

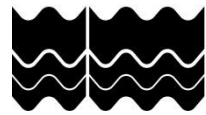
East Sussex County Council Schools Forum

Friday 20th Sept 2024

08.30

Remote Meeting

**East Sussex
County Council**



Agenda

Item	Heading	Paper	Lead	Item for
1.	Welcome and Apologies	N	Chair	Note
2.	Minutes of previous meeting 12th July 2024	Y	Chair	Approval
3.	Matters Arising and Declaration of Interests	N	Chair	Discussion
4.	De-delegation	Y	Sarah Rice / Nathan Caine	Approval
5.	High Needs Block – Response to Demands 2024/25	Y	Nathan Caine	Approval
6.	Core Schools Budget Grant	N	Sarah Rice	Information
7.	Oracle Implementation Update	N	Sarah Mainwaring	Information
	AOB			

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EAST SUSSEX SCHOOLS' FORUM

Minutes of a meeting of the Schools' Forum held remotely with Microsoft Teams on 12 July 2024

MEMBERS

Primary

Richard Blakeley (Harlands Primary)
Laura Cooper (St John's CE School)
Vicky Anderson (Catsfield CEP School)

Primary Governors

Debra Vice Holt (Oak Tree Federation)
Peter Hughes (South Malling Primary School) Secondary
Emily Winslade (Priory School)
Helen Key (Chailey School) -Chair

Special

Julie Champion (Grove Park)

Academies

James Freeston (King Offa Primary Academy)
Gavin Bailey (Swale Academy Trust)
Kelly Johnson (UoBAT)
Zoe James (MARK Education Trust)
Sally Hill (Aquinas Trust)
Richard Preece (Saxon Mount and Torfield)

Pupil Referral Unit

Jo Foulkes (Sabden Multi Academy Trust)

Non School Members

Joanna Sanchez (Diocese of Arundel and Brighton)
Jon Gilbert (Diocese of Chichester)
Hannah Caldwell (Post 16 East Sussex College Group)

ESCC representatives

Cllr Bob Standley (Lead Member for Education and Inclusion,
Special Educational Needs and Disability)
Carolyn Fair (Director Children's services)
Elizabeth Funge Assistant Director Education
Honor Green (BSD Finance)
Nathan Caine (H of Ed SEND & Safeguarding)
Edward Beale (Acting Finance Manager - Childrens Services)
Sarah Rice (Finance Manager - Schools)
Kirsten Coe (Schools Funding Manager - Acting)
Rachel King (Clerk)

1 Welcome and Apologies (Note)

1.1 It was confirmed the meeting was quorate, recognising the apologies below

Carolyn Fair- Director Children's Services
Peter Hughes- South Malling Primary School
Debra Vice Holt - Oak Tree Federation
James Freeston - King Offa

2 Agenda Item 2: Minutes Of Previous Meeting 10 May 2024 (Approval)

2.1 The minutes for the meeting held were approved as a true record and will be signed by the Chair.

3. Agenda Item 3: Matters Arising And Declaration Of Interests (Discussion)

2.2 Matters arising - none

2.3 Declarations of interest - none.

4. Agenda Item 4: High Needs Funding for FE Providers - Approval

4.1 Recommendations:

That Schools' Forum agrees a 3.4% uplift on all areas of all areas of Element 3 hourly rates in FE Colleges for the 24/25 academic year.

Decision - The chair asked if any amendments to the recommendation to be brought forward. No amendments were proposed.

Comments:

It was asked where the 3.4% uplift come from and what we will we not have to have in order to have that funding? - This will come from the High Needs Block (HNB). Any cost in the HNB is going to create additional pressure for 25/26 which will be discussed further in the autumn meetings.

Due to implications for budget setting, it was requested that an annual review would be welcomed as would an agreement for all decisions, where possible, to be agreed in a single meeting. This was agreed. Where possible and available, comparative data from other LAs will be provided alongside requests.

There is a commitment and intention to look at a more efficient way of working within FE and these discussions are being looked at across the Sussex LAs.

Clarification was provided that the 3.4% uplift relates to Element 3 (hourly rates of provision for High Needs Learners).

Members were requested to vote and approve the uplift for FE colleges as per the recommendation. Results as below:

	Number voting 'Yes'	Number voting 'No'	Number of Abstentions
3.4% uplift for FE Providers	12	0	0

5 Agenda Item 5: Pupil Exclusion Funding - Approval

5.1 Recommendations:

- a) That Schools' Forum agrees to the principle that funding shall follow pupils and therefore be transferred between schools, Academies and the Local Authority unless the pupil is from outside of East Sussex.
- b) That Schools' Forum agrees that where a pupil is permanently excluded, the school will passport to the LA the remainder of the age weighted pupil unit (AWPU) for that financial year, based on the calculation set out within the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2012.
- c) That Schools' Forum agrees that where the exclusion occurs after the October census (the date when schools indicate that they should receive funding for a child for the following financial year) the school or academy will also be required to pay the following year's full year AWPU.
- d) That Schools' Forum agrees that where a pupil transfers within the same financial year to another school or academy, the amount that the new school receives, will be calculated in accordance with the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2012.
- e) That Schools' Forum recommends an early review of the East Sussex Fair Access Protocol (FAP) that will clearly set out the funding principles for permanently excluded pupils and ensure all schools, including academies adhere to them.

5.2 This item was flagged initially in the last meeting around PEX Funding which changed since the further review on policy and regulations 2012.

5.3 We are facing significant pressure on the HNB and the rise in permanent exclusions is contributing to this.

5.4 Principle of the paper is to move to a more equitable situation where the funding a child receives follows them after PEX into the AP setting and then into their next mainstream school

Comments:

This previously was a standard process in academies which stopped in 2012.

It was noted that there will be a review of the Fair Access Protocol (FAP), supported by a working group of school leaders.

The recommendation has to be agreed by academies but there is a section in the academies funding agreement which allow for money to be forwarded to the local authority.

West Sussex local authority currently operating in this way for all PEX
Members were requested to vote and approve the recommendation. Results as below:

	Number voting 'Yes'	Number voting 'No'	Number of Abstentions
Pupil Exclusion Funding	10	0	0

6 Agenda Item 6: Schools Forum Membership 24/25 - Approval

Changes to the membership for AP FROM September were discussed in 2 parts.

Part 1: Information was shared relating to changes in membership for AP representation from Sept '24, This is due to the transition to a new AP provider (London Southeast Academy Trust') from College Central.

Action: Ed to liaise with new AP representative and Sabden.

Part 2: Election of Chair and Vice Chair for Schools' Forum. Zoe James proposed as Chair with James Freeston as Vice Chair from Sept. There were no objections.

Comments:

Action: Richard Preece to inform Ed about change in the special academy representative from September

7 Agenda Item 7: Any Other Business

Meeting concluded at 08:59 am

Next meeting - To be held Friday 20th September on Microsoft Teams

Report to: Schools Forum

Date of meeting: 20th Sept 2024

Report By: Carolyn Fair

Title: De-delegating budgets for Primary and Secondary maintained schools

Purpose: To advise Forum which budgets were de-delegated by schools in 2024/25 and seek approval on de-delegated budgets for 2025/26.

Recommendations:

1. The Primary and Secondary maintained Schools Forum Representatives are asked to decide which services should be provided centrally by the Authority for 2025/26.

1. Background

- 1.1 Since 2013/14 the Department for Education (DfE) has required that Schools Forum agree to de-delegate budgets for certain services provided centrally by the Local Authority (LA). The DfE have confirmed that this arrangement will continue for financial year 2025/26.
- 1.2 The funding is automatically delegated to Academies who can choose to access some of the services by purchasing from East Sussex Services to Schools or source services from other providers.
- 1.3 The services to be considered for de-delegation in 2025/26 are shown below and Schools Forum can agree to de-delegate a service in 2025/26 where it chose not to in 2024/25.
- Contingency
 - Behaviour Support Services (please see appendix B)
 - Support for ethnic minority pupils (please see appendix B)
 - Administration of free school meals
 - Jury service and union business
 - Headteacher Partnership (please see appendix C)

- 1.4 For 2024/25, the following decisions were agreed at schools forum on de-delegated services.

	PRIMARY	SECONDARY
	De-delegated in 2024/25	De-delegated in 2024/25
Contingency	Yes	Yes
Behaviour Support Services	Yes	No
<i>Support for ethnic minority pupils*</i>	Yes	No
Administration of Free school meals	Yes	Yes
Jury service and union business	Yes	Yes
Head Teacher Partnership	Yes	Yes

*subject to a 2 year commitment for 2024/25

- 1.5 Only members of the Schools Forum representing maintained primary and secondary schools are entitled to vote on the 2025/26 proposals. In accordance with regulations, representatives of each phase will vote separately, however it is possible that a decision not to de-delegate in one phase may affect the viability of provision overall and the withdrawal of the service for all phases.

2. The Services

- 2.1 Descriptions of the services which can be provided centrally to maintained schools are set out below in Appendix A B and C.
- 2.2 The De-delegated funding for 2024/25 to schools and academies for these services is summarised in Appendix D.
- 2.3 The calculation of amounts to be de-delegated from each school must be linked to factors within the funding formula. The calculations, applied in 2024/25, will continue for 2025/26 using the following basis:

De-delegated Heading	Formula Factor
Contingency	Per Pupil Amount
Behaviour Support Services	20% Per Pupil Amount 11% Free School Meals 22% Free School Meal Ever6 22% IDACI 25% Prior Attainment
Support for Ethnic Minority Pupils	50% Per Pupil 50% Per EAL Pupil
Administration of Free School Meals	Free School Meal Numbers
Jury service and union business	Per Pupil Amount
Head Teacher Partnership	Lump Sum Amount

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 The Maintained Primary and Secondary representatives on the Schools Forum are requested to agree the services to be de-delegated in 2025/26, as per paragraph 1.3.

Carolyn Fair

Director Children's Services

Contact Officer: Sarah Rice

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Email: Sarah.Rice@eastsussex.gov.uk

Description of De-delegated services

Appendix A

The framework for de-delegated budgets is set within the principles of shared responsibility between schools for all children and mutual support across all schools. The model allows for all maintained schools to have certainty of access to support at the point of need from services that continue to operate and provide support in a well managed and cost effective way.

Contingencies

Contingencies can be held for a limited range of circumstances

- Exceptional unforeseen costs which it would be unreasonable to expect governing bodies to plan for
- Schools in financial difficulties
- Additional costs relating to new, re-organised and closing schools
- Managing extra ordinary personnel matters

It is recommended that maintained schools continue to fund a contingency which will be administered by the Local Authority for the approved purposes.

If schools decide not to have a central contingency, they will need to ensure that all schools are able to make any extraordinary payments this can put significant additional strain on individual school budget shares.

Administration of Free School Meals

The County Council's free school meals service enables schools to meet legal requirements relating to the provision of free school meals without the administrative burden.

The free school meals service is located within the Admissions and Transport Team and as a Local Authority, we have direct links with Government Departments (DfE and DWP). This enables us to determine eligibility for free school meals with one short telephone call from schools with the vast majority of individual applications only taking 30 seconds to process. Individual schools do not have access to the checking service meaning eligibility would need to be carried out at school level as a paper exercise.

We are able to give guidance on all aspects of eligibility and provide accurate data to support schools. Weekly changes are reported to schools securely and full entitlement reports are sent to individual schools. We will ensure that free schools meals data is accurate for the census returns.

NB Academies can buy into this service through Services to Schools.

Jury service and union business

This central budget currently pays for supply cover when members of a school's staff undertake Trade Union Duties or Jury Service. The amount each school may have to pay can vary significantly from year to year, whereas across the County the amount is more likely to be relatively stable. The benefit to maintained schools of pooling these budgets is that schools know exactly how much they will pay each year instead of facing the prospect of additional costs which are out of the schools control and which could present a significant budget pressure.

For primary schools, this budget also includes the costs of administering the County Funded Supply internal insurance schemes.

Behavioural Support, Support for Minority Ethnic Pupils and HeadTeacher Partnership

For discussions around these areas of de-delegation please see appendices B & C.

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1 Background

1.1 From April 2014, funding arrangements for centrally held Behaviour Support Services (BSS) were placed under the jurisdiction of Schools' Forum to decide whether the historic budgets could be pooled by the Local Authority or distributed to maintained schools by formula.

1.2 The framework for de-delegated budgets is set within the principles of shared responsibility between schools for all pupils and mutual support across all schools. The model allows for all schools who de-delegate funding to have certainty of access to support at the point of need from services that continue to operate and provide support in the most cost-effective way.

1.3 Behaviour support sits within the Team Around the School and Setting (TASS) and is delivered through a broader agenda of inclusion support. The new TASS Inclusion Advisers provide support to all maintained primary schools through delivering a range of interventions to support schools and settings around emerging needs including, social, emotional and mental health needs, cohort work around emerging behaviour needs and includes developing programmes for groups of children who are at risk of permanent exclusion.

1.4 The Inclusion and Alternative Provision team will provide support for secondary and primary aged child is at risk of Permanent Exclusion through the Inclusion Partnerships (secondary) or Behaviour Support Networks (primary). A team of Inclusion Partnership Advisers are available to support with children at risk of PEX.

1.5 Support from the TASS team is bespoke to the needs of the school and includes whole school expert advice, guidance, training, and support, as well as targeted group work alongside whole school approaches to behaviour and inclusion. As pupils who present challenges with behaviour often present with attendance difficulties, the TASS behaviour offer is supported by the new statutory and core attendance offer and termly attendance meetings, where identified. Schools at both phases are offered a core behaviour meeting prior to the implementation of any targeted work.

1.6 Schools and academies have a statutory duty to provide for pupils with EAL on their roll and funding is delegated within their individual budgets for this purpose. EAL is not a special educational need and pupils with EAL are able to achieve very well if effective support is in place for them. This includes support from staff who have a good understanding of their mother tongue and can build links with families who do not speak English as a first language. The EAL service offers a range of support for pupils and schools (1:1 support and training) as well as a translation service and support for pupils to take examinations in their mother tongue.

2 Behaviour Support: (Team Around the School and Setting - Inclusion)

2.1 Currently, resources for primary maintained schools are managed according to a published formula. Appendix A outlines the agreed allocation of support to schools. The new Inclusion offer, through the Team Around the School and Setting, provided an opportunity to reshape the behaviour model to support emerging needs

in schools and to enhance the developing inclusion agenda. The central tenet of this proposal is to ensure there is a clarity and equity around distribution of resource for all schools and a targeted whole school support, which in turn support whole school improvement.

2.2 This system aims to support whole school developments around behaviour and inclusion and to provide schools with access to specialist support for behaviour and guidance around inclusion.

2.3 *Implications for Cessation of De-Delegated Primary Behaviour Support:*

- Behaviour and inclusion capacity would be significantly reduced, and the service could only focus on statutory work (i.e. permanently excluded pupils). Behaviour and inclusion provision could not be reinstated at a later stage.
- No early intervention would be provided, except for statutory duties.
- The number of pupils requiring support in the secondary phase could increase as their barriers to learning support may not have been addressed in a timely and robust manner in the primary phase.
- A potential increase in the demand for special school provision in both primary and secondary phases.
- A potential increase in permanent exclusions, breakdown of placements of pupils with EHCPs, and a related increase in the number of pupils that schools must reintegrate mid-year from other schools.
- A potential deterioration of attendance.
- Further pressure on High Needs Block funding and in turn funding available for schools.

2.4 The overall impact of a reduction in funding in this area would increase the challenge for schools, potentially creating additional budget pressures or demands on already stretched alternative and specialist provision. Outcomes for pupils in East Sussex could further decline.

Conclusions

3.1 High standards of behaviour and improved attendance are key to improving standards. While there is some evidence of progress, East Sussex continues to under-perform when compared to national and statistical neighbours in relation to both attendance and exclusions. Developing and sustaining consistent, effective inclusive practice across all schools must be a priority.

3.2 There is evidence that where schools have assumed financial responsibility for behaviour support there has been no correlating improvement in pupil behaviour or school performance. Indeed, the evidence suggests that schools delay early intervention because appropriate support is more costly or difficult to access and later remedies to address the problems are less effective and much more costly for pupils and schools. Where pupils are permanently excluded, the burden falls on all schools to fund and provide ongoing support and places for pupils in special schools or Independent Non-Maintained Schools (INMS).

3.3 In light of the rising demand for high-cost provision for pupils who are permanently excluded in secondary schools, and the potential that this will have on all school budgets due to pressures in the High Needs Block. consideration should be given to re-establishing a de-delegation of funding for Behaviour Support Services

across this sector and other approaches to ensuring consistent effective inclusive practice.

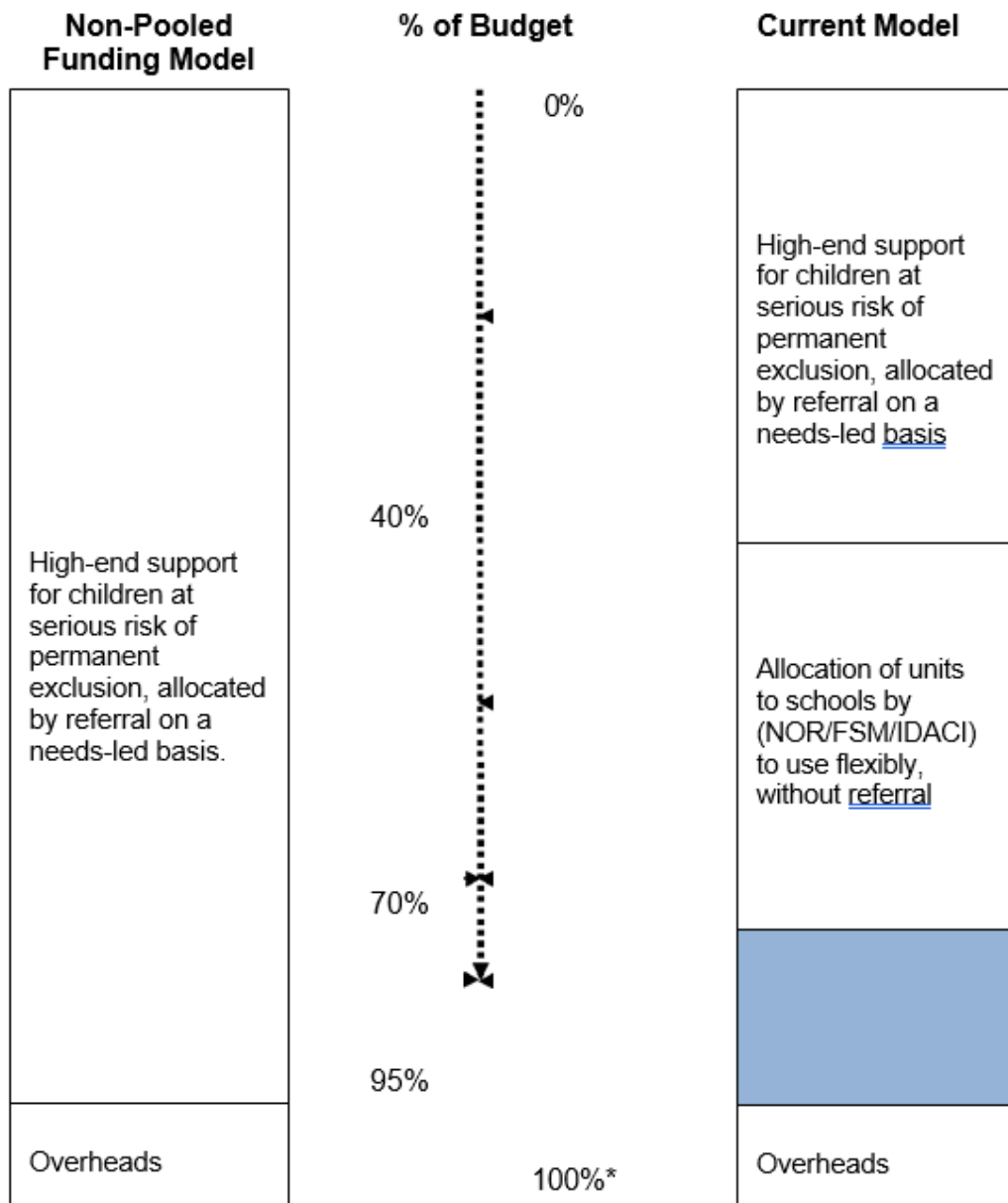
4 Recommendations

4.1 This paper sets out the rationale for continued de-delegation of primary behaviour support service, and for restoring de-delegated budgets from secondary schools for those services. The implications of any cessation of provision should be considered carefully considering the likely impact across all schools.

4.2 Schools' Forum is, therefore recommended to:

4.2.1 Continue de-delegated budgets for maintained primary Behaviour Support for 2025/26

4.2.2 Consider restoring de-delegated budgets for maintained secondary Behaviour Support for 2025/26



*This can be 'topped up' by individual schools by purchasing additional units from the Services to Schools offer.

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Headteacher Partnership Contribution

1.1 A school improvement monitoring and brokering grant was allocated to local authorities from September 2017 to support local authorities in fulfilling their school improvement duties, including monitoring the performance of maintained schools, brokering school improvement provision, and intervening as appropriate. The Department for Education removed the grant in full from the financial year 2023/24 and confirmed that in future these functions should be funded from maintained school budgets through de-delegation.

1.2 Schools Forum were updated at their meeting in March 2023 on how the removal of the grant would be managed in East Sussex. The local authority is managing the reduction of the grant through efficiencies in the resource allocated to the Primary and Secondary Boards, savings made as part of the re-structure of the Education Division and reduced spend on project activity.

1.3 The Education Division leads for the local authority on our school improvement functions. The service has a range of responsibilities and is supported by funding from different sources, including government grants and local authority funding.

1.4 The local authority has worked with schools to develop a school-led system for improvement which sits alongside the delivery of the local authority's statutory school improvement duties. The EIPs and Area Groups, supported by the Boards, are the key mechanisms for schools to work together on improving practice and raising standards. We continue to work in a school system that is characterised by overlapping responsibilities and increasing pressure on resources. In this landscape, our partnership structures play an important role in holding the system together, avoiding further fragmentation and navigating future developments. Bringing school leaders together, by phase, across the academic year provides an important forum for shaping and delivering our shared ambitions for children's education.

1.5 There are a range of costs associated with facilitating the school-led system and providing opportunities for school leaders to collaborate with each other and hear from expert speakers. The costs for this activity have been modelled so that the following functions can be delivered for approximately £43,500 per annum:

- Chairing the Primary and Secondary Boards
- Chairing the 11-19 Headteacher meetings and Primary Headteacher meetings
- Venue and speaker costs for Primary Leadership conferences
- Venue and speaker costs for 11-19 Headteacher meetings

1.6 Schools Forum are asked to agree the same proposals as last financial year for the financial year 2024/25, where schools are asked to contribute to cover these partnership costs through a 'headteacher partnership contribution' of a flat fee of £250 per primary, secondary and all-through school.

1.7 This model continues to represent good value for money for school leaders and mirrors arrangements in other local authority areas for headteacher associations. It is proposed that, as last year, the agreed amount is de-delegated from local authority maintained schools and that academy schools are asked to contribute through purchasing a 'headteacher partnership contribution' as a traded service through Services to Schools. As academies buy into Services for Schools from the 1st September details were not available

at the time of writing this report of how many brought in for September 2023. A verbal update will be provided at the meeting.

1.8 Discussion is ongoing with the Special School headteachers about how the local authority supports their partnership arrangements, we have therefore not included special schools in this proposal.

Appendix D

School	Contingency £	Behaviour Support Service £	Ethnic minority and bi-lingual £	Free meal eligibility £	Jury Service & union duties supply cover £	Head teacher Partnership £	Total £
Alfriston School	1,107	933	1,323	35	205	250	3,854
All Saints' and St Richard's Church of England Primary School	1,039	827	1,025	31	193	250	3,366
All Saints Church of England Primary School, Bexhill	2,474	4,866	2,835	367	459	250	11,250
Ashdown Primary School	4,757	3,881	4,411	108	882	250	14,289
Barcombe Church of England Primary School	1,548	1,208	1,663	77	287	250	5,033
Battle and Langton Church of England Primary School	4,790	4,442	4,882	322	888	250	15,574
Beckley Church of England Primary School	1,073	766	1,054	45	199	250	3,387
Blackboys Church of England Primary School	1,480	1,046	2,001	42	274	250	5,093
Bodiam Church of England Primary School	904	822	711	45	168	250	2,900
Bonnors CofE School	1,390	1,320	2,204	105	258	250	5,526
Bourne Primary School	4,779	8,842	25,162	497	886	250	40,416
Brede Primary School	1,243	1,189	978	52	230	250	3,943
Burwash CofE School	1,819	1,431	2,102	59	337	250	5,998
Buxted CofE Primary School	2,079	1,423	3,354	66	385	250	7,558
Catsfield Church of England Primary School	1,152	1,008	1,131	35	214	250	3,790
Chailey St Peter's Church of England Primary School	1,299	1,450	1,226	112	241	250	4,578
Chantry Community Primary School	2,316	3,452	2,720	234	429	250	9,401
Chiddingly Primary School	1,152	1,102	907	73	214	250	3,698
Cradle Hill Community Primary School	6,926	7,158	7,242	339	1,284	250	23,199
Cross-in-Hand Church of England Primary School	4,327	4,037	5,216	213	802	250	14,846
Crowhurst CofE Primary School	1,085	1,248	854	70	201	250	3,707
Dallington Church of England Primary School	1,288	936	1,450	42	239	250	4,205
Danehill Church of England Primary School	1,028	830	1,035	24	191	250	3,359
Denton Community Primary School and Nursery	2,395	3,035	2,777	168	444	250	9,069
East Hoathly CofE Primary School	1,107	834	1,323	38	205	250	3,759
Etchingham Church of England Primary School	1,164	747	916	24	216	250	3,317
Firle Church of England Primary School	881	1,125	1,860	52	163	250	4,332
Five Ashes CofE Primary School	576	572	869	52	107	250	2,426
Fletching Church of England Primary School	780	1,018	1,020	63	144	250	3,275
Forest Row Church of England Primary School	1,898	1,735	4,798	112	352	250	9,145
Framfield Church of England Primary School	1,051	691	1,940	28	195	250	4,154
Frant Church of England Primary School	1,107	612	1,323	7	205	250	3,505
Groombridge St Thomas' Church of England Primary School	1,977	1,133	2,217	14	366	250	5,958
Grovelands Community Primary School	7,186	9,803	7,662	616	1,332	250	26,848
Guestling Bradshaw Church of England Primary School	2,407	3,661	2,785	189	446	250	9,738
Hamsey Community Primary School	1,130	1,258	1,345	56	209	250	4,248
Hankham Primary School	1,390	1,821	1,742	119	258	250	5,579
Harbour Primary and Nursery School	4,723	8,972	7,940	612	875	250	23,372
Harlands Primary School	2,339	1,751	3,184	84	433	250	8,041
Hellingly Community Primary School	2,226	2,045	1,752	108	413	250	6,793
Herstmonceux Church of England Primary School	2,361	2,074	2,308	129	438	250	7,560
High Hurstwood Church of England Primary School	1,107	747	1,308	31	205	250	3,649
Holy Cross Church of England Primary School	802	1,362	2,166	112	149	250	4,841
Icklesham Church of England Primary School	1,220	1,742	1,849	94	226	250	5,383
Iford and Kingston Church of England Primary School	1,876	1,668	1,914	66	348	250	6,122
Laughton Community Primary School	1,096	1,053	863	21	203	250	3,485
Little Common School	7,028	6,882	7,097	332	1,303	250	22,892
Little Horsted Church of England Primary School	972	668	1,176	31	180	250	3,278
Manor Primary School	4,384	3,923	4,776	269	813	250	14,415
Mark Cross Church of England Aided Primary School	1,028	596	809	21	191	250	2,895
Mayfield Church of England Primary School	1,796	1,250	4,958	56	333	250	8,643
Maynards Green Community Primary School	2,361	1,430	1,858	84	438	250	6,422
Meridian Community Primary School and Nursery	5,028	7,140	7,708	434	932	250	21,492
Motcombe Infants' School	2,791	3,381	9,677	182	517	250	16,798
Netherfield CofE Primary School	1,593	1,296	1,477	63	295	250	4,974
Newick Church of England Primary School	2,395	1,439	3,412	70	444	250	8,010
Ninfield Church of England Primary School	1,706	1,201	1,343	52	316	250	4,868
Nutley Church of England Primary School	938	678	738	38	174	250	2,816
Park Mead Primary School	1,175	1,261	925	73	218	250	3,902
Parkside Community Primary School	2,316	1,806	2,047	73	429	250	6,922
Pashley Down Infant School	2,949	3,645	10,269	196	547	250	17,855
Peasmarsh Church of England Primary School	847	907	667	52	157	250	2,881
Pevensey and Westham CofE Primary School	4,689	4,741	3,914	269	869	250	14,732
Plumpton Primary School	1,435	980	1,579	35	266	250	4,545
Polegate Primary School	7,118	9,053	7,612	458	1,319	250	25,810
Punnetts Town Community Primary School	1,175	729	1,144	10	218	250	3,526
Ringmer Primary and Nursery School	3,389	2,573	3,320	154	628	250	10,315
Rocks Park Primary School	2,327	1,955	2,057	80	431	250	7,101
Rotherfield Primary School	2,373	2,185	2,761	94	440	250	8,103
Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Hastings	2,678	3,400	4,929	122	496	250	11,876
Salehurst Church of England Primary School	2,135	1,991	2,558	112	396	250	7,441
Sandown Primary School and Nursery	5,050	10,408	6,186	689	936	250	23,519
Seaford Primary School	4,700	4,309	7,278	175	871	250	17,583
South Malling CofE Primary and Nursery School	2,599	2,636	3,151	185	482	250	9,303
Southover CofE Primary School	3,480	2,735	5,223	150	645	250	12,484
St Andrew's Church of England Infants School	2,881	4,525	7,943	280	534	250	16,413
St John's Church of England Primary School	2,282	1,758	2,695	21	423	250	7,429
St Mark's Church of England Primary School	1,006	819	791	42	186	250	3,094
St Mary Magdalene Catholic Primary School	2,361	2,558	4,764	73	438	250	10,444
St Mary Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School	2,260	3,890	10,613	210	419	250	17,642
St Mary the Virgin Church of England Primary School	1,017	947	1,236	42	188	250	3,681
St Marys Catholic Primary School	2,463	2,085	3,936	66	457	250	9,257
St Michael's Church of England Primary School	994	1,361	998	84	184	250	3,872
St Michael's Primary School	813	465	640	14	151	250	2,333
St Pancras Catholic Primary School	1,220	1,800	2,226	140	226	250	5,862
St Peter and St Paul CofE Primary School	4,723	6,283	7,069	325	875	250	19,525
St Philip's Catholic Primary School	1,989	1,761	4,302	101	369	250	8,771
St Thomas A Becket Catholic Primary School	4,971	5,693	22,308	182	921	250	34,326
St Thomas' Church of England Aided Primary School	1,548	1,954	1,218	98	287	250	5,355
Staplecross Methodist Primary School	1,085	1,041	854	52	201	250	3,483

Appendix D

School	Contingency £	Behaviour Support Service £	Ethnic minority and bi-lingual £	Free meal eligibility £	Jury Service & union duties supply cover £	Head teacher Partnership £	Total £
Stone Cross School	4,723	4,503	5,058	227	875	250	15,636
Stonegate Church of England Primary School	1,096	761	1,092	24	203	250	3,426
The Haven Voluntary Aided CofE/Methodist Primary School	4,847	6,532	9,823	413	898	250	22,764
Ticehurst and Flimwell Church of England Primary School	1,277	1,707	2,534	164	237	250	6,169
Tollgate Community Junior School	4,395	6,510	6,904	444	815	250	19,318
Wadhurst CofE Primary School	2,802	1,957	3,595	112	519	250	9,235
Wallands Community Primary and Nursery School	2,666	3,880	2,525	255	494	250	10,070
West Rise Community Infant School	3,028	4,701	7,571	262	561	250	16,373
West Rise Junior School	4,067	6,851	3,775	444	754	250	16,142
Western Road Community Primary School	2,339	1,480	2,286	38	433	250	6,826
Westfield School	2,260	3,103	2,224	157	419	250	8,412
Willingdon Primary School	4,745	4,333	5,521	203	880	250	15,932
Wivelsfield Primary School	2,497	1,476	2,427	52	463	250	7,165
Chailey School	12,663	8,872	3,482	455	110	250	25,832
Claverham Community College	17,343	17,651	4,769	1,329	151	250	41,492
Heathfield Community College	18,206	14,362	5,006	916	158	250	38,899
Priory School	17,676	18,300	4,861	1,273	154	250	42,513
Robertsbridge Community College	11,481	12,612	3,157	972	100	250	28,572
St Richard's Catholic College	15,768	16,170	4,336	689	137	250	37,349
Uckfield College	19,600	15,805	5,390	1,009	170	250	42,224
Willingdon Community School	15,419	15,287	4,240	843	134	250	36,173
Primary Total	248,665	273,607	368,925	14,891	46,090	25,750	977,927
Secondary Total	128,156	119,059	35,240	7,486	1,114	2,000	293,054
Total	376,821	392,666	404,165	22,376	47,204	27,750	1,270,981

Unit rates for allocations

Primary pupils	11.30	2.86	8.89		2.09	250.00
Primary FSM		6.45		3.50		
Primary FSM Ever 6		12.55				
Primary IDACI total units		7.53				
Primary Prior Attainment		15.02				
Primary EALs			191.41			
Secondary pupils	15.15	3.82	8.33		0.13	250.00
Secondary FSM		9.47		6.15		
Secondary FSM Ever 6		16.46				
Secondary IDACI total units		10.48				
Secondary Prior Attainment		20.58				
Secondary EALs			614.49			

Report to:	Schools' Forum
Date of meeting:	20 September 2024
Report By:	Carolyn Fair
Title:	High Needs Block - Response to Demands 2024/25
Purpose:	To provide an update on the current position with the HNB in respect of identified pressures and to seek approval for use of Central School Services Block (CSSB) to reduce in-year pressures.

Recommendations:

- That Schools' Forum agrees for CSSB to be retained for the purposes of reducing any HNB deficit in 24/25.
 - That Schools' Forum representatives note the implications of costs for maintaining the current (or increased) level of placements in special schools and the risks associated with this for broader school budgets.
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1. Background

- 1.1 At Schools' Forum in May, we set out the current and forecast pressures on the High Needs Block, alongside the potential implications for schools in meeting in-year, and future, overspends.
- 1.2 Since this meeting, the LA has undertaken further work to update the projections and to model different options for Schools' Forum to consider in addressing the financial challenges. This includes working with partners across the sector to review requests for increases in fees with a view to establishing long-term and sustainable options for meeting increasing demands. This work is ongoing and remains a high priority.
- 1.3 Since 2017, the partners across the local SEND system Local Area partners have worked hard to avoid the need for inter-block transfers, from individual school budgets into the HNB, in ensuring that the costs of provision for children with SEND are met within the available resources This has included:
 - ensuring that schools have access to high quality support and guidance from dedicated specialist support services;
 - ensuring transparent models of funding for state-run provision;
 - challenging unreasonable costs in the independent sector;
 - developing cost-effective provision in the state sector (new special schools and specialist facilities);
 - investing in systems to improve inclusion in mainstream schools through the Enhancing Mainstream Practice Fund.
- 1.4 Collectively, this work has been instrumental in allowing us to mitigate the impact of the rising costs of SEND provision that other LAs have seen over recent years. However, the current position in East Sussex means that our mitigations will no longer meet the costs. This is due to the following factors: a much higher proportion

of children with EHCPs placed in special schools than is the case nationally; significant increases in costs in provision within the independent and non-maintained special (INMS) sector; a comparatively low allocation of HNB funding for the current year.

- 1.5 This paper sets out the proposed steps to address the forecast pressure in the High Needs Block, which will require agreement from Schools' Forum at this meeting and the following meeting, in November.

2. Supporting Information

- 2.1 At the end of Q1 24/25, we were forecasting a total pressure on the High Needs Block of £2.83m. It is important to note that this has been mitigated by the last of the reserves within the HNB that were brought forward from 23/24.
- 2.2 The single most significant pressure on the SEND budget is the costs from the INMS sector. This is due to two main factors: the increase in the number of children for whom there is a request for a special school; and the unregulated price increases in this sector for all children placed which is above inflation in most cases.
- 2.3 It is important to note that, with a few exceptions, the INMS sector is not providing anything that local, state-run provision (in both mainstream and special schools) are not providing. INMS are, therefore, only picking up 'overflow' where local provision is full, or where mainstream schools are stating that they cannot meet needs. For this reason, we are paying a premium for educational provision for children who might otherwise be supported in their local special or mainstream schools, and are not achieving discernibly better outcomes in the INMS sector.
- 2.4 As the number of pupils placed in special schools increases and, as the funding from central government is insufficient to pay for the costs associated with this, we need to make some collective decisions about how we respond to this challenge. As we have already undertaken a lot of work (since the last de-delegation in 2017) to address many of the cost pressures, the only options are either to reduce the number of pupils who are placed in special schools (to bring ES in line with national averages) or fund the additional costs from elsewhere in the school funding system.
- 2.5 Where there is a projected overspend in the HNB, Local Authorities must liaise with Schools' Forum to agree how this will be met. As the regulations around the funding of the HNB do not allow for the transfer of non-DSG into the HNB, any shortfall in the HNB must be met from other DSG budgets.
- 2.6 As the pressure we are seeing is predominantly from the number of placements of children in INMS schools, and the average cost of these placements is £45k, the only way of avoiding the projected overspends is a reduction in the number of placements in special schools. This would require a significant change of approach, in order to meet the needs of more pupils in mainstream provision. We have already identified that the year 6 to 7 transition is a particular time of pressure for special school placements and the Statement of Intent that was agreed by the Joint Board last academic year identifies a range of ways to tackle this challenge together. However, this has yet to have the required impact on the number of special school placements.
- 2.7 Looking at the current costs and numbers, if we had placed 63 fewer children in INMS, then there would be no pressure on the HNB this financial year. As an example of the current challenge, last calendar year, 84 children were placed in INMS schools directly from mainstream provision; 40 of these did not previously have an EHCP.

This is an additional annual cost of £3.7m for this cohort alone and exceeds this year's total pressure on the HNB.

- 2.8 Following a meeting between the LA and the DfE at the end of August to discuss the processes for interblock transfers, we are currently completing a DSG management plan which will articulate the pressures in the HNB and the measures we are taking to address these. This is a requirement of the DfE and we will bring this to Schools' Forum on 15 November 2024. We will provide an updated financial position at this meeting, along with any request for a funding transfer from schools' budgets to the HNB to address the in-year pressure (i.e. for 24/25 only).
- 2.9 In order to reduce the impact of an interblock transfer, we have looked across the board to see where DSG is sitting to see if there are other options for consideration. Following discussion with the DfE, this includes looking at existing school reserves. With the current level of unmitigated overspend in the HNB, we feel that the best way to address this (in the first instance) is to utilise the "term-time" surplus of CSSB which would otherwise be delegated to schools. By using this element of DSG, this would reduce the forecast overspend for 24/25 by £1.049m bringing the current projection to £1.79m.
- 2.10 The proposal, therefore, is that Schools' Forum vote to agree for the CSSB to be retained to reduce the deficit in HNB in 24/25. We propose to re-run our projections for the HNB in early November (including the implications for this on individual schools) in advance of a request for an interblock transfer coming to Schools' Forum on 15 November.
- 2.11 The future position for HNB remains in flux, but (assuming we receive a similar allocation of HNB as this year) we are currently forecasting overspends of £15.8m in 25/26 and £25.1m in 26/27. Unless mainstream schools retain a greater number of pupils, or the government changes the financial regulations around INMS settings, it is very likely that a significant interblock transfer, as well as other virements of DSG, will be required next financial year as well.
- 2.12 We are still committed to the processes that we agreed last academic year to review the top-up funding to mainstream schools, state run special schools and a wholesale funding review for FE Colleges, and the HNB Working Group will continue to meet in between Forum meetings to make recommendations on these. However, it is important to flag that the costs of the current pattern of educational provision in East Sussex exceed the HNB funding available and these will have to be met through the DSG.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 In light of the above, the following recommendations are made:
 - a) That Schools' Forum agrees for CSSB to be retained for the purposes of reducing any HNB deficit in 24/25.
 - b) That Schools' Forum representatives note the implications of costs for maintaining the current (or increased) level of placements in special schools and the risks associated with this for broader school budgets.

Carolyn Fair
Director Children's Services

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