presented for information only.

3.0 Background Information

3.1 Attendance

Attendance throughout the first term of 2021-22 school year has been relatively steady with most schools seeing consistently over 90% of pupils attending. Cases of Covid in pupils have been rising recently in the last half-term.



3.2 Elective Home Education

Elective Home Education numbers have risen again, although more slowly than in the same period last year. A number of pupils have returned to school since the beginning of the school year.

ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION												
Current Total on Register = 337 (as at 1 December 2021)												
Yr R	3	Yr 3	17	Yr 6	15	Yr 9	60					
Yr 1	9	Yr 4	23	Yr 7	22	Yr 10	56					
Yr 2	16	Yr 5	18	Yr 8	38	Yr 11	60					
	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Register 2019-20	240	246	251	260	267	266	268	276	276	213	213	225
Register 2020-21	271	301	347	355	356	349	348	347	359	307	312	314
Register 2021-22	318	329	337									
No of children visited	24	12	28									
Enquiries/ No on to Reg	39/36	20/16	28/21									
Returned to school	19	13	4									
Total returned to school 2020-21	9	14	23	28	33	44	51	61	75	82	87	87
Total returned to school 2021-22	19	32	17									
Total visits in academic year 2020-21	0	41	54	77	104	140	166	197	249	293	308	308
Total visits in academic year 2021-22	24	36	64									

3.3 Permanent Exclusions

Permanent Exclusions are higher, marginally, when compared to the same period in the last school year, but are considerably lower than the pre-pandemic years when the figures had been 23 (2017) 13 (2018) 10 (2019).

Total for 2019-20 = 14

Total for 2020-21 = 15

Running Total for 2021-22 = 7

3.4 Education Diversity

The number of pupils in the PRU is much reduced when compared to previous year, with 149 pupils. At the same time in previous years the number was - 241 (2019) 222 (2018) 242 (2017).

Only 76 of the current cohort will move upwards into another year group in Sept 2022.

EDUCATIONAL DIVERSITY
Numbers in Centres as at 1 December 2021

On Roll	PEGASUS KS3	PEGASUS KS4	SPECIALIST	ATHENA	HHM	CHRYSLIS	TOTAL
Yr 11		16 (1)	23(3)	29 (7)	1	0	69 (11)
Yr 10		16 (1)	1	14 (1)	1	0	32 (2)
Yr 9	10			12 (1)	1	4	27 (1)
Yr 8	3			3		3	9
Yr 7				2		1	3
Yr 6	4						4
Yr 5	2						2
Yr 4	2						2
Yr 3							
Yr 2	1						1
R / Yr 1							
TOTAL	22	32 (2)	24 (3)	60(9)	3	8	149 (14)
Capacity	50	70	60	75	15		270

* Numbers in brackets = children with an EHCP

3.5 Ofsted inspections

Holy Family received a Section 8 inspection in the last two weeks before the Christmas break. The report is currently unpublished.

3.6 Opportunity Area

Opportunity Area Y5 programme is ongoing. A successful visit by the Secretary of State for Education was held in the last half-term, showcasing the progress that has been made.

The literacy strategy is being developed further under the guidance of a partnership steering group.

3.7 SEND

The SEND strategy will be renewed and available this term.

The SEND banding consultation process is still ongoing.

The local authority has engaged an additional SEND consultant who was previously Head of Service for SEND in Blackburn. There are now four SEND consultants engaged in work within the service – Head of Service, Senior service manager and two consultants, looking at quality, timeliness, place planning, finance and panel decision making, in preparation for our expected SEND local area inspection.

3.8 Alternative Provision

Blackpool Council's Chef's Academy is now active with six pupils attending.

3.9 Assessment and moderation

Assessment and moderation cycles will be underway in the spring and summer terms as usual with further information about the process to be confirmed this term. Phonics screening checks have been completed in the last school term. This year, 75.5% of Y2 pupils passed the phonics check. This compares to 78.1% in the NW and 79.8% nationally.

These figures are lower than in previous years for Blackpool.

List of acronyms:

NW – North West

PRU – Pupil Referral Unit

SEND – Special Education Needs and Disabilities

Report to: **SCHOOLS FORUM**
Relevant Officer: Darren Maddocks, Senior Accountant
Date of Meeting: 18 January 2022

DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT BUDGET MONITORING 2021-2022

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To report the budget position of the 2021-22 Dedicated Schools Grant as at 30 November 2021 - Appendix 5A. To report the amount of Dedicated Schools Grant Reserves Forecast as at 30 November 2021 – Appendix 5B.

1.2 Action required:

- For information

2.0 Recommendation:

2.1 To note contents of the report.

3.0 Background:

3.1 The monitoring report at Appendix 5A reflects the budgets as approved at the March 2021 Schools Forum.

3.2 Budget monitoring to the end of November 2021 is forecasting a £693k over spend against a deficit budget of £326k. Therefore, the total in-year shortfall is estimated at £1.019m. See further details of the reserves position at paragraphs 3.4 and 3.5 below.

3.3 The major in-year variances are as follows:

- Post 16 placements demand higher than budgeted of £306k.
- Access and Inclusion £105k
 - Increased costs for the Oracle building.
 - Resilience coaches as approved at a previous Schools Forum.
- Special Schools placement growth £154k
- Exceptional Circumstances costs higher than budgeted £175k.

Reserves

3.4 The statement of forecast reserves is set out at Appendix 5B to this report. On this occasion, the local authority is able to account for a transfer into DSG reserves of £1.604m from a provision that has been set aside in the current and previous financial years. The provision was set aside to allow payments to be made to new and growing academies and free schools for the April to August periods, given that the academy financial year differs from the local authority and ESFA financial year. It has now been established that the provision is not

required, as the ESFA has paid those schools in full, including for the period from April to August. The discrepancy in accounting treatment only came to light some time after the provision was first established, and the local authority assumed that the ESFA would recover the funding. However, in November 2021, the Department for Education confirmed that they will not recover the funding, stating that it should be treated as part of DSG.

- 3.5 When this transferred provision is added to the brought forward deficit of £5.766m and the in-year deficit of £1.019m, the resulting forecast DSG deficit by 31 March 2022 reduces to £5.181m. This excludes the maintained schools reserves (£3.919m) and the specific Union Fees reserve (£44k).

List of Appendices

Appendix 5A - Dedicated Schools Grant 2021-2022 Budget Monitoring Report to 30 November 2021.

Appendix 5B - Dedicated Schools Grant Reserves Forecast as at 30 November 2021.

List of Acronyms:

DSG	-	Dedicated Schools Grant
LA	-	Local Authority
HNB	-	High Needs Block
SSA	-	Special Support Assistant
ESFA	-	Education and Skills Funding Agency
SERF	-	Special Education Resource Facility
PRU	-	Pupil Referral Unit

Appendix 5A - Dedicated Schools Grant 2021-2022 Budget Monitoring Report to 30 November 2021

Service	2021/22						Comments
	Budget	In Year Adj.	Recoupment	Adjusted Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	
Schools Block							
Local School Budget							
- Delegated	94,745	0	(74,490)	20,255	20,255	0	
- Third Party & Public Liability Insurance (de-delegated)	0	0	0	0	0	0	
- Union Duties (de-delegated)	19	0	0	19	19	0	
- Free School Meals Eligibility Checks (de-delegated)	18	0	0	18	18	0	
- Education Functions (retained)	164	0	0	164	164	0	
Pupil Growth Contingency	0	0	430	430	430	0	
	94,946	0	(74,060)	20,886	20,886	0	
Central School Services Block							
Servicing of Schools Forum	17	0	0	17	17	0	
Licences & Subscriptions	89	0	0	89	89	0	
School Admissions	160	0	0	160	150	(10)	Staffing Underspend
Contribution to Combined Budgets - Children's Centres	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Former ESG Retained Duties							
- Education Welfare	228	0	0	228	228	0	
- Asset Management	63	0	0	63	63	0	
- Statutory / Regulatory Duties	86	0	0	86	86	0	
Equal Pay	0	0	0	0	39	39	Equal pay Reserve
	643	0	0	643	672	29	
Total Schools Block	95,589	0	(74,060)	21,529	21,558	29	
High Needs Block							
Special Schools							
Place Funding	5,508	0	(3,292)	2,216	2,343	127	Based on Nov Forecast
Top-up Funding	3,918	(6)	0	3,912	3,939	27	Based on Nov Forecast
SERFs							
Place Funding	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Top-up Funding	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Transport	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Resource Provision							
Place Funding	760	0	(267)	493	493	0	
Top-up Funding	585	0	(0)	585	590	5	Underwriting agreed for 2 years
Pupil Referral Units							
Place Funding	1,913	0	0	1,913	1,913	0	
Top-up Funding	1,237	0	0	1,237	1,297	60	Pressure on Income Target due to low KS2 provision numbers
Other AP	100	0	0	100	100	0	
Mainstream Schools							
Top-up Funding	2,353	30	0	2,383	2,356	(27)	
Exceptional Circumstances Funding	165	0	0	165	340	175	Based on Term 1 & 2 Forecast 21/22
Post-16 Education	2,514	(30)	(1,015)	1,468	1,774	306	Higher Recoupment than anticipated & 2 Additional High cost Placements
Out of Borough	4,992	(6)	0	4,986	4,992	6	
Specialist Advisory and Referral Service (SARS)	1,368	0	0	1,368	1,343	(25)	Staffing Underspend
Access and Inclusion	941	0	0	941	1,046	105	Cost of Oracle building and Resilience Coaches for full year plus Mental Health Support
Other High Needs Central Services (Management, Central Support Costs, Admin Support, Pension Top-slice)	772	0	0	772	772	0	
Total High Needs Block	27,126	(12)	(4,574)	22,539	23,298	759	
Early Years Block							
2 Year Old Grants	1,665	0	0	1,665	1,623	(42)	
Early Years Pupil Premium	102	0	0	102	103	1	
3 & 4 Year Old Grants	6,552	0	0	6,552	6,424	(128)	Correction of Year end adjustment figures following updated information from the ESFA
Early Years Inclusion Fund	30	0	0	30	72	42	
Disability Access Fund	50	0	0	50	10	(40)	
Early Years Central Services	384	0	0	384	384	0	
Total Early Years Block	8,783	0	0	8,783	8,616	(167)	
Total Expenditure	131,498	(12)	(78,634)	52,851	53,472	621	
Dedicated Schools Grant Income							
ESFA Free School Income	(130,747)	0	78,385	(52,362)	(52,362)	0	
Transfer from growth contingency	(333)	261	0	(72)	0	72	Lotus School Income slightly less than forecast
	(91)	0	0	(91)	(91)	0	
Total Income	(131,171)	261	78,385	(52,525)	(52,453)	72	
In year (under)/over spend	327	249	(249)	326	1,019	693	

Appendix 5B - Dedicated Schools Grant Reserves Forecast as at 30 November 2021

Description	Brought Forward 1st April 2021	Total Forecast Expenditure FY 2021-22	Forecast Surplus / (Deficit) at 31st March 2022	Comments
DSG Reserve	(5,765,758)	1,019,000	(6,784,758)	
New & Growing Schools	0	(1,604,408)	1,604,408	Provision released into reserves
Maintained School Balances	3,919,362	0	3,919,362	
Union Fees Reserve	44,329	0	44,329	
	(1,802,067)	(585,408)	(1,216,659)	

Report to: **SCHOOLS FORUM**
Relevant Officer: Hilary Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources
Date of Meeting: 18 January 2022

HIGH NEEDS UPDATE

1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To update Schools Forum members on latest developments relevant to the High Needs budget.
- 1.2 Action required – for information (no decision required).

2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 To note the contents of this report.

3.0 Background Information

Medium-term financial plan

- 3.1 As reported in previous meetings, Blackpool, along with many other areas around the country, is experiencing financial pressures on its High Needs Budget. In order to better understand Blackpool's financial position, a medium-term financial plan has been developed to monitor forecast expenditure against the High Needs Budget, and factor in predictions of where savings may be achievable.
- 3.2 Despite additional government funding in recent years, pupil numbers in high cost placements are continuing their upward trend. Latest forecasts show a position where costs in 2021/22 will exceed the High Needs funding allocation by £2.254 million. However, transfers from the Schools Block and the Central Schools Services Block, together with the release of the new and growing schools provision referred to in the earlier report, combine to offset pressures, with the cumulative deficit against Dedicated Schools Grant reducing by a forecast £585k to £5.184 million by March 2022.
- 3.3 Since the last meeting of Schools Forum, the allocation of High Needs funding for 2022/23 has been confirmed. As reported at the last meeting, this will be the third and final year of the announced three-year settlement for schools and High Needs, with the increase for Blackpool equating to almost 11% compared to 2021/22. Furthermore, the Spending Review in October 2021 announced an additional

£1.6 billion for schools and High Needs, on top of previous allocations. The High Needs element has been confirmed as £325 million, of which Blackpool will receive £946k, taking the year-on-year increase to almost £4 million, or 15%.

- 3.4 The medium-term financial plan has been revised to take account of updated forecasts and the funding allocation for 2022/23 (see Appendix 6(a) to this report). Assumptions have been made about inflationary uplifts on relevant expenditure lines in 2022/23, but no assumptions have yet been made about increases to income or costs beyond 2022/23. An assumption has been made about a reduced requirement for Exceptional Circumstances funding in line with the proposal set out at agenda item 7.
- 3.5 As reported previously, given the scale of the deficit and the ongoing pressures on costs, it has been assumed that a 0.5% transfer from Schools Block will continue to be required in future years, although this will be subject to approval by Schools Forum each year. This is therefore shown on the Medium-Term Financial Plan for illustration purposes in each year until 2025/26, when it is anticipated that the direct National Funding Formula may be implemented.
- 3.6 It is pleasing to be able to report that the additional income in 2022/23 and subsequent years, together with the transfer of the provision for new and growing schools, are contributing to a forecast position whereby the cumulative deficit could be recovered within a three-year period, with a surplus reserve predicted by March 2025. It should be noted, however, that the Medium-Term Financial Plan contains a number of ambitious assumptions, so it is vital that concerted efforts continue to be made to contain expenditure.

Further work to address High Needs pressures

- 3.7 The local authority, in conjunction with the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Board, is in the process of drawing up a SEND Improvement Plan. A number of the actions within the plan will have financial implications for the High Needs Block, including, but not limited to, the following:

	Action	Comments
1	Strategic planning for SEND places	Underway in collaboration with special school head teachers. Effective planning will optimise support for pupils in mainstream settings, prioritise places in Blackpool special schools for those pupils who most need them, and reduce placements outside of Blackpool.
2	Assess need for Special School estate to be re-configured / added to in short/longer term	To be assessed based on the outcome of action no.1, taking into account pupils currently in special school places.
3	Review of banding methodology and top-up rates for funding pupils in special and mainstream schools	Changes to proposed methodology being co-produced with schools following consultation in summer 2021. The driver for this review is not to make financial savings, but it is anticipated that the changes will lead to better outcomes for children, greater flexibility for schools, and a more effective use of available resources.
4	Options for funding model in special schools	To be discussed with special schools in early 2022. Minimal impact on High Needs spend anticipated.
5	Review of exceptional circumstances funding for mainstream schools	See separate Schools Forum agenda item. Would result in reduction of c.£240k against forecast 2021/22 spend.
6	Review of Resource Provision	Underway – due for completion spring 2022. Outcome of review will determine future requirements from September 2022 onwards. (NB Boundary School have given notice that they will cease operating the 12 place SEMH provision from end March 2022.)
7	Review of inclusion advisory support to schools	Planned for early 2022.
8	Review of Pupil Referral Unit provision model and funding	Discussions ongoing with Head of Pupil Referral Unit, taking account of reduced number of pupils.
9	Review of post-16 and post-19 provision for SEND students	To be determined.
10	Review the additional financial allocation to schools to avoid Permanent Exclusion	To be discussed with secondary schools and academy trusts.

- 3.8 In the short-term, there is an immediate need for additional space to accommodate pupils currently in Blackpool's special schools. Plans are continuing to create additional capacity at the Oracle building for Park's post-16 students. As well as accommodating the current high number of sixth form students, this solution will give the school the space to be able to accept pupils with a higher level of need than has previously been the case, given that it is now designated to meet the needs of pupils with Global Learning Delay. It is expected that this will contribute to the easing of pressure on demand for places at Highfurlong and Woodlands special schools.

Key performance indicators

- 3.9 At its last meeting, Schools Forum asked that the local authority presented information about quality and outcomes for children in order that the impact of funding decisions could be assessed. To this end, Appendix 6(b) to this report contains a number of financial and non-financial key performance indicators to allow Schools Forum members to understand trends and impact around SEND and inclusion.

List of acronyms:

SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

SEMH - Social, Emotional and Mental Health

List of Appendices:

Appendix 6(a): High Needs Medium-Term Financial Plan

Appendix 6(b): SEND and Inclusion Key Performance Indicators

High Needs Block Medium-Term Financial Plan

Forecasts exclude inflationary impact, and costs and income are stated at 2022/23 levels

Service	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Notes Current Version
	Actual £000s	Actual £000s	Forecast £000s	Budget £000s	Budget £000s	Budget £000s	Budget £000s	
High Needs Block								
Special Schools								
Place Funding	4,879	4,950	5,361	5,894	5,910	5,928	5,957	Highfulong from 85 to 105 from Sep 2021 Lotus 24 from Sep 2020, 40 from Sep 2021, 48 from Sep 2022 Park from 290 to 300 from Sep 2021 Woodlands 120 2021/22 onwards includes £660 per place for TPG/TPECG
Top-up Funding	2,768	3,388	3,959	4,480	4,509	4,524	4,549	Special School top-up: based on Dec 2021 figures
SERFs								
Place Funding	320	260	-	-	-	-	-	Mereside SERFs decommissioned from Nov 2020; Boundary and Bispham Endowed SERFs decommissioned from Dec 2020
Top-up Funding	111	117	-	-	-	-	-	
Transport	54	20	-	-	-	-	-	
Resource Provision								
Place Funding		190	760	519	413	400	400	Mereside and Thames Resource Provisions opening Nov 2020; Boundary, Revoe and Marton Resource Provisions opening Jan 2021. Boundary closing March 2022.
Top-up Funding		234	590	530	572	572	572	
AP Provision								
PRU - Place Funding	2,533	2,208	1,913	1,850	1,850	1,850	1,850	Reduced from 250 places to 200 from September 2020, 185 from September 2021 2021/22 onwards includes £660 per place for TPG/TPECG
PRU Top-up Funding	1,147	1,359	1,297	1,252	1,252	1,252	1,252	Forecast numbers:- Fixed funding agreed based on September 2020 to March 2021 173, April to August 2021 215, September 2021 to March 2022 147, April to August 2022 178. September 2022 onwards - funding to be agreed, forecasts based on 152 pupils. Teachers pay award/superannuation costs and KS2 Engagement Coaches & Therapist in 22/23
Other AP	-	293	100	100	100	100	100	
Mainstream Schools								
Top-up Funding	1,250	1,837	2,326	2,371	2,371	2,371	2,371	1.75% Uplift in 2021/22 & 2% uplift in 2022/23. Future Years' forecast to be reviewed following outcome of banding review.
Exceptional Circumstances Funding	119	193	340	100	100	100	100	Proposed changes to be consider by Schools Forum Jan 2022
Post-16 Education	2,030	2,569	2,819	2,858	2,883	2,883	2,883	3% Uplift in 2022/23 & built in the increase in numbers from 2021/22 onwards
Out of Borough	5,081	5,360	4,998	4,762	4,584	4,648	4,648	Based on 16 year-olds leaving, 40 new placements each year @£30k per place, offset by transfers into Lotus starting in September 2020 and Resource Provision from Apr 21. 3% Uplift in 2022/23.
Specialist Advisory and Referral Service (SARS)	1,028	1,056	1,343	1,380	1,380	1,380	1,380	1.75% Uplift in 2021/22 & 2% 2022/23
Access and Inclusion	508	811	1,046	1,024	820	820	820	1.75% Uplift in 2021/22 & 2% 2022/23
Other High Needs Central Services	767	767	772	772	772	772	772	
(Management, Central Support Costs, Admin Support, Pension Top-slice)								
Total High Needs Block Expenditure	22,594	25,613	27,623	27,891	27,515	27,600	27,654	
High Needs Block allocation	19,496	22,276	25,369	29,207	29,207	29,207	29,207	
In-year (surplus)/deficit - High Needs Block	3,098	3,337	2,254	(1,316)	(1,692)	(1,608)	(1,554)	
Schools Block Transfer	(431)	(109)	(457)	(494)	(494)	(494)	-	
Other Block (Surplus) / Deficit	21	(565)	(2,382)	(512)	(410)	(328)	-	
In Year (Surplus) / Deficit DSG	2,688	2,663	(585)	(2,322)	(2,596)	(2,430)	(1,554)	
Cumulative DSG (Surplus) / Deficit	3,105	5,768	5,184	2,861	265	(2,164)	(3,718)	

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Key Performance Indicators		Indicator Guide	Baseline	Baseline	AY 2020/21	Sep-21	Dec-21	Sept-21 to Dec-21	Notes
			AY 2018/19	AY 2019/20					
1	Percentage of children with EHCPs placed in mainstream Primary Schools	Higher is better	14.9%	17.3%	19.4%	16.7%	17.7%	17.9%	Where a child has attended more than one school in the period, they are counted twice. Figure is likely to increase by the end of the academic year.
2	Percentage of children with EHCPs placed in mainstream Secondary schools	Higher is better	8.2%	9.8%	10.4%	11.0%	11.1%	11.3%	Where a child has attended more than one school in the period, they are counted twice. Figure is likely to increase by the end of the academic year.
3	Number of children on roll in Alternative Provision	Lower is better	157	168	170	141	144	144	AP includes any child that attends any setting that would be included in the AP census
4	Number of children on roll at the Pupil Referral Unit	Lower is better	391	320	268	137	149	171	This includes any child that was at Educational Diversity at any point within the period.
5	Number of children supported in Resourced Provision within mainstream schools	Higher is better	N/A	N/A	24	39	45	45	68 places commissioned
6	Number of children with EHCPs in Independent or Non-Maintained Special Schools	Lower is better	136	139	122	87	95	97	Where a child has attended more than one school in the period, they are counted twice.
7	Percentage of new EHCPs placed in mainstream schools	Higher is better	63.0%	82.2%	87.0%	63%	92%	80%	This includes any child attending a FE College/Sixth Form, a Nursery/Pre School, PRU, Primary School or Secondary School
8	Percentage of new EHCPs placed in Independent or Non-Maintained Special Schools	Lower is better	8.5%	3.2%	3.0%	5.0%	0.0%	3.4%	
9	Percentage of children with EHCPs whose needs are met within Blackpool schools, colleges or learning centres	Higher is better	76.6%	76.8%	81.8%	86.3%	86.4%	86.5%	This includes any child with an EHCP within the period. If a child has attended more than one school, they are included more than once
10	Permanent Exclusion Rate from Primary Schools	Lower is better	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
11	Permanent Exclusion Rate from Secondary Schools	Lower is better	0.9%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%	
12	Fixed Term Exclusion Rate from Primary Schools	Lower is better	2.7%	2.0%	1.1%	0.04%	0.10%	0.50%	
13	Fixed Term Exclusion Rate from Secondary Schools	Lower is better	35.2%	18.4%	17.6%	1.9%	1.0%	6.5%	
14	Number of days lost to exclusion for children with identified SEND	Lower is better	1715	1356.5	1290	145	384.5	54	This includes children with an EHCP and those on SEN Support at the time of their exclusion
15	Number of days lost to exclusion for children with EHCPs	Lower is better	108.5	139.5	128	24.5	37.5	0	
16	Progress made by children with identified SEND and EHCPs - Primary	Higher is better							No progress scores available
17	Progress made by children with identified SEND and EHCPs - Secondary	Higher is better							No progress scores available

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Report to: **SCHOOLS FORUM**
Relevant Officer: Hilary Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources
Date of Meeting: 18 January 2022

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES FUNDING

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To set out the background to exceptional circumstances funding for mainstream schools, and to seek Schools Forum's views on the proposals for changes to the scheme.

1.2 Action required:

- For consultation (local authority decision)

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To support the local authority's proposal to replace the current methodology for allocating Exceptional Circumstances funding to mainstream schools with the alternative methodology described at paragraph 3.8.

2.2 To support the proposed reduction in the budget for Exceptional Circumstances to £100k from 2022/23 (paragraph 3.9).

3.0 Background Information

3.1 In 2013/14, the way that pupils with high cost needs were funded was the subject of fundamental national changes. There was a significant transfer of funding from central Council budgets into mainstream schools' delegated budgets, and a new requirement for those schools to fund the first £6,000 of the costs of meeting the additional educational needs of each pupil. The three elements of funding can be seen in the table below:

Element 1: Core education funding	Mainstream per pupil funding – within core school budgets
Element 2: Additional support funding	Schools to contribute up to first £6,000 of additional support – within schools’ notional SEN budget
Element 3: Top-up funding	Additional “top-up” funding provided by commissioning local authority to meet additional support costs over £6,000 – within local authority’s centrally-held budget

3.2 A school’s notional SEN budget is not separate to its formula funding, but is an assumed element within it. Each local authority sets out in its local formula how the notional SEN budget is calculated. In Blackpool, it is assumed within the following formula factors:

Formula factor	Contribution
Deprivation – FSM	10%
Deprivation – Ever6 FSM	10%
Deprivation – IDACI	50%
Prior attainment	75%
Total	

3.3 It is recognised that on occasion, a school may have a disproportionate number of pupils with more complex needs and may be financially disadvantaged if their level of “element 2” funding is insufficient to cover the number of pupils with high needs. As such the Department for Education allows local authorities to define the circumstances in which additional funding may be provided from the local authority’s High Needs block where it is felt the school’s formula funding does not adequately reflect the number of high cost pupils.

3.4 As previously agreed with Schools Forum, in Blackpool, this additional funding (Exceptional Circumstances funding) is currently calculated by comparing 20% of a school’s Notional SEN Budget with the number of pupils with EHC plans, and funding is allocated if the 20% is insufficient to meet the first £6,000 of additional costs for those pupils. The calculation is carried out three times a year, using a snapshot of pupils on roll at the start of each term.

3.5 The table below contains a summary of the allocation of Exceptional Circumstances funding in recent years:

Financial year	Number of schools receiving funding (out of 39)	Total amount of funding	Average annual amount per funded school
2021/22 (est.)	19	£340k	£18k
2020/21	16	£193k	£3k
2019/20	16	£119k	£7k
2018/19	10	£64k	£6k
2017/18	6	£50k	£8k

3.6 As can be seen, the number of schools receiving funding has increased from six in 2017/18 to 19 so far in 2021/22, with costs rising from £50k to a forecast £340k (against a budget of £165k) during the same period. In a situation where over half of mainstream schools are in receipt of funding, this can no longer be classed as “exceptional circumstances”. It is also felt that many schools do not anticipate this funding, given that a number of queries are received each year asking what the funding relates to.

3.7 Mindful of the pressures on the High Needs Block, the local authority would like to propose a change to the current criteria for accessing funding in order to bring about a return to allocations only in exceptional circumstances. In considering the options for change, account has been taken of practice across other North West authorities relating to this source of funding for schools. The practice varies significantly from one area to another, but out of 13 respondents, the following themes were seen:

- Similar process to Blackpool, with the number of pupils with EHC plans compared to Notional SEN Budget, but at higher levels (between 35% and 100% of Notional SEN Budget compared to 20% in Blackpool).
- Compare percentage of pupils on roll with EHC plans to average for sector, or to average for a school with certain rates of FSM.
- One authority compares the number of all pupils with SEND to the Notional SEN Budget.
- One authority looks at the formula factors attracted by individual pupils with EHC plans.
- One authority does not make any such allocations.
- A number of authorities do not make allocations automatically, but schools have to apply to the local authority who will consider their application

3.8 The proposal for Blackpool is that, from April 2022, the following methodology would apply:

- Schools to apply to the Council’s Head of Business Support and Resources if they believe that they have insufficient “element 2” funding to cover the first £6k of costs for pupils with high needs.

- The Head of Business Support and Resources, in liaison with the Head of SEND, to consider each application on its merits, taking into account the following benchmarks:
 - Number of pupils with EHC plans compared to 35% of Notional SEN Budget;
 - Percentage of pupils on roll with EHC plans compared to national average for sector (primary/secondary);
 - Percentage of pupils on roll with EHC plans compared to average for Blackpool schools with similar rates of FSM;
 - Level of uncommitted reserves (above 8% for primary, and 5% for secondary).
- Should an award be approved, it will be calculated as the difference between £6k for each pupil with an EHC plan and 35% of the Notional SEN Budget.
- Any appeals against decisions to be considered by the Assistant Director School Improvement and SEND.

3.9 Should the 35% threshold have been applied in 2021/22, it would result in an estimated four schools receiving funding of almost £100k in total. It is therefore proposed that the Exceptional Circumstances budget for 2022/23 is reduced from £165k to £100k.

List of acronyms:

SEN – Special Educational Needs

EHC plan – Education Health and Care Plan

FSM – Free School Meals

SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Report to: **SCHOOLS FORUM**
Relevant Officer: Hilary Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources
Date of Meeting: 18 January 2022

DRAFT DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT BUDGET 2022/23

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To share with Schools Forum the provisional estimates for the use of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) in 2022/23.

1.2 Action required – for consultation (local authority decision).

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To note the provisional estimates for future use of DSG.

3.0 Background Information

3.1 On 16 December 2021, the Department for Education issued the provisional allocations of DSG for 2022/23. Blackpool's allocations, shown alongside the original allocations for 2021/22, are as follows:

	2022/23	2021/22	Increase	Increase
	£m	£m	£m	%
Schools Block	98.818	95.312	3.506	3.7
Central Schools Services Block	1.196	1.283	-0.087	-6.8
High Needs Block	28.261	25.369	2.892	11.4
Early Years Block	8.649	8.783	-0.134	-1.5
Total	136.924	130.747	6.177	4.7

3.2 In addition to the DSG covered by the table above, the Government also announced an extra £1.6 million for schools and High Needs in its Spending Review of October 2021. The allocation for Blackpool schools has been provisionally set at just over £3 million, taking the increase to £6.5 million, which equates to 6.9% compared to 2021/22. This additional funding will be allocated directly to schools as a supplementary grant, with school-level funding amounts confirmed in spring 2022. Blackpool will also receive an additional £946k of High Needs funding, taking the year-on-year increase to £3.8 million, or 15.1%.

3.3 The Appendix 8a to this report sets out the provisional forecast expenditure against DSG for 2022/23. Final proposals for the allocation of funding will be brought to the

meeting of Schools Forum in March 2022, taking into account discussions arising at this meeting, as well as final estimates of expenditure. For the purpose of budget setting, the additional £3 million that schools will receive directly via the supplementary grant has been excluded, but the additional £946k of High Needs funding has been included.

- 3.4 As per the previous report, the Local Authority is proposing to add £90k to the Schools Block total of £98.8 million from the growth fund contingency, and also make a transfer of 0.5% to the High Needs Block, which amounts to £494k. The net figure will be allocated to schools via the local school funding formula.
- 3.5 The Central Schools Services Block has decreased in total by £87k. This is made up of an increase of £41k (6.3%) on the main block funding, and a decrease of £128k (20%) on the historic commitments funding. There is a balance of £37k that requires allocating within this Block, and updated proposals will be brought to the next Schools Forum meeting in March 2021. Given that the Children's Centre review has concluded, the £512k allocation in respect of historic commitments will be used to help offset the cumulative deficit on DSG.
- 3.6 The total High Needs block increase of £3.8 million, including additional Spending Review monies, will have a significant impact on the ongoing pressures on costs for pupils with additional needs. As per the High Needs update considered in the earlier agenda item, the estimated costs of the High Needs budget should now be able to be contained within the annual funding allocation. Subject to cost estimates being updated for the March 2022 Schools Forum, there is potential for a contribution of £1.3 million (on top of the £494k transfer from Schools Block) to be made from the High Needs Block towards offsetting the cumulative deficit on DSG.
- 3.7 It is proposed that the Early Years Block funding is fully allocated to Early Years provision and services. In 2022/23, the hourly funding rate for 3 and 4 year olds will increase by 17p to 4.67 (3.8%), and the rate for 2 year olds will increase by 21p to £5.57 (3.9%). The per pupil amount for Early Years Pupil Premium is set to increase by 7p per hour to 60p (13.2%), and the Disability Access Fund will increase by £185 per pupil to £800 (30.1%). The number of 3 and 4 year olds accessing the free entitlement has reduced by around 3.3%, with the number of 2 year olds reducing by 13.6%. The Early Years Provider Strategy Group will meet in the New Year to consider proposed funding rates for Blackpool providers, as well as the level required for the Early Years Inclusion Fund.
- 3.8 Taking into account the information above, it is currently estimated that the in-year surplus on DSG could amount to £2.3 million, which would reduce the forecast cumulative deficit at 31 March 2023 to £4.5 million.

List of acronyms:

DSG – Dedicated Schools Grant

List of Appendices:

Appendix 8a – Draft DSG Budget 2022/23

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	2022/23	2021/22	Movement	% Change	Notes
Total	98,413,764	94,945,579	3,468,185	3.7%	
Schools Block					
Local Schools Budget	98,413,764	94,745,090	3,668,674		Includes £494k transfer to HN
- Union Duties (de-delegated)		18,938	(18,938)		To be confirmed
- Free School Meals Eligibility Checks (de-delegated)		17,875	(17,875)		To be confirmed
- School Improvement		-	-		To be confirmed
- Education Functions (retained)		163,676	(163,676)		To be confirmed
Total	98,413,764	94,945,579	3,468,185	3.7%	
Central Schools Services Block					
Servicing of Schools Forum	16,771	16,771	-	0.0%	
Licences & Subscriptions	93,018	89,217	3,801	4.3%	
School Admissions	159,962	159,962	-	0.0%	
Former ESG retained duties					
- Education Welfare	228,085	228,085	-	0.0%	
- Asset Management	63,282	63,282	-	0.0%	
- Statutory / Regulatory duties	86,091	86,091	-	0.0%	
Balance to be re-allocated	36,915	-	36,915	-	
Total	684,124	643,408	40,716	6.3%	
High Needs Block					
Special Schools					
Place Funding	5,943,333	5,507,500	435,833	7.9%	
Top-up Funding	4,479,785	3,917,947	561,838	14.3%	
Total Special Schools	10,423,118	9,425,447	997,671	10.6%	
Resource Provision					
Place Funding	518,667	760,000	(241,333)		Closure of Boundary / Inclusion of
Top-up Funding	530,183	585,180	(54,997)		part-funding in school budgets
Total Resource Provision	1,048,850	1,345,180	(296,330)		
Alternative Provision					
Place Funding	1,850,000	1,912,500	(62,500)	-3.3%	
Top-up Funding	1,251,650	1,237,418	14,232	1.2%	
Other AP Provision	100,000	100,000	-	0.0%	
Total Alternative Provision	3,201,650	3,249,918	(48,268)	-1.5%	
Mainstream Schools					
Top-up Funding	2,370,745	2,352,815	17,930	0.8%	
Exceptional Circumstances Funding	100,000	165,175	(65,175)	-39.5%	Separate item on agenda
Total top-up for Mainstream Schools	2,470,745	2,517,990	(47,245)	-1.9%	
Post-16 Education	2,857,526	2,514,294	343,232	13.7%	
Out of Borough	4,761,788	4,993,881	(232,093)	-4.6%	
Specialist Advisory and Referral Service (SARS)	1,380,304	1,367,612	12,692	0.9%	
Access and Inclusion	1,024,048	940,541	83,507	8.9%	
Other High Needs Central Services (Management, Central Support Costs, Admin Support, Pension Top-slice)	771,865	771,865	-	0.0%	
Total	27,939,894	27,126,728	813,166	3.0%	
Early Years Block					
2 Year Old Grants	1,549,669	1,664,616	(114,947)	-6.9%	
3 & 4 Year Old Grants	6,929,326	6,551,647	377,679	5.8%	
Early Years Pupil Premium	100,083	102,171	(2,088)	-2.0%	
Disability Access Fund	69,600	50,430	19,170	38.0%	
Early Years Inclusion Fund		30,000	(30,000)	-100.0%	To be confirmed
Other Early Years Central Services (Management, Central Support Costs, Training, Admin Support, Pension Top-slice)		383,918	(383,918)	-100.0%	To be confirmed
Total	8,648,678	8,782,782	(134,104)	-1.5%	
Total	135,686,460	131,498,497	4,187,963	3.2%	
DSG	(137,870,110)	(130,747,483)	(7,122,627)	5.4%	
ESFA special free school funding	(49,333)	(333,333)	284,000		
Transfer from growth contingency	(89,767)	(90,729)	962		
Dedicated Schools Grant Allocations	(138,009,210)	(131,171,545)	(6,837,665)		
Deficit / (Surplus)	(2,322,750)	326,952	(2,649,702)		

	Schools Block	Central Schools Services Block	High Needs Block	Early Years Block	Total
Original DSG Allocations 2022/23	98,817,997	1,196,124	28,261,139	8,648,678	136,923,938
Additional allocation - Spending Review 2021	-	-	946,172	-	946,172
Proposed transfers between blocks	(494,000)	-	494,000	-	-
ESFA special free school funding	-	-	49,333	-	49,333
Transfer from growth contingency	89,767	-	-	-	89,767
	98,413,764	1,196,124	29,750,644	8,648,678	138,009,210
Estimated spend as above	98,413,764	684,124	27,939,894	8,648,678	135,686,460
Reduction/(addition) to cumulative DSG deficit	-	512,000	1,810,750	-	2,322,750

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Report to: **SCHOOLS FORUM**
Relevant Officer: Hilary Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources
Date of Meeting: 18 January 2022

SCHOOLS FUNDING FORMULA 2022/23 PROPOSALS

1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To consider the local authority's proposal for the schools funding formula for 2022/23.
- 1.2 To note the estimated allocations of the Schools Supplementary Grant 2022/23 for schools for pupils aged between five and 16.
- 1.3 Action required – for consultation (local authority decision); voting restricted to school and Early Years representatives.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 To agree to the local authority's proposal for the allocation of school funding in 2022/23.
- 2.2 To note the estimated allocations of the Schools Supplementary Grant 2022/23 for schools for pupils aged between five and 16.

3.0 Background Information

- 3.1 At its meeting of 12 October 2021, Schools Forum agreed to the following principles for the 2022/23 schools funding formula:
 - Continue to apply the National Funding Formula unit values;
 - Set a minimum funding guarantee of 2% per pupil funding;
 - Transfer 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block by way of a reduction to the Basic Entitlement;
 - Transfer any surplus from the growth funding allocation into the growth funding contingency.
- 3.2 The Minimum Per Pupil Funding levels, which are mandatory in local funding formulae, have increased to £4,265 for primary schools, and £5,525 for secondary schools.
- 3.3 On 16 December 2021, the Department for Education (DfE) announced allocations of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2022/23. Based on a Pupil Unit of Funding of £4,747 and a Secondary Unit of Funding of £6,415, together with pupil numbers

taken from the October 2021 school census, Blackpool's Schools Block of funding is £98.818 million, which includes growth funding of £674k.

- 3.4 The growth funding of £674k compares to £645k in 2021/22. It is a formulaic allocation based on changes in pupil numbers across all schools in the town, and is used to fund the pupils in new and/or growing schools who would otherwise not attract allocations through the lagged funding system. Currently in Blackpool, the only new and growing school is Armfield Academy. The requirement to fund the estimated new pupils from September 2022 to March 2023 is £770k, leaving a gap of £96k compared to the available growth funding. A growth fund contingency of £90k set aside from previous year's growth funding can be brought into the formula to practically bridge the gap. The 2022 intake at Armfield will see the secondary phase filled up, with only two further years of new year groups to follow in the primary phase. This means that the requirement for growth funding for Armfield in 2023/24 and 2024/25 will be much reduced.
- 3.5 Schools Forum agreed at its October 2021 meeting to make a 0.5% transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block, and to do this by way of a reduction to the Basic Entitlement factor values. 0.5% of the Schools Block equates to £494k, and the effect on the Basic Entitlement values is shown in the table below:

Description	Amount Per Pupil National Formula Values	Amount Per Pupil Local Formula Values	Difference Per Pupil	% Change
Primary (Years R-6)	£3,217	£3,183	£34	1.06%
Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9)	£4,536	£4,488	£48	1.06%
Key Stage 4 (Years 10-11)	£5,112	£5,058	£54	1.06%

- 3.6 The proforma showing full details of Blackpool's proposed formula is contained in Appendix 9(a) to this report.

Schools Supplementary Grant 2022/23

- 3.7 The autumn 2021 spending review confirmed £1.6 billion funding for schools and High Needs for the 2022/23 financial year, above the previous settlement for that year. Mainstream schools will be allocated £1.2 billion of this additional funding, to provide support for the costs of the Health and Social Care Levy and wider costs, with the remainder increasing allocations for High Needs.
- 3.8 The funding will be allocated through the schools supplementary grant from April 2022, before being incorporated into the schools National Funding Formula. The grant will continue for the period April to August 2023 for academies.

3.9 The schools supplementary grant will only be payable to public sector employers. This means that further education colleges, sixth form colleges, independent learning providers, as well as private and voluntary sector early years providers will not be eligible to receive this funding.

3.10 The allocations will be based on the following methodology:

Early years (January 2022 pupil data)

The base per-pupil funding rate for early years provision in schools, and for maintained nursery schools, will be £24 per pupil.

5 to 16 schools (October 2021 pupil data)

- Basic per-pupil rate of £97 for primary pupils
- Basic per-pupil rate of £137 for key stage 3 pupils
- Basic per-pupil rate of £155 for key stage 4 pupils
- Lump sum of £3,680
- FSM6 per-pupil rate of £85 per eligible primary pupil
- FSM6 per-pupil rate of £124 per eligible secondary pupil

Post-16 (student data from the 2022/23 16 to 19 allocations)

The base per-student funding rate for 16-19 provision in schools, including 16 to 19 schools and academies, will be £35 per student.

3.11 Final allocations will be confirmed and paid in spring 2022. Given that the October 2021 pupil data is now available, an estimate of the allocation for 5 to 16 schools can be found at Appendix 9(b), totalling just over £3 million

List of acronyms:

DfE Department for Education

DSG Dedicated Schools Grant

FSM6 – Ever6 Free School Meals

List of Appendices:

Appendix 9(a) – Blackpool Schools Funding Formula Proforma 2022/23

Appendix 9(b) – Schools Supplementary Grant 2022/23 – estimate of allocations to schools with pupils aged 5 to 16

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Local Authority Funding Reform Profile										
LA Name:		Blackpool								
LA Number:		890								
Primary minimum per pupil funding level	Secondary (S23 only) minimum per pupil funding level	Secondary (S24 only) minimum per pupil funding level	Secondary minimum per pupil funding level		Disproportion number where alternative MPFF values are used					
£4,285	£5,521.00	£5,881.00	£5,525.00							
Pupil Led Factors										
Reception uplift		No		Pupil Units		0.00				
Description	Amount per pupil	Pupil Units		Sub Total	Total	Proportion of total pre MPFF funding (%)	Notional SEN (%)			
1) Basic Entitlement										
Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AMPU)										
Primary (Years 0-6)	£3,583.00	11,671.00		£37,246,799	£98,611,775	37.80%				
Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9)	£4,488.00	4,054.33		£18,195,848		18.50%				
Key Stage 4 (Years 10-11)	£5,058.00	2,623.00		£13,267,134		13.50%				
Description	Primary amount per pupil	Secondary amount per pupil	Eligible proportion of primary NOR	Eligible proportion of secondary NOR	Sub Total	Total	Proportion of total pre MPFF funding (%)	Primary Notional SEN (%)	Secondary Notional SEN (%)	
2) Deprivation										
FSM	£470.00	£470.00	4,506.53	2,814.86	£3,441,056	£16,687,542	16.50%	10.00%	10.00%	
FSM6	£590.00	£885.00	4,728.83	3,384.02	£7,717,188			10.00%	10.00%	
ESAC Band F	£220.00	£300.00	1,244.68	718.41	£501,722			30.00%	30.00%	
ESAC Band E	£270.00	£425.00	1,430.13	817.63	£730,925			50.00%	50.00%	
ESAC Band D	£420.00	£565.00	413.09	249.42	£321,903			50.00%	50.00%	
ESAC Band C	£460.00	£600.00	1,037.47	596.01	£864,644			50.00%	50.00%	
ESAC Band B	£490.00	£700.00	1,372.88	813.75	£1,234,850			50.00%	50.00%	
ESAC Band A	£840.00	£980.00	2,885.23	1,703.96	£3,250,296			50.00%	50.00%	
3) Looked After Children (LAC)										
LAC March 19	£0.00		245.21		£0		0.00%			
4) English as an Additional Language (EAL)										
EAL 3 Primary	£565.00	555.46		£313,832	£585,610	0.42%				
EAL 3 Secondary	£1,530.00		61.26				£98,728			
5) Mobility										
Pupils starting school outside of normal entry dates	£925.00	£1,330.00		158.80	23.43	£176,090	0.18%			
Description	Weighting	Amount per pupil (primary or secondary respectively)	Percentage of eligible pupils	Eligible proportion of primary and secondary NOR respectively	Sub Total	Total	Proportion of total pre MPFF funding (%)	Primary Notional SEN (%)	Secondary Notional SEN (%)	
6) Low prior attainment										
Primary low prior attainment		£1,130.00	22.30%	3,746.80	£4,239,882	£6,634,450	6.97%	75.00%		
Secondary low prior attainment (year 9)	64.52%		21.96%							
Secondary low prior attainment (year 10)	64.52%		22.00%							
Secondary low prior attainment (year 11)	64.52%	£1,710.00	22.30%	1,520.80	£2,603,568					75.00%
Secondary low prior attainment (year 12)	63.59%		24.40%							
Secondary low prior attainment (year 13)	58.02%		28.40%							
Other Factors										
Factor	Lump Sum per Primary School (£)	Lump Sum per Secondary School (£)	Lump Sum per Middle School (£)	Lump Sum per All-through School (£)	Total (£)	Proportion of total pre MPFF funding (%)	Notional SEN (%)			
7) Lump Sum	£121,300.00	£121,300.00			£4,790,700	4.82%				
8) Sparsity factor	£55,000.00	£80,000.00			£0	0.00%				
From 46 to 49 are populated with the NFF methodology, please leave this as is if you wish to follow the NFF. As per the Operational Guidance, the distance thresholds can be increased or the year group size thresholds decreased and the distance threshold taper is optional. An alternative method of allocation to the NFF's average year group size taper can be chosen: the continuous taper (Tapered) or fixed sum (Fixed). Examples of each are provided in the Operational Guidance.										
Primary distance threshold (miles)	Primary pupil number average year group threshold		Apply primary distance taper			NFF, tapered or fixed sparsity primary lump sum?	Fixed			
Secondary distance threshold (miles)	Secondary pupil number average year group threshold		Apply secondary distance taper			NFF, tapered or fixed sparsity secondary lump sum?	Fixed			
Middle schools distance threshold (miles)	Middle school pupil number average year group threshold		Apply middle school distance taper			NFF, tapered or fixed sparsity middle school lump sum?	Fixed			
All-through schools distance threshold (miles)	All-through pupil number average year group threshold		Apply all-through distance taper			NFF, tapered or fixed sparsity all-through lump sum?	Fixed			
9) Fringe Payments					£0	0.00%				
10) Split Sites					£0	0.00%				
11) Rates					£619,772	0.62%				
12) PFI funding					£161,471	0.17%				
13) Exceptional circumstances (can only be used with prior agreement of ESFA)										
Exceptional Circumstance					Total (£)	Proportion of total pre MPFF funding (%)	Notional SEN (%)			
Additional lump sum for schools amalgamated during PFI-22					£0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%		
Additional sparsity lump sum for small schools					£0	0.00%				
Exceptional Circumstancea					£0	0.00%				
Exceptional Circumstanceb					£0	0.00%				
Exceptional Circumstancec					£0	0.00%				
Exceptional Circumstanced					£0	0.00%				
Exceptional Circumstancee					£0	0.00%				
Exceptional Circumstancef					£0	0.00%				
Exceptional Circumstanceg					£0	0.00%				
Total Funding for Schools Block Formula (including minimum per pupil funding level and MPFF Funding Total)					£97,885,230	99.50%				
14) Additional funding to meet minimum per pupil funding level					£490,418	0.50%				
Total Funding for Schools Block Formula (including MPFF Funding Total)					£98,375,738	100.00%				
15) Minimum Funding Guarantee										
					2.00%	£332,407				
Where a value less than 0.5% or greater than 2% has been entered please provide the disproportion reference number authorising the value										
Apply capping and scaling factors? (gains may be capped above a specific ceiling and/or scaled)										
No										
Capping Factor (%)					Scaling Factor (%)					
Total deduction if capping and scaling factors are applied					£0					
					Total (£)	Proportion of Total funding (%)	Notional SEN (%)			
MPFF Net Total Funding (MPFF + deduction from capping and scaling)					£332,407	0.34%				
Total Funding for Schools Block Formula					£98,408,145		£9,481,511			
High Needs threshold (only fill in if, exceptionally, a high needs threshold different from £5,000 has been approved)										
Additional funding from the High needs budget										
Growth fund (if applicable)										
Falling rolls fund (if applicable)										
Other Adjustment to 22-23 Budget Share					£0					
Total Funding for Schools Block Formula (including growth and falling rolls funding)					£98,408,145					
% Distributed through Basic Entitlement					69.95%					
% Pupil Led Funding					30.05%					
Primary: Secondary Ratio					1 :	1.38				
22-23 NFF NDR allocation					£540,172					
Total Funding for Schools Block Formula (including growth and falling rolls funding) after deduction of 22-23 NFF NDR allocation					£97,867,973					

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	NOR Primary	£ per pupil	NOR KS3	£ per pupil	NOR KS4	£ per pupil	FSM6 Primary	£ per pupil	FSM6 Secondary	£ per pupil	Lump sum per school	Estimated allocation
Layton Primary School	618	97	0	137	0	155	279	85	0	124	3680	87341
Kincraig Primary School	164	97	0	137	0	155	85	85	0	124	3680	26813
Boundary Primary School	357	97	0	137	0	155	251	85	0	124	3680	59644
Bispham Endowed Church of England Primary School	341	97	0	137	0	155	140	85	0	124	3680	48657
Blackpool St Nicholas CofE Primary School	414	97	0	137	0	155	69	85	0	124	3680	49703
Blackpool St John's Church of England Primary School	207	97	0	137	0	155	102	85	0	124	3680	32429
Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Primary School	199	97	0	137	0	155	23	85	0	124	3680	24938
St John Vianney's Catholic Primary School	416	97	0	137	0	155	96	85	0	124	3680	52192
St Kentigern's Catholic Primary School	210	97	0	137	0	155	47	85	0	124	3680	28045
Holy Family Catholic Primary School	207	97	0	137	0	155	40	85	0	124	3680	27159
St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School	203	97	0	137	0	155	33	85	0	124	3680	26176
St Teresa's Catholic Primary School	199	97	0	137	0	155	42	85	0	124	3680	26553
Moor Park Primary School	387	97	0	137	0	155	152	85	0	124	3680	54139
Stanley Primary School	563	97	0	137	0	155	169	85	0	124	3680	72656
Revoe Learning Academy	403	97	0	137	0	155	242	85	0	124	3680	63341
St Cuthbert's Catholic Academy	193	97	0	137	0	155	89	85	0	124	3680	29966
Marton Primary Academy and Nursery	271	97	0	137	0	155	131	85	0	124	3680	41102
Blackpool Gateway Academy	332	97	0	137	0	155	212	85	0	124	3680	53904
Roseacre Primary Academy	585	97	0	137	0	155	192	85	0	124	3680	76745
Westminster Primary Academy	378	97	0	137	0	155	286	85	0	124	3680	64656
Hawes Side Academy	538	97	0	137	0	155	194	85	0	124	3680	72356
Norbreck Primary Academy	603	97	0	137	0	155	112	85	0	124	3680	71691
Anchorholme Primary Academy	610	97	0	137	0	155	108	85	0	124	3680	72030
Thames Primary Academy	377	97	0	137	0	155	230	85	0	124	3680	59799
Waterloo Primary Academy	576	97	0	137	0	155	322	85	0	124	3680	86922
Westcliff Primary Academy	207	97	0	137	0	155	37	85	0	124	3680	26904
Mereside Primary Academy	256	97	0	137	0	155	172	85	0	124	3680	43132
Baines' Endowed Church of England Primary Academy	468	97	0	137	0	155	175	85	0	124	3680	63951
Christ The King Catholic Academy	213	97	0	137	0	155	86	85	0	124	3680	31651
Devonshire Primary Academy	406	97	0	137	0	155	271	85	0	124	3680	66097
Langdale Free School	93	97	0	137	0	155	28	85	0	124	3680	15081
South Shore Academy	0	97	503	137	270	155	0	85	548	124	3680	182393
Blackpool Aspire Academy	0	97	511	137	295	155	0	85	525	124	3680	184512
Highfield Leadership Academy	0	97	288	137	260	155	0	85	329	124	3680	124232
Montgomery Academy	0	97	725	137	446	155	0	85	485	124	3680	232275
St George's School A Church of England Academy	0	97	630	137	385	155	0	85	391	124	3680	198149
St Mary's Catholic Academy	0	97	631	137	411	155	0	85	370	124	3680	199712
Unity Academy Blackpool	407	97	355	137	235	155	238	85	422	124	3680	200777
Armfield Academy	235	97	479	137	160	155	66	85	274	124	3680	156484

3034307

DfE provisional allocation
 Difference

3035204

897

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Report to: **SCHOOLS FORUM**
Relevant Officer: Hilary Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources
Date of Meeting: 18 January 2022

DE-DELEGATION OF SERVICES AND RETENTION OF FUNDING FOR EDUCATION FUNCTIONS 2022/23

1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 Approval is sought for the de-delegation of services and the retention of funding for Education Functions.
- 1.2 Action required - for approval (Schools Forum decision by relevant members, as set out in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.4 below).

2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 The local authority recommends that de delegation is approved by maintained primary school representatives for 2022/23 in respect of Free School Meal (FSM) Eligibility Checks (paragraphs 3.6 to 3.9).
- 2.2 The local authority recommends that de delegation is approved by maintained primary school representatives for 2022/23 in respect of Union Duties (paragraphs 3.10 to 3.12).
- 2.3 The local authority recommends that de delegation is approved by maintained primary school representatives for 2022/23 in respect of School Improvement (paragraphs 3.13 to 3.18).
- 2.4 Maintained school representatives, including primary, special and pupil referral unit members, are asked to approve an amount to be retained from school budgets in respect of education functions, previously funded by the Education Services Grant (paragraphs 3.19 to 3.25).

3.0 Background Information

De-delegation of Services

- 3.1 The Schools Finance Regulations that came into effect in April 2013 require the delegation to schools of the entirety of the Schools Block funding, subject to certain prescribed exceptions.
- 3.2 Maintained, mainstream schools may choose, by vote at Schools Forum, to de-delegate some of these prescribed elements of funding to be managed centrally by the local authority on behalf of them. Delegation means the allocation of funding to schools through the local schools funding formula. De-delegation means the

retention by the local authority of funding that would otherwise be delegated to schools.

- 3.3 Decisions are to be made by primary and secondary phases separately, and voting is restricted to school members representing those phases. De-delegation does not apply to academies, which could instead choose to buy into local authority services. It also does not apply to special schools or Pupil Referral Units, as they no longer receive delegated budgets in the same way that mainstream schools do, but they will be able to access any collective arrangements using their funding.
- 3.4 The difference between de-delegation and buy back is that, with de-delegation, all maintained schools in that phase will not receive an element of funding in their delegated budgets, and the local authority will hold the de-delegated budgets centrally and provide services on behalf of all schools. If de-delegation is not voted for, all schools will receive the full amount of funding, and may choose, on a school-by-school basis, how to fund those responsibilities. As with any item of expenditure, should Schools Forum not vote for de-delegation, groups of schools could still choose to combine their resources in order to achieve best value, including buying services back from the local authority where available.
- 3.5 Maintained schools are asked to vote to de-delegate the following services in 2022/23:
- a) Free School Meal eligibility checks
 - b) Union duties
 - c) School improvement

Free School Meal eligibility checks

- 3.6 This service is carried out by the Council's Benefits Team, who access DWP and Council benefits information in order to determine eligibility for free school meals. Eligibility is reviewed on a weekly basis and communicated to schools. The full FSM eligibility checking service specification includes:
- Establishing entitlement to FSM for each pupil via Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction Scheme claims for parents/guardians;
 - Processing of Free School Meal applications for parents who are not entitled to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction, including those in receipt of Universal Credit, by completion of the Free School Meal application form;
 - Processing of claims relating to FSM entitlement, including collection and verification of evidence when required, notification of entitlement to parent/guardian/school, and maintenance of records, within 10 working days of receipt of all information;
 - Provision of a comprehensive enquiry and resolution service for the school and parents or guardians, to be resolved within five working days;
 - Maximisation of income available to parents by awarding Free School Meals in all appropriate cases;

- Production and issue of standard weekly reports to the school;
- Notification to parent/guardian when entitlement ceases due to a change of circumstances, within 10 working days of receipt of all information;
- Processing changes of address/school;
- Provide information as required to assist the school in their reconciliation of data and quarterly census returns;
- Provision of guidance to the school as and when required;
- Secure storage of data to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

3.7 Schools are not permitted to access the benefits information directly from the relevant agencies, and therefore a school-based solution would necessitate the regular provision by parents of benefits entitlement, significant administrative resource for schools, as well as the development of technical expertise. For this reason, the local authority would strongly advise the continued de-delegation of funding for this purpose.

3.8 In order to fund the current level of service as described in paragraph 3.6, the de-delegation amount per Free School Meal pupil will be set at £13.23 in 2022/23, compared to £13.00 in 2021/22. The increase equates to 1.75% which is in line with the anticipated local government pay award for 2021/22.

3.9 **Vote** – do maintained mainstream primary school members agree to the continued de-delegation of funding for free school meal eligibility checks at the rate of £13.23 per free school meal pupil?

Union duties

3.10 Historically, this budget has been held centrally in order to fund the facilities time of the teaching unions. Agreement is reached between unions through the Professional Teaching Association and Unison regarding the number of days that each union can claim from the central pot.

3.11 In October 2020 it was agreed at Schools Forum that Unison will now be included within the collective funding arrangements. This means that members of both teaching and non-teaching unions can be supported by local representatives during the school day. At the same time, Schools Forum agreed to a five-year plan for the use of accumulated reserves, which set out the per pupil rate payable by schools, as well as the day rate for union cover. In line with the agreed five-year plan, the de-delegation amount for 2022/23 will increase by 20p per pupil to £4.40 compared to £4.20 per pupil de-delegated in 2021/22.

3.12 **Vote** – do maintained mainstream primary school members agree to the continued de-delegation of funding for union duties at the rate of £4.40 per pupil?

School improvement

- 3.13 In October 2021, the Department for Education (DfE) launched a consultation: *Reforming how local authorities' school improvement functions are funded*. In the consultation, the DfE proposed to reduce the LA School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant by half in 2022/23, and remove it completely from April 2023. Given the small number of local authority schools, Blackpool has historically received the minimum grant level of £50k each year.
- 3.14 The grant has been provided to local authorities since 2017 to enable them to fulfil their core school improvement responsibilities in respect of maintained schools. These core functions are set out in Part 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and in the Schools Causing Concern guidance, which provide the powers for local authorities to warn and intervene in schools causing concern, through issuing warning notices setting out actions governing bodies are to take, establishing interim executive boards, or suspending the right to delegated budgets.
- 3.15 The funding available to local authorities to meet their statutory duties would need to be replaced by de-delegation of funding from maintained schools, or by setting up a traded service. If maintained schools do not support de-delegation at Schools Forum, the local authority would have the option to seek Secretary of State approval to deduct the funding from schools.
- 3.16 The rationale for the DfE's proposal to remove the grant lies in their belief that local authorities use the grant predominantly on early challenge and support in cases of potential underperformance, rather than for formal intervention powers. The DfE therefore proposes that funding for these activities is replaced by de-delegation from maintained school budgets or buy-back from a traded service, arguing that academies in trusts have their funding reduced in respect of school improvement through the MAT top-slice, and stand-alone academies have to pay for it from their school budgets.
- 3.17 The consultation closed in November, but the outcome has not yet been published. If the DfE takes forward its plans as proposed, it is assumed that Blackpool's grant will reduce to £25k in 2022/23 before being removed completely from 2023/24. A vote on de-delegation is therefore required in anticipation of the outcome of the consultation. In order to replace the lost income of £25k in 2022/23, and continue the same level of support for maintained schools, de-delegation of £5.58 per pupil would be required.
- 3.18 **Vote** – subject to the outcome of the DfE's consultation on the LA School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant, do maintained mainstream primary school members agree to the de-delegation of funding for school improvement services at the rate of £5.58 per pupil?

Education Functions

- 3.19 In the 2015 Spending Review, the Government announced that it would be cutting £600m from the Education Services Grant (ESG), a funding stream paid to local authorities outside of the local government finance settlement in respect of certain education functions.
- 3.20 There were two elements of ESG – the retained grant, and the general grant. Retained ESG was only paid to local authorities, and funded the responsibilities they hold for all pupils in the area, regardless of whether they are educated in maintained or academy schools. The general element of ESG was paid to local authorities in respect of the pupils in maintained schools. It was also paid separately to each academy in respect of the pupils in their own school.
- 3.21 In November 2016, details were released of how the £600m of savings would be realised. The retained element of ESG was transferred into Dedicated Schools Grant from April 2017, and has formed part of the Central Schools Services Block since April 2018. The general element of the grant ended in September 2017 for both local authorities and academies.
- 3.22 Despite the removal of the general element of the grant, the local authority remains responsible for providing the functions that were covered by it on behalf of its maintained schools. Financial regulations allow for funding to be retained from the budgets of maintained schools in order to cover the costs.
- 3.23 In previous years, Schools Forum agreed to allow the local authority to retain funding from maintained school budgets in order to cover specific support that is provided to maintained schools (but not to academies) at no cost. The education functions covered by the retention in respect of Blackpool’s maintained schools include:
- Budgeting, accounting and finance functions, e.g. production of statement of accounts, year-end audit, VAT advice, treasury management
 - Production of and monitoring of compliance with the Scheme for Financing Schools
 - Internal audit compliance visits
 - Administration of local government and teachers’ pension schemes
 - Provision of information to or at the request of the Crown
 - Functions under the Equality Act 2010
 - Asset management, including condition surveys to ensure assets are in suitable state of repair
 - Monitoring of National Curriculum assessments
- 3.24 The 2022/23 amount has been calculated at £36.94 per pupil, which equates to a 1.75% increase on the 2021/22 amount of £36.30, in line with the anticipated local government pay award for 2021/22.

- 3.25 **Vote** – do maintained school members, including primary, special and pupil referral unit members, agree to the amount of £36.94 per pupil being retained from school budgets for the purpose of funding education functions?

List of acronyms:

FSM – Free School Meals

DWP – Department for Work and Pensions

GDPR – General Data Protection Regulations

DfE – Department for Education

LA – Local Authority

MAT – Multi-Academy Trust

ESG – Education Services Grant

VAT – Value Added Tax

Report to: **SCHOOLS FORUM**
Relevant Officer: Hilary Wood, Head of Business support and Resources
Date of Meeting: 18 January 2022

COVID FUNDING UPDATE

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To inform Schools Forum of updates since the last meeting regarding financial support provided in the education sector during the COVID outbreak.

1.2 Action required – for information.

2.0 Recommendations:

2.1 To note the contents of the report.

3.0 Background Information:

3.1 Updates on COVID financial support for the education sector have previously been given to Schools Forum in respect of the following funding streams:

- Catch-up premium: coronavirus (COVID-19)
- National Tutoring Programme
- Recovery Premium
- Coronavirus (COVID-19) workforce fund for schools
- Exceptional costs associated with coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Providing school meals during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak
- Coronavirus Job retention scheme Furlough
- Free early education entitlements funding during coronavirus (COVID-19)
- National Testing programme for Schools and Colleges
- Coronavirus (COVID-19) mass testing for Schools and Colleges
- Coronavirus (COVID-19) no recourse to public funds: free school meals

3.2 Since the last meeting, updates have been announced around the following funding streams for schools:

National Tutoring Programme

- 3.3 In November 2021, the Department for Education published new guidance covering the three funding routes within the National Tutoring Programme, with detailed explanations regarding the School-Led Tutoring element of the programme. The guidance can be found at the following link:

[School-led tutoring guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Coronavirus (COVID-19) workforce fund for schools

- 3.4 The COVID-19 workforce fund has been re-introduced to provide financial support to settings with the greatest staffing and funding challenges. The fund has been extended to help eligible schools cover the cost of workforce absences experienced from 22 November 2021 until 18 February 2022.

- 3.5 Guidance has been issued setting out details of the fund, including the eligibility criteria and claims system. Conditions for accessing this funding stipulate that schools should only apply once they have used other options, as far as possible.

- 3.6 The funding applies to:

- primary, secondary and all through maintained schools, academies and free schools
- 16 to 19 academies and maintained schools
- maintained special schools, and special academies and free schools
- non-maintained special schools
- pupil referral units
- alternative provision academies and free schools
- maintained and academy hospital schools

- 3.7 Registered independent special schools and independent schools delivering alternative provision are also eligible to claim for staff they employ to support pupils whose placements are funded from local authorities' high needs budgets.

- 3.8 The guidance can be found at the following link:

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) workforce fund to support schools with costs of staff absences from 22 November 2021 to 18 February 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Providing school meals during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

- 3.9 The guidance for this funding was updated in October 2021 to include information about the £500 million Household Support Fund that is being run by local authorities. It allows local authorities to directly help the hardest-hit families and individuals with daily needs such as food, clothing and utilities. See details at the following link:

[Providing school meals during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/providing-school-meals-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak)

National Testing programme for Schools and Colleges

- 3.10 The guidance for this funding stream was updated in November 2021 ahead of the claim deadline of 5 December 2021, and incorporated the funding allocation amounts for pupil and staff testing.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) mass testing funding for schools and colleges - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-mass-testing-funding-for-schools-and-colleges)

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Glossary

ACA	Area Cost Adjustment
AP	Alternative Provision
ASCL	Association of School and College Leaders
AtC	Achievement through Collaboration
ATL	Association of Teachers and Lecturers
BEBCMAT	Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi-Academy Trust
BFC	Blackpool Football Club
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CJRS	Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme
CSSB	Central Schools Services Block
DfE	Department for Education
DSG	Dedicated Schools Grant
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EHA	Early Help Assessment
EHE	Elective Home Education
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
ESFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency
ESG	Education Services Grant
EY	Early Years
FCAT	Fylde Coast Academy Trust
FSM	Free School Meals
FSM6	Free School Meals Ever 6
GAG	General Annual Grant
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulations
HNB	High Needs Block
IDACI	Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index
KS1/2/3/4	Key Stage 1/2/3/4
LA	Local Authority
LGFS	Local Government Finance Settlement
LSOAs	Lower Super Output Areas
MAT	Multi Academy Trust
MFG	Minimum Funding Guarantee
MPPF	Minimum per-pupil funding
MTFP	Medium Term Financial Plan
NAHT	National Association of Head Teachers

Glossary

NASUWT	National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers
NEU	National Education Union
NFF	National Funding Formula
NRPF	No Recourse to Public Funds
NUT	National Union of Teachers
NW	North West
PEX	Permanent Exclusion
PFI	Private Finance Initiative
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
PTA	Professional Teaching Association
PUF	Primary Unit of Funding
PVI	Private, Voluntary and Independent Sector
RPA	Risk Protection Arrangement
RPIX	Retail Price Index excluding mortgage interest
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SERF	Special Education Resource Facility
SSA	School Support Assistant
SUF	Secondary Unit of Funding
TUC	Trades Union Congress
VAT	Value Added Tax