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# SCHOOLS' FORUM

**Wednesday 15 February – 2pm**

**At the  
Centre for Independent Living (CIL),  
Havelock Street, Hartlepool**

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## *A G E N D A*

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|----|--|--------------------|
| 1. | Apologies  | Chair              |
| 2. | Minutes from Schools' Forum meeting on 6 <sup>th</sup> December 2022 and Matters Arising | Chair              |
| 3. | High Needs Block Review (D)  | Danielle Swainston |
| 4. | SEMH Funding Proposals (D)   | Danielle Swainston |
| 5. | High Needs Block Projected Outturn 2022/23 (I)   | Danielle Swainston |
| 6. | Early Years NFF Hourly Rate to Providers 2023/24 (D)                                     | Danielle Swainston |
| 7. | School Budgets Update 2023/24 (I)  | Amanda Whitehead   |
| 8. | Easter 2023 and Closure Process (I)  | Amanda Whitehead   |
| 9. | Any Other Business   | All                |

Date and Time of Next Forum Meeting –  
Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> March at 2pm

## Schools' Forum Meeting

### 6 December 2022

#### Attendees:

##### Members

Carole Bradley (CB) (Academy – Primary)  
 Lisa Grieg (LG) (Academy – Special)  
 Toni Ray (TR) (Early Years)  
 Chris Simmons (CS) (Academy – Governors)  
 Mark Tilling (MT Chair) (Maintained Secondary)  
 David Turner (DT) (Maintained Primary)  
 Lee Walker (LW) (Academy – Primary)  
 Zoe Westley (ZW) (Academy – Special)  
 Leanne Yates (LY) (Maintained Primary)

##### Local Authority Officers

Jacqui Braithwaite (JB)  
 (Integrated Services for  
 Learning Manager)

Sandra Shears (SSh) (Head of  
 Finance – Corporate and  
 Schools)

Jo Stubbs (JS) (Administrator)

Danielle Swainston (DS)  
 (Assistant Director  
 (Commissioning))

Jane Watt (JW) (Group  
 Accountant)

Amanda Whitehead (AW)  
 (Assistant Director  
 (Education))

| Agenda Item   | Action |
|---|--------|
| <p><b>1 Apologies -</b></p> <p>Apologies were submitted by the following and accepted by Forum:</p> <p>Sara Crawshaw (Diocese RC)<br/>           Tracey Gibson (Secondary)<br/>           Mandy Hall (Academy – Primary)<br/>           John Hardy (Academy – Primary)<br/>           Jo Heaton (Diocese C of E)<br/>           Andrew Jordan (Academy – Secondary)<br/>           Sue Sharpe (Maintained Primary)<br/>           Joanne Wilson (Academy – Primary)</p> <p>Members discussed the current practice around non-attendance at meetings and the appointment of substitutes. It was agreed that in future anyone who failed to attend or provide a substitute for 2 consecutive meetings should receive a letter from the Chair asking them to either resign</p> |        |

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
|   | <p>or appoint an alternative substitute. DS noted that some may have been less inclined to attend today's meeting as there were no decisions to be made and that this should be considered by officers in future.</p> <p>The Chair advised that a member had queried whether they could join today's meeting remotely. He queried whether members were happy to continue meetings in person or would prefer to return to remote meetings. SSh advised that legally remote meetings could take place and a link sent to any non-members that requested it. Hybrid meetings could also take place depending on the technology being available. While members acknowledged that remote meetings made it easier to attend, particularly if people were isolating, there were also less opportunities for people to make a meaningful contribution online than in person. It was agreed therefore that meetings would continue in person.</p> <p>The Chair advised that Mandy Hall had resigned as an Academy – Primary representative.</p>  |  |
| 2 | <p><b>Minutes of the Last Meeting – 18 November 2022</b> - Minutes approved.</p> <p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <p>SSh to distribute annual declarations of interest forms to members for completion.</p> <p>Corrections to the breakdown of the profile of children placed into independent provision by year group which had been previously circulated to members were complete and would be recirculated in due course.</p> <p>DS was facilitating the setting up of a Task and Finish Group to look at funding of Horizon places.</p>   |  |
| 3 | <p><b>Early Years Update</b></p> <p>Members would be asked to make recommendations on the 2023/24 hourly rate for Early Years providers in March 2023. Government funding is based on an hourly rate payable to providers. The rates were different for 2 year-old and 3-4-year old provision. Since 2016/17 there had been a funding shortfall on 2-year-old provision which had been offset by underspending on 3-4-year-old provision. In 2019/20 the Early Years block had begun to overspend overall and been funded using Dedicated Schools Grant reserves. In Summer 2019 a Task and Finish Group had been established to propose options to tackle the 2-year-old provider funding deficit. Within the 2021 Autumn spending review the Government had announced additional funding for early years entitlements from 2022-2025 to allow an increase in hourly rates. Forecasts for Early Years spending in 2022/23 showed an underspend of £0.100m. The reason for this unusual overspend was not yet clear and it was possible that this was just a one-off benefit that may not continue in future years.</p> |  |

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|----------|--|--|
|          | <p>The Task and Finish Group had reviewed the changed position projected for 2022/23. They felt along with Council officers that further time was needed to clarify whether the change in funding position was temporary. Previously the Task and Finish Group had proposed that any rate reduction proposals to be made by the Task and Finish Group be delayed until the December 2022 consultation window. Given the current underspend uncertainty a further pause to December 2023 was recommended.</p> <p><b>Decision</b></p> <p>That the report be noted.</p> |  |
| <b>4</b> | <b>High Needs Block Projected Outturn 2022/23</b>  |  |
|          |  |  |
|          | <p>DS advised members that the projected outturn for the High Needs Block was showing a mid-case estimated overspend of £0.438m. Reasons for this projected overspend included increases in independent school fees and top up funding and support.</p> <p><b>Decision</b></p> <p>That the report be noted</p>   |  |
| <b>5</b> | <b>High Needs Task and Finish Group Update</b>   |  |
|          |  |  |
|          | <p>DS confirmed that a meeting was scheduled for the following day. In January the Group would be considering spending plans for the High Needs Block and setting up panels.</p>   |  |
| <b>6</b> | <b>Any Other Business</b>  |  |
|          |  |  |
|          | <p>The next meeting of the Forum would take place on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> February at 2pm.</p>   |  |
|          |  |  |

## OUTSTANDING ACTIONS LOG

| Meeting  | Description   | Owner              |
|----------|---|--------------------|
| 18/11/22 | That a Task and Finish Group be set up to look at issues around funding of Horizon places | Danielle Swainston |
| 18/11/22 | Annual declaration of interest forms to be sent to members                                | Sandra Shears      |

Financial Year 2022/23: Children’s Services Committee – Log of Schools’ Forum  
 Recommendations and Committee Decisions

Last Updated: 16 January 2023

| Committee Date | Report  | Recommendation and Decision Details  |
|----------------|---|--|
| 15/11/22       | Dedicated Schools Grant (Former Education Services Grant rate per pupil) – Disapplication Request | <p>The Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Agreed the 2023/24 funding rate at £60 per pupil/place.</li> <li>b) Agreed to submit the disapplication request to the Secretary of State to set the Education Services General Duties rate at £60 per pupil/place for 2023/24.</li> <li>c) Noted this will be the seventh consecutive year the local authority has applied for disapplication and that the previous six applications have been successful.</li> <li>d) Agreed that a request for additional funding be sought from the Secretary of State, on behalf of the Children’s Services Committee, to assist in discharging statutory responsibilities to schools.</li> </ul> |
|                |   |  |
|                |   |  |
|                |   |  |
|                |   |  |



## Schools Capital Sub-Group Meeting

Thursday 23rd June 2022

Held remotely via Microsoft Teams



| <b>PRESENT</b>  |  |
|---|--|
| Mark Tilling  | Headteacher - High Tunstall College of Science (Chair)   |
| Mary Frain  | Headteacher - St Teresa's RC Primary                     |
| Jo Heaton   | CEO – Northern Lights Learning Trust                     |
| Julie Reed  | Pupil Place Planning, Admissions & Capital Manager - HBC |
| David Mitchell  | Capital Projects Officer - HBC                           |
| Claire Appleton   | Group Accountant (Corporate and Schools) - HBC           |
| Kieran Bostock  | Assistant Director (Place Management) - HBC              |
| Louise Robson   | Head of Corporate Services – Catcote Academy             |
| David Turner  | Headteacher – Rift House Primary                         |
| <b>APOLOGIES</b>  |  |
| Amanda Whitehead - Assistant Director (Education) – HBC |  |
| Carole Bradley – Headteacher – St Helen's Academy       |  |

| Item      |  | Action |
|-----------|--|--------|
| <b>1.</b> | <b>Review of minutes from 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022.</b>  |        |
|           | <p>No matters arising from the minutes. Minutes of previous meeting agreed.</p> <p>Actions from previous minutes:</p> <p>DM confirmed that the latest condition surveys have been forwarded to the schools.</p> <p>KB said that the contact for final accounts information, regarding the capital projects, is Heather James.</p> <p>DM confirmed that a request to Jane Watt had been made that the sub group membership continue to be an item on the agenda at the School Forum, in the hope of replacing those that have stepped down.</p> |        |
| <b>2.</b> | <b>2022/23 Schools' Capital Works Programme - Progress Update (JR)</b>   |        |
|           | JR updated the group on the current position for the 2022/23 schools' capital programme and added that some problems have been experienced with both internal and external resourcing of services for the programme this year. In addition, there are supply chain issues which is delaying the progress of works. All mechanical & electrical   |        |

| Item      |   | Action |
|-----------|---|--------|
|           | works are going ahead this summer apart from Kingsley fire alarm, which will proceed in later in the year.  |        |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>Finance Update (CA)</b>  |        |
|           | There is not a lot to report on due to the progress of this year's schemes and only £44,000 has been spent so far this year.  |        |
| <b>4.</b> | <b>Fire Safety / door replacements Update (DM)</b>  |        |
|           | <p>Capital funding for the fire safety modifications, at Throston and Kingsley schools, was approved last year.</p> <p>Door installs &amp; maintenance have been undertaken at both schools and are about 90% complete.</p> <p>We have been advised, by a fire consultant, that before we undertake further works, that the electrical wiring, above the ceiling, should be reviewed and tidied, lifted off ceiling tiles and made safe where necessary. Works are currently underway identifying the best way of completing both the fire stopping and, where necessary, the electrical works.</p> <p>Once we have developed the most effective methodology we will identify a programme of works that allows us to address the modifications over a number of phases in both schools.</p>   |        |
| <b>5.</b> | <b>DfE CDC2 Programme (Condition Data Collection) (DM)</b>  |        |
|           | <p>The DfE's Condition Data Collection 2 will be carried out from 2021 to 2026 and it will visit every government-funded school in England to collect data about the condition of their buildings.</p> <p>The purpose of the data collected is to provide the DfE with a comprehensive picture of the condition of the schools and help prioritise investment in terms of condition funding and rebuilding programmes.</p> <p>The condition survey also benefits schools inasmuch as it highlights condition issues which need attention or further investigation, provides a view of roof condition which is not normally seen and provide good photographic evidence of condition issues.</p> <p>The survey, however, does have limitations as it's not invasive, it's not structural, does not report on hazardous materials (principally asbestos), does not address critical health and safety requirements such as fire and intruder alarm functionality, does not take into account building use or capacity and does not provide descriptions of defects, remedies or cost information for schools or responsible bodies.</p> <p>There will be 9 tranches of school visits programmed over the next 5 years. Tranche 1 included Rossmere, Catcote Academy and Barnard Grove, while tranche 2 included Greatham. The following tranches are also confirmed by the DfE:</p> <p><b>Tranche 3 - February 2022 – July 2022</b></p> |        |



| Item      |   | Action     |           |       |          |          |            |  |
|-----------|---|------------|-----------|-------|----------|----------|------------|--|
|           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Horizon School</li> <li>• St John Vianney</li> <li>• Rift House</li> <li>• Clavering</li> <li>• St Teresa's</li> <li>• Golden Flatts</li> </ul> <p><b>Tranche 4 - August 2022 to January 2023</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St Joseph's</li> <li>• Stranton</li> <li>• Grange</li> <li>• Manor</li> </ul> <p>All responsible bodies will receive information from surveyors or DfE so schools need to keep an eye out for the information.</p> <p>Discussion was held around the experiences of the Headteacher's whose school had been surveyed. It was identified that the thoroughness and time taken to carry out the surveys were different for different schools (possibly depending on the different surveying companies used). MF pointed out that accompanying the surveyor round the school provided the opportunity to point things out to the surveyor to ensure everything was picked up in the survey.</p>  |            |           |       |          |          |            |  |
| <b>6.</b> | <b>High Needs Capital (JR)</b>  |            |           |       |          |          |            |  |
|           | <p>JR provided an update that had been received from Danielle Swainston.</p> <p>The Local Authority receives funding to support High Needs. Allocations as below:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="277 1256 963 1328"> <thead> <tr> <th>2022/23</th> <th>2023/2024</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>£962,737</td> <td>£732,295</td> <td>£1,695,032</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>A Children's Services Committee report sets out allocations to Springwell and Catcote 6th form – these schemes were formally approved last year but costs have increased. In addition, there are additional fire safety works at Springwell that need to be completed before the building can be signed off by Building Control. These were not in the original costs.</p> <p>There is £1,486,520.11 remaining. The proposal is to use this in mainstream schools to increase the provision for secondary age children with MLD and primary age children with ASD (these are the two areas that are under significant pressure at the moment). High Tunstall are the only secondary provision that have expressed an interest. Discussions are taking place with a number of schools regarding primary ASD provision.</p> <p>Recently, we were notified that Kingsley have increasing numbers of children with high level needs (not including ARP children). The majority are school transfers which is causing significant issues as the school cannot accommodate these children safely, however due to parental preference (and the school having some places) they have had to take these children. Danielle Swainston and Kelly Armstrong have reviewed the building and do not consider it to be safe for the level of needs, therefore they are</p> | 2022/23    | 2023/2024 | Total | £962,737 | £732,295 | £1,695,032 |  |
| 2022/23   | 2023/2024   | Total      |           |       |          |          |            |  |
| £962,737  | £732,295  | £1,695,032 |           |       |          |          |            |  |

| Item |  | Action  |
|------|--|---|
|      | <p>exploring a temporary demountable on site until alternative options, for ASD enhanced provision, can be developed. This will need to go through planning. We are currently looking at costs.</p> <p>JH asked if the cost of the demountables comes out of the £1,486,520.11. JR confirmed that it will.</p> <p>JH also asked what is the mechanism in relation to how the funding is allocated to specific projects and how they are prioritised? JR said she will take it back to Danielle Swainston and Kelly Armstrong for comment.</p> <p>DT commented that it was an opportunity to have ASD ARP in schools. JR will look into a response.</p> <p>DT also raised the point that any funding needs to be sustainable, perhaps with year on year funding not just one off improvements.</p> <p>MT queried whether the £750k not spent in the SEMH budget could be looked at in reacting to need.</p> <p>KB flagged concerns regarding timescales for completion of schemes especially with regards to Kingsley demountables/classroom and that a September completion date was unrealistic.</p> <p>JH also queried if other schools could perhaps find a quicker and cheaper solution than demountables to alleviate pressures and who would be looking at this?</p> | <p>JR</p> <p>JR</p> <p>JR</p> <p>JR</p> <p>JR</p> <p>JR</p> |
| 7.   | <b>Free School – Brenda Road (JR)</b>  |   |
|      | <p>JR provided an update on behalf of Danielle Swainston.</p> <p>The new school is currently in the planning process.</p> <p>There has been delays with approval from ministers. We were expecting the school to be open in Sept 2023, however it now looks like it will be 2024. This is a concern as we have a cohort of children we were expecting to attend the Free School from Sept 2023. Discussions are taking place to see if there are any options to open the school from Sept 2023 but in demountables. Not sure if this is feasible, however it is being explored.</p> <p>MT asked if we can ask DfE for more funding for higher needs as we were planning towards 2022 and it has been delayed until 2023?</p>   |   |
| 8.   | <b>Any other business</b>  |   |
|      | <p><b>Free School – Wynyard</b> - JR informed the group that the LA had recently received correspondence from the DfE in respect of the approval of a new 420 place primary school at Wynyard, Hartlepool, (St Joseph’s Church of England Primary School). The school will now progress to the pre-opening stage. During this phase, the free school proposer group will finalise plans, develop policies and undertake a statutory consultation. An opening date hasn’t been confirmed as yet.</p>  |   |

| Item      |   | Action    |
|-----------|---|-----------|
|           | <p><b>Mary Frain Retiring</b></p> <p>The group thanked MF for her service to the Schools' Capital Sub Group and the Admissions Forum while wishing her well in her retirement.</p> <p>JH asked MF if she could ask the Head, replacing her at St Teresa's, if they would be prepared to attend the sub group.</p> | <b>MF</b> |
| <b>9.</b> | <b>Date and Time of Meetings for 2022/23 Academic Year</b>  |           |
|           | <p>Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2022 at 10:00</p> <p>Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at 10:00</p> <p>Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2023 at 10:00</p>  |           |



## Schools Capital Sub-Group Meeting

Thursday 3rd November 2022

Held remotely via Microsoft Teams



| <b>PRESENT</b>  |  |
|---|--|
| Mark Tilling  | Headteacher - High Tunstall College of Science (Chair)   |
| Louise Robson   | Head of Corporate Services – Catcote Academy             |
| Jo Heaton   | CEO – Northern Lights Learning Trust                     |
| David Turner  | Headteacher – Rift House Primary                         |
| Chris Connor  | Headteacher – Fens Primary                               |
| Claire Appleton   | Group Accountant (Corporate and Schools) - HBC           |
| David Mitchell  | Capital Projects Officer - HBC                           |
| Julie Reed  | Pupil Place Planning, Admissions & Capital Manager - HBC |
| Chris McCulloch   | Construction Manager - HBC                               |
| <b>APOLOGIES</b>  |  |
| Amanda Whitehead - Assistant Director (Education) – HBC                 |  |
| Kieran Bostock - Assistant Director (Place Management) - HBC            |  |
| Carole Bradley – Executive Headteacher – Northern Lights Learning Trust |  |
| Sara Crawshaw – Headteacher – English Martyrs                           |  |

| Item      |  | Action |
|-----------|--|--------|
| <b>1.</b> | <b>Review of minutes from 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022.</b>  |        |
|           | JH asked that her job title be updated.<br><br>Minutes of previous meeting agreed.   |        |
| <b>2.</b> | <b>2022/23 Schools' Capital Works Programme - Progress Update (JR)</b>   |        |
|           | JR updated the group on the current position for the 2022/23 schools' capital programme and added that some problems have been experienced with both internal and external resourcing of services for the programme this year. In addition, there are supply chain issues which is delaying the progress of works.                               |        |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>Finance Update (CA)</b>   |        |
|           | There is not a lot to report on due to the progress of this year's schemes and only £68,000 has been spent so far this year, however it is expected that there will be more by the end of March.<br><br>JR pointed out that HBC have regular capital monitoring meetings where final accounts are requested to be processed as soon as possible. |        |

| Item      |   | Action |
|-----------|---|--------|
| <b>4.</b> | <p><b>Fire Safety / door replacements Update (DM)</b></p> <p>Capital funding for the fire safety modifications was approved last year.</p> <p>Approved work includes fire door replacement, door maintenance &amp; fire stopping i.e. the work above ceilings to stop fire spread.</p> <p>Door installs &amp; door maintenance have been undertaken at both schools and are largely complete, however the fire stopping works are still outstanding in both schools.</p> <p>HBC have commissioned an independent fire consultant to advise on the current fire stopping works. Currently, the focus is on the design for a small manageable section of Throston which we are aiming to complete next summer.</p> <p>Once a sound methodology has been developed we will design further phases for Throston and move onto Kingsley.</p>  |        |
| <b>5.</b> | <p><b>DfE CDC2 Programme (Condition Data Collection 2) (DM)</b></p> <p>The DfE's Condition Data Collection 2 will be carried out from 2021 to 2026 and it will visit every government-funded school in England to collect data about the condition of their buildings.</p> <p>The purpose of the data collected is to provide the DfE with a comprehensive picture of the condition of the schools and help prioritise investment in terms of condition funding and rebuilding programmes.</p> <p>The condition survey also benefits schools inasmuch as it highlights condition issues which need attention (or further investigation), provides a view of roof condition which is not normally seen and provide good photographic evidence of condition issues.</p> <p>The survey, however, does have limitations as it's not invasive, it's not structural, does not report on hazardous materials (principally asbestos), does not address critical health and safety requirements (such as fire and intruder alarm functionality), does not take into account building use or capacity and does not provide descriptions of defects, remedies or cost information for schools or responsible bodies.</p> <p>There will be 9 tranches of school visits programmed over the next 5 years.</p> <p>Tranche 1 (Complete):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rossmere</li> <li>• Catcote Academy</li> <li>• Barnard Grove</li> </ul> <p>Tranche 2: (Complete)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greatham</li> </ul> <p>Tranche 3: (Complete)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Golden Flatts Primary School</li> <li>• Clavering Primary School</li> <li>• Rift House Primary School</li> </ul> |        |

| Item      |  | Action   |
|-----------|--|--|
|           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St Teresa’s RC Primary School</li> <li>• St John Vianney RC Primary School</li> <li>• The Horizon School</li> </ul> <p>Tranche 4: (Complete)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stranton Primary School</li> <li>• Manor Community Academy</li> <li>• Grange Primary School</li> <li>• St Joseph's Catholic Primary School</li> </ul> <p>Tranche 5: (Underway)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lynnfield Primary School</li> <li>• Throston Primary School</li> <li>• High Tunstall College of Science</li> <li>• Eldon Grove Academy</li> <li>• West View Primary School</li> <li>• Sacred Heart Primary Catholic School</li> <li>• St Bega’s Primary Catholic School</li> </ul> <p>All responsible bodies will receive information from surveyors or the DfE so schools need to keep an eye out for the information.</p> <p>MT raised issue around DfE contacting schools direct re “Connect the Classroom” funding, raising concerns that High Tunstall were asked to complete forms for the funding but then only to be told they can’t have the funding because it’s a new building.</p> <p>MT asked if JR could liaise with the DfE around “Connect the Classroom”</p> | <p style="text-align: right;"><b>JR</b></p>  |
| <b>6.</b> | <b>High Needs Capital (JR)</b>   |  |
|           | <p>Responses to actions from the previous minutes have been forwarded with the agenda.</p> <p>MT queried how much funding has already been allocated and what remains.</p> <p>JR confirmed that a DfE return is to be submitted, however Kelly Armstrong may be able to provide further details.</p> <p>MT commented that his MLD ARP is full and children will have to be placed out of town which will increase the burden on the high needs block funding.</p> <p>JH commented that St Helen’s is planning for an ASD ARP for which they are currently in the process of recruiting staff.</p> <p>JH referred to the response from Danielle Swainston regarding a further expression of interest for an ASD ARP received in September and asked for clarification on this other ASD ARP so that they could work with this provision and also so that they can plan staffing and resources effectively.</p>  | <p style="text-align: right;"><b>JR</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>KA/DS</b></p> |

| Item      |  | Action                            |
|-----------|--|-----------------------------------|
|           | <p><b>Kingsley</b></p> <p>Planning permission has been submitted for demountables at Kingsley.</p> <p>CA commented that demountables are going to be rented, therefore capital funding cannot be used for this.</p> <p>MT commented that High Needs Capital requires a more joined up approach. As there are still enquiries with respect to High Needs Capital JR would liaise with Danielle Swainston and Kelly Armstrong regarding their availability to attend the next meeting to provide further information.</p> <p>DT reiterated his call for sustainable funding streams to allow for forward planning for staff and resources.</p> <p>MT advised that he will also raise concerns to Danielle at the Next High Needs Block Review meeting on 25th November.</p> <p>JH clarified her question from the previous minutes.</p> <p>The previous minutes stated: <i>JH also queried if other schools could perhaps find a quicker and cheaper solution than demountables to alleviate pressures and who would be looking at this?</i></p> <p>However, JH's original question was why we are spending on demountables when other schools might have had space and expertise to accommodate these children, thus saving money on demountables.</p> <p>With reference to the demountable at Kingsley, MT made a comment querying are parents choosing Kingsley because they have the provision or because there is no other provision?</p> | <p><b>JR</b></p> <p><b>MT</b></p> |
| <b>7.</b> | <b>School Rebuilding Programme (JR)</b>  |                                   |
|           | <p>Earlier this year, the government announced the next round of schools which will have buildings replaced or refurbished as part of the School Rebuilding Programme. The programme addresses school buildings in the worst condition across England.</p> <p>In 2022 to 2023, the DfE (subject to future spending rounds) expect to prioritise up to 300 schools in total.</p> <p>St Helen's was nominated to be included in the programme.</p> <p>The assessment of nominations is ongoing and St Helen's has received a recent visit from the DfE's Technical Advisors. It is expected that an announcement will be made this financial year as to which schools are to be included.</p>  |                                   |
| <b>8.</b> | <b>Free School – Brenda Road (JR)</b>  |                                   |
|           | <p>JR provided an update on behalf of Kelly Armstrong.</p>   |                                   |

| Item      |  | Action    |
|-----------|--|-----------|
|           | <p>A planning application has been submitted by HBC for the access road to the free school, the access road has caused some delays to the project and current timescales mean the school will be delayed until approximately February/March 2024, we feel this may extend further and an early summer 2024 completion date is more likely.</p> <p>The knock on effect of the delay is that we will have to find school places out of area for approximately 10-12 children with SEMH for 23/24 academic year. Due to issues we have had for this academic year securing places Kelly Armstrong and Louise Allen have carried out a piece of work to identify those children who may require specialist SEMH provision.</p> <p>A meeting is being held on Monday 16th October to discuss the children and young people in more detail with Lorna McClean (Director, Spark of Genius) who are the delivery partner for the free school. We are hoping to secure places at the Spark of Genius School in Norton by early block booking of places, the children and young people will then transfer to the free school in Hartlepool when it opens in 2024.</p>  |           |
| <b>9.</b> | <b>SEMH Update (CA)</b>  |           |
|           | <p>CA provided an update.</p> <p>Forum agreed that some of the £743k SEMH Capital funding will be used for training (Trauma, etc.) and will be organised by an organisation called Together to Succeed. This would aim to address issues facing gaps in knowledge and understanding of SEMH provision. The Schools Forum have requested that the Board of Together to Succeed draft a suggested programme and costing for training across schools in the Hartlepool. This will be taken to a future Schools Forum meeting for approval.</p> <p>It was clarified that this training would not use the entire remaining SEMH funding. It was pointed out the need to utilise, and to make best use of, the remaining funding. However, currently there are no plans for the remaining funding.</p> <p>It was further clarified that the funding has reverted back to revenue from capital, therefore this training can be funded.</p> <p>JH queried if, given schools are facing budgetary issues, it would it be possible to divide up the funding and distribute an allocation to all schools? MT pointed out that as the allocations would be based around pupil numbers many schools would only receive small sums.</p> <p>It was agreed that a breakdown of the remaining funding based on the £743k be provided at the next meeting to see what school have been allocated.</p> <p>Could the breakdown of the remaining funding (based on 750k) to schools be drafted to see what the allocations actually are?</p> <p>LR asked if SEMH funding can be linked into SEND training. MT advised that the funding will start with trauma training and then may be able to address additional training later.</p> | <b>CA</b> |



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| Item       |   | Action    |
|------------|---|-----------|
|            | <p>DT commented that Emma Rutherford (HBC) also provides trauma training and asked if she is part of the discussions?</p> <p>JH commented that it was raised, at the Education Partnership Board, that the strain on resources, to release staff for training, highlighted the need to manage training carefully. JH also queried if there was the possibility to “train the trainers” so that schools could manage their training more flexibly?</p> | <b>MT</b> |
| <b>10.</b> | <b>Any other business</b>   |           |
|            | None.   |           |
| <b>11.</b> | <b>Date and Time of Meetings for 2022/23 Academic Year</b>  |           |
|            | <p>Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at 10:00</p> <p>Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2023 at 10:00</p>  |           |

**Report to Hartlepool Schools' Forum 15 February 2023**  
**From Danielle Swainston (Assistant Director – Joint Commissioning)**

**Item 3: High Needs Block Review**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present the outcomes from the High Needs Block (HNB) review along with a set of proposals for change.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 High needs funding is provided to local authorities through the HNB of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), enabling them to meet their statutory duties under the Children and Families Act 2014.

- 2.2 There has been increasing pressure on this funding to meet the needs of children in Hartlepool with additional needs. Previously, owing to these pressures, £0.5m was transferred from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block to support the budget requirement. In more recent years, this transfer has not taken place as the authority has received increased allocations from government.

- 2.3 Schools' Forum agreed at their meeting of 25 March 2021 that a review needed to be undertaken with the following scope:

- Horizon School funding model;
- Inclusions Strategy;
- Top up ranges;
- Special Schools – increase capacity;
- Special Schools – review of Minimum Funding Guarantee/ funding model;
- Speech and Language Provision;
- Additionally Resourced Provision;
- Capacity of SEND team; and
- Early Years.

- 2.4 Schools' Forum asked Peter Gray (SEND consultant who undertakes work with other authorities and DfE) to undertake a review. Subsequently, a High Needs Task and Finish Group met on a number of occasions to work through the findings and possible solutions. This report pulls together all those discussions.

**3. National Context**

- 3.1 Key points relating to the national context include:

- Significant pressures on High Needs Budgets;
- Large number of local authorities are experiencing deficits/overspends in 2017/18;
- Significant injection of new funding from 2018/19;

- Some local authorities are now in surplus, although there is a continuing growth in spend;
- Concerns about 2023/24 and beyond when increases revert to inflation;
- A lot of focus on strengthening local specialist provision (reducing reliance on high cost placements in the Independent sector);
- Evidence suggest that this is not enough – needs stronger/more consistent mainstream offer as bedrock on which to build;
- Need to ensure specialist provision is focused on most complex/significant needs

3.2 Recent national research (LA case study research – effective management of HNB) indicates that possible reasons for growth in spend included:

- Growth in numbers of children with complex/significant needs;
- Changes in diagnostic practice;
- Impact of social media;
- Loss of parental confidence in mainstream settings;
- School accountability pressures making some schools less inclusive;
- Increased demand for special school placements;
- Increased need for higher cost placements (INMSS) where local provision is full.

3.3 Key lessons from this research (success in reducing spend) included:

- Importance of relationships and securing a ‘common agenda’: meeting needs in a way that is equitable and financially sustainable;
- Importance of having a clear strategy for improvement with capacity to implement/‘see through’ and monitor/evaluate;
- Willingness/capacity to be creative, with a problem-solving approach;
- Commitment to meeting needs wherever possible locally and in mainstream schools/settings to help remove barriers to community access.

#### 4. Local Context

4.1 The table below shows the number of children and young people (0-25) being supported by EHC plans trend over last four years (as per SEND 2 return).

| 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|------|------|------|------|------|
| 585  | 610  | 689  | 740  | 805  |

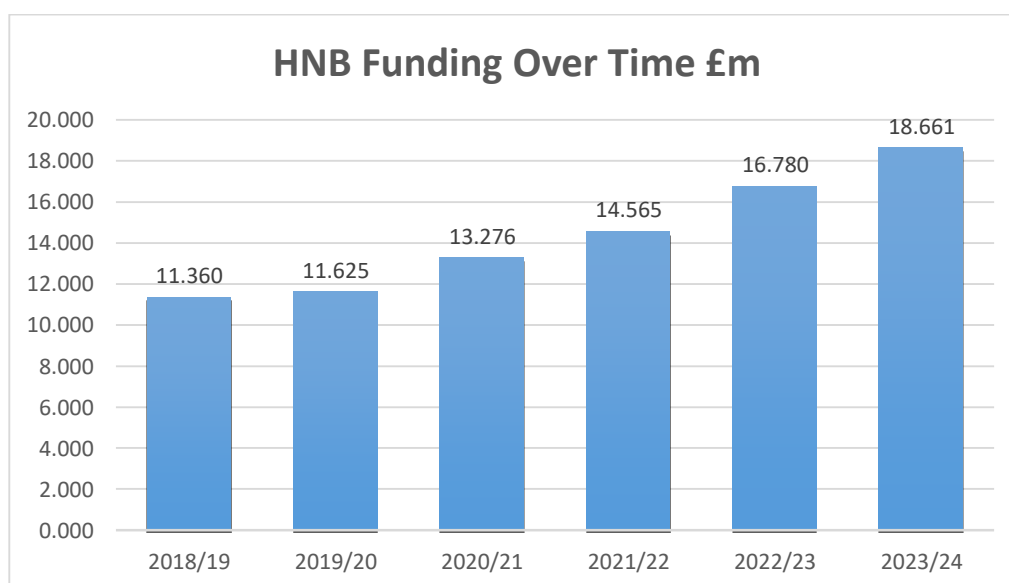
4.2 There is a significant increase in the number of children accessing independent provision with a total of 80 children across the year groups and primary needs in the following table.

|         | ASD       | SEMH      | MLD      | HI/VI    | PD       | PMLD     |
|---------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Year 6  | 2         | 3         |          |          |          |          |
| Year 7  | 2         | 4         |          |          | 1        |          |
| Year 8  | 1         | 9         |          |          |          |          |
| Year 9  | 1         | 15        |          |          |          | 1        |
| Year 10 | 1         | 5         |          |          |          |          |
| Year 11 | 1         | 19        |          |          | 1        |          |
| Year 12 | 3         | 7         |          |          |          |          |
| Year 13 |           | 1         |          |          |          |          |
| Year 14 | 1         | 2         |          |          |          |          |
|         | <b>12</b> | <b>65</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>1</b> |

## 5. History of Funding

- 5.1 The table below provides the historic funding for the HNB from DfE, along with block transfers from the DSG Schools Block.

| FY      | DfE<br>£m | Block Transfer<br>£m | Total<br>£m |
|---------|-----------|----------------------|-------------|
| 2018/19 | 10.810    | 0.550                | 11.360      |
| 2019/20 | 11.004    | 0.621                | 11.625      |
| 2020/21 | 12.946    | 0.329                | 13.276      |
| 2021/22 | 14.565    | 0.000                | 14.565      |
| 2022/23 | 16.780    | 0.000                | 16.780      |
| 2023/24 | 18.661    | 0.000                | 18.661      |



- 5.2 The table below presents historic spending by category of provision, along with the latest outturn estimate for the current financial year.

| Reporting Category            | 2018/19<br>FINAL<br>£m | 2019/20<br>FINAL<br>£m | 2020/21<br>FINAL<br>£m | 2021/22<br>FINAL<br>£m | 2022/23<br>ESTIMATE<br>£m |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| LA Place Funding              | 1.441                  | 1.426                  | 1.366                  | 1.317                  | 0.882                     |
| Ind School Fees               | 2.582                  | 2.226                  | 2.405                  | 3.553                  | 4.684                     |
| OoA Top-ups                   | 0.347                  | 0.314                  | 0.309                  | 0.380                  | 0.415                     |
| Top-ups & Support             | 4.302                  | 4.374                  | 4.250                  | 5.404                  | 6.516                     |
| Exclusions<br>(including PRU) | 0.297                  | 0.455                  | 0.662                  | 0.706                  | 0.766                     |
| Post-16 Top-ups               | 0.627                  | 0.821                  | 0.903                  | 1.044                  | 1.044                     |
| Support Services              | 0.467                  | 0.467                  | 0.467                  | 0.467                  | 0.467                     |
| Borrowing Costs               | 0.000                  | 0.000                  | 0.000                  | 0.000                  | 0.075                     |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                  | <b>10.062</b>          | <b>10.083</b>          | <b>10.361</b>          | <b>12.871</b>          | <b>14.849</b>             |

|                                     |              |              |                |              |              |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>Overspend /<br/>(Underspend)</b> | <b>0.317</b> | <b>0.506</b> | <b>(0.848)</b> | <b>0.386</b> | <b>0.906</b> |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|

- 5.3 Peter Gray (consultant who works with local authorities and DfE to review use of HNB and strategies to reduce spend) undertook a review and provided the following commentary for Hartlepool’s use of HNB funding:
- Higher than average HNB for unitaries but lower than some that are demographically similar (Middlesbrough; Blackpool);
  - In deficit in 2018/19 and 2019/2020 (need for Schools Block transfer);
  - Significant extra funding since 2020 then from national government;
  - Continuing growth in spend;
  - Just about breaking even;
  - Concern about impact of continuing growth when increase in income starts to ‘flatten’ (2023/24 and beyond);
  - Need for a more ‘managed’ approach.

## 6. **Proposals**

- 6.1 There have been lengthy discussions about the increased “demand” for specialist provision. Many views were expressed about the benefits of further developing this type of provision versus the need to strengthen the mainstream offer for children with SEND. Many feel that if you “build” specialist provision that places will be filled quickly. It is important that we have this in the forefront of our minds when deciding on the best way forward and ensure that there is the right balance in the system.
- 6.2 This is also being discussed at a national level and there seems to be an agreement that HNB strategies/ plans need to have elements of both (the recent evaluation of local authorities and HNB indicate that those managing their HNB well address both of these issues).
- 6.3 The following review proposals therefore focus on all elements.

## 7. **Horizon School Funding Model**

- 7.1 Schools’ Forum agreed the current funding model for Horizon School at their meeting 22 October 2020. The model is based on a total of 34 places – 12 places for Horizon School, 12 places for Haven and a further 10 inreach places (2 places for each of the 5 secondary schools). Funding per place is based on £10k place funding plus a further £10k top-up.
- 7.2 The agreement covered 2 financial years starting April 2021 and ending March 2023.
- 7.3 Schools’ Forum received a report at their meeting on 18 November 2022 highlighting the rising number of permanent exclusions (PEX) and the need to increase place numbers for Horizon School.
- 7.4 The table below shows the history of exclusions by academic year.

| AY                    | Numbers of PEX |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| Sept 2017 – July 2018 | 14             |
| Sept 2018 – July 2019 | 32             |
| Sept 2019 – July 2020 | 13             |
| Sept 2020 – July 2021 | 5              |
| Sept 2021 – July 2022 | 19             |
| Sept 2022 – Feb 2023  | 20             |

- 7.5 Schools' Forum agreed to fund increased capacity at Horizon School using a cost model basis in 2022/23. Agreement was given to funding of up to £0.120m pro rata.
- 7.6 A longer term model for funding of Horizon has been completed as part of the HNB review. The total operating cost requirement for Horizon for 2023/24 has been calculated to determine an appropriate top-up per place. Operating costs have been assigned to either Horizon (including inreach places) or Haven to allow a separate top-up amount.

### *Proposal*

- *To increase the number of commissioned places at Horizon by 6 places – a total of 28 places*
- *To continue to commission 12 places at Haven*
- *To introduce the following funding model:*
  - *Haven 12 places – £10k place funding and £1.6k top-up – a total of £0.139m*
  - *Horizon 28 places – £10k place funding and £14k top-up – a total of £0.672m (this consists of 10 inreach and 18 PEX places)*
- *If numbers of PEX reduces for the year 2024/25, the type of places will be reviewed and PEX places will be converted to inreach places and explored to see if appropriate to extend to KS2 support*
- *If PEX continue to increase and the PEX places cannot be met within the allocation of 18 the inreach places will be reduced*

## **8. Inclusions Strategy**

- 8.1 The local authority commissioned NDTi to carry out “A review of inclusion in mainstream education for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)”.
- 8.2 As a result of this work, one of the areas identified in the recommendations was the need to review the Individual Pupil Support (IPS) model of funding. Subsequently, Peter Gray (SEND consultant was commissioned to carry out a review). He suggested the devolving of budgets to clusters.
- 8.3 This has been discussed at length in the HNB review sessions. The advantages of this approach is:
- enables moderation across schools to ensure that there is a consistent approach to schools receiving additional funding (report indicated schools did not feel this was currently happening);
  - allows for more solution focused approaches with schools working together with one pot of funding to enable children’s needs to be met better locally;
  - school staff to support each other to increase SEND expertise across the system.
- 8.4 Within the discussions for this approach it was also agreed to establish a solution focused forum made up of schools and local authority officers. The purpose is to review any children whose needs cannot be met locally (from the initial assessment) to look for a solution to educate in Hartlepool.

## Proposal

- *To develop and implement the devolving of IPS funding to clusters*
  - *Devolve to four clusters (acknowledging this is best fit and not perfect)*
  - *Establish four SEND cluster leads to work with local authority to develop model, implement model and manage funding and requests across the cluster (to be funded for two years part time via SEMH funding (separate paper on agenda)*
  - *Fund 0.5 FTE Education Psychologist to support across clusters via SEMH funding (separate paper on agenda)*
- *To establish a solution focused forum to review any children that needs cannot be met in Hartlepool due to a lack of provision*
- *Develop Hartlepool “ordinarily available” document to support the allocation of additional funding (previous IPS now cluster funding)*

## 9. Top Up Ranges

- 9.1 Following review, there appears no evidence that top up ranges are less within Hartlepool than other areas – some lower, some higher but those that are higher have a greater HNB overspend and are in a deficit reserves position.
- 9.2 For the budget year starting 2021/22, Schools’ Forum agreed an increase back to April 2019 and subsequently introduced an annual uplift process for 2022/23.
- 9.3 An annual uplift is considered a reasonable approach. The uplift would be linked to the Council’s own commissioning process based on basket of indicators.

## Proposal

- *Uplift 2023/2024 top-up ranges by 4% at an estimated cost of £0.090m*

## 10. Special Schools – Increase Capacity

- 10.1 Children and Families Act 2014/ SEND COP sets out a presumption in law that all children be provided with a mainstream education as long as that is in line with parental wishes. Therefore the focus on our SEND development across Hartlepool must be about strengthening our mainstream offer which includes ordinarily available.
- 10.2 However we know that some children need specialist provision due to the level of their needs and the tracking of children attending schools by the commissioning team has allowed us to understand projections for children potentially needing specialist provision. (Note: this is based on individual schools identifying needs without any moderation. Moderation needs to take place within and across the clusters to ensure that there is a consistent approach.)
- 10.3 There has been ongoing work to increase capacity across the system:
- Additional five places at Grange Primary ARP;
  - Starting to implement Primary ASD ARP at St Helen’s – early development however looking at approx. 6 places initially;
  - Increased capacity at Catcote to 200 places;

- Post 16 ASD 6<sup>th</sup> Form (Catcote) being developed to ensure that more capacity freed up at main school site on Catcote Road (phased approach);
- Pilot MLD ARP at HT – 24 places (currently 17 with being full from Sept 2023). Review recently carried out which shows positive outcomes for these children. Working with school to increase to 45 as permanent to allow for KS3 children to move through to KS4 and new children admitted in KS3;
- Springwell – capital build for more PMLD children. Not increased place numbers but have increased space to support more PMLD children (based on changing needs of children and more complexity);
- Free School – delays in construction mean that the new proposed opening will be 2024. This will hopefully support the current cohort of children and young people needing SEMH specialist provision and significantly reduce the need for children needing to attend independent out of area provision. Agreed with Spark of Genius to identify children that would have gone to free school Sept 2023 – approx. 8-12 will attend Stockton Spark of Genius (SoG) provision and then will transfer to Free school when ready if appropriate.

10.4 ASD is now an area that is of concern with an increasing number of children needing more specialist provision. We have commissioned extra places at Grange (increased number of places) and commissioned new provision at St Helen's for primary. However we are now projecting an increased need for primary specialist provision and Springwell are over capacity. It is increasingly difficult to place children in Hartlepool when there is only one primary special school. Therefore there is a need to explore whether there is a requirement for another primary special school.

*Proposal:*

- *Explore opportunities to bid for specialist free school – potentially a through school from early years to KS4. Potential for multi academy trust to bid in partnership with local authority.*
- *Review place numbers at special schools for the 2024/25 commissioning year (Nov 2023 ESFA deadline) and understand impact on HNB funding as any additional places at academies are recouped with no additional funding via the HNB formula*

## **11. Special Schools – Review of Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) / Funding Model**

- 11.1 As part of the HNB review, special schools asked for greater certainty and stability around their budget funding. Peter Gray proposed a move to an average cost per pupil as the basis for top-up payments and this proposal was considered in further detail within the Task and Finish Group.
- 11.2 As an equivalent to the Maintained Schools Additional Grant (MSAG) in 2023/24, ESFA have included a requirement within the regulations to provide an additional grant to special schools and Pupil Referral Units. The additional grant is to be calculated at a 3.4% increase on 2022/23 total school funding. Although important context for Schools' Forum, the additional grant is a mandatory condition so is not included as a proposal in this report. The grant is included in the HNB budget requirement for 2023/24.



- 11.3 Both Catcote and Springwell special schools manage pupils in 3 Pathways or Teams dependent on level of need and support. Option 1 starts with an average cost per pupil in each pathway / team being calculated for both Catcote and Springwell. This option encompasses the current Minimum Funding Guarantee and any top-ups payable where the school is above number. A 4% uplift has been applied to the proposed pathway / team costs in line with the uplifts proposed for IPS and ARPs elsewhere in this report.
- 11.4 A further option was presented by Springwell School in December 2022. This option 2 continues to be based on Teams but has been calculated on the basis of estimated operating cost per Team (provided by the school) as opposed to current payments in option 1 described at paragraph 11.3. As with option 1, an uplift of 4% has been assumed. Option 2 carries an additional cost of £0.460m compared to option 1.
- 11.5 In preparation for this report, Springwell School proposed an option 3. This option is calculated on the same basis as option 2 but has nil inflationary uplift. Also, the operating cost estimated has been reduced by the new grant income outlined at paragraph 11.2 of this report. The additional cost of implementing option 3 (compared to option 1) is £0.322m.
- 11.6 All options would move away from the existing MFG arrangement and would also mean that top-up funding for special schools is no longer based on the same top-up ranges used in Individual Pupil Support and ARPs.

*Proposal:*

- *Implement a revised funding model for special schools based on per pathway top-up prices;*
- *Remove the existing MFG arrangement;*
- *Cost of option 1 proposal is estimated at £0.118m*
- *Cost of option 2 proposal is estimated at £0.578m;*
- *Cost of option 3 proposal is estimated at £0.440m.*

## **12. Speech and Language Provision**

- 12.1 Owing to the complexity of this review there has not been enough time to explore this fully therefore we propose to review this in 2024/25 in partnership with health colleagues.

## **13. Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP)**

- 13.1 The table below shows current provision.

Primary

|                    |                       |   |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Kingsley Primary   | ASD                   | 25 places   |
| Grange Primary     | ASD/Physical/ medical | 21 places   |
| St Helen's Primary | ASD                   | Phased approach to development – worked on a cost |

|                              |      |  |
|------------------------------|------|--|
|                              |      | model until agreement re: places                           |
| Rossmere Primary             | SEMH | 6 places short term placements stay on roll at home school |
| Springwell Primary (Special) | SEMH | 4 places short term placements on roll at home school      |

### Secondary

|                         |                        |           |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------|
| Manor Secondary         | ASD                    | 20 places |
| High Tunstall Secondary | ASD/ Physical/ medical | 20 places |
|                         |                        |           |
| High Tunstall Secondary | MLD                    | 24 places |

\* Trialled a secondary SEMH ARP in 2021/2022 – was not effective and did not continue after the initial year

- 13.2 ARPs are funded with £10k place funding and top up. In 2017/18, DfE aligned place funding across the system at £10k. Maintained schools with ARPs receive £6k per occupied place, with the remaining £4k received via per pupil funding within individual school budgets (as ARP pupils are on school rolls for census). Vacant places within ARPS are paid at £10k place funding. To maintain the £10k per place across the system, a clawback is in place where an ARP receives more than £10k per ARP pupil. The clawback resets the place funded amount to a consistent £10k across the system.

### **Proposal:**

- *Uplift 2023/2024 top-up ranges by 4% at an estimated cost of £0.030m*
- *To establish an ARP and resource panel to ensure that provision is being allocated consistently across SEND provision.*
- *Establish additional ARP (Primary High Need) needs based on trajectories of newly identified children 25 children already attending Kingsley Primary School. Place funding will be payable at £6k per place (£0.150m) and top-up payments are estimated at £0.100m.*
- *Extend existing secondary ARP places by 22 places operational from 1 January 2024*

## **14. Capacity of SEND Team**

- 14.1 The numbers of Education, Health and Care Plans has significantly increased over the last four years. However the number of SEND officers supporting this process has stayed static since 2018.

| 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|------|------|------|------|------|
| 585  | 610  | 689  | 740  | 805  |

- 14.2 This is now affecting the timeliness of undertaking EHC assessments (SEND COP sets out 20 weeks requirement) and the timeliness of reviews is very poor. This is not good for children and parents and needs to improve.

- 14.3 Other local authorities have taken the decision to change processes and their SEND officers do not undertake front facing meetings and use portals to manage all information. There is no legal requirement for local authorities to undertake these meetings. However a session with schools took place recently to understand if processes were appropriate and whether there are efficiencies that can reduce workload and schools said they wanted the current model to continue.
- 14.4 The current capacity within the SEND team cannot continue with the front facing model therefore in order to sustain there needs to be added capacity within the team.

#### *Proposal*

- *Increase the capacity of the SEND team recruiting two additional SEND officers (Band 11) at a cost of £0.089m.*

## **15. Early Years**

- 15.1 Over the last year there has been anecdotal evidence that the needs at early years are increasing. One view is that this is owing to children in their earliest years not being subjected to the interaction that would be normal owing to COVID. It is thought that this would lead to potential developmental delay. However information from all partners are indicating it is more complicated than just a lack of opportunities.
- 15.2 The following information has been captured from the pilot Early Years Panel which indicates that this is an area that needs systemic focus:
- Since September 2022 there have been 43 Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments initiated. Of those 43 there were 16 for Nursery and Reception Aged Children (37%). This compares to a figure of 8 out of 41 (19.5%) for the same period last year. Almost double the requests for statutory assessment in the EYFS age group.
  - An Early Years panel has been established to trial an early intervention approach to enable need to be identified early. However it has become evident that need is at a high level. For the period March 22 – January 23 there have been 50 referrals to the Early Years Panel with the following primary needs:
    - 60% Speech Language Communication and Interaction Needs
    - 10% medical / physical needs
    - 6% Social and Emotional Needs (presenting through behaviour)
    - 4% General Learning / Delay
    - 20% unknown
  - 36% of the children that came to panel now have Early Years EP/Small Steps involvement. Despite ever increasing creativity in Small Steps Service delivery to maximise the resource there is now always a waiting list for Small Steps involvement.
  - Of the children with Social Communication needs most are non-verbal and highly sensory. Narrative evidence from both schools and settings is that a high level of adult support is required to keep these young children safe (putting small objects in mouth etc). Reports from the Early Years EP and Small Steps is that this level of

need requires a totally different curriculum based on engagement profiles not just a differentiated curriculum.

- Increasingly the Early Years Panel hear of parents wanting specialist provision from the off (possibly reflected in the doubling of Early Years statutory assessments). We hear of schools expressing difficulties in meeting needs which obviously puts parents off and reduces confidence in the SEN System from the beginning. Panel members pick this up with schools and challenge accordingly.

15.3 The above information is a concern. It is clear that we need to understand the needs of these children. There is a significant risk that if we don't understand these needs that there will be a presumption they need specialist provision. The cost of this (if not appropriate) will have to be sustained for potentially 12/13 years and not be right for the child.

## Proposals

*Establish an early years support/ portage offer with a focus on early intervention with potential resource as set out below:*

- *Additional small steps worker*
- *Assistant Psychologist*
- *School EYs specialist teachers (seconded from schools or employed by schools)*
- *Estimated costs would include 1.0 FTE at band 9 (£0.036m), 1.0 FTE Assistant Education Psychologist (£0.040m) and £0.040m for specialist teacher support. Total cost estimate of £0.116m*

## 16. Funding & Conclusions

16.1 The current pressure on the HNB is significant and the costs set out above will add to the immediate pressure thus increasing the overspend. However all the information gathered for this review shows that if we don't make some substantial changes the funding from HNB will never be sustainable and we will need to seek to transfer funding from the Schools Block.

16.2 We will therefore see:

- An increasing number of children needing specialist provision;
- An increasing number of children needing independent provision at high cost;
- Children's needs not being met appropriately as provision is not available;
- Parents continuing to believe that EHC assessment is the only route to their children's needs being met.

16.3 Current independent provision costs between £60k - £80k therefore in order to ensure that the HNB is sustainable (additional funding from government is expected to reduce to only inflationary uplifts – not at the level we have seen for the last two years) we will need to reduce the number of independent placements by at least 10. There are currently 80 placements therefore this would be a 12.5% reduction.

16.4 Even a 12.5% reduction in Independent School Fees would not bring spend back in line with budget as savings would be between £20k-£40k per placement. At the top

end of this estimate that would only produce saving of £400k against an in year overspend of between £1.687m and £2.147m.

- 16.5 Therefore it is suggested that the following proposals are approved based on the assumption that the proposals will in the longer term enable the HNB to be sustainable within the funding envelope provided by the Government.
- 16.6 It is intended that the proposals set out in this paper will support the following:
- Establishment of solution focused forum – will reduce the need for independent out of area places as schools will work together to develop packages of support
  - IPS devolved funding – will enable schools to be more creative to look at cohort groups instead of individuals, will allow for more collaborative working, potentially jointly commissioning services that can support groups of schools, early support prevents need for a statutory response (EHC)
  - Increase in capacity in special schools – reduce the need for high cost out of area provision
  - Increase Additionally Resourced Provision – reduce the need for specialist provision
  - Early Years support team – will enable settings to be supported with increasing needs so we understand and can meet their needs early, reduce the need for specialist provision if needs are met.
- 16.7 Therefore it is felt that the only way to meet the needs of our children with SEND in the future is to invest additional funding to stop further high costs. If all the proposals within the review are accepted, alongside other areas of general budget growth, the HNB budget gap for 2023/24 is projected to be in the range of £1.687m to £2.147m (dependent upon the option approved for special schools – para 11.4).
- 16.8 DSG reserves currently have a balance of £1.230m. Although DSG reserves are historically earmarked to individual blocks (e.g. high needs block) for internal reporting purposes, ESFA consider DSG reserves as one overall balance in terms of accounting and reporting of deficits.
- 16.9 Therefore, current reserve balances earmarked to support the High Needs Block stand at £0.325m. Should the mid-case projection included in the outturn report materialise, there would be a deficit reserve of £0.581m. However, overall DSG reserves would remain positive (Early Years and Growth Fund) at £0.324m.
- 16.10 However, if the proposals in this report were approved the estimated balance on the DSG reserves at 31.03.2024 would be £1.363m in deficit or £1.822m in deficit, depending on the recommendations approved.
- 16.11 The regulations at present provide a statutory override which allows local authorities to report a DSG reserve in deficit. This override will stop in 2024/25 as by then, ESFA expect HNB spending will be equal to budget provided.
- 16.12 There is currently an DfE initiative where LA's with a deficit are invited to join a Safety Valve Programme. From information from a neighbouring authority our trigger point (at which we are strongly encouraged to join the programme) may be as low as a £4.6m cumulative deficit.

16.12 Clearly, approving these proposals has to be on the understanding that ALL schools adopt the approach of ensuring Hartlepool children can access Hartlepool education and reduce the number of children who have to be educated out of authority, be it in other local authority schools or in an independent schools.

## 17. Recommendations

### 17.1 Horizon funding model

17.1a Increase the number of commissioned places at Horizon to 28 (includes 10 inreach places)

17.1b Continue to commission 12 places at Haven

17.1c Introduce the following funding model:

- Haven – £10k place funding and £1.6k top-up
- Horizon – £10k place funding and £14k top-up

17.1d If numbers of PEX reduces for the year 2024/25 the type of places will be reviewed and PEX places will be converted to inreach places and explored to see if appropriate to extend to KS2 support.

### 17.2 Inclusions/ IPS

17.2a To develop and implement the devolving of IPS funding to four clusters (acknowledging this is best fit and not perfect).

17.2b Establish four SEND cluster leads to work with the local authority to develop model, implement model and manage funding and requests across the cluster (to be funded for two years via SEMH funding (separate on Agenda).

17.2c To establish a solution focused forum to review any children that needs cannot be met in Hartlepool due to a lack of provision.

17.2d Develop Hartlepool “ordinarily available” document to support the allocation of additional funding (previous IPS now cluster funding).

### 17.3 Top up ranges

17.3a Apply an annual uplift based on Council’s Commissioning Team indicators.

17.3b Apply a 4% uplift for 2023/24 at an estimated cost of £0.090m

### 17.4 Capacity of special schools

17.4a Explore opportunities to bid for 9 specialist free school – potentially through school from early years to KS4. Potential for multi academy trust to bid in partnership with local authority.

### 17.5 Special schools funding model

17.5a Move away from existing MFG arrangement to a per pathway / team price (using current special school payments) with a 4% uplift at an estimated cost of £0.118;

17.5b As option 1 for Catcote. For Springwell, move away from existing MFG arrangement to a per team price using estimated operating costs with a 4% uplift at an estimated cost of £0.578m;

17.5c As option 1 for Catcote. For Springwell, move away from existing MFG arrangement to a per team price using estimated operating costs with nil uplift and a reduction to reflect the new additional grant income at an estimated cost of £0.440m.

17.6 Additionally resourced provision (ARPs)

17.6a Uplift 2023/24 top-up ranges by 4% at an estimated cost of £0.030m;

17.6b To establish an ARP and resource panel to ensure that provision is being allocated consistently across SEND provision.

17.6c Explore additional ARP (Primary) for communication and interaction needs (based on trajectories of newly identified children) which would be for 25 additional children

17.6d Extend ARP (Secondary) from January 2024

17.7 Capacity of the SEND team

17.7a Increase the capacity of the SEND team recruiting two additional SEND officers at a cost of £0.089m

17.8 Early Years

17.8a Establish an early years support/ portage offer with potential resource as set out below:

- Additional small steps worker
- Assistant Psychologist
- School EYs specialist teachers (seconded from schools or employed by schools)
- Cost of proposal estimated at £0.116m

All recommendations with a 2023/24 cost attached are listed in the following table. The total cost of proposals amounts to £0.904m or £1.364m depending on the proposals contained at paragraph 17.5a-c relating to special schools.

| Ref     | Description  | £m           | £m           | £m           |
|---------|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 17.1c   | Horizon School – commission 28 places at £10k place funding and £14k top-up.<br><br>Haven – commission 12 places at £10k place funding and £1.6k top-up<br><br>Existing cost is £0.680m and proposal cost is £0.811m | 0.131        |              |              |
| 17.3b   | IPS top-up ranges - Apply a 4% uplift for 2023/24  | 0.090        |              |              |
| 17.5a-c | Special schools – move away from existing MFG arrangement to a per pathway price (option 1 or option 2 or option 3)  | 0.118        | 0.578        | 0.440        |
| 17.6a   | ARPs – Apply a 4% uplift to top-up ranges for 2023/24  | 0.030        |              |              |
| 17.6c   | Explore additional ARP (Primary) for communication and interaction needs (based on trajectories of newly identified children) which would be for 25 additional children  | 0.250        |              |              |
| 17.6d   | Extend ARP (Secondary) from January 2024   | 0.080        |              |              |
| 17.7a   | Increase the capacity of the SEND team recruiting two additional SEND officers   | 0.089        |              |              |
| 17.8a   | Establish an early years support/ portage offer  | 0.116        |              |              |
|         | <b>TOTAL (with either option 1,2 or 3 para 17.5)</b>   | <b>0.904</b> | <b>1.364</b> | <b>1.226</b> |

**Report to Hartlepool Schools' Forum 15 February 2023**  
**From Danielle Swainston (Assistant Director – Joint Commissioning)**

**Item 4: SEMH School Funding**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to request the use of the SEMH schools funding to be allocated to support the High Needs Block review.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 Prior to the introduction of the four DSG blocks, funding was allocated to the Local Authority via the Schools Budget. Schools Forum could approve the funding of Centrally Retained Services which if approved this funding was 'top-sliced' from the Schools Budget.
- 2.2 There were historically eight categories of Centrally Retained Services. One category was named 'Capital Expenditure funded from Revenue'. This funding once approved by Schools Forum was added to the Capital Programme of school capital works, which was annually approved by Capital Sub Group and subsequently Children Services Committee.
- 2.3 When the four blocks were introduced, a Central Services School Block was created. The option to approve 'Capital Expenditure funded from Revenue' was removed as a category for Centrally Retained Services. Schools Forum agreed that any money not committed to a capital project from previous years approvals be earmarked for SEMH projects.
- 2.4 Apart from funding/contributing towards a few SEMH capital projects the funding remaining is £0.743m.
- 2.5 Discussions have taken place within the High Needs Block review meetings about how to support our approach with additional funding. There was a request from the HNB group for the local authority to submit proposals to Schools Forum for the use of the SEMH funding to support the HNB review.

**3. Proposals**

- 3.1 Support the devolving of IPS funding to clusters:
- Fund capacity in the clusters to develop the processes and in the longer term manage the process – moderation/ panel approach/ approval for funding. It will need to be decided how many days are needed to support this approach. The average cost of SENDCOs across the system is £72k which is £378.95 per day. As an example two days per week per cluster equates to £28,800. A total for all clusters would be per annum £115,200. (please note: cluster pupil numbers are different so would need to understand what additional capacity was needed for each cluster. The costs are for the total and work would need to be undertaken about each cluster requirement)



It is expected that it would need two years to establish this and understand if it works. Therefore total cost would be £230,000.

- Fund 0.5 Educational Psychologist to support the implementation of processes/ moderation/ clusters working together = £37,477.
- Pump prime the cluster working with additional funding towards early support for children with additional needs. Allocate £200k across the clusters (allocate based on pupil numbers) for one year. Also an option to extend this pump prime to the second year – either £200k or a reduction for Year 2 to £100k

### 3.2 Total costs would include:

SENDCO time = £230,000

Additional EP capacity to support cluster working = £37,477

Pump prime cluster working in relation to SEND children = £200k or £300k or £400k

## 4. Recommendations

- 4.1 To allocate **£230,000** of the SEMH schools funding to support implementation of devolving funding to clusters.
- 4.2 To allocate **£37,477** of the SEMH schools funding to support implementation of cluster working.
- 4.3 To allocate funding to pump prime cluster working (choose one of the following options)
  - a) **£200k** for one year;
  - b) £200k for two years = **£400k**; or
  - c) £200k for one year and £100k for second year = **£300k**.

**A vote is required and All Schools' Forum members are eligible to vote.**

## Appendix A

### Clusters for IPS devolved funding

|            |                 | Numbers on roll (Oct census) | IPS funding for whole cluster |
|------------|-----------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| South      | Fens            | 395 (59N)                    |                               |
|            | Golden Flatts   | 97 (10N)                     |                               |
|            | Grange          | 322 (63N)                    |                               |
|            | Greatham        | 90 (13N)                     |                               |
|            | Kingsley        | 421 (56N)                    |                               |
|            | Rossmere        | 344 (72N)                    |                               |
|            | St Teresa's     | 283 (32N)                    |                               |
|            | Manor           | 1029                         |                               |
|            | English Martyrs | 1331                         |                               |
| Central 2  | Eskdale         | 186 (27N)                    |                               |
|            | Brougham        | 268 (44N)                    |                               |
|            | Holy Trinity    | 210 (18N)                    |                               |
|            | Jesmond Gardens | 305 (63N)                    |                               |
|            | St Aidan's      | 279 (54N)                    |                               |
|            | St Cuthbert's   | 222 (16N)                    |                               |
|            | St Joseph's     | 103 (11N)                    |                               |
|            | Stranton        | 276 (51N)                    |                               |
|            | Ward Jackson    | 86 (12N)                     |                               |
| Dyke House | 1242            |                              |                               |
| Central    | Eldon Grove     | 446 (51N)                    |                               |
|            | Hart            | 98 (10N)                     |                               |
|            | Lynnfield       | 220 (57N)                    |                               |
|            | Rift House      | 210 (48N)                    |                               |
|            | Sacred Heart    | 371 (34N)                    |                               |
|            | St Peter's      | 89 (8N)                      |                               |
|            | Throston        | 389 (51N)                    |                               |
|            | West Park       | 305 (33N)                    |                               |
|            | High Tunstall   | 1348                         |                               |
| North      | Barnard Grove   | 299 (26 N)                   |                               |
|            | Clavering       | 334 (28N)                    |                               |
|            | St Bega's       | 141 (21N)                    |                               |
|            | St Helen's      | 217 (42N)                    |                               |
|            | St John Vianney | 198 (39N)                    |                               |
|            | West View       | 378 (72N)                    |                               |
|            | St Hild's       | 685                          |                               |

**Report to Hartlepool Schools' Forum 15 February 2023**  
**From Danielle Swainston (Assistant Director – Joint Commissioning)**

**Item 5: High Needs Block Projected Outturn 2022/23**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present the projected 2022/23 outturn for high needs services based on spending to the end of quarter three.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 Financial pressures affecting the provision of services for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are reported to Schools' Forum at regular intervals.
- 2.2 Projected outturns for 2022/23 based on worse-case, mid-case and best-case have been prepared.
- 2.3 The final position for 2021/22 was a year-end overspend of £0.386m. The overspend was despite increased block funding of £1.151m compared to the previous financial year.

**3. 2022/23 Block Funding**

- 3.1 The Hartlepool high needs block allocation (after recoupment of place funding for academies) has changed to reflect academy conversions for Rossmere and Springwell schools in-year. The revised allocation for 2022/23 is **£13.943m**.
- 3.2 Although block funding has reduced, there is no impact overall on the high needs spending position. The change means that place funding will be passed direct to Rossmere and Springwell by ESFA and will therefore form part of our recoupment value.

**4. 2022/23 Outturn Projection**

- 4.1 Based on spending in quarter 3, along with estimated expenditure for the remainder of the financial year, the projected outturn position for high needs ranges from £0.739m overspend best case to £1.129m overspend worse case. This is summarised by each area of spend in the table below.
- 4.2 The mid-case projected overspend has increased from £0.438m at quarter 2 to £0.906m at quarter 3. The paragraphs that follow explain the main variances to budget based on the mid-case projection.

| High Needs Expenditure 2022/23 | Worse Case    |                                | Mid Case      |                                | Best Case     |                                |
|--------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|
|                                | Projection £m | Variance Over/(under) Spend £m | Projection £m | Variance Over/(under) Spend £m | Projection £m | Variance Over/(under) Spend £m |
| Place funding                  | 0.882         | -                              | 0.882         | -                              | 0.882         | -                              |
| Independent school fees        | 4.675         | 0.454                          | 4.654         | 0.433                          | 4.612         | 0.391                          |
| Out of Area top-ups            | 0.415         | (0.080)                        | 0.415         | (0.080)                        | 0.415         | (0.080)                        |
| Top-up funding and support     | 6.575         | 0.565                          | 6.516         | 0.506                          | 6.511         | 0.501                          |
| Horizon School and AP          | 0.839         | 0.086                          | 0.796         | 0.043                          | 0.776         | 0.023                          |
| Post-16 top-ups                | 1.144         | 0.104                          | 1.044         | 0.004                          | 0.944         | (0.096)                        |
| Support services               | 0.467         | -                              | 0.467         | -                              | 0.467         | -                              |
| Borrowing Costs                | 0.075         | -                              | 0.075         | -                              | 0.075         | -                              |
| <b>Total projection</b>        | <b>15.072</b> | <b>1.129</b>                   | <b>14.849</b> | <b>0.906</b>                   | <b>14.682</b> | <b>0.739</b>                   |

#### 4.3 Local authority place funding (on budget).

Budgets have been realigned to match the revised funding from ESFA outlined at paragraph 3.1. Place funding is expected in line with budget.

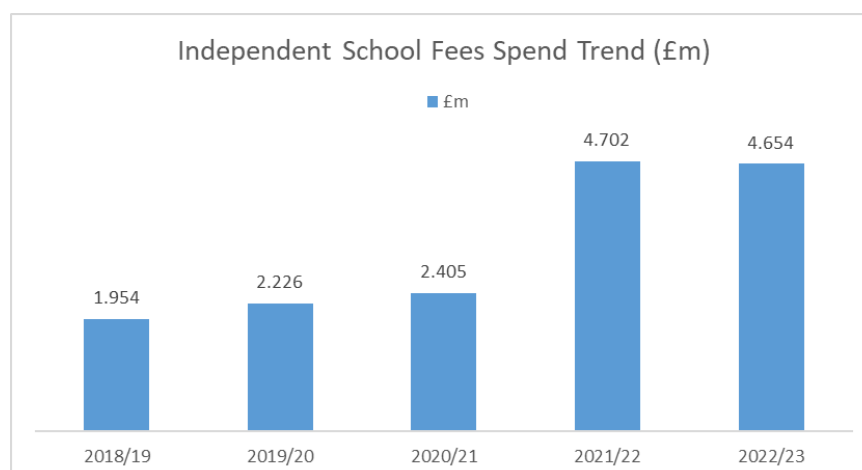
#### 4.4 Independent school fees (£0.433m overspend)

Independent School placements account for approximately 30% of High Needs Block spend. The projected forecast (mid-case) of £4.654m is based on:

- Existing placements for 73 FTE pupils at an average cost of £22k per term;
- 14 leavers (i.e. part year placements) during 2022/23 to date at a total cost of £209k;
- Estimated growth in placements for 2 pupils for spring term at an estimated cost of £21k per term.

For comparison, the equivalent spend breakdown for 2021/22 was placements for 60 FTE pupils at an average cost of £20k per term. Therefore, there are 13 additional pupils being funded at this point in 2022/23. The delay in opening of the free school is contributing to the financial pressure on independent placements as the majority of provision is SEMH.

During 2021/22, there were 3 placements costing in excess of £50k per term. This has reduced to 2 placements in 2022/23.



#### 4.5 Out of authority top-ups (on budget)

There are currently 29 pupils placed out of Hartlepool at an average cost of £5k per term. There have been 6 leavers (i.e. part year placements) to date in 2022/23 at a total cost of £50k. The mid-case projection assumes there are no new placements for the remainder of 2022/23. Additional out of authority places in year are unlikely as there is limited supply of these places.

#### 4.6 Exclusions, including Horizon School (£0.043m overspend)

This budget head funds the cost of place funding and top-ups for Horizon School, along with the costs of alternative provision for permanently excluded pupils. It receives income from AWPU clawback from schools for those pupils that are permanently excluded.

During quarter 3, the number of pupils placed in alternative provision has increased from 12 to 17. This increase has resulted in a projected overspend of £0.043m.

#### 4.7 Top-up funding and support (£0.506m overspend)

This budget heading includes funding for Individual Pupil Support (IPS) and funding for Special Schools and ARP top-ups.

Projected spend has increased significantly during quarter 3 (mid case projection has increased from £0.043m overspend to £0.506m overspend).

There has been further growth in exceptional funding agreements for IPS during the quarter. Agreements are approved on a group funding basis and aim to support children in their current school. New group funding agreements are in place to assist with early identification in younger children. There are also agreements to fund a member of staff to continue a specific pupil's education in mainstream school whilst a more specialist place is sought.

Cost funded arrangements at one special school and one ARP have been revised and uplifted. These changes are effective from 1 September 2022.

#### 4.8 Post-16 top-up funding (on budget)

Forum Members will recall that there has been an increase in the number of pupils with SEND choosing to take up and continue education beyond age 16. The original budget for 2022/23 was significantly increased to reflect the increased volume of pupils. Forecast expenditure remains in line with the available budget.

#### 4.9 Support Services (on budget)

The contribution from high needs to local authority support services is assumed at budget level, with inflationary increases being absorbed by the local authority.

#### 4.10 Borrowing Costs (on budget)

Borrowing costs to fund part of the capital works needed to extend SEND provision within the town were approved by Full Council on 8 July 2021. A cost of £0.075m has been incorporated into outturn projections for 2022/23 for interest payments.

- 4.11 Current reserve balances earmarked to support the High Needs Block stand at £0.325m. Should the mid-case projection included in this report materialise, there would be a deficit reserve of £0.581m. However, overall DSG reserves would remain positive (Early Years and Growth Fund).
- 4.12 Although DSG reserves are historically earmarked to individual blocks (e.g. high needs block) for internal reporting purposes, ESFA consider DSG reserves as one overall balance in terms of accounting and reporting of deficits.
- 4.13 The current balance of total DSG reserves is £1.230m. Should the movement on reserves in 2022/23 be limited to the projected high needs block overspend, DSG reserves would reduce to £0.324m.

## **5. Recommendations**

- 5.1 Forum is recommended to note the contents of the report.

**Report to Hartlepool Schools' Forum 15 February 2023**  
**From Penny Thompson – Head of Service**

**Item 6: Dedicated Schools Grant – Early Years Block 2023/24**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to consult on the 2023/24 Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF) and funding of Providers.
- 1.2 Schools' Forum has already approved the central element of spending at an earlier meeting on 19 October 2022.
- 1.3 Schools' Forum received an update on Early Year's spending for 2022/23 at their meeting of 6 December 2022 in preparation for decisions relating to the hourly rates to be set from April 2023.
- 1.4 This report presents a summary of the consultation responses for consideration by Schools' Forum.
- 1.5 Changes to the former Teacher's Pay Grant (TPG) and Teacher's Pension Employer Contribution Grant (TPECG) for early year's settings in schools are outlined in the report.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The EYNFF sets the hourly funding rates that each local authority is paid to deliver the universal and additional entitlements for three and four year olds, along with entitlements for 2 year olds.
- 2.2 Local authorities are required to consult providers on proposed annual changes to local early year's funding formulas, although the final decision rests with the local authority.
- 2.3 Consultation with providers was open between the 10 January and 17 January 2023.
- 2.4 There is a key change to the EYNFF from 2023/24 onwards. Since 2019, school settings have received a separate government grant to help fund the costs of teacher pay and pension contribution increases introduced in September 2019. This separate grant has been mainstreamed into the funded hourly rate for 3 to 4 year old provision from April 2023.

**3. 2022/23 Financial Position**

- 3.1 Outturn projections are prepared on a quarterly basis for early year's provision. Owing to the volatility in attendance during the year and in recognition that final funding is not confirmed until after the latest January census is published, a range of scenarios are considered for projected outturns.

3.2 The table below shows the range of outturn projections for 3 to 4 year old provision.

| Scenario  | Best Case<br>£m   | Mid Case<br>£m  | Worse Case<br>£m  |
|---|---|---|---|
| Budget  | 4.448   | 4.448   | 4.448   |
| Spend Estimate                                  | 4.237   | 4.487   | 4.537   |
| Overspend (+) /<br>Underspend (-)<br>Projection | (0.211)   | 0.039   | 0.089   |
| High Level<br>Assumptions - Funding             | Funding based on 5 months of January 2022 census and 7 months January 2023 census estimate from EY Team |   |   |
| High Level<br>Assumptions –<br>Expenditure      | Year to date spend plus estimates for remaining autumn term and spring term from EY Team                | Summer term actual spend plus assumed autumn 2022 spend is equal to autumn 2021 and spring 2023 spend is equal to spring 2022 | Summer term actual spend plus assumed estimated January 2023 census headcount is the basis of spend for autumn 2022 and spring 2023 |

3.3 The latest outturn projection for 3 to 4 year provision is in the range of £0.211m underspend (best case) to £0.089m overspend (worse case). This compares to an underspend of £0.224m in 2021/22. The regulations place an obligation on the local authority to pass through at least 95% of funding for 3 to 4 year old provision to providers. In 2021/22 the pass through rate fell slightly short at 94.28%. Should the best-case underspend materialise in 2022/23, the pass through rate is at risk again.

3.4 The table below shows the range of outturn projections for 2 year old provision.

| Scenario  | Best Case<br>£m   | Mid Case<br>£m  | Worse Case<br>£m  |
|---|---|---|---|
| Budget  | 1.373   | 1.373   | 1.373   |
| Spend Estimate                                  | 1.295   | 1.297   | 1.401   |
| Overspend (+) /<br>Underspend (-)<br>Projection | (0.078)   | (0.076)   | 0.028   |
| High Level<br>Assumptions - Funding             | Funding based on 5 months of January 2022 census and 7 months January 2023 census estimate from EY Team |   |   |
| High Level<br>Assumptions –<br>Expenditure      | Year to date spend plus estimates for remaining autumn term and spring term from EY Team                | Summer term actual spend plus assumed autumn 2022 spend is equal to autumn 2021 and spring 2023 spend is equal to spring 2022 | Summer term actual spend plus assumed estimated January 2023 census headcount is the basis of spend for autumn 2022 and spring 2023 |



- 3.5 The latest outturn projection for 2 year old provision is in the range of £0.078m underspend (best case) to £0.028m overspend (worse case). This compares to an underspend of £0.069m in 2021/22. Forum will recall that although the funding basis has reverted to the usual January census points in 2022/23, we are seeing unexpected changes in spending versus funding.
- 3.6 To help ease the pressure on reserves and pending the outcome of the Task and Finish Group proposals, the authority retained a total 16p increase in funding from government (8p increase from April 2020 and a further 8p increase from April 2021). This approach reduced the 2021/22 funding shortfall by an estimated £0.040m. For April 2022, the full increase of 21p was passed to providers via the 2 year old provision hourly rate, with the 16p continuing to be withheld.
- 3.7 The balance of DSG reserves relating to Early Years currently stands at £0.536m.

#### 4. **2023/24 Block Funding**

- 4.1 The table below summarises the indicative early year's funding position for 2023/24 published on 16 December 2022.

| Early Years Block                        | Rate            | 2023/24<br>Estimated<br>Funding (£) |
|--|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| 3/4 Year Old Funding                     | £5.09 per hour  | 5,268,123                           |
| Disability Access Fund (DAF)             |                 | 51,336                              |
| Pupil Premium                            |                 | 178,369                             |
| Total 3/4 Funding                        |                 | 5,497,828                           |
| 2 Year Old Funding                       | £5.63 per pupil | 1,410,400                           |
| <b>Total Estimated Early Years Block</b> |                 | <b>6,908,228</b>                    |

- 4.2 The funded rate for 3 to 4 year old provision increases from £4.80 to £5.09; the funded rate for 2 year old provision increases from £5.57 to £5.63. This hourly rate from government includes the funds both to deliver the scheme and the maximum payment for providers for each eligible child.
- 4.3 The 29p increase for 3 to 4 year old provision includes 24p to fund the previously separate Teacher's Pay Grant (TPG) and Teachers Pension Employer Contribution Grant (TPECG). Therefore, without the grant, the actual increase for 3 to 4 year old provision is 5p per hour.

## 5. Proposed Hourly Rate Structure 2023/24 – Three to Four Year Old Provision

5.1 The table below shows the proposed hourly rate structure for 2023/24. The following changes are proposed:

- Apply the increase of 5p per hour, with 4p of the increase being applied to the base rate and 1p to centrally retained budgets;
- Create a new supplement for payment of the 24p TPG / TPECG to relevant settings;
- Remove the 2p contingency and transfer the 2p to the base rate. This will result in a total 6p per hour increase to the base rate for 3 to 4 year old provision in line with the government's 6p per hour increase for 2 year old provision. It will also assist in achieving the 95% pass through rate as outlined in paragraph 3.2.

| <b>Proposed three &amp; four year old formula</b> | <b>Current Hourly Rate (£)</b> | <b>Proposed New Hourly Rate (£)</b> | <b>% Allocated</b> |
|---|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>DFE allocation</b>                             | <b>4.80</b>                    | <b>5.09</b>                         | <b>100.0%</b>      |
| <b>Proposed Hartlepool Formula:</b>               |                                |                                     |                    |
|   |                                |                                     |                    |
| Base Rate   | 4.50                           | 4.56                                | 89.5%              |
| Mandatory Deprivation Supplement                  | 0.01                           | 0.01                                | 0.2%               |
| TPG / TPECG Supplement                            | 0.00                           | 0.24                                | 4.7%               |
| Contingency                                       | 0.02                           | 0.00                                | 0.0%               |
| SEN Inclusion Fund                                | 0.03                           | 0.03                                | 0.6%               |
| <b>Pass- through rate to providers</b>            | <b>4.56</b>                    | <b>4.84</b>                         | <b>95.0%</b>       |
| <b>Centrally retained funding</b>                 | <b>0.24</b>                    | <b>0.25</b>                         | <b>5.0%</b>        |
| <b>Total</b>                                      | <b>4.80</b>                    | <b>5.09</b>                         | <b>100.0%</b>      |

### 5.2 Pass-through rate – 95%

The pass-through rate includes the base rate, the funding of the deprivation supplement, the new TPG / TPECG supplement and an allocation for the SEN inclusion fund. These elements are described in more detail below.

### 5.3 Base rate– 89.5%

The base rate proposed would represent an increase of 6p per hour from the existing base rate of £4.50. The base rate is payable to all providers of three to four year old provision.

### 5.4 Mandatory Deprivation Supplement – 0.2%

Deprivation is a mandated supplement within the early year's hourly rate. This is proposed at the same rate as 2022/23. Payments would continue to be allocated on the basis of those three to four year olds attracting pupil premium.

### 5.5 TPG / TPECG Supplement – 4.7%

From 2019/20, school settings received a grant to cover the significant teacher pay and pension increases effective from September 2019. Rather than continue to pay as a separate grant, DfE have increased the 3 to 4 year old provision funded hourly rate. For

Hartlepool, the DfE increase is 24p. As the supplement will not affect all settings, the actual payment per hour will be greater than 24p. Section 6 of this report outlines proposals for distribution of the new supplement.

#### 5.6 Contingency Fund – 0.0%

Historically, 2p of the hourly rate has been set aside as contingency in case the 95% pass through rate is exceeded because of unexpected volatility in census volumes. As the contingency has not been required in recent years, and to assist with reaching the 95% pass through rate, the contingency is proposed to be removed in 2023/24. This position will be considered again ahead of setting hourly rates in 2024/25.

#### 5.7 SEN Inclusion Fund – 0.6%

The SEN Inclusion Fund is proposed to be maintained at 0.6%. This fund can be accessed by all providers in accordance with the agreed policy.

5.8 The pass-through rate position will continue to be carefully monitored in-year to assess any risk and respond appropriately. The response could prompt an hourly rate change from April 2024, or if significant, consideration of an in-year change to hourly rates.

#### 5.9 Centrally Retained Funding

In accordance with ESFA guidance, centrally retained funding of 5% of the EYNFF, is proposed to be retained. Schools' Forum has already recommended the retention of 5% for approval by Children's Services Committee.

#### 5.10 Other Specific Funding

The local authority also receives specific funding for eligible three and four year olds relating to the Disability Access Fund (DAF) and Pupil Premium; this is passported to eligible providers. The national funding rate for EYPP will increase by 2 pence, from 60 pence to 62 pence per eligible child per hour. The national funding rate for DAF will increase by £28, from £800 to £828 per eligible child per year.

## **6. TPG / TPECG Supplement Proposals**

6.1 Mainstream schools and academies with an early year's setting currently receive a grant payment from DfE to help fund the cost of significant increases in teacher's pay and pension contribution rates that became effective from September 2019. The grant was established in financial year 2019/20 using a rate per pupil multiplied by the latest census numbers for the setting. This grant is being mainstreamed into the 3 to 4 year old provision hourly rate from April 2023.

6.2 The current total TPG / TPECG grant amount has been divided by the total funded part time equivalents for 3 to 4 year old provision by DfE to establish a funded hourly rate of 24p.

6.3 The grant eligibility was restricted to school settings. However, in mainstreaming the former grant into the 3 to 4 year old provision hourly rate, DfE have suggested that local authorities may wish to reconsider the basis for distributing the funding, whilst continuing to adhere to the reason and rationale for the original TPG / TPECG grant.

- 6.4 As the original grant was restricted to school settings only, one option would be to continue this practice and apply the TPG / TPECG supplement to maintained schools and academies only. This proposal would result in an hourly rate supplement of 31p as school and academy settings make up 76% of 3 to 4 year old provision funded hours. With this option, school settings would receive an amount broadly comparable to the funding received under the separate grant, although exact amounts would vary because the method of distribution differs.
- 6.5 Another option would be to extend the supplement to any settings that employ a qualified teacher. This currently affects 5 non-school settings across Hartlepool. This option would result in an hourly rate supplement of 29p as settings would make up 81% of 3 to 4 year old provision funded hours. With this option, school settings would see a reduction in funding compared to the previous grant income, although the estimated reduction would equate to only £14k across all school settings.
- 6.6 With either option, it is not possible to predict the exact amount of TPG / TPECG supplement that will be payable as the amount is dependent on actual hours paid. Clearly, hours paid can fluctuate from funded hours which are on the basis of the two January census points.
- 6.7 Owing to the unpredictability and, in recognition of 2023/24 being the first year of operating the TPG / TPECG supplement, Schools' Forum may wish to consider holding back a small amount of the supplement as a contingency. As an example, one regional authority is proposing to withhold 2p (or 10%) of their supplement. However, it should be noted that the TPG / TPECG supplement is included within the 95% pass through requirement so any unallocated amounts not passed to providers will place risk on meeting the 95% obligation.

## **7. Proposed Hourly Rate 2023/24 – Two Year Old Provision**

- 7.1 Schools' Forum will recall previous decisions in 2020/21 and 2021/22 to withhold 16p (2 x 8p) of the 2 year old funding to support the ongoing risks associated with the funding deficit in this early years budget area. This decision reduces the two year old deficit by approximately £0.040m. This was ratified by Children's Services Committee.
- 7.2 The Task and Finish Group met in November 2022 to review the latest position on 2 year old provision expenditure, particularly the projected underspend for 2022/23. Owing to the uncertainty, the Group supported proposals from Council Officers to continue to withhold the 16p per hour but to pass on any new hourly rate increase for 2023/24.
- 7.3 Following notification of the minimal 2 year old hourly rate increase of 6p on 16 December 2022, further review of continuing to hold back the full 16p was considered appropriate. Although there is a risk that hourly rate reductions may need to be proposed by the Task and Finish Group in future, this risk must be considered against the current financial climate and the sustainability risk for providers.
- 7.4 Although there is uncertainty surrounding both the reasons and the longevity for any projected underspend in 2022/23, the authority proposes that 2p of the total 16p being

withheld is passed to providers from April 2023. This position will be reviewed before setting hourly rates for April 2024.

- 7.5 Therefore, the new hourly rates for two year old provision in 2023/24 would increase by the 2p per hour outlined at paragraph 7.2, along with the 6p per hour increase from government.

## 8. Consultation Responses

- 8.1 The consultation with providers ended on 17 January 2023. A summary of the responses is provided in the table below.

| <b>Early Years Consultation 2023/24 - Responses</b>  | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> | <b>Not Sure</b> | <b>Total</b> | <b>% Agreed</b> |
|--|------------|-----------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 1: Do you agree that the hourly rate for 3 to 4 year old provision is distributed using the current hourly rate structure as shown in the table at section 5.1 above?)                       | 11         | 0         | 0               | 11           | 100%            |
| 2: Do you agree that 2p of the historic 16p increase for 2 year old funding is passed to providers in 2023/24, despite the risk that the hourly rate may need to be reduced in future years? | 5          | 2         | 4               | 11           | 45%             |
| 3: Do you agree that the 2023/24 hourly rate increase of 6p from government for 2 year old funding is passed to providers in 2024/24?  | 6          | 0         | 5               | 11           | 54%             |

- 8.2 Although the number of responses to the consultation was disappointing, they were from a mix of settings – 2 childminders, 3 private nurseries and 6 schools with early year’s provision.

## 9. Recommendations

- 9.1 To note the contents of the report and the consultation responses included.
- 9.2 To agree the preferred option from the table below for recommendation to Children’s Services Committee for payment of the new TPG / TPECG supplement.

|          |   |                    |
|----------|---|--------------------|
| Option 1 | Restrict the TPG / TPECG supplement to school settings and do not set aside a contingency                     | Hourly rate of 31p |
| Option 2 | As option 1 but set aside a contingency of 2p   | Hourly rate of 29p |
| Option 3 | Extend the TPG / TPECG supplement to all settings with a qualified teacher and do not set aside a contingency | Hourly rate of 29p |
| Option 4 | As option 3 but set aside a contingency of 2p   | Hourly rate of 27p |

- 9.3 To agree that the proposed three and four year old hourly rate structure shown at the table in paragraph 5.1 above should be recommended to Children's Services Committee for Implementation from April 2023. This equates to £4.56 per hour (base rate) for eligible 3 and 4 year olds, noting the TPG/TPECG Supplement will be as per recommendation at 9.2 above.
- 9.4 To recommend to Children's Services Committee that the hourly rate for two year old provision increases from £5.41 to £5.49 from April 2023.

**A vote is required and ALL Schools' Forum members are eligible to vote.**

**Report to Hartlepool Schools' Forum 15 February 2023**  
**From Amanda Whitehead – Assistant Director Education**

**Item 7: Schools Block Budgets Update 2023/24**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide updated information on the 2023/24 Schools Block funding issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on 16 December 2022.
- 1.2 ESFA have provided updated funding information that reflects the October 2022 school census and pupil characteristics.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 Consultation on setting individual school budgets (ISBs) took place with Schools' Forum during September to early December 2022. These discussions were on the basis of the indicative NFF published in July 2022.
- 2.2 Forum will recall that additional modelling was performed for this budget year with the aim of anticipating the funding position before the release of the updated allocation by ESFA. This additional modelling suggested that a cap would be needed in order for the maximum Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) of 0.5% to be affordable.
- 2.3 At their meeting on 18 November 2022, Schools' Forum voted in favour of applying the maximum possible MFG, with an appropriate cap. Budget estimates suggested that a cap in the region of 3.1% would be required.
- 2.4 Schools' Forum agreed to the transfer of £0.139m from the Central School Services Block (CSSB) to the Schools Block.

**3. Schools Block Funding 2023/24**

- 3.1 The following table shows the updated Hartlepool schools block allocation of £76.531m for 2023/24 based on October 2022 census numbers. This allocation includes growth funding which ESFA have confirmed is £0.186m for 2023/24.

| <b>Schools Block</b>                                     | <b>Pupil Numbers<br/>(Oct 2022)</b> | <b>2023/24<br/>Funding<br/>(£m)</b> |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Primary  | 7,581                               | 38.638                              |
| Secondary  | 5,635                               | 37.086                              |
| Premises   |                                     | 0.621                               |
| Growth   |                                     | 0.186                               |
| <b>NFF Schools Block 2023/24</b>                         |                                     | <b>76.531</b>                       |
| NFF Schools Block 2022/23, including supplementary grant |                                     | 74.916                              |
| Funding increase   |                                     | 4.354                               |
| Percentage increase in funding                           |                                     | 5.49%                               |

- 3.2 Primary pupil numbers reduced from 7,654 to 7,581 between the October 2021 and October 2022 census (a reduction of 73). Secondary pupil numbers increased from 5,604 to 5,635 (an increase of 31).
- 3.3 The formula calculation based on updated pupil numbers and characteristics for the October 2022 census required a cap of 3.29% to fund the 0.5% maximum MFG. This is a slightly improved position from the estimated cap of 3.1%.
- 3.4 The Council submitted the Hartlepool formula using the government's Authority Pro-Forma Tool (APT) for the statutory deadline of 20 January 2023. ESFA are in the process of review and validation before giving their final sign off for 2023/24 school budgets.
- 3.5 Whilst completing the APT, it was recognised that 2 Hartlepool schools qualified for funding against the sparsity factor (total funding of £7k across the 2 schools). In the national move towards compliance with the hard formula, this factor is mandatory. Although minimal in cost, this is a new factor within the Hartlepool formula and is likely to feature in each year's budget allocation from 2023/24 onwards.
- 3.6 Appendix A shows the 2023/24 schools block funding at an individual school level once the block transfer and Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) plus cap have been applied. Appendix A excludes growth funding.
- 3.7 The final columns in Appendix A show the change in ISBs from 2022/23 to 2023/24 as both a monetary value and percentage.

#### 4. **Block Transfers**

- 4.1 Updated CSSB funding of £0.711m for 2023/24 (£0.731m in 2022/23) has been confirmed based on October 2022 census numbers.
- 4.2 At their meeting on 18 November 2022, Schools' Forum agreed to fund the elements amounting to £0.572m shown in the table below and for the balance of CSSB funding (£0.139m) to be transferred to the schools block for 2023/24.

| <b>Historic Commitments</b>     |       | <b>£m</b>    |
|---------------------------------|-------|--------------|
| Licenses                        |       | 0.067        |
| Termination of Employment costs |       | 0.031        |
|                                 | Total | <b>0.098</b> |
| <b>Ongoing Responsibilities</b> |       | <b>£m</b>    |
| Retained Education Services     |       | 0.215        |
| Admissions                      |       | 0.146        |
| Copyright licences              |       | 0.074        |
| Servicing Schools Forum         |       | 0.039        |
|                                 | Total | <b>0.474</b> |
| <b>Grand Total</b>              |       | <b>0.572</b> |



**5. Supplementary Funding 2023/24**

- 5.1 Schools received a separate supplementary grant in 2022/23 to fund cost pressures, including energy increases. The separate grant has been mainstreamed into the NFF for 2023/24 onwards.
- 5.2 On 16 December, 2022, ESFA announced an additional grant – the Maintained Schools Additional Grant (MSAG). For 2023/24 this funding sits outside of the Schools Block and is therefore not included in this report.

**6. Recommendations**

- 6.1 Forum is recommended to note the updated schools block funding for 2023/24 outlined in this report and illustrated at an individual school level on appendix A.

## APPENDIX A: Updated Individual School Budgets 2023/24

| A                | B                | C  | D              | E                | F                       | G  | H                                 | I                                 | J                    |
|------------------|------------------|--|----------------|------------------|-------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| School Reference | MPPF Test Result | 2023/24 Pre MFG Budget (Excl ESG and De-Del) | MFG 0.50%      | Cap              | 2023/24 Post MFG Budget | 2022/23 post MFG Budget (incl supplementary grant) | Budget Increase +£ / Decrease (£) | Budget Increase +% / Decrease (%) | Per Pupil Increase % |
| 1                | PASS             | 1,707,110                                    | 0              | (17,195)         | 1,689,915               | 1,709,377  | (19,462)                          | (1.14%)                           | 3.29%                |
| 2                | PASS             | 802,822                                      | 0              | (12,416)         | 790,406                 | 764,891  | 25,515                            | 3.34%                             | 3.29%                |
| 3                | PASS             | 8,410,503                                    | 0              | 0                | 8,410,503               | 8,099,980  | 310,523                           | 3.83%                             | 3.27%                |
| 4                | PASS             | 7,080,784                                    | 0              | 0                | 7,080,784               | 6,960,529  | 120,255                           | 1.73%                             | 3.26%                |
| 5                | PASS             | 8,674,819                                    | 0              | (3,441)          | 8,671,378               | 8,373,663  | 297,715                           | 3.56%                             | 3.29%                |
| 6                | PASS             | 946,448                                      | 12,246         | 0                | 958,694                 | 946,779  | 11,915                            | 1.26%                             | 0.50%                |
| 7                | PASS             | 1,436,987                                    | 0              | (323)            | 1,436,664               | 1,440,379  | (3,715)                           | (0.26%)                           | 3.29%                |
| 8                | PASS             | 460,482                                      | 46,950         | 0                | 507,432                 | 505,583  | 1,849                             | 0.37%                             | 0.50%                |
| 9                | PASS             | 1,521,016                                    | 0              | 0                | 1,521,016               | 1,473,365  | 47,651                            | 3.23%                             | 2.87%                |
| 10               | FAIL             | 1,349,208                                    | 0              | 0                | 1,349,208               | 1,324,365  | 24,843                            | 1.88%                             | 0.75%                |
| 11               | PASS             | 2,126,543                                    | 0              | 0                | 2,126,543               | 2,075,010  | 51,534                            | 2.48%                             | 3.20%                |
| 12               | PASS             | 1,526,953                                    | 0              | 0                | 1,526,953               | 1,417,097  | 109,856                           | 7.75%                             | 2.27%                |
| 13               | PASS             | 2,004,310                                    | 0              | 0                | 2,004,310               | 1,990,765  | 13,545                            | 0.68%                             | 1.86%                |
| 14               | PASS             | 1,589,081                                    | 0              | (4,260)          | 1,584,821               | 1,539,695  | 45,126                            | 2.93%                             | 3.29%                |
| 15               | PASS             | 1,539,024                                    | 0              | 0                | 1,539,024               | 1,581,104  | (42,080)                          | (2.66%)                           | 2.52%                |
| 16               | PASS             | 1,072,689                                    | 0              | 0                | 1,072,689               | 1,070,479  | 2,210                             | 0.21%                             | 1.85%                |
| 17               | PASS             | 495,672                                      | 57,025         | 0                | 552,697                 | 550,595  | 2,101                             | 0.38%                             | 0.50%                |
| 18               | PASS             | 8,281,801                                    | 0              | 0                | 8,281,801               | 7,937,218  | 344,583                           | 4.34%                             | 1.75%                |
| 19               | PASS             | 4,891,519                                    | 0              | 0                | 4,891,519               | 4,800,467  | 91,052                            | 1.90%                             | 3.01%                |
| 20               | PASS             | 1,030,274                                    | 0              | (6,721)          | 1,023,553               | 1,003,888  | 19,665                            | 1.96%                             | 3.29%                |
| 21               | PASS             | 1,381,334                                    | 0              | (1,902)          | 1,379,432               | 1,318,405  | 61,027                            | 4.63%                             | 3.29%                |
| 22               | PASS             | 639,371                                      | 0              | (9,204)          | 630,167                 | 590,800  | 39,368                            | 6.66%                             | 3.29%                |
| 23               | PASS             | 1,122,311                                    | 0              | (3,272)          | 1,119,039               | 1,044,526  | 74,513                            | 7.13%                             | 3.29%                |
| 24               | PASS             | 497,042                                      | 51,775         | 0                | 548,817                 | 514,539  | 34,278                            | 6.66%                             | 0.50%                |
| 25               | PASS             | 1,821,609                                    | 0              | (6,591)          | 1,815,018               | 1,732,931  | 82,087                            | 4.74%                             | 3.29%                |
| 26               | PASS             | 1,808,708                                    | 0              | (17,828)         | 1,790,880               | 1,734,098  | 56,781                            | 3.27%                             | 3.29%                |
| 27               | PASS             | 1,219,723                                    | 0              | (1,251)          | 1,218,472               | 1,171,470  | 47,002                            | 4.01%                             | 3.29%                |
| 28               | PASS             | 1,518,475                                    | 0              | 0                | 1,518,475               | 1,593,818  | (75,343)                          | (4.73%)                           | 0.99%                |
| 29               | PASS             | 1,782,948                                    | 0              | 0                | 1,782,948               | 1,784,945  | (1,997)                           | (0.11%)                           | 2.19%                |
| 30               | PASS             | 1,216,620                                    | 0              | (2,669)          | 1,213,952               | 1,241,651  | (27,699)                          | (2.23%)                           | 3.29%                |
| 31               | PASS             | 2,177,326                                    | 0              | (26,085)         | 2,151,241               | 2,075,972  | 75,269                            | 3.63%                             | 3.29%                |
| 32               | PASS             | 1,788,358                                    | 0              | 0                | 1,788,358               | 1,767,859  | 20,499                            | 1.16%                             | 1.28%                |
| 33               | PASS             | 1,317,669                                    | 0              | (12,835)         | 1,304,835               | 1,363,917  | (59,083)                          | (4.33%)                           | 3.29%                |
| 34               | PASS             | 614,812                                      | 2,914          | 0                | 617,726                 | 664,125  | (46,399)                          | (6.99%)                           | 0.50%                |
| 35               | PASS             | 588,656                                      | 0              | (4,821)          | 583,835                 | 625,521  | (41,686)                          | (6.66%)                           | 3.29%                |
| <b>TOTAL</b>     |                  | <b>76,443,009</b>                            | <b>170,909</b> | <b>(130,813)</b> | <b>76,483,106</b>       | <b>74,789,804</b>                                  | <b>1,693,302</b>                  |                                   |                      |

**Report to Schools' Forum 15 February 2023**  
**From Amanda Whitehead – Assistant Director, Education**

**Item 8: Closure Process 2022/23**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the statutory deadline for local authorities' statutory accounts for 2022/23 with particular reference to the date Easter falls in 2023. Good Friday falls on 7 April 2023 and Easter Monday on 10 April 2023.

**2. Deadline For 2021/22 Closure of Accounts**

- 2.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015. The regulations require local authorities in England and Wales to produce their statutory accounts by 31<sup>st</sup> July each year.
- 2.2 The regulations reduced the timescales to produce the statutory accounts by one month, with the accounts now having to be prepared by 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023. The external auditors then have a further two months to audit the accounts.

**3. What this means?**

- 3.1 The local authority has a statutory duty to ensure maintained school accounts are incorporated into its accounts. To provide sufficient time to carry out this work, the school accounts will need to be closed during the first week of April.
- 3.2 To ensure the statutory deadlines are adhered to we will need to make the necessary arrangements to ensure systems are made available for local authority finance staff to complete the preliminary close visit. The visit can be made in person by finance staff, or remotely. Remote visits can be performed using connections across the Council network, where this is feasible. Remote visits can also be carried out over the telephone with an appropriate member of school administration.
- 3.3 All visits will need to take place between Monday 3 April 2023 and Thursday 6 April 2023. Visits will be booked in advance to minimise any disruption, the visit typically takes one hour to complete.
- 3.4 Council finance staff will contact individual school administrators during early February to organise visits.

**4. Recommendations**

- 4.1 Schools' Forum is asked to:
- a) note the contents of this report;
  - b) ensure that the head teachers (maintained schools only) they represent are aware that adequate staff cover is required for each school (or via a remote connection to school systems) to support the closure of accounts over Easter 2023.