

ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS' FORUM

Date and Time:- Friday 13 December 2024 at 8.30 a.m.

Venue:- Rockingham Professional Development Centre,
Roughwood Road, Rotherham. S61 4HY

The items which will be discussed are described on the agenda below and there are reports attached which give more details.

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Introductions

Welcome by the Vice Chair and introductions by all Forum Members present.

2. Apologies for Absence

To receive apologies for absence from any Forum Member who are unable to attend the meeting.

3. Declarations of Interest

To receive any declarations of interest from Forum Members in respect of items listed on the agenda and to confirm the nature of those interests and whether they intend to leave the meeting for the consideration of the item.

4. Appointment of Chair

To appoint a new Chair of the Rotherham Schools Forum.

5. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 5 - 15)

To receive and approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13th September, 2024.

6. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

To consider and report on any matters arising from the previous minutes.

7. Membership and Constitution of the Rotherham Schools Forum (Standing Item)

To consider and approve the amendments/updates to the membership of the Rotherham Schools Forum.

Based on the School Sector Breakdown to remove:-

- Kirstey Peart representing Primary School Headteachers (Maintained) who has stepped down from the Forum leaving a vacancy.

8. Schools Forum Review Feedback

Assistant Director of Education and Inclusion to report.

Recommendation:

That Schools Forum receive and note the update.

9. SEND Sufficiency Update

Transformation Lead, Commissioning, Performance and Quality to report

Recommendation:

That Schools Forum receive and note the update.

10. Dedicated School Grant (DSG) and Schools Budgets 2024-25 - Latest Position (Pages 17 - 20)

Head of Finance (CYPS) and Principal Finance Officer (CYPS) to report.

Recommendations:

1. That Schools Forum note the latest published DSG funding for schools for the 2024/25 financial year.
2. That Schools Forum note the financial positions of Rotherham's maintained schools and the identified financial risks against the schools DSG budgets for the year.

11. School Funding Formula Consultation Outcome (Part A) (Pages 21 - 27)

Head of Finance (CYPS) and Principal Finance Officer (CYPS) to report.

Recommendation:

That Members of Schools Forum note the contents of this report.

12. School Funding Formula Consultation Outcome (Part B) - (School funding transfer to high needs) (Pages 29 - 49)

Head of Finance (CYPS) and Principal Finance Officer (CYPS) to report.

Recommendations:

1. That the Schools Forum note the outcome(s) of the recent consultation with schools on the proposal for a block funding transfer to the high needs budget.
2. That the Schools Forum approve the council's proposal to transfer 0.5% of the schools block funding in 2025/26 to the high needs budget to address ongoing cost pressures.

13. Early Years and Wraparound Expansion Update (Pages 51 - 53)

Head of Service, Early Years and Childcare to report.

Recommendation:

That Schools Forum note and approve the content of the report.

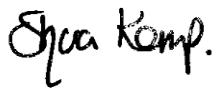
14. Schools Forum Forward Plan (Pages 55 - 56)

To consider the attached Forward Plan of agenda items and receive any updates.

15. Any Other Urgent Business

To receive any other items of urgent business.

**The next meeting of the Rotherham Schools Forum will
be held on Friday 17 January 2025
commencing at 8.30 a.m.
in Rockingham Professional Development Centre.**



**SHARON KEMP OBE,
Chief Executive.**

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**ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS' FORUM
FRIDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 2024**

Kirstey Peart - Sitwell Infant (Maintained) (as Chair for Item 1 and Items 3 to 18)
 Joshua Amahwe – Head of Finance, CYPS
 Ashley Blackwell – EHCP Team Manager
 Mark Cummins, SEND Project Lead, CYPS
 Dr. Sipra Deb (PVI Nursery)
 Chris Eccles – Oakwood (Academy)
 Wayne Greenhough – Nexus MAT (Special Academy)
 Lindsey Hadfield – Executive Head, Arnold Nursery
 David Horrigan – Maltby Learning Trust (Primary Academy)
 Lee Morrill – Aspire
 Lewis Moat – GMB Representative
 Colin Price – NEU Representative
 Mark Ryan – RNN Group
 Sharon Stones – Head of Arnold Nursery and Children’s Centre
 Cary-Anne Sykes – Head of Service, SEND
 Nevine Towers - Head of Business and Operations (Primary Academy)
 Pam Ward – Head of Service, Education, CYPS
 Sarah Whitby - Head of Service - Access to Education
 Nathan Williams – Roughwood Primary (Primary Academy)
 Mark Windle – Badsley Primary (Primary Maintained)

Apologies were received from:-

Councillor Victoria Cusworth – Cabinet Member for CYPS
 Niall Devlin – Assistant Director, Education and Inclusion
 Louise Keith – Principal Finance Officer, CYPS
 Amy Leech – HR Business Partner
 Lisa McCall – Wales High School
 Vera Njelic - Principal Finance Officer, CYPS
 Steve Scott – Happy Kids (PVI Nursery)

13. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to today’s meeting and introductions were made.

14. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Nominations were sought by the Clerk for the position of Chair of the Rotherham Schools Forum for the next two years.

Mrs. K. Peart was proposed and seconded and duly appointed to the position of Chair of Rotherham Schools’ Forum with immediate effect.

Agreed:- That Mrs. K. Peart be appointed Chair of the Rotherham Schools Forum for the next two years (2024/25 and 2025/26 academic years).

15. APPOINTMENT FOR VICE-CHAIR

Nominations were sought for the position of Vice-Chair of the Rotherham Schools Forum for the next two years.

Mr. M. Windle was proposed and seconded and duly appointed to the position of Vice-Chair of Rotherham Schools' Forum with immediate effect.

Agreed:- That Mr. M. Windle be appointed Vice-Chair of the Rotherham Schools Forum for the next two years (2024/25 and 2025/26 academic years).

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

17. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Consideration was given to the minutes from the previous meeting held on 21st June 2024.

Agreed:- That the minutes be approved.

18. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

There were no matters arising.

19. MEMBERSHIP AND CONSTITUTION OF THE ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS FORUM (STANDING ITEM)

No changes to the membership and constitution of the Rotherham Schools Forum were proposed.

The Forum noted that a subgroup was due to meet on Monday 23rd September to be to review the constitutional and organisational elements of the Forum.

The outcome of those discussions would be reported back to Schools Forum at the November meeting.

20. SCHOOLS BUDGETS 2024-25 - LATEST POSITION

Consideration was given to a report presented by Joshua Amahwe, Head of Finance (CYPS) which provided an update on the school's budget for 2024/25 and outlined the main funding changes announced by the DfE since the last Schools Forum in June 2024.

The latest confirmed DSG funding allocation for Rotherham for 2024/25 was £109.7m which included a total of £30.4m in Schools Block funding.

The latest allocation included a change of £363k on the High Needs Block. All other blocks remained unchanged from the last position reported to Schools Forum in June 2024.

The funding allocated to the Local Authority and delegated to maintained schools was 30.45m. The de-delegated budgets for Schools in Financial Difficulty (SIFD) and School Improvement and Trade Union activities were showing a balanced position for 2024-25.

The Local Authority was committed to supporting two schools using the SIFD funding for 2024/25 and it was likely that additional commitments would need to be made as schools continued to face rising costs alongside a drop in pupil numbers.

The latest confirmed allocation of 1.57m for the central block remained unchanged from the March 2024 allocation.

A cost pressure of 1.5m was forecasted for the High Needs block. There was a small increase in the deficit compared with the position in the Safety Valve agreement due to inflationary pressures, increases in EHCP pupils in mainstream settings and specialist provision and continued placements in out of authority independent settings. Work was continuing through the SEND Sufficiency programme to create more local places and provision for pupils with complex needs with the aim of reducing out of authority specialist placements.

Forum Members were assured that although the position on the High Needs Block was slightly adrift from the planned position it was not an immediate cause for concern when compared with the reported position of other Local Authorities.

A balanced budget position was currently forecasted across the Early Years Block, with the brought forward balance at the start of 2024/25 being utilised to fund the Inclusion Support Grant payment to providers. At this stage participation numbers are expected to be in line with budget projections, however Autumn term data (when available) would provide a clearer indication of the overall position.

The Delegated Schools Budget total net balances for maintained settings was set out at 6.1 of the report. When compared to the original budget the July position indicated a net improvement of £536k.

The July budget monitoring showed a decrease in net surplus of £604k compared to the 2023/24 outturn position and was reflective of the increased financial pressures faced by schools.

The latest position also indicated that five schools were now reporting a

deficit balance compared to the original three that had licensed deficits from May's budget submissions. One school had returned to a balanced position.

Since the original budget submission, a further three schools were now projecting deficits in their July budget statements.

It was noted that the Local Authority would continue to monitor those deficits and work closely with schools to support them with recovery plans to manage their overall financial position.

Forum Members were advised that the Department for Education (DfE) had announced that teachers would receive a 5.5% pay increase from September 2024.

The DfE are providing in the region of £1.1 billion in additional funding nationally to support schools (including mainstream, special and alternative provision) with overall costs.

Additional funding would be provided through a new Core Schools Budget Grant which was based on a combination of per-pupil allocation, a lump sum and weighting for disadvantaged pupils.

Schools would receive one payment to cover the 2024-25 financial year and it was expected that that would be paid by the ESFA in November 2024 for local authorities and December 2024 for academies. It was noted that schools were able to check their indicative allocations utilising a calculating tool provided on the DfE website.

Forum Members were informed that due to the timing of the general election the ESFA were unable to announce the school's budget or publish the indicative schools and high needs national funding formula allocations for 2025-26 and as a result the annual funding cycle would differ from previous years and new timelines would be confirmed in due course.

Agreed:- (1) That that latest DSG funding for schools for the 2024/25 financial year be noted.

(2) That the financial position of Rotherham's maintained schools and the identified financial risks against the schools DSG budgets for the year be noted.

(3) That the announcements of the Teachers Pay Award alongside the Core School Budget Grant allocation be noted.

(4) That the delay to the publication of the indicative schools and high needs national funding formula (NFF) allocations for 2025-26 due to the timing of the general election be noted.

21. GROWTH FUND POLICY

Consideration was given to a report presented by Joshua Amahwe, Head of Finance (CYPS) which provided a timely update on the changes introduced by the DfE in relation to the administration and distribution of growth funding by local authorities.

In 2024/25 more stringent guidelines were introduced by the DfE for the administration and distribution of growth funding. Reference was made to the official policy document appended to the report which provided a clear focus on how growth funding should be utilised.

The Head of Finance explained that the policy was not significantly different to previous practice and growth funding would continue to be ringfenced from the school block funding. The policy set out the criteria that would be applied to allocate funding and funding would then be used to manage and fund impact on schools where agreed growth was identified. It was also clarified that there was provision within the criteria related to funding pupil intake to ensure schools would not be financially disadvantaged.

The Head of Finance confirmed further updates on Growth Funding would be brought to Schools Forum as required.

Agreed:- (1) That the changes introduced by the Department for Education (DfE) be noted.

(2) That the local Growth Policy be approved and adopted for Rotherham.

22. FREE SCHOOL MEALS - AUTO ENROLMENT UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report presented by Joshua Amahwe, Head of Finance (CYPS) which provided an update on the final results of the Free School Meals (FSM) auto enrolment process.

It was noted that work on the project had begun in November 2023. The main aims of the project were to ensure that families were receiving what they were entitled to and that schools received the pupil premium grant associated with free school meals.

The project involved carrying out a data matching exercise using revenue and benefit data and school census data. Following the completion of the data matching work a list of families eligible but not currently claiming Free School Meals was collated.

Three hundred and sixty letters were issued to eligible families requesting consent to register for Free School Meals, of those letters issued three opted out of the process.

Following completion of the exercise a total of three hundred and forty

children were auto enrolled resulting in an approximate saving for families of £136,000 and approximate additional Pupil Premium funding of £502,560 for schools.

Details relating to which schools would see the biggest gain in funding were set out in section 4.3 of the report.

The Head of Finance emphasised that it remained important for schools to reflect the information in their census data returns as this would drive funding for the national funding formula and pupil premium.

The Forum commended the excellent piece of work carried out and welcomed the positive outcome achieved.

Agreed:- That the total number of additional families identified through the process and the additional pupil premium generated be noted.

23. MATRIX OF NEED

Consideration was given to a presentation provided by Cary-Anne Sykes, Head of Service - SEND (circulated with the agenda papers) which provided an overview on the development of a key piece of work relating to SEND Thresholds.

The presentation highlighted:-

- A SEND Thresholds document would be created based on a Graduated Approach to identifying and meeting needs.
- The work was part of the national agenda and linked to the SEND Strategy currently out for consultation.
- The three key priorities for the Borough – Equity, Inclusion and Ambition.
- The need for consistency across the whole system with a transparent approach.
- Guidance to be created as an online document. Reference was made to the Gateshead paperwork as an example, detailing clear blocks for Early Years, Primary and Secondary (mainstream) and Post 16.
- Detailed threshold descriptors for each block.
- Cognition and learning would be the biggest piece of work to make Rotherham centric.
- Every area at every level would have a Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) outcome.
- Task and Finish Groups to be established to review the document and ensure it reflects Rotherham. Engagement would be welcomed with as many as possible in each area.
- SEND Thresholds would provide a framework and clear pathway and understanding of each level of need.
- The Thresholds guidance would be used for consistency of

judgement and was expected to lead to improved transitions between academic phases.

- The need for full and ongoing involvement of the young person and their parent/carers.
- The provision of a Training programme to support implementation alongside personal support and advice.

It was acknowledged that this was a huge piece of work, with the primary focus initially being the development of the Thresholds document. Consideration would then be given to the criteria for entry for each provision and each area would be broken down into detail to provide clarity.

Discussion ensued about how Post 16 providers would be involved in the work and how information would be shared. Comments were also acknowledged regarding the potential impact of any associated costs to mainstream settings.

It was confirmed that all areas would be invited to participate in the development of the threshold proposals and once developed detailed consultation with various stakeholders would then take place.

Agreed:- (1) That the presentation be received and the contents noted.

(2) That the link to the document be re-circulated to Schools Forum Members via the Clerk.

(3) That SENCO Leads be invited to attend a 1-hour online session to discuss the SEND Threshold proposals.

24. SEND SUFFICIENCY UPDATE

Consideration was given to the report presented by Mark Cummins, Transformation Lead, which provided an update on Rotherham's SEND Sufficiency data that provided comparisons to the national position where data was available to do so.

The data included within the report had been taken from a number of different sources including the local authorities Safety Valve data dashboard, SEN2 statutory returns and placement tracking information.

A number of key points from the report were highlighted:-

- 22.2% of Rotherham statutory aged pupils had either a statutory plan for Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND), known as an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or were receiving SEND support. This compared to a national average of 18.4%.
- 5.5% of Rotherham's statutory agenda pupils had an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) compared to a national average of 4.8%.

- Rotherham had 3310 active EHCP's in place for all children and young people 0-25yr old at the SEN2 census date in January 2024. This was 425 more plans than the previous year's return and represented an increase of 14.7% compared to a national increase of 11%.
- Requests for EHCP assessments have continued to rise in Rotherham with a 72% increase since 2018. Over the past 12 months there had been a 16.1% increase in requests.
- 61% of all new requests to assess for an EHCP were from schools, with 30% from parents/carers and family members. These percentages had remained relatively flat since 2018.
- The most local prevalent need types were Autism, SEMH, Speech Language and Communication, and Cognition and Learning.
- Indicators against national comparators show that Rotherham had less children who attended mainstream schools with an EHCP and more children attending specialist provision. This pattern was also replicated in Post 16 education with more children attending independent provision.

Forum Members were advised that the data was used for several different purposes including Safety Valve and Send Sufficiency work.

It was recognised that there had been an increase in the availability of some specialist SEND resource provision for this academic year and further provision was expected to be accessible from the next academic year which should generate a shift in some of the data.

Agreed:- That the SEND Sufficiency Update report be received and noted.

25. **REDUCED TIMETABLES - UNDERSTANDING AND IMPACT**

Consideration was given to a report presented by Sarah Whitby, Head of Service – Access to Education, which provided context and understanding of the use and prevalence of Part Time Timetables across Rotherham settings.

It was noted that the Local Authority had a statutory duty to monitor and report on pupil's missing out on full time education.

Data referenced within the report focused on data provided from the 2023-24 return. It was recognised that systems for returning information across Rotherham had not been as robust as the service would have liked however the service had worked hard to embed and strengthen those systems.

Of the 120 settings across the Borough, 61 schools provided a return from the 2023-24 academic year and of those schools 56 reported the use of part-time timetables. Five schools reported a nil return each month and the position was unknown for the remaining 59 settings.

A new collection system, which was now in place, would prompt all schools to make a return, including nil returns, to provide assurance that details of all children accessing part-time provision was captured.

The Forum noted that the use of part time timetables had increased in Secondary settings with a peak at KS4. The highest use of part-time timetables in Primary settings was for reception aged pupils, recognising that some children in Reception would not yet have achieved statutory school age.

It was also noted that 79% of students reported were on the SEND register and 43% had an EHCP. Forum Members were advised that to keep the use of part-time provision for students with an EHCP in close focus relevant information was also shared where needed with the EHCP team.

In 2023-24 22% of children reported had an open Social Care involvement and 47% had a least one open Early Help involvement within the academic year.

A relaunch of the part time timetable guidance alongside new reporting arrangements would take place later this month and it was suggested that this also included SENCO networks and the Secondary Heads Forum.

Termly analysis of data would begin alongside the distribution of child level data to relevant teams to share awareness and strengthen collaborative working practices. Proposals were also shared on the commencement of annual reporting on the Use of Part-time Timetables to Schools Forum.

Discussion ensued on the potential linked financial implications of the use of part-time timetables.

Forum Members also expressed an interest in understanding the numbers of children reported using part-time timetables that were on the SEND register that were awaiting special school provision and whether this information could be included in the annual report going forward.

It was recognised that there were several strands to this area of work with a number of wider issues to consider. Understanding the drivers behind the use of part-time timetables was crucial and consequently dialogue with settings would take place if it was identified that part-time timetables had been used inappropriately within a setting.

Forum Members enquired if there was any national data on the use of part-time timetables to be able to compare against Rotherham's position. The Head of Service for Access to Education confirmed that there was no national data available as this data was not published in the same way as attendance and exclusion data.

Agreed:- (1) That the report be received and the contents noted.

(2) That a report on the use of Part-time Timetables be presented to the Schools Forum on an annual basis.

26. ANNUAL EXCLUSIONS DATA

Consideration was given to a report presented by Sarah Whitby, Head of Service – Access to Education, which provided context to the rising use of suspension and exclusions reported nationally and mirrored locally.

The report highlighted that there had been a rise in the use of suspensions and exclusions reported nationally and similar trends had also been seen locally with rates for permanent exclusions rising above national levels over the last two years.

Locally collated and verified data had identified a difference to the data reported centrally through the census. The Local Authorities data team were currently analysing the data closely to understand the differences reported. It was also recognised that data from academic years 2019-20 and 2020-21 was impacted by periods of national lockdown and should be interpreted with caution.

Fixed term exclusions had remained at a relatively stable level between 2016-2019 for Secondary settings but had subsequently been on an upward trajectory since 2021. In Primary settings numbers of fixed term exclusions had fallen in 2023-24.

Discarding lockdown data, fluctuations had been seen across Primary settings for permanent exclusions with 13 permanent exclusions issued for primary age children in 2023-24.

The borough wide rise in exclusions was due to the increase in Secondary exclusions, which had risen year on year since 2021.

Analysis of Secondary setting suspension data showed a peak at Year 9 for suspensions issued which could be associated to the fact there had been no transitional activities in place for pupils moving from Primary to Secondary settings due to the lockdown period. Analysis of Primary setting suspension data showed peaks at Year 2 and Year 6.

Permanent exclusions were highest in Year 10 at Secondary with 34 exclusions issued. Year 7 exclusions were raised as a concern with 18 exclusions issued for this year group, 13 of which were for a physical assault against an adult or pupil.

In Primary settings it was noted that the highest numbers of exclusions were at Year 2 and 4, with 6 out of the total 7 exclusions for these year groups being related to a physical assault against an adult or pupil. There

was also a higher percentage of SEND pupils excluded from primary settings than seen in secondary settings.

Several key actions were highlighted as set out in Section 3 of the report.

Forum Members acknowledged the significant impact the exposure of social media platforms had had on negative pupil behaviour in educational settings.

Forum Members queried if an upward trend had been seen in the numbers of assaults being reported and if this was reflective in the increase seen in the numbers of exclusions due to assaults. The Head of Service explained that there had been an increase in the numbers of assaults reported and statistics could be analysed to consider any differences in settings in conjunction with how those settings are managed and supported.

Agreed:- (1) That the report be received and the contents noted.

(2) That a report on the Exclusions and Suspensions be presented to the Schools Forum on an annual basis.

27. SCHOOLS' FORUM FORWARD PLAN

The Chair invited Forum Members to review the Forward Plan of agenda items and share any other items for inclusion.

The Clerk noted the following item for future discussion and would liaise with the relevant officer(s) on achievable reporting timescales.

- Childcare Expansion (including Wraparound Programme and uptake)

Agreed:- That the updates be received and noted.

Action: Clerk

28. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no other urgent business items to consider.

29. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That the next meeting of the Schools' Forum takes place on Friday, 15th November, 2024 at 8.30am at Rockingham Professional Development Centre.

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| REPORT FOR SCHOOLS FORUM |
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|-----------|-------------------------|---|
| 1. | Date of meeting: | 13th December 2024 |
| 2. | Title: | Dedicated School Grant (DSG) and Schools Budgets 2024-25 – Latest Position |
| 3. | Directorate: | Finance and Customer Services |

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update on the school's budget for 2024/25 and to outline the main funding changes announced by the DfE since the last School Forum in September 2024.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 It is recommended that the schools forum note the latest published DSG funding for schools for the 2024/25 financial year.
- 2.2 That Schools Forum note financial positions of Rotherham's maintained schools and the identified financial risks against the schools DSG budgets for the year.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION & CONTEXT

- 3.1 Following the DfE notification of Rotherham's DSG funding in December 2023, a report was presented to Schools Forum outlining the overall funding envelope across all four of the DSG funding blocks (£333.5m in total, £243.7m in Schools Block funding). This informed the budget setting process for the 2024-25 financial year.
- 3.2 Individual school budget shares were issued in February 2024 in accordance with the statutory deadline; with a requirement for schools to submit approved detailed 3-year budgets to the Authority by the 17th of May 2024 and revised budgets by the 17th October 2024.
- 3.3 Overall DSG allocations are amended by ESFA and changes communicated to Schools Forum through this report

4. LATEST DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT 2024-25

- 4.1 The latest confirmed DSG funding allocation for Rotherham for 2024-25 is £108.8m, which includes a total of £30.5m in Schools Block funding.

| 2024-25 DSG Funding Blocks | July 2024 Allocation | Latest Nov Position (£m) | Change (£m) |
|----------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| Schools Block | 30.45 | 30.45 | - |
| Central Block | 1.57 | 1.59 | 0.02 |
| Early Years Block | 30.95 | 30.91 | -0.04 |
| High Needs Block | 46.73 | 45.86 | -0.87 |
| Total DSG | 109.70 | 108.81 | 0.89 |

- 4.2 There has been an increase in funding of £20k in the Central Block to compensate for the additional cost associated with copyright licenses in 2024-25.
- 4.3 There has been a decrease of £875k in the high needs block driven by the academy conversion of Newman Special school.
- 4.4 In the Early Years block, there has an overall reduction of £44k since the July allocation. This is made up of a decrease in estimated number for 2 year olds early years pupil premium funding of £121k, partially offset by an increase in estimated number for 2 year old entitlement for working parents.

5. UPDATE ON CENTRALLY RETAINED DSG BUDGETS

- 5.1 These relate to budgets for schools' expenditure that are retained and where it is cost effective to be managed by the council. It comprises elements of the schools' block, early years, and the high needs DSG blocks. The table below summarises the latest forecast position across all the centrally retained DSG budgets.

| Centrally Retained DSG Budget Position October 2024 | Latest Budget (£m) | Latest Forecast (October) (£m) | Forecast Variance (£m) |
|---|--------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| Schools Block | 0.35 | 0.36 | 0.01 |
| Central Block | 1.59 | 1.59 | 0.00 |
| Early Years Block | 30.91 | 31.46 | 0.55 |
| High Needs Block | 47.07 | 50.07 | 3.00 |
| Total DSG | 79.92 | 83.48 | 3.56 |

The following is an explanation of the key variances:

- **Schools Block** – the actual delegated budget for 2024-25 currently stands at £29.25m, after adjusting for the school block funding transfer of 0.5% to the high needs budget. Of this amount, **£349k** was de-delegated

from the schools block and managed centrally and covers the following: growth fund; schools in financial difficulty; etc.

Overall, the de-delegated budgets are on track to spend to budget, with the exception of the Schools in Financial Difficulty (SIFD), where a minor over-commitment of £10k is currently forecast for the year. The LA has committed to supporting two schools using the SIFD funding for 2024-25 and it is still likely that additional commitments may be required following the next budget monitoring returns due in December.

- **Central Schools Services Block** – the DSG allocation for the CSSB is £1.59m for the year and is used to support ongoing commitments such as SACRE, Teachers Pensions costs, Schools forum admin costs, Schools Admissions and Copyright Licensing. There has been an increase of £20k to the allocation for the central block to cover the additional costs of the copyright licenses.
- **High Needs Block** – A cost pressure of £3m is currently forecast for the High Needs block and mainly relates to SEND. The increased deficit is mainly due to the following; inflationary costs; increase in EHCP pupils in mainstream schools and specialist provision; and continuing placements in out of authority independent settings. Work is ongoing through the SEND sufficiency programme to create more local places and provision aimed at reducing out of authority specialist placements
- **Early Years Block** – a cost pressure of £0.55m is currently anticipated across the early years block, and mainly relates to Inclusion Support Grant payments to providers for the year – which would be funded through the use of carry forward DSG reserve balances.

6. UPDATE ON DELEGATED SCHOOLS BUDGETS 2024-25

6.1 The total net balances as reported by 24 LA maintained primary, secondary and special schools and nurseries in their October revised budget submissions are shown below.

| | 2023/24 Outturn | 2024/25 Original Budget | 2024/25 Latest Budget Outturn | Variance |
|-----------|--------------------|-------------------------------|--|--------------|
| Nursery | 0.440 | 0.558 | 0.507 | -0.051 |
| Primary | 1.466 | 0.590 | 1.008 | 0.418 |
| Secondary | 0.556 | 0.088 | 0.104 | 0.016 |
| | 2.462 | 1.236 | 1.619 | 0.383 |

6.2 Main highlights from the above:

- When compared to the original budget, the October position shows a net improvement of £383k largely due to the Core Schools Budget Grant alleviating pressures on school budgets associated with the pay award.
- The October revised budget submissions indicate a decrease in net surplus of £843k compared to the 2023/24 outturn position. This is reflective of the increased financial pressures faced by schools.
- The latest position includes a total of 3 schools with deficit balances. In the original budget submission in May 2024, 3 schools submitted a deficit budget and 1 of those has now returned to projecting a balanced position. The other 2 schools remain are still operating under a licensed deficit and continue to work towards achieving a balanced position within the specified timeframes.
- Between the May and October budget submissions one additional is now projecting a deficit position at the end of the financial year.

| Schools with deficit | Original budget | Latest Oct position | Comments |
|--------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---|
| Aston Fence J&I | -£0.009 | -£0.008 | Unforeseen staffing costs. |
| Brinsworth Manor Infants | -£0.077 | £0.010 | Significant changes in staffing during academisation. |
| Wales Primary | -£0.052 | -£0.031 | No significant changes from original budget and deficit reduction plan. |
| Blackburn Primary | £0.002 | -£0.007 | Falling pupil numbers |

- The three schools that submitted a deficit budget have had licensed deficits approved by the LA. Two of these schools will receive funding through the Schools in Financial Difficulty (DSG) fund in 2024/25.
- The next budget monitoring is due in December 2024. Information received since the revised budget submission in October suggests at least one other school not mentioned above will be projecting a deficit at the end of the financial year.

9. NAMES & CONTACT DETAILS

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| BRIEFING PAPER FOR SCHOOLS FORUM |
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|-----------|-------------------------|--|
| 1. | Date of meeting: | 13th December 2024 |
| 2. | Title: | School Funding Formula 2025/26 Consultation outcome |
| 3. | Directorate: | Finance and Customer Services |

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Forum of the outcomes of Part A of the Schools Funding Formula consultation for 2025-26. This report will confirm the changes to the funding formula that will form the basis of determining individual schools budgets. The confirmed schools funding formula must be submitted to the DfE by 22nd January 2025.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 That members of Schools Forum note the contents of this report.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

To ensure compliance with the School & Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2017.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 To comply with the DfE operational guidance, local authorities are required to consult with schools, academies & Schools Forum in respect of planned changes to the local funding formula including the method, principles and rules that are to be adopted. The final decisions in respect of the local formula remain with the local authority.
- 3.2 The Local Authority have been unable to set out, as it has in previous years, detailed proposals for the Rotherham mainstream funding formula. This is due to the delay in the announcements on the National Funding Formula (NFF) and published DSG allocations as a result of the general election.
- 3.3 In order to support local authorities in their budget planning work, a summary policy note was published on 05 November 2024, which detailed the structure of the schools NFF for 2025/26 and the funding factors and values that will be used in the NFF. The policy note can be found at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pre-16-schools-funding-local-authority-guidance-for-2025-26/summary-policy-document-for-schools-national-funding-formula-2025-26>

- 3.4 A consultation exercise was undertaken in November 2024, which sought views on further changes to Rotherham's local formula as well as the proposal to transfer funding from the schools' block to the high needs block. (Covered in Schools Funding Formula Consultation paper 2025-26 – Part B).

4. CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 4.1 The following activities have taken place in respect of the consultation on the schools block and central schools services block;
- The consultation document was issued via e-mail on Thursday 14th November 2024 to all mainstream schools and academies.
 - The consultation closed on Friday 24th November 2024
 - Consultation responses have been analysed and are tabled in the appendices to this report.
- 4.2 A total of 62 academies and maintained schools responded to the consultation. This consisted of 56 primary schools and 6 secondary schools. Responses from Multi Academy Trusts (MAT) have been disaggregated to reflect the number of schools within the Trust (e.g A MAT with 6 schools is counted as 6 responses).
- 4.3 The table below shows the responses to the 2025/26 consultation. Further detail can be found in appendix A to this report.

| Consultation Responses | | | |
|------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Maintained | Academies | Total |
| Primary | 5 | 51 | 56 |
| Secondary | 0 | 6 | 6 |
| Total | 5 | 57 | 62 |
| | | | |
| Rotherham Total | 20 | 92 | 112 |
| | | | |
| Response Rate | 25% | 62% | 55% |

5. School block funding formula

5.1 Transition to a national funding formula

The structure of the Schools NFF will remain largely unchanged in 2025-26. The key changes include:

- Rolling in the Teachers Pay Additional Grant (TPAG), the Teachers Pay Employer Contribution Grant (TPECG) and the Core Schools Budget Grant (CSBG) into the NFF.

- Changes to the PFI factor
- Technical changes to the split sites factor
- A further uplift to the NFF factor values

In addition to the funding allocated through the NFF, further funding will be provided in 2025-26 in respect of the increase in National Insurance contributions.

5.2 2025/26 Rotherham's local funding formula proposed changes

Local Authorities that are not already mirroring the NFF will be required to move their factor values 10% closer to the NFF factor values. In 2024-25 Rotherham was aligned to most factor values and proposes to stay as closely aligned as the funding envelope allows in 2025-26 as set out in the following paragraphs.

5.3 Basic Entitlement (AWPU)

All LAs formulae must include a basic amount that every pupil attracts to their school. Funding is allocated through an 'age-weighted pupil unit' (AWPU) factor, with separate unit values for primary, KS3 and KS4. The AWPU rates are set by the NFF but can be determined locally by LAs in line with moving closer to the NFF.

In 2024-25 Rotherham's AWPU values were aligned to the NFF. In 2025-26 Rotherham proposes to stay as closely aligned to the NFF as the allocation allows.

| AWPU | RMBC 2024/25 | NFF 2024/25 | NFF 2025-26 | % Change |
|---------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------|
| Primary | £3,562 | £3,562 | £3,847 | 8% |
| KS3 | £5,022 | £5,022 | £5,422 | 8% |
| KS4 | £5,661 | £5,661 | £6,113 | 8% |

5.4 Additional Needs

The 2025-26 NFF continues to reflect the Government's policy of supporting schools with pupils with additional needs and ensuring that they get sufficient funding to tackle low attainment issues.

As in previous years, Rotherham proposes to continue to allocate funding through its local formula on a level consistent with the NFF. The following briefly explains the additional needs factors in the modelled formula for 2025-26

5.5 Deprivation Factor

The RMBC schools' formula currently allocates funding via the Free School Meals-EVER6 and the 2019 updated IDACI data (income deprivation affecting children index).

For 2025-26 it is proposed to continue to align the per pupil unit values of the IDACI and the FSM-EVER6 factors to the NFF rate.

5.6 **Mobility Factor**

This factor supports schools where a proportion of pupils join the school part way through the year. To be eligible the proportion must be above the threshold of 6%.

In 2024-25 Rotherham was aligned to the values in the NFF and is proposing to stay aligned in 2025-26 by uplifting by £5 to mirror the provisional 2025-26 NFF values.

5.7 **Low Prior Attainment Factor**

Low Prior Attainment allocates funding to schools based on the following:

- proportion of primary pupils identifying as not achieving the expected level of development in early years foundation stage profile.
- and secondary pupils not reaching the expected standard in KS2 at reading, writing or maths.

The unit values for both primary and secondary phases have been uplifted in the NFF (£5 primary; £10 secondary).

In 2024-25 Rotherham was aligned to the NFF in its local formula and is proposing to uplift its local values by the same amounts to stay aligned in 2025-26.

5.8 **English as an Additional Language Factor (EAL)**

This factor allocates funding to schools with identified pupils with a first language other than English (for up to 3 years after they enter the statutory school system). Separate unit values apply to both the primary and secondary phases. The rates for 2025-26 have been uplifted in the NFF (£5 primary; £10 secondary).

In 2024-25 Rotherham was aligned to the NFF in its local formula and is proposing to uplift its local values by the same amounts to stay aligned.

5.9 **School-led funding factors**

These comprised the lump sum, premises (i.e., rates, split sites, PFI factor) and growth factors. The following outline the proposed approach to these factors for 2025-26

- **Lump Sum:** The lump sum factor allocates a standard funding to all schools irrespective of size or number on roll. The lump sum factor in the NFF has been increased to £145,100 from £134,400 for 2024-25.

It is proposed to uplift Rotherham's local lump sum factor value to reflect NFF – to stay aligned.

- **Premises factors:** these comprised the following: **business rates** and **PFI factor**. In the main these factors allocate funding to schools to cover actual cost incurred in the year (e.g., business rates) or to cover additional unavoidable contract cost (e.g., PFI contract). An inflationary uplift would be applied to the PFI factor consistent with the NFF.
- **Split Site factor:** In 2024/25 the NFF introduced a compulsory national formulaic approach to split site funding. The factor is made up of 2 parts:
 - **basic eligibility funding:** schools attract a lump sum payment for each of their additional eligible sites (max 3 sites)
 - **distance funding:** eligible sites that are separated from the school's main site by more than 100 metres (by road distance) attract distance funding on top of the basic eligibility funding (max 3 sites).

The basic eligibility criteria for split sites funding requires additional sites to:

- be part of the main school, that is, to share the same unique reference number (URN) with the school's main site.
- be separated from the school's main site by a public road or railway
- have a building on them which is maintained by the school, and which is primarily used for the education of 5 to 16- year-old pupils in mainstream education. This excludes playing fields, 'ancillary buildings and buildings leased out full time by the school to another entity.

The provisional NFF funding for split sites in 2025-26 is £81,000 and it is proposed to include this in the RMBC local formulae following the announcement of allocations at the end of November.

6. Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG)

The MFG is a national requirement to protect schools from major real time funding reductions to their per pupil funding between years. It is set by the council following consultation with schools and the schools forum, within a range set by the government. For 2025-26 the Government has **confirmed a range of -0.5% to 0%**.

It is proposed for 2025-26 Rotherham adopts 0% for its MFG to ensure that no schools in the borough see a reduction in its per pupil funding on a like-for-like basis.

Q1 : Do you support the proposal to set the minimum funding guarantee (MFG) within the local funding formula at 0% for 2025-26?

Consultation response:

Of the total responses representing 62 schools 100% voted in favour of the proposal.

LA Response:

For 2025-26, the Council would look to set the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) for its local school funding formula at 0%.

7. Pupil Growth

In accordance with Government requirements, the pupil growth fund is to meet basic need and will be for the benefit of both maintained schools and academies.

Under the current formula arrangements school & academy budgets are to be based on pupil numbers as at the October pupil census. If a school admission limit is increased from September 2024 due to expansion, interim financial support to bridge the gap is necessary to cover the period September to March (or September to August for academies).

Q2 : Do you agree that in 2025/26 a growth fund of £150k is provided and will be funded from the DSG Allocation?

Consultation Response:

71% of the total 62 schools voted Yes and the remaining 29% voted No to the proposal.

LA Response:

The growth fund provides revenue funding to schools / academies to cover the additional costs of increased class sizes and school places (to address demand for places). Growth funding has been included by the DfE in the schools block funding for this purposes.

Based on this the Council would top slice the sum of £150k from the schools funding formula to be allocated to the relevant schools or academies that have agreed with the LA an increase in their numbers or PAN. Such allocation would be in accordance with the Growth Policy agreed by the Schools Forum. Actual payments would be reported to the Forum with any underspend maintained in the DSG reserve.

7.2 Falling Rolls

Similar to the Growth Fund, it is proposed a Falling Rolls Fund is maintained by Rotherham. Funding would be distributed to eligible schools on the basis of observed differences between primary and secondary numbers on roll within each medium super output area (MSOA) between the most recent October census and the census in the previous October.

Local Authorities continue to have discretion over whether to operate a falling rolls fund to be used to support specific schools where school capacity data (SCAP) shows that school places will be required in the subsequent three to five years.

Q3 : Do you agree that the Local Authority should continue to provide for a falling rolls fund of £50k? It is proposed the fund will be provided from the DSG allocation.

Consultation Response:

93.5% of the total 62 responses voted Yes to the proposal and the remaining 6.5% voted No.

LA Response:

The demographic data on birth rates in the borough predict that schools will continue to see a fall in pupil numbers which is unlikely to recover until the end of the decade. It is important that the LA is able to support schools to ensure their financial sustainability. Therefore, the LA will continue to maintain / operate a fallings roll fund of £50k through top slicing of the 2025-26 Schools Block allocation.

8. Name and contact details

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| BRIEFING PAPER FOR SCHOOLS FORUM |
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|-----------|-------------------------|---|
| 1. | Date of meeting: | 13th December 2024 |
| 2. | Title: | School Funding Formula 2025/26 Consultation outcome – Part B (School funding transfer to high needs) |
| 3. | Directorate: | Finance and Customer Services |

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Forum of the responses to Part B of the Schools Funding Formula consultation for 2025-26 and to seek a decision for the proposed transfer of 0.5% from the schools' block to the high needs block of the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2025/26.
- 1.2 The confirmed schools funding formula must be submitted to the DfE by 22nd January 2025.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 **That the Schools Forum note the outcome(s) of the recent consultation with schools on the proposal for a block funding transfer to the high needs budget.**
- 2.2 **That the Schools Forum approve the council's proposal to transfer 0.5% of the schools block funding in 2025/26 to the high needs budget to address ongoing cost pressures.**

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

To ensure compliance with the School & Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2017.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Within the Dedicated Schools Grant, the ESFA allow for Schools Forum to move up to 0.5% between the blocks. This proposal is to move 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block (at a value of approximately £1.3m) to address part of the financial pressures within the High Needs Block. It should be noted that High Needs Block and SEND financial pressures are a national issue, with Local Authorities lobbying that there is insufficient funding from Central Government.
- 3.2 It should also be noted that the proposal will only impact the 2025-26 budget allocations and not future years.

- 3.3 A consultation exercise was undertaken in November 2024, which sought views on further changes to Rotherham’s local formula as well as the proposal to transfer funding from the schools’ block to the high needs block.
- 3.4 Modelling for the consultation exercise was based upon indicative numbers for the 2025-26 schools block allocation due to a delay in the publication of the National Funding Formula due to the timing of the general election.

4. CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 4.1 The following activities have taken place in respect of the consultation on the schools block and central schools services block;
- The consultation document was issued via e-mail on Thursday 14th November 2024 to all mainstream schools and academies.
 - The consultation closed on Friday 24th November 2024
 - Consultation responses have been analysed and are tabled in the appendices to this report.
- 4.2 A total of 62 academies and maintained schools responded to the consultation. This consisted of 56 primary schools and 6 secondary schools. Responses from multi academy trusts have been disaggregated to reflect the number of schools within the trust. (e.g A MAT with 6 schools is counted as 6 responses).
- 4.3 The table below outline the responses to the 2025/2026 consultation. Further detail can be found in **appendix A** to this report.

| Consultation Responses | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| | Maintained Schools | Academies | Total |
| Primary | 5 | 51 | 56 |
| Secondary | 0 | 6 | 6 |
| Total school responses | 5 | 57 | 62 |
| Total nos. of schools | 20 | 92 | 112 |
| Response Rate | 25% | 62% | 55% |

5. BLOCK FUNDING TRANSFER PROPOSAL

- 5.1 Rotherham continues to experience pressures on its High Needs budget which is a trend that is being experienced nationally, mainly due to the increasing EHCP numbers / exclusions / cost of out of authority SEN placements. In addition, the increasing number of pupils in mainstream schools with EHC plans requiring support, some with complex needs, continues to rise.

- 5.2 An in-year deficit is currently forecast for the high needs budget for 2024/25, with a cumulative DSG deficit of £3.2m is projected by year end (this is net of the 0.5% funding transfer from schools implemented in the year and £1.3m Safety Valve funding from the DfE).
- 5.3 In respect of 2025/26, a cumulative deficit of £2.2m is projected for the year, which is inclusive of the proposed 0.5% transfer from the Schools Block and £2m in Safety Valve income from the DfE. This projected deficit also takes account of the increase in high needs funding allocation as announced by the Government.
- 5.4 The funding transfer (£1.3m) will be used to mitigate cost pressures arising in the high needs block and to enable the Safety Valve programme to continue to work towards achieving a balanced position at the end of 2025/26.

Q4: Considering the borough as a whole and to ensure support for the most vulnerable children & young people in the borough, do you support the LA's proposal to transfer 0.5% from the schools' block to the high needs block?

Consultation Response: 56.5% of the schools that responded to the consultation voted No to the proposal, with 43.5% responses in support of the transfer proposal.

RMBC'S RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION

- 5.5 The following explain the rationale for the 0.5% funding transfer from schools to the high needs block proposal – as detailed in the consultation document.

Why do we need to transfer funding?

- 5.6 *Increasing cost pressures* – The recurring annual deficit in the high needs budget is largely due to the funding over the years not keeping pace with the growth in SEND numbers in Rotherham. Continued placements in independent non-maintained special schools continue to drive high costs alongside a challenging economic landscape with high cost-of-living pressures and pressures associated with inflation.
- 5.7 *Demand challenges* – Requests for an EHCP assessment continue to rise in Rotherham with a 72% increase since 2018. Over the past 12 months there has been a 16.1% increase in requests. Although the Council is creating additional specialist provision and has increased the number of SEND places in several resource provision, demand challenges continue to exist in meeting the complex needs of certain pupils locally in Rotherham.
- 5.8 *Meeting the signed safety valve agreement with the DfE* - Since 2021, the Council has been implementing a Safety Valve agreement with the DfE. Under this agreement, the DfE has committed to paying the council £20.5m over five years to 2025/26. This funding is provided in annual instalments and is subject to continued satisfactory progress (via quarterly monitoring returns), in delivering the actions / measures set out in the DSG Management Plan.

- 5.9 The Safety Valve Agreement signed and entered with the DfE includes a 0.5% funding transfer requirement from the schools block to the high needs budget for 2025/26 and underpins the financial plan to get the high needs to a sustainable position.
- 5.10 *Increased funding by the Govt would not fully address the existing and future financial challenges in the SEND system.* The following table outlines the current forecast position for 2025-26.

| High Needs Budget 25/26 | |
|--|--------------|
| Forecast HN Estimated spend | 64.568 |
| Forecast HN Funding allocation | 62.302 |
| Forecast in-year deficit | 2.266 |
| 0.5% schools block funding transfer | -1.341 |
| Revised in-year deficit (2025/26) | 0.925 |

| DSG Reserve account 25/26 | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| | £m |
| Carry forward deficit (from 24/25) | 3.258 |
| In-year high needs deficit | 0.925 |
| Safety valve funding (DfE) payment | -2.000 |
| Year-end DSG reserve position | 2.183 |

- 5.11 The above forecast position for the high needs budget showed that a funding transfer is required from the schools block to mitigate increasing cost pressures and deficit position. A 0.5% funding transfer would reduce the forecast deficit position to £0.9m.

What are we doing to address the problems?

- 5.12 *Sufficiency planning work* – to create more local SEND places to avoid and stem out of borough placements. The Rotherham SEND Sufficiency Strategy sets out a clear and deliverable action plan to tackle these challenges and establish a more coherent, effective, and sustainable system for commissioning education placements for SEND pupils.
- 5.13 Among the key objectives of the Strategy is to reset the balance between local provision and placements outside of Rotherham, improving parental choice and the quality of the pupil's experience.

What is the financial impact on schools' budgets?

- 5.14 Using 2023 census figures and the estimated schools funding envelope, the modelling undertaken indicates that the funding transfer proposals would not have a significant adverse impact on individual schools' core funding.
- 5.15 Rotherham's local school formula would be fully aligned to the Government's national funding formula (NFF), which would mean that schools would get the funding as expected under the NFF. Also, the Council is proposing implementing a minimum funding guarantee rate of 0%, which is within the Government's recommended -0.5% to 0% range.

Options if proposal is not approved?

- 5.16 Existing regulations allow the LA to submit a disapplication request to the Secretary of State to approve the funding transfer request if the Schools Forum disapprove the proposal.
- 5.17 For 2025-26 the DfE encouraged disapplication requests to be submitted by 18th November 2024 to ensure that LAs are in a position to submit their APT by the deadline of 22nd January 2025 setting their local funding formulae and can issue Individual School Budgets by the end of February 2025.
- 5.18 With the above in mind, the LA submitted a disapplication request to the DfE on 15th November 2024 to transfer 0.5% of the schools' block funding to the high needs block to cover the possibility of the Schools Forum voting against the proposal.
- 5.19 The DfE will await the outcome of the Schools Forum vote on the proposal to transfer 0.5% of the schools block funding to the high needs block before processing the request.

Name and contact details

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**Consultation on schools funding formula
changes for 2025/26**

**Closing date for responses: Wednesday 27th
November 2024**

About this consultation

This consultation paper sets out the latest position from the Department for Education (DfE) and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) with regard to school funding for 2025/2026.

Unlike previous years, the DfE have not yet published draft operational funding guidance and indicative national funding formula allocations for local authorities and schools for 2025/26. Nor have they issued detailed funding model to support local authorities in modelling the impact of funding changes for 2025/26.

However, to support local authorities in their budget planning work, a summary policy note was published on 05 November 2024, which detailed the structure of the schools NFF for 2025/26 and the funding factors and values that will be used in the NFF.

The policy note can be found at : <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pre-16-schools-funding-local-authority-guidance-for-2025-26/summary-policy-document-for-schools-national-funding-formula-2025-26>

The DfE plan to publish detailed NFF allocations for schools and local authorities and all supporting documents on the NFF (including the schools operational guide and NFF technical note), for 2025/26, by the end of November 2024. The dedicated schools grant (DSG) allocations will then be confirmed in December 2024.

This consultation is based on the modelling work carried out using the council's 2024/25 schools local funding formula but updated to reflect proposed funding factors for 2025/26 as provided in the published DfE summary policy note. The consultation seeks the views of primary and secondary schools and academies on the following:

- Changes to the funding arrangements and the formula for allocating budgets to schools, i.e. funding factors and unit values and applicable minimum funding guarantee used in the formula, to align as closely to the NFF.
- the proposal to transfer funding (0.5%) from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block to help alleviate the financial pressures within the high needs funding block of the schools' system.

The views of schools and academies provided through this consultation will be fed back to the Rotherham Schools Forum on 13th December 2024.

Who is being consulted?

- Maintained schools / academies.
- Multi-academy trusts
- Schools forum reps

Issue date

The consultation was issued on 14th November 2024

Responding to the consultation

To help us analyse the responses please complete the attached template and email it to the following address: louise.keith@rotherham.gov.uk

Deadline

The consultation closes on **Wednesday 27th November 2024 at 5pm**

Enquiries

If you have any questions about this consultation, please contact Louise Keith.

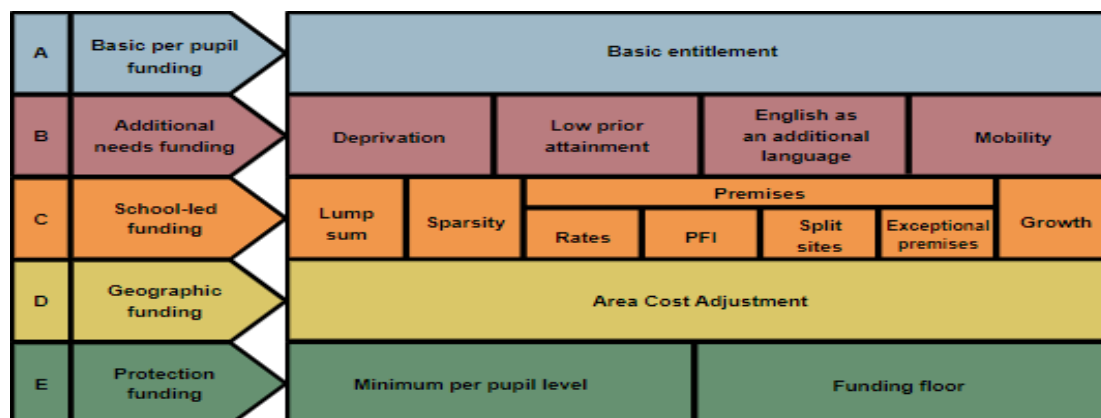
Email: louise.keith@rotherham.gov.uk

Telephone: (01709) 822786

Consultation Part A

Features of the 2025-26 National Funding Formula

There will be no substantial changes to the NFF for 2025-26. The 2025-26 schools NFF will use the same factors as the 2024-25 NFF. These are shown below:



The Individual NFF factors for 2025-26 will operate in the same way as 2024-25 except for some changes to the PFI factor. These changes include:

- providing pro-rata funding when a PFI contract is coming to an end in the financial year (such that funding is only provided for the part of the year when the contract is still in place)
- setting conditions that local authorities would need to meet to receive above-inflation increases in PFI funding (with the expectation that these would be the exception). The default expectation will be that previous years' PFI funding through the NFF will be increased by the Retail Prices Index excluding mortgage interest payments (RPIX) measure of inflation.
- For mainstream primary and secondary maintained schools, the Core Schools Budget Grant (CSBG), Teachers Pay Additional Grant (TPAG) and Teachers Pensions Employer Contribution Grant (TPECG) will all be incorporated into core funding from April 2025. Mainstream academies will similarly see these grants incorporated into core funding from September 2025. Appropriate adjustments have been made to the NFF factor values and baselines to reflect this and are shown in the table below.

| Table 1: Provisional factor values in 2025 to 2026 | | | | |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | 2024/25 NFF | Rolled in grants | CSBG uplift | Provisional 2025/26 |
| Basic per pupil funding | | | | |
| Basic entitlement | | | | |
| Primary basic entitlement | £3,562 | £213 | £51 | £3,847 |
| Key stage 3 basic entitlement | £5,022 | £300 | £71 | £5,422 |
| Key stage 4 basic entitlement | £5,661 | £339 | £80 | £6,113 |
| Minimum per pupil | | | | |
| Primary minimum per pupil funding | £4,610 | £257 | £62 | £4,955 |
| Secondary minimum per pupil funding | £5,995 | £350 | £83 | £6,465 |
| Additional needs funding | | | | |
| Deprivation | | | | |
| Primary free school meals (FSM) | £490 | £0 | £0 | £495 |
| Secondary FSM | £490 | £0 | £0 | £495 |
| Primary free school meals Ever 6 | £820 | £188 | £45 | £1,060 |
| Secondary FSM6 | £1,200 | £277 | £68 | £1,555 |
| Primary IDACI A | £680 | £0 | £0 | £685 |
| Primary IDACI B | £515 | £0 | £0 | £520 |
| Primary IDACI C | £485 | £0 | £0 | £490 |
| Primary IDACI D | £445 | £0 | £0 | £445 |
| Primary IDACI E | £285 | £0 | £0 | £285 |
| Primary IDACI F | £235 | £0 | £0 | £235 |
| Secondary IDACI A | £945 | £0 | £0 | £950 |
| Secondary IDACI B | £740 | £0 | £0 | £745 |
| Secondary IDACI C | £690 | £0 | £0 | £695 |
| Secondary IDACI D | £630 | £0 | £0 | £635 |
| Secondary IDACI E | £450 | £0 | £0 | £450 |
| Secondary IDACI F | £340 | £0 | £0 | £340 |
| Low prior attainment (LPA) | | | | |
| Primary LPA | £1,170 | £0 | £0 | £1,175 |
| Secondary LPA | £1,775 | £0 | £0 | £1,785 |
| English as an additional language (EAL) | | | | |
| Primary EAL | £590 | £0 | £0 | £595 |
| Secondary EAL | £1,585 | £0 | £0 | £1,595 |
| Mobility | | | | |
| Primary mobility | £960 | £0 | £0 | £965 |
| Secondary mobility | £1,380 | £0 | £0 | £1,385 |
| School-led Funding | | | | |
| Lump sum | | | | |
| Primary lump sum | £134,400 | £8,006 | £1,915 | £145,100 |
| Secondary lump sum | £134,400 | £8,006 | £1,915 | £145,100 |
| Sparsity | | | | |
| Primary sparsity | £57,100 | £0 | £0 | £57,400 |
| Secondary sparsity | £83,000 | £0 | £0 | £83,400 |
| Premises | | | | |

| | | | | |
|-------------|---------|----|----|---------|
| Split sites | £80,600 | £0 | £0 | £81,000 |
|-------------|---------|----|----|---------|

Table 1 above shows the provisional unit values of each factor in the NFF for 2025 to 2026. The column 'Rolled in grants' sets out the rolled in value of the 3 grants from 2024 to 2025 (TPAG, TPECG and CSBG). The column 'CSBG uplift' sets out the additional funding rolled into the baseline to reflect the full year cost of the 2024 teachers' pay award.

As in previous years, local authorities will remain responsible for determining final allocations to schools, in consultation with the schools forum.

From 2025-26 the local authority flexibility to increase the pupil number count for schools with higher reception pupil numbers in the January 2025 census, rather the October 2024 census will be removed.

There will also be some technical adjustments made to the operation of the minimum funding guarantee (MFG) whereby split sites and PFI funding will be excluded from the MFG calculation.

Provisional Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2025/26 LA allocations

Total core funding for schools is expected to increase by £1.3bn in 2025/26 and would cover the following: the full year effect of the teachers' pay grant allocated to schools (which would be rolled into DSG together with other pay / pension grants); per pupil increase in schools NFF; and increases to the pupil premium.

Unlike previous years, the DfE have not yet published indicative national funding formula allocations for local authorities and schools for 2025/26. Nor have they issued detailed funding model to support local authorities in modelling the impact of funding changes for 2025/26.

The detailed NFF allocations for schools and local authorities and all supporting documents on the NFF for 2025/26 is expected to be published by the end of November 2024. However, to inform the consultation and planning, high level modelling has been undertaken to estimate the level of schools funding for Rotherham for 2025/26 – see table below.

| RMBC schools block funding | 2024/25 | Estimated 2025/26* | % change |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Pupil number (October 2023 census) | 40,128 | 40,128 | - |
| Schools NFF allocation (£m) | 243.7 | 259.4 | 6.4% |
| Adjust for rolled in grants (£m) | 14.3 | - | |
| Adjusted schools block funding | 258.0 | 259.4 | 0.5% |

The above **funding estimates for 2025/26** have been derived based on the council's 2024/25

schools local funding formula but updated to reflect proposed funding factors for 2025/26 as provided in the published DfE summary policy note.

It must be emphasised that these are indicative estimates to inform the consultation only, as final 2025/26 allocations would not be confirmed till December 2024. Therefore, it is likely that some of the assumptions and proposals put forward in this consultation may change following actual confirmation of funding – in order to ensure affordability.

Also, the funding estimates are based on October 2023 census pupil count numbers / characteristics and will require finalising once the October 2024 pupil census information is known.

2025/26 Rotherham’s local funding formula proposed changes

Basic Entitlement (AWPU)

All LAs formulae must include a basic amount that every pupil attracts to their school. Funding is allocated through an ‘age-weighted pupil unit’ (AWPU) factor, with separate unit values for primary, KS3 and KS4. The AWPU rates are set by the NFF but can be determined locally by LAs in line with moving closer to the NFF. In 2024-25 Rotherham’s AWPU values were aligned to the NFF. In 2025-26 Rotherham proposes to stay as closely aligned to the NFF as the allocation allows.

| AWPU | RMBC 2024/25 | NFF 2024/25 | NFF 2025-26 | % Change |
|---------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------|
| Primary | £3,562 | £3,562 | £3,847 | 8% |
| KS3 | £5,022 | £5,022 | £5,422 | 8% |
| KS4 | £5,661 | £5,661 | £6,113 | 8% |

Additional Needs

The 2025-26 NFF continues to reflect the Government’s policy of supporting schools with pupils with additional needs and ensuring that they get sufficient funding to tackle low attainment issues.

As in previous years, Rotherham proposes to continue to allocate funding through its local formula on a level consistent with the NFF. The following briefly explains the additional needs factors in the modelled formula for 2025-26

- **Deprivation Factor**

The RMBC schools’ formula currently allocates funding via the Free School Meals-EVER6 and the 2019 updated IDACI data (income deprivation affecting children index). For 2025-26 it is proposed to continue to align the per pupil unit values of the IDACI and the FSM-EVER6 factors to the NFF rate.

- **Mobility Factor**

This factor supports schools where a proportion of pupils join the school part way through the year. To be eligible the proportion must be above the threshold of 6%. In 2024-25 Rotherham was aligned to the values in the NFF and is proposing to stay aligned in 2025-26 by uplifting by £5 to mirror the provisional 2025-26 NFF values.

- **Low Prior Attainment Factor**

Low Prior Attainment allocates funding to schools based on the following:

1. proportion of primary pupils identifying as not achieving the expected level of development in early years foundation stage profile.
2. and secondary pupils not reaching the expected standard in KS2 at reading, writing or maths.

The unit values for both primary and secondary phases have been uplifted in the NFF (£5 primary; £10 secondary). In 2024-25 Rotherham was aligned to the NFF in its local formula and is proposing to uplift its local values by the same amounts to stay aligned in 2025-26.

- **English as an Additional Language Factor (EAL)**

This factor allocates funding to schools with identified pupils with a first language other than English (for up to 3 years after they enter the statutory school system). Separate unit values apply to both the primary and secondary phases. The rates for 2025-26 have been uplifted in the NFF (£5 primary; £10 secondary). In 2024-25 Rotherham was aligned to the NFF in its local formula and is proposing to uplift its local values by the same amounts to stay aligned.

School-led funding factors

These comprised the lump sum, premises (i.e., rates, split sites, PFI factor) and growth factors. The following outline the proposed approach to these factors for 2025-26

- **Lump Sum:** The lump sum factor allocates a standard funding to all schools irrespective of size or number on roll. The lump sum factor in the NFF has been increased to £145,100 from £134,400 for 2024-25. It is proposed to uplift Rotherham's local lump sum factor value to reflect NFF – to stay aligned.
- **Premises factors:** these comprised the following: **business rates** and **PFI factor**. In the main these factors allocate funding to schools to cover actual cost incurred in the year (e.g., business rates) or to cover additional unavoidable contract cost (e.g., PFI contract). An inflationary uplift would be applied to the PFI factor consistent with the NFF.
- **Split Site factor:** In 2024/25 the NFF introduced a compulsory national formulaic approach to split site funding. The factor is made up of 2 parts:

1. **basic eligibility funding:** schools attract a lump sum payment for each of their additional eligible sites (max 3 sites)
2. **distance funding:** eligible sites that are separated from the school's main site by more than 100 metres (by road distance) attract distance funding on top of the basic eligibility funding (max 3 sites).

The basic eligibility criteria for split sites funding requires additional sites to:

- be part of the main school, that is, to share the same unique reference number (URN) with the school's main site.
- be separated from the school's main site by a public road or railway.
- have a building on them which is maintained by the school, and which is primarily used for the education of 5 to 16- year-old pupils in mainstream education. This excludes playing fields, 'ancillary buildings and buildings leased out full time by the school to another entity.

The provisional NFF funding for split sites in 2025-26 is £81,000 and it is proposed to include this in the RMBC local formulae following the announcement of allocations at the end of November.

Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG)

The MFG is a national requirement to protect schools from major real time funding reductions to their per pupil funding between years. It is set by the council following consultation with schools and the schools forum, within a range set by the government. For 2025-26 the Government has **confirmed a range of -0.5% to 0%**.

It is proposed for 2025-26 Rotherham adopts 0% for its MFG to ensure that no schools in the borough see a reduction in its per pupil funding on a like-for-like basis.

Question 1: do you support the proposal to set the minimum funding guarantee (MFG) within the local funding formula at 0% for 2025-26?

Pupil Growth

From 2024/2025 local authorities have been required to provide growth funding where a school or academy has agreed with the local authority to provide an extra school places (e.g. additional or bulge classes or increase in PAN) to meet basic need in the area. A growth policy has been developed (and agreed by the schools Forum) that sets out the funding criteria and how the funding would be determined or calculated.

It is proposed that the pupil growth fund is established by top slicing from the schools block funding and for this to be managed outside the local funding formula by the local authority in conjunction with the schools forum. The amount to be top sliced is based on the projected additional school places required and commitments agreed with specific schools /

academies. Any under/overspend on the growth fund forms part of the overall DSG balances.

It is proposed that the Growth Fund amount to be top sliced from the 2025/26 school block funding be set at £150k and for this to be used to support specific schools providing additional places.

Question 2: Do you agree that in 2025/2026 a growth fund of £150k is provided and will be funded from the DSG Allocation?

Falling Rolls Fund

Funding will be allocated to local authorities in 2025/26 on the basis of falling rolls as well as growth and will be distributed on the basis of the reduction in pupil numbers that local authorities experience each year

Local authorities will continue to have discretion over whether to operate a falling rolls fund. It is proposed that the Falling Rolls amount to be top-sliced from the 2025/26 allocation be set at £50,000. This funding will be used to support specific schools where school capacity data (SCAP) shows that school places will be required in the subsequent three to five years. This SCAP requirement replaces previous guidance that funding may only be used where local planning data shows that the surplus places will be needed within the next 3 financial years.

Question 3: Do you agree that the Local Authority should continue to provide for a falling rolls fund of £50k? It is proposed the fund will be provided from the DSG allocation.

Consultation Part B

Introduction

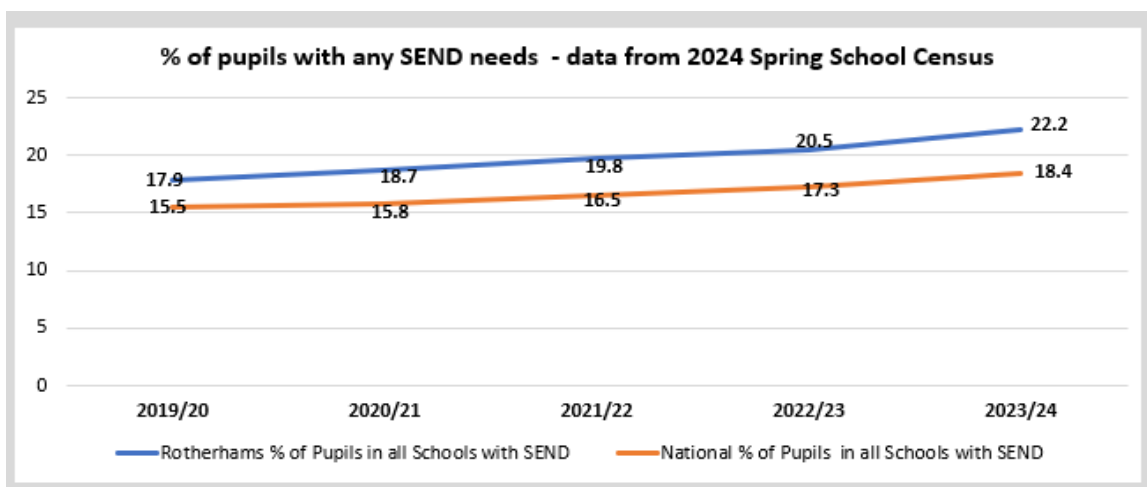
The context of Rotherham's SEND/High needs budget alongside many other local areas, is one of rising demand, cost pressures (inflationary increases), and an increasing accumulated budget deficit. A cumulative DSG deficit of £3.2m is currently projected by year end (net of £1.3m Safety Valve funding from the DfE). This cumulative forecast deficit is inclusive of the in-year deficit of £3.0m currently projected for 2024/25.

A deficit of £2.2m is currently projected for 2025/26, which is inclusive of the proposed 0.5% transfer from the Schools Block and £2m in Safety Valve income from the DfE. This projected deficit takes account of the increase in high needs funding allocation as announced by the Government.

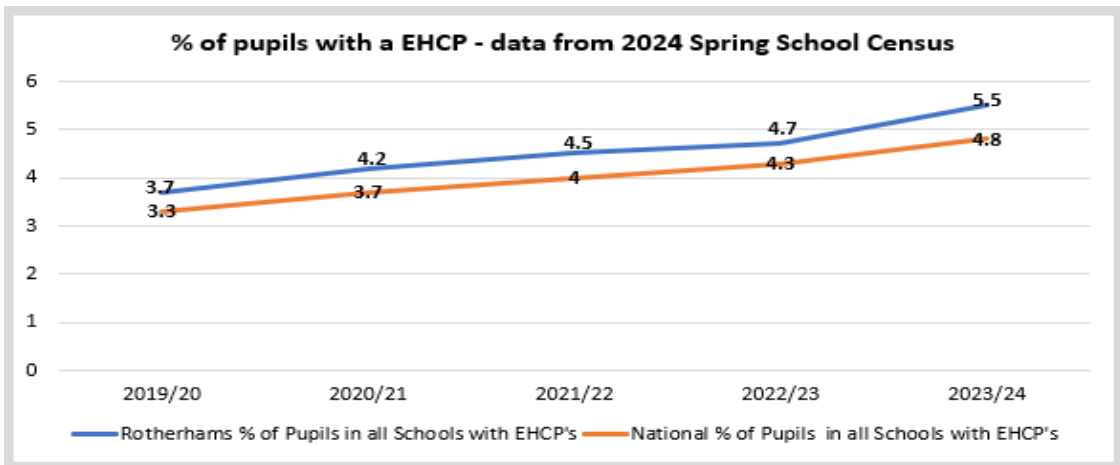
It is the intention of the Council to consult on the proposal to transfer 0.5% of the 2025/26 schools' block funding to the high needs block (on a similar basis as in 2024/25). The transferred funding (estimated at £1.3m) will be used to mitigate in-year budget pressures within the high needs block. The decision to redirect from the Schools Block would only take place where the DSG High Needs DSG Block allocation is not deemed sufficient to fund the estimated costs in 2025/26 and to continue to keep Rotherham on track to meet its Safety Valve requirements.

Demand challenges

There are currently 45,763 Children & Young People attending Rotherham's Schools (Rotherham school census January 2024). A total of 22.2% of Rotherham's statutory aged pupils have either a statutory plan for Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND), known as an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), or are receiving SEND support. This compares to an average of 18.4% across all England Authorities.



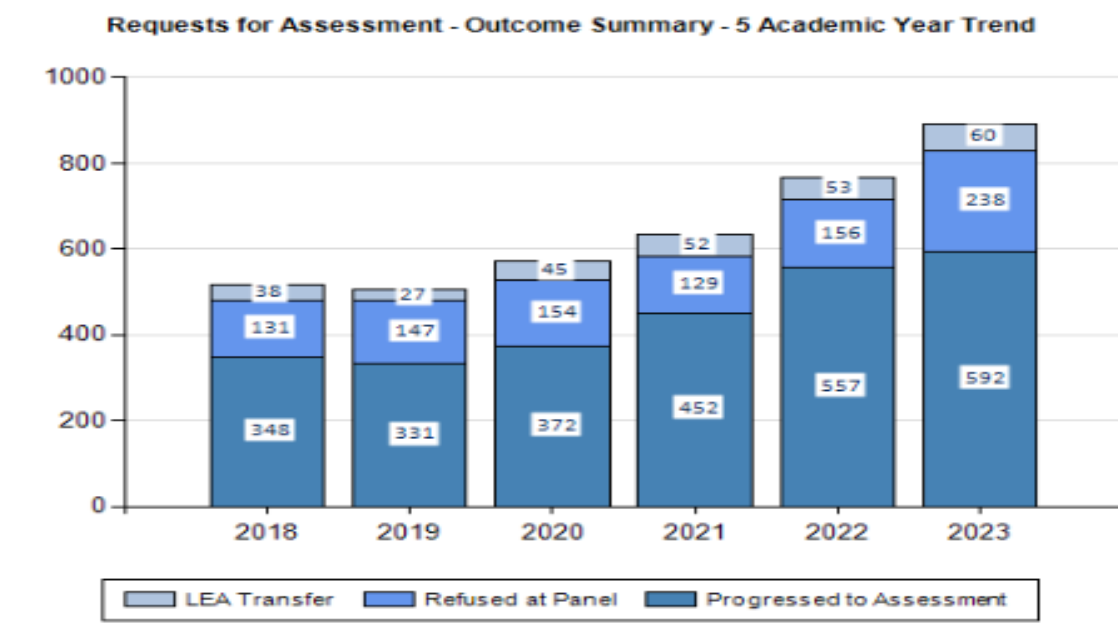
5.5% of Rotherham’s statutory aged pupils have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) compared to an average of 4.8% nationally.



As at the SEN2 census date in January 2024, Rotherham had 3,310 active EHCP’s in place for all children and young people 0-25yr old. This is 425 more plans than the previous year’s return representing an increase of 14.7% and compared to a national increase of 11%. When comparing to similar neighbouring areas Rotherham is ranked 3rd out of 11 local authorities in relation to the number of active EHCP’s in place

Requests for an EHCP assessment continue to rise in Rotherham with a 72% increase since 2018. Over the past 12 months there has been a 16.1% increase in requests.

61% of all new requests to assess for an EHCP are from schools, with 30% from parents/carers and family members. These percentages have remained relatively flat since 2018.



Although the Council is creating additional specialist provision and has increased the number of SEND places in several resource provision, demand challenges continue to exist in meeting the complex needs of certain pupils locally in Rotherham.

The modelled forecast data suggests that there is an ongoing and increasing demand for support for children and young people with SEND and for those with EHCPs. If unmitigated, the cumulative DSG deficit would continue to rise.

Addressing the demand challenges

In response to the challenges set out above, the Rotherham SEND Sufficiency Strategy has been implemented. The Strategy sets out a clear and deliverable action plan to tackle these challenges and establish a more coherent, effective and sustainable system for commissioning education placements for SEND pupils. Among the key objectives of the Strategy is to reset the balance between local provision and placements outside of Rotherham, improving parental choice and the quality of the pupil's experience. The following highlight key developments or progress to date:

- Use of allocated DfE special provision capital resources to fund additional specialist places and expand existing provision where appropriate.
- Review of all specialist resource provision (range and number of places) to ensure they are meeting needs and current demand.
- Additional places created through the SEND sufficiency strategy in order to minimise the number of children placed in high-cost independent Sector Placements (through the annual review process).
- Ensure appropriate use of provision and avoid escalation of children and young people's needs by improving the governance around placement decisions.
- Post 16 planning and commissioning of SEMH places.
- Continue working with schools to maintain pupils in mainstream settings wherever possible.

The key objective of Rotherham's participation in the safety valve programme is ensuring that more children with special needs can be supported to stay in mainstream education in the borough. Rotherham involvement also allows appropriate SEND provision mapping in the borough to meet the Council's needs to continue to be developed and improve SEND outcomes.

SEND Sufficiency phase 4 has seen increases in resource provision places being provided in 7 schools, with this achieving the additional 100 places as set out within the Safety Valve agreement over the next two academic years. The small grant accessibility programme has been implemented across both mainstream and special schools to support inclusion for identified cohorts of SEND pupils.

A further phase of SEND Sufficiency will address incremental rises in demand for places across SEMH, alternative provision and support long-term sufficiency requirements at Newman School.

Addressing the financial challenges / sustainability

Since 2021, the Council has been implementing a Safety Valve agreement with the DfE. Under this agreement, the DfE has committed to paying the council £20.5m over five years to 2025/26. This funding is provided in annual instalments and is subject to continued satisfactory progress (via quarterly monitoring returns), in delivering the actions / measures set out in the DSG Management Plan.

Rotherham’s 2025/26 estimated allocation for the High Needs Block is £62.3m, an increase of 7% on our 2024/25 allocation. Although welcomed, the level of cost and demand pressures in the SEND system is such that a financial deficit (£2.2m) is projected for 2025/26 despite the increased high needs funding. The table below outline latest high needs budget projections for 2025/26, excluding the proposed 0.5% funding transfer:

| High Needs Budget | £2025/26 £m |
|--|----------------|
| Forecast HN spend | 64.568 |
| Forecast HN funding allocation (plus 7%) | 62.302 |
| Forecast in-year deficit | 2.266 |
| Carry forward deficit (from 24/25) | 3.258 |
| Safety valve funding (DfE) payment | -2.000 |
| Forecast year end DSG reserve deficit | 3.524 |

The above forecast position for the high needs budget showed that a funding transfer is required from the schools block to mitigate increasing cost pressures and projected deficit position for 2025/26. A 0.5% funding transfer (£1.3m) would reduce the in-year forecast deficit position to £0.9m and the year end DSG reserve deficit to £2.2m.

The funding transfer (£1.3m) will be used to mitigate in-year pressures arising in the high needs block and to enable the Safety Valve to continue to work towards achieving a balanced position at the end of 2025/26.

Assessment of impact on individual schools

The Safety Valve Agreement signed and entered with the DfE includes a 0.5% funding transfer requirement from the schools block to the high needs budget for 2025/26 and underpins the financial plan to get the high needs to a sustainable position.

Using 2023 census figures and the estimated schools funding envelope (inclusive of the rolled in grants) for 2025-26, **appendix 1** models the estimated individual schools budget per school net of the proposed 0.5% transfer to the high needs block.

The modelling shows that by implementing a MFG of 0% and transferring 0.5% to the High Needs block, no schools will see a reduction in funding from their 2024-25 allocations.

Question 4: Considering the borough as a whole and to ensure support for the most vulnerable children & young people in the borough, do you support the LA's proposal to transfer 0.5% from the schools' block to the high needs block?

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| <h1>BRIEFING</h1> | TO: | Schools Forum |
| | DATE: | 13 th December 2024 |
| | LEAD OFFICER: | Aileen Chambers Head of Service Early Years and Childcare |
| | TITLE: | Early Years and Wraparound Expansion Update |

1. Background

1.1 The purpose of this briefing is to provide an update on the range of developments currently taking place within early years including: The DfE Early Years Expansion; The DfE Wraparound Childcare Programme and the Schools Based Nurseries Programme.

1.2 **Early Years Expansion:** In the Spring Budget 2023 the Chancellor announced an expansion to the current early years entitlements – 30 hours childcare for every child over the age of 9 months with working parents by September 2025. The expansion delivery phases are:

| Age of child | Number of funded hours per week | Date of implementation |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Term after 2 nd birthday | 15 hours per week | April 2024 |
| Term after child is 9 months old | 15 hours per week | September 2024 |
| From term after child is 9 months old | 30 hours per week | September 2025 |

Based on the 2024 childcare sufficiency analysis it is projected that an additional 1200 part time equivalent two year old / under 2 places could be needed to meet need by September 2025.

The following areas have been identified as areas for potential expansion:

| | 2 year old places needed | Under 2 places needed |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Herringthorpe | x | |
| Greasbrough / Rockingham / Wingfield | x | x |
| Kimberworth / Kimberworth Park | | x |
| Thorpe Hesley | | x |
| East Dene / Clifton | x | x |
| Eastwood / Town Centre | | x |
| Canklow | x | |
| Dinnington / Laughton | x | x |
| Woodsetts | x | x |
| Harthill / Kiveton / Wales / Todwick | x | x |
| Thurcroft | x | x |
| Bramley / Wickersley | x | |
| Rawmarsh | | x |
| Swinton | x | x |

| | |
|-----|---|
| | <p>The DfE provided a small amount of capital funding to support expansion however it is not enough to support large scale building work. Although a number of providers in the childcare sector are willing to expand / create new provision, lack of opportunity within existing buildings or availability of new buildings is restricting progress. Much action has been taken across RMBC to identify potential building opportunities. To date, capital funding has been awarded to 3 projects to create 86 additional places in Ravenfield, Swallownest and Kimberworth areas of the borough. Other planned developments are taking place at Waverley, Manvers and Dinnington.</p> <p>We will continue to monitor take-up / demand and actively work with existing providers and schools to identify opportunities for expansion.</p> <p>An early years recruitment campaign is underway to help support with the challenge of finding qualified staff to support expansion and promotion of childminding as a career is also being undertaken to increase childcare capacity.</p> |
| 1.3 | <p>School Based Nurseries Programme</p> <p>In September 2024 the Government announced plans to deliver 3,000 nurseries by upgrading spare classrooms in primary schools. From 17th October, schools have been invited to apply for up to £150,000 capital funding, to set up new or expand nurseries. The closing date for applications is 19th December 2024. Funding will be allocated to successful schools in Spring 2025 to support delivery for the first cohort of places. This funding can be used to create Foundation 1 classes for three year olds or to create provision for children from 9 months to 2 years in areas of need.</p> <p>In Rotherham there are 18 primary schools without a Foundation 1 class. The position has been reviewed for all of these schools. Seven are served by the three maintained nursery schools. A further five have PVI providers on site delivering three year old places. Four are in geographical areas where there is already adequate capacity within other schools / PVI providers.</p> <p>Aston All Saints C of E Primary already successfully applied to the DfE to lower the age range from September 2025 and a further two schools are in the process of submitting funding applications to create new Foundation 1 provision: Sitwell Infant School, Todwick Primary school.</p> <p>One school is underway with the submission of an application to create two year old provision and we are actively working with a further 5 schools.</p> |
| 1.4 | <p>Wraparound Childcare Programme: The ambition is for all parents of primary school children who need it, to be able to access childcare in their local area from 8am-6pm by September 2026.</p> <p>The wraparound programme aims to remove barriers to setting up new provision or expanding current provision, including removing the financial risk of setting up new provision when demand is not yet guaranteed. The aim for the programme is for the substantial majority of new/expanded provision to be self-sustaining from the end of the planned programme (i.e. 2026 onwards). The deadline to apply for the funding was slightly reduced by the new government and all applications must be approved before the end of the 2024/25 financial year to remain eligible.</p> <p>Engagement of schools in this opportunity in Rotherham has been excellent. The Wraparound and Early Years Expansion Co-ordinator has liaised with strategic leaders in</p> |

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| | <p>Academy Trusts to help raise awareness and support with implementation as well as individual Head Teachers.</p> <p>We projected that 1120 wraparound places would be needed to meet needs. In total, 46 schools have a 10 hour wraparound offer in place. Twenty of which have successfully applied for funding to create 664 new wraparound places. Work is underway with a further 28 schools.</p> <p>There is a small cohort of 17 schools where further engagement is needed to make sure the funding opportunity is maximised where needed before the deadline.</p> |
| <p>1.5</p> | <p>Breakfast Clubs Early Adopter Programme</p> <p>On the 27th November the DFE announced the roll out of the application process for the breakfast clubs early adopter programme in up to 750 early adopter schools from April 2025 as part of a test and learn phase in advance of national roll out.</p> <p>Early adopters will offer all primary-aged children on roll at their school, no matter their circumstances, access to a free, universal breakfast club lasting at least 30 minutes that involves food, providing children with a supportive start to the day and helping families to have more choice about work. Parents and carers can choose to take up the offer although we encourage schools to promote the offer and drive take up, particularly within disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>Applications must be submitted by 20th December 2024. The DFE will confirm which schools in our area are participating in the early adopter programme in January.</p> <p>If schools are already receiving funding to deliver breakfast provision from another source, it is expected that you they will end current funding or engage with the relevant funder to agree how it can be used in a way that ensures there is no duplication of funding</p> |
| <p>4. Recommendations</p> | |
| <p>4.1</p> | <p>Note and approve the content of the report</p> |

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Rotherham Schools' Forum

Forward Plan of Agenda Items

| Provisional Date of Meeting | Agenda & Reports Publication Date | Issues for Consideration | Lead Officer |
|---|--|--|---|
| Friday 13th December 2024 | Thursday 5 th December 2024 | SEND Sufficiency (standing item) School Funding Formula Consultation Dedicated Schools Grant Update and Schools Position Child Care Expansion Update Schools Forum Review Feedback | Mark Cummins Joshua Amahwe/ Louise Keith Joshua Amahwe/ Louise Keith Aileen Chambers Niall Devlin |
| Friday 17th January 2025 | Thursday 9 th January 2025 | SEND Sufficiency (standing item) 2024/2025 Early Years Funding Formula 2024/2025 Dedicated Schools Grant School Block Funding Formula | Mark Cummins Joshua Amahwe/ Louise Keith Joshua Amahwe/ Louise Keith |
| Friday 11th April 2025 | Thursday 3 rd April 2025 | SEND Sufficiency (standing item) | Mark Cummins |

Items of Business to be Scheduled for Rotherham Schools' Forum:-

High Needs Sub-Group Updates – *Reporting arrangements to be agreed following the Forum's Refresh*

Education Safeguarding – Annual Progress Report

Exclusion and Suspensions - Annual Report

Reduced Timetables - Annual Report