



Wirral Schools Forum

Date:	Wednesday, 5 July 2017
Time:	6.00 pm
Venue:	Council Chamber, Wallasey Town Hall

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AGENDA

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS (Pages 1 - 10)
2. MATTERS ARISING
3. ARRANGEMENTS FOR ALTERNATIVE PROVISION (Pages 11 - 14)
4. UPDATE OF WATER CHARGES FROM UNITED UTILITIES (Pages 15 - 18)
5. UPDATE ON ENERGY PRICES (Pages 19 - 20)
6. FREE SCHOOL MEALS ELIGIBILITY (Pages 21 - 22)
7. TRADED SERVICES UPDATE - EDSSENTIAL (Pages 23 - 24)
8. TRADED SERVICES - WIRRAL TRADED SERVICES (Pages 25 - 26)
9. EARLY YEARS INCLUSION (Pages 27 - 48)
10. SCHOOL ADMISSIONS (Pages 49 - 52)
11. COMMISSIONING PLACES FOR HIGH NEEDS/SEND (Pages 53 - 58)
12. SCHOOLS BUDGET OUTTURN FOR 2016-17 (Pages 59 - 64)

- 13. UPDATE ON SCHOOL BALANCES (Pages 65 - 66)**
- 14. SCHOOLS BUDGET UPDATE 2017-18 (Pages 67 - 70)**
- 15. BUDGET MONITORING 2017-18 (Pages 71 - 74)**
- 16. DSG BASELINE (Pages 75 - 78)**
- 17. SCHOOLS FORUM ASSOCIATION (Pages 79 - 80)**
- 18. SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS CHANGES (Pages 81 - 84)**
- 19. FORUM MEMBERSHIP UPDATE (Pages 85 - 88)**
- 20. ACTION PLAN AND DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS (Pages 89 - 90)**
- 21. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

WIRRAL SCHOOLS' FORUM

18th January 2017

MINUTES

Present: Jill Billinge (Chair)

Schools Group

L Ayling	J Lawrenson (substitute)
S Baker	N Lightwing
B Chadwick	R Mahony
M Forber	D Marchant
J Goalen	A Whiteley (Vice Chair)
A Heron	V Woods (substitute)
T Kelly	

Non-Schools Group

S Bennett	I Harris
M Bulmer	N Prance
A Donelan	

In Attendance:

S Allen	M Johns
S Ashley	M Morris
P Cleary	A Ryecroft
Cllr W Clements	A Roberts
A Davies	A Snow
R Edwards	S Talbot
S Harper	A Turnbull
J Hassall	

Apologies:

E Cogan	J McCallum
S Dainty	J Pearson
S Davies	K Podmore
S Duggan	T Quinn
S Higginson	T Taylor
L Ireland	P Young

1. Minutes from the Meeting held on 28th September 2016

The minutes from the meeting were accepted as a true record.

2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes that were not covered on the main agenda.

3. Insurance Update

Andrew Roberts summarised the Insurance Service that maintained schools receive. Insurance premiums are competitive and most schools continue to buy in to the SLA. A service has also been developed for schools who have converted to academies and there is a strong take up of this offer.

The SLA now requires schools to inform the Insurance Team of their intention to convert to academy.

Due to a procurement exercise for Liability Insurance the expected average increase for Schools Insurance SLA in 2017-18 has reduced from 6.6% stated in the report to 0.5%.

Resolved

Forum noted the report

4. Energy Update

Andrew Snow outlined the school electricity and gas contracts. 118 Wirral schools, including PFI Schools and Academies, purchase energy through the Local Authority's contract. Electricity and gas are purchased by the Crown Commercial Service on behalf of the wider public sector, which allows them to buy on wholesale markets keeping costs down for schools.

Utility costs are starting to rise again, but there is no firm indication of the implications for schools in 2017-18. An update will be provided at the April Forum Meeting.

The high costs of Surface Water Drainage has been discussed at previous meetings. Defra have now reviewed their guidance and have decided that there should be no amendment to charging policies by water companies. As a result water costs will remain high in the North West.

Resolved

Forum noted the report

5. MEAS Update

Anna Turnbull updated the Forum on the SLA that has been provided to schools since September 2016 for MEAS. 63 schools bought back services to March 2017. The team has reduced but has maintained the breadth of services offered. The team will continue develop the service, which is now also offered to Cheshire West Schools.

MEAS will work with 4 refugee families moving into the area this term.

Resolved

Forum noted the report

6. PFI Support

Mary Johns outlined the work of the PFI team, which provides contractual, legal and financial support to PFI schools. Discussions are ongoing with the PFI Providers to ensure that the 2 PFI CLCs are occupied as soon as practicable. A further report will be presented later in the year to update Forum Members on this progress. Members noted the valuable work the team provides to the PFI schools.

Resolved

Forum noted the report

7. Budget Monitoring 2016-17

Shaun Allen updated the Forum on the expected position and variations with regard to the Schools Budget in the current financial year, particularly:-

- Special Educational needs top ups projected to overspend by £170k due to additional top ups and increased costs within further education and alternative provision.
- Education Health and Care Plans projected to overspend £195k
- Independent Special Schools overspend of £365k mainly due to students moving into 6th form provision.
- Support for SEN projected underspend of £300k

DSG has reduced due to the conversion of St Marys Catholic College to academy status in November 2016 with £2.88m being recouped.

The expected additional costs of £345k will be met from DSG reserves.

Resolved

Forum noted the report

8. Schools Funding Formula 2017-18

Richard Edwards highlighted the changes in the dataset which will affect the schools 2017-18 funding formula:-

- Pupil numbers for both primary and secondary sectors have increased by 503 in total.
- Free School Meal numbers have increased by 173 due to the opt in process
- IDACI bands have been adjusted to ensure funding is distributed appropriately to all bands (the numbers in more deprived bands has increased)
- Children eligible for EAL has increased by 71.
- The New PFI affordability Gap and PFI Facilities elements allocating funds to PFI schools
- Exceptional Sum Factor for Pensby amalgamation of £40k

Resolved

Forum notes the report

9. Schools Budget 2017-18

Andrew Roberts outlined the Schools Budget for 2017-18 of £252m and highlighted the following areas:-

- Pupil Premium and UIFSM rates remain the same for 2017-18.
- The Early Years block will increase by £1.4m and the hourly rate for providers will increase.
- Additional Grant will be available to cover the 15 hour extension for working parents
- High needs growth of £550k.

- The Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) remains at -1.5%
- Education Services Grant (ESG) transitional funds of £943k to August only
- Confirmation of permanent funding for High Needs place changes from September 2016 as follows:-
 - Ellera Park increase by 11 places to 110
 - Stanley increase by 21 places to 120
 - Lyndale Reduction of 40 places
 - Clare Mount increase by 10 to 204
 - Bebington ERP reduce by 5 to 20
 - Birkenhead Park ERP reduce by 10 to 10
 - Kingsway Academy ERP reduce by 10 to 20
- And further changes to high needs places from September 2016:-
 - Clare Mount increase by 12 to 216
 - Townfield ERP increase by 1 from 11 to 12
 - Hilbre ERP increase by 15 to 30
 - Kingsway Academy ERP closure and reduce by 20
 - Birkenhead Park closure and reduce by 10
 - Emslie Morgan AP increase by 20 to 100
 - Birkenhead 6th Form increase by 5 to 65
 - Wirral Met College increase by 45 to 117
- Centrally held budgets - The changes required for 2017-18 are:-
 - Continuing premature retirement costs of teachers and staff that have arisen from closing schools reduced to £60k
 - Budget for the PFI affordability gap will be delegated from April 17. There will be no DSG funded costs held at the centre.
 - The Schools budget will contribute £730k to the councils ESG
 - The funds for ESG General Duties of £759,300 was described, together with the revised arrangements for School Improvement of £862,000.
- The Contribution to Combined budgets are to be agreed by the Forum.

Resolved

- i) Forum noted the contents of the report
- ii) Forum agreed that the PFI are delegated to schools, subject to finalising amended schools agreements and confirmation from the EFA
- iii) Forum agreed the following Contributions to Combined budgets for 2017-18
 - Discretionary Rate Relief top ups
 - School Improvement
 - LSCB Contribution
 - School Intervention
 - PFI - CLCs
 - LACES
 - Governors Forum
 - PFI Support Team
- iv) Forum agreed to use £568,900 reserves to set the 2017-18 budget.
- v) Forum agreed the contribution of Retained Duties of £730k
- vi) Forum agreed to transfer £106k from the schools block to the high needs block following the transfer of central budgets to schools.
- vii) The High Needs Working group will review budget and demands along side the National Funding Formula proposals
- viii) The schools budget and views of the forum to be referred to the budget meeting of Cabinet on 20th February 2017.

10. School Improvement Funding Changes and De-delegation

Sue Talbot briefed Schools Forum on the changes to School improvement in 2017-18. ESG Funding ceases from September 2017 which reduces school improvement funding within Wirral. Moving forward the plan is to develop a new service, but in the meantime:-

- Maintain a central contribution for 3 school improvement staff, 2 consultant heads and admin support
- From September de-delegate funding for maintained schools and provide an SLA for academies & special schools of £190,800.

Resolved

Forum Noted the Report

11. De-delegation of Budgets

In addition to the changes to the schools budget Report above the following budgets were identified that could be de-delegated in 2017-18. Only Schools Forum members, in their relevant phase, can decide if these areas should be taken out of the formula budget before it is allocated to schools.

Resolved

- a) The Primary Forum Representatives agreed to de-delegate each of the following budgets for the financial year 2017-18:-
 - Contingency
 - Special Staff Costs
 - School Library Service
 - Insurance
 - School Improvement
 - FSM eligibility
 - Behaviour support
- b) Primary Forum Representatives agreed a contribution to former ESG costs for General Duties of £217,761
- c) The Secondary Forum Representative agreed to de-delegate each of the following budgets for the financial year 2016-17:-
 - Contingency
 - Special Staff Costs
 - School Improvement
 - FSM eligibility
 - Behaviour Support
- d) Secondary Forum Representatives agreed a contribution to former ESG costs for General Duties of £32,373
- e) Special Schools Forum Representatives agreed a contribution to former ESG costs for General Duties of £41,466

12. High Needs Consultation

Margaret Morris shared the outcomes of the consultation for High Needs Funding for 2017-18. There were 14 responses to the consultation.

- Most respondents agreed that the planned place changes for September 2017 should go ahead, (identified in Minute 9 above).

- There was no consistent response to increasing the Notional SEN Budget (Low Cost High Incidence Element of the mainstream funding formula), therefore there is no planned change.
- The rate of £1090 for IPFA's and statements will not reduce for 2017-18 as the growth requirements identified will be met next year.
- Most responses supported the proposal to only pay double top ups where pupil numbers exceed planned place numbers. A Forum Member expressed his concerns at this change and the impact it would have on SEMH schools. However, double top-ups would still be provided where place numbers were exceeded.
- There is no proposed change to the exceptional needs allocation process, but this will continue to be reviewed.

Resolved

Forum agreed the following recommendations:-

- place changes identified with effect from September 2017
- from September 2017 double top ups will only be paid where place numbers are exceeded
- there is no change to the definition of the Schools Notional SEN budget or the systems of allocation exceptional needs
- Forum and the High Needs working group will consider plans to support a strategic review of provision and resources.

13. Early Years Update and Consultation

Andrew Roberts summarised the new funding model for early years, with the main changes being:-

- Hourly rate received by the Council to increase to £4.31 per hour, providing an extra £1.5m per annum to Early Years.
- Cap supplements to 10% of allocated budget
- Supplementary resources for maintained nursery schools for life of this parliament
- Introduce a Disability Access Fund

The Early Years working group considered how best to distribute the increased funding to the early years sector taking into account the base rate, supplements and how they could be reduced to 10% of funding, nursery schools, SEN inclusion, Central costs and 2 year old funding.

Resolved

Forum agreed to:-

- Increase the Early Years Formula base rate to £3.60 per hour from April 2017
- Supplements are set at 10% of the funding distributed, Option 1, whereby all supplements are scaled back equally
- Increase the SEN inclusion budget to £450,000
- Increase the central budget to £518,700
- Increase the 2 year old funding to £5.12 per hour
- The Early Years Working Group continues to review rates paid and supplements

14. National Funding Formula Consultation

Andrew Roberts updated the Forum on the latest information regarding the National Funding Formula for schools and High Needs. This second consultation provides information on the proposals for:-

- A soft formula for schools up to 2019
- A hard formula for schools from 2019
- A breakdown of the proposed formula
- Illustrative budgets based on the new formula
- New high needs formula
- A new formula to fund centrally the LAs duties for maintained schools and academies.
- Continuation of the MFG at 1.5%
- No LAs to receive less High Needs funding

The Illustrative tables, from the DfE indicate a small, overall, increase in funding of 0.5% for Wirral Schools, with an average 1% increase for Primary schools, a decrease of 2% for Secondary schools and an increase of 5% for High Needs.

Most formula elements are similar to Wirral's current formula, however, the Looked After Children Element will be removed.

Resolved

Agreed that the Forum's Formula and the High Needs Working Group should consider the consultation papers and report back to the March Forum Meeting to agree an overall response to the DfE.

15. Update on School Balances

Sue Ashley updated the Forum on the indicative school balances for March 2017 and 2018. The overall financial position has improved compared to earlier reports. There are a number of schools projecting a deficit for the financial year 2017-18 that have received letters requesting plans to manage their deficit position. The LA will continue to provide support to help balance budgets.

Resolved

Forum noted the report.

16. Membership Update

This report was provided as an update for members and to be noted.

17. Schools Forum Powers & Responsibilities

This report was provided as background information for members.

18. 2017-18 School Funding: Historic Commitments

This report was provided as background information for members.

19.Apprenticeship Levy Update

This circular from the DfE was provided for information.

20.Workplan

The workplan was provided for information.

The dates of the meetings for this academic year are:-

Tuesday 7th March 2017 (Extra Meeting for NFF Consultation response)

Wednesday 26th April 2017

Wednesday 5th July 2017

21.Any Other Business

There was no other business

WIRRAL SCHOOLS' FORUM

7th March 2017

MINUTES

Present: Adrian Whiteley (Vice Chair)

Schools Group

L Ayling	N Lightwing
S Baker (substitute)	D Marchant
S Duggan	J Pearson
J Goalen	T Taylor
T Kelly	

Non-Schools Group

S Bennett	I Harris
A Donelan	

In Attendance:

S Allen	M Morris
K Brown	A Roberts
A Davies	A Ryecroft
J Hassall	

Apologies:

S Ashley	S Higginson
J Billinge (Chair)	L Ireland
M Bulmer	R Mahony
B Chadwick	N Prance
E Cogan	V Woods

1. Schools Forum Response to the Consultation for Schools and High Needs National Funding Formula

Andrew Roberts briefed Forum on work carried out to analyse the impact of the proposed Schools and High Needs National Funding Formulas, and the consultation responses proposed by the Schools and High Needs NFF Working Groups.

The Schools NFFs has received significant media attention due to the impact of flat cash, the Trade Union School Cuts campaign, and increasing cost pressures on schools from pay awards, inflation, pensions and National Insurance.

The Schools Working Group agree that there is not enough money in the overall national formula, which could lead to a reduced curriculum on offer and increase reliance on other funding streams, and make narrowing attainment gaps difficult.

Analysis shows Secondary schools lose money due to the change in the Primary/Secondary ratio and the transfer of funding from AWPU to Prior Attainment, which is most extreme in Grammar Schools. A similar loss in Primary Schools is offset by the change in ratio.

Analysis of deprivation funding changes shows that schools with the highest number of pupils receiving Free School Meals lose most funding in Primary Schools and gain least in Secondary Schools.

The High Needs NFF has received less media attention and is largely supported by the Working Group due to the stability it offers by using historic costs, and that no Local Authority will lose funding.

Issues to be resolved by DfE include reviewing the level of historic costs and proxy indicators, how future growth will be allocated in light of funding floor protection, the ability to move funds between blocks, and how the review of High Needs provision interacts with the formula.

The consultation closes on 22nd March 2017, with DfE aiming to publish the results by the end of the summer term, along with Local Authorities 2018-19 allocations. Working Groups now need to consider the implications for the Schools Budget in 2018-19, how to use 18-19 to move towards the hard formula, how to review the commissioning of High Needs Places, and how this will inform future funding.

Resolved

Forum approved the draft consultation responses with the following amendments to the Schools NFF response:

- Amend question 1 response, so the final sentence reads:
“There is a real danger that this will reduce the educational support to pupils from poorer backgrounds and will work against targets to narrow attainment gaps and increase social mobility.”
- Amend question 6 response, so it reads:
“Additional information on pupils arriving mid-term could be included in the school census in order to gauge the actual movement of pupils during the year.”

There were no amendments to the High Needs consultation response.

2. Any Other Business

There was no other business

WIRRAL COUNCIL

WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM 5th JULY 2017

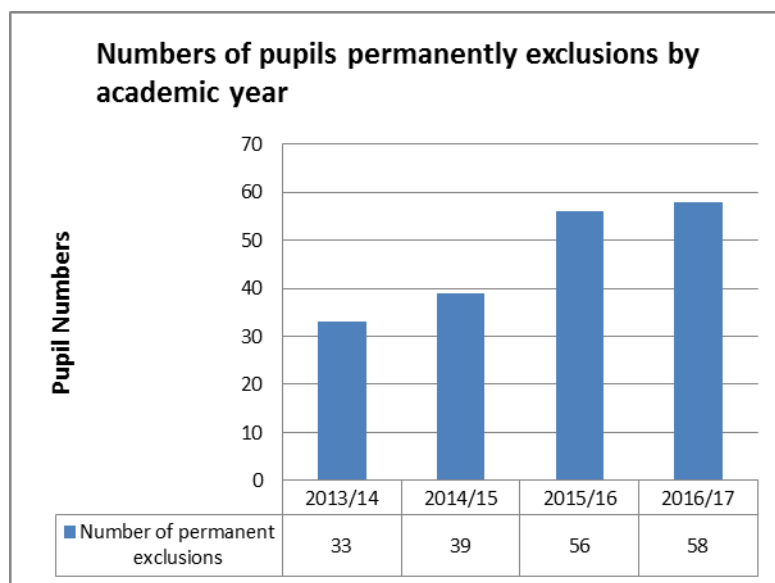
REPORT OF THE INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Against a backdrop of rising numbers of Wirral students being permanently excluded from school, Alternative Education is being viewed as an increasingly important tool in helping young people to remain engaged in mainstream education. The chart below illustrates the Wirral trend in numbers of pupils permanently excluded from school.

Chart 1. Wirral Pupil Permanent Exclusion Trend



(Source: Wirral Council, Data & MI Team, June 2017)

Alternative Education supports by extending the traditional school offer through vocational education pathways, and by offering educational and therapeutic interventions when students face extensive barriers to learning in order to facilitate a smooth re-engagement with school.

There is a strong commitment to providing high quality, safe and supportive Alternative Education within Wirral, with the intention of developing the range and breadth of provision on offer.

Whilst schools remain the commissioners of this provision, the Local Authority is now in a much stronger position to:

- (a) exercise its duty of care towards young people who do not access all of their education within mainstream schools
- (b) lead and shape the development of extended alternative educational provision with a view to meeting local employment opportunities and reducing NEET figures and

- (c) ensure that young people have high quality alternative educational provision augmenting mainstream education in order to impact effectively and positively on the rising numbers of Wirral students permanently excluded from school, thereby improving our young peoples' well-being, employability and life chances, as well as reducing associated costs.

2. BACKGROUND

During the academic year 2016/17, the Wirral Guild of Alternative Education has been established as a means by which disparate, independently funded alternative education providers can be monitored for quality and safeguarding, as well as ensuring that students continue to access services available to their peers attending full time, mainstream education.

There are currently seven Alternative Education providers who form part of the Wirral Guild of Alternative Education. They are:

- Beechwood Community Trust
- Cornerstone Training
- Livava
- The Engineering College
- The Vocational College
- Utopia Project
- Wirral Respite Alternative Provision

Additionally, Tranmere Rovers Football Club is affiliated to the Guild, and has shown significant interest in offering educational opportunities through the field of alternative education, although this is still under review and development. Shaftesbury Youth Club and Tranmere Community Project both ceased offering alternative education this year, although Shaftesbury Youth Club's position is also under review following the appointment of a new Chief Executive Officer.

Of the seven core providers, five offer vocational courses and qualifications to Key Stage 4 students including construction, plumbing, carpentry, sport, hair and beauty, catering and engineering, although new courses are constantly under consideration, with a specific focus on local employment and economic development opportunities. The other two providers support a range of Key Stage 4 students in their study towards GCSE qualifications, as well as working with Key Stage 3 pupils who are preparing to re-integrate back into mainstream schooling, following a period of intensive intervention.

From the start of the academic year 2016/17, all processes governing student referrals, quality assurance and safeguarding monitoring have been standardised, including agreed documentation. Additionally a new, bespoke, interactive web-based Wirral Alternative Education Portal has been developed, through which schools submit referral documentation, monitor student attendance and increasingly record students' progress and behaviour against agreed targets. The Portal also enables the Local Authority to maintain an overview of this fluid and mobile population within the wider educational landscape.

From September 2016 to date, 290 students were registered through the Wirral Portal with approved Alternative Education providers.

Of these students:

AE Provision Type	Total Pupils	Gender		SEND	LAC	Pupil Premium
		Male	Female			
Schools directly commissioned AE	290	200	90	132	22	147
PRU: Emslie Morgan Academy	95	67	28			
The Hospital School	74	44	30			
TOTALS	459	311	148			

(Source: January 2017 Schools Census and Wirral Alternative Education Portal (June 2017 snapshot))

The nature of the cohort, whilst fluid, tends to suggest that students from more disadvantaged backgrounds, with a range of SEND are more likely to find themselves accessing Alternative Education at some point during their education. The high ratio of boys to girls is also a concern, particularly when considered against the number of boys who have been permanently excluded from our schools so far this academic year (43 boys/ 15 girls).

One of the significant developments arising from our more pro-active and sophisticated application of Alternative Education has been the enhanced use of the Government's AP Census arrangements, as a further means of avoiding Y11 students from being permanently excluded from school. Robust systems for monitoring admission on to the AP Census have been established through the Wirral Fair Access Panel, chaired by the Schools Commissioning Manager, with clear and transparent criteria supporting the Panel's decision making. The 14-19 Team undertake regular and rigorous monitoring of students on the AP Census, working closely with schools and other appropriate agencies.

Finally, Wirral has been instrumental in creating a Liverpool City Region Alternative Education forum which meets termly to discuss common concerns, maintain awareness of national policy development, and facilitate the sharing of best practice, with a view to developing the quality of provision across the City region.

3. THE FUTURE

As part of the drive to continue developing and shaping a high quality Alternative Education offer within Wirral, there are two exciting new developments on the horizon:

- (a) The establishment of a new, independent, 35 place school in the Birkenhead area. This new school will be responsible for providing a 12 week programme for Key Stage 3 students who are permanently excluded from school, with a view to re-integrating them back into the mainstream school population.
- (b) Planning for a Key Stage 4/5 AP 50 place (in the first instance) Free School with an emphasis on vocational skills and qualifications within the fields of hair and beauty, business management/administration and customer service, as well as core qualifications in English and Maths. The Free School is particularly focused on establishing a formal vocational pathway through to post – 16, working on reducing NEET figures and providing good quality work experience through traineeships and apprenticeships.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To support emerging developments within Wirral's Alternative Education landscape in order to further enhance the breadth, range and quality of the provision on offer to some of our most vulnerable young people.
2. To continue to explore and research best practice in how other regions, both locally and nationally, utilise the opportunities afforded by Alternative Education as a means of reducing permanent exclusion.
3. To continue to lead strategically on shaping and expanding the local Alternative Education offer, both through identification of provision 'gaps' and as determined by local intelligence regarding local employment and economic need.

Deborah Gornik
Interim Director of Children's Services

WIRRAL COUNCIL

WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM – 05 July 2017

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR FOR BUSINESS SERVICES

SURFACE WATER AND HIGHWAYS DRAINAGE CREDIT AND CHARGE REDUCTIONS FOR SCHOOLS AND EDUCATIONAL SITES

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper provides a brief description of how the utility wholesale company, United Utilities intend to provide a credit in 2017/18 and reduce future charges in relation to Surface Water and Highways Drainage charges at Wirral Schools and Educational Sites.

2. BACKGROUND

Since 2007 schools and educational sites in the North West have been charged for Surface Water and Highways drainage charges based on the size of their Chargeable Areas. The Chargeable Area is any area within a site boundary that is not grassed, landscaped or cultivated land. Because many schools have large chargeable areas due to their footprint and the playground size, drainage charges have been higher than other areas of the country where different methods for charging are used.

A water bill is made up of the following different elements:

- Metered Water Charges
- Metered Sewerage Charges
- Standing Charge
- Surface Water and Highways Drainage Charges (SWHD)

3. UPDATE

This update relates to the SWHD element of the water bill. In May 2017 Wirral Council received a notification from United Utilities, our wholesale supplier for water. United Utilities recognise that a significant part of the chargeable school area is attributed to playgrounds at educational sites which provide a societal benefit. As such they have decided to apply a concession to the SWHD wholesale charges.

For most schools this will represent approximately 40% reduction in their waste water bill from April 2018. Furthermore they have agreed to provide a credit of approximately 15% of the wholesale charges in the 2017/18 financial year.

There has been ongoing pressure applied to United Utilities regarding these charges by North West Councils and Schools, including Wirral. This pressure applied has almost certainly been the catalyst for the reduction in SWHD charges. Educational sites will all be contacted directly by United Utilities (if they haven't been already) regarding the changes in wholesale charges.

The wholesale charges for schools and educational sites will reduce from April 2018. Most schools should receive a benefit of roughly moving down 1 SWHD charge

band. These concessions will only apply to educational establishments that have a playground facility attached and deliver tuition on any or all levels of key stages 1 to 5. It should be noted that the changes to the banding charges will only take effect from April 2018. For information the retail banding table for the current 2017/18 financial year is shown below:

Surface water drainage and highway drainage charges

Site area charging band	Chargeable area m²	Surface water drainage only charge	Highway drainage only charge	Surface water drainage and highway drainage charge
Band 1	Up to 124	£92.09	£43.85	£135.95
Band 2	125-299	£228.76	£108.92	£337.67
Band 3	300-649	£509.82	£242.75	£752.56
Band 4	650-1,499	£1,153.48	£549.24	£1,702.72
Band 5	1,500-2,999	£2,412.70	£1,148.80	£3,561.50
Band 6	3,000-6,999	£5,364.19	£2,554.15	£7,918.34
Band 7	7,000-11,999	£10,191.35	£4,852.57	£15,043.92
Band 8	12,000-17,999	£15,632.34	£7,176.33	£22,808.68
Band 9	18,000-24,999	£22,406.58	£10,286.19	£32,692.77
Band 10	25,000-49,999	£39,081.64	£17,941.21	£57,022.84
Band 11	50,000-74,999	£65,136.41	£29,902.17	£95,038.58
Band 12	75,000-99,999	£91,191.18	£41,863.14	£133,054.32
Band 13	100,000-124,999	£117,245.94	£53,824.10	£171,070.04
Band 14	125,000-149,999	£143,300.73	£65,785.06	£209,085.79
Band 15	≥ 150,000	£169,356.01	£77,746.26	£247,102.27

(Banding charges 01 Apr 2017 – 31 Mar 2018)

The expected Savings over the next 2 financial years are shown in the table below. However please note the 2018/19 figures are Indicative.

	Impact on Wirral MBC schools	Impact on all schools in Metropolitan Borough of Wirral area (including Academies etc.)	Impact on entire United Utilities Water service area
2017-18 bill credit <i>(15% of wholesale site area charges for SWHD (excluding retail element))</i>	£128,000	£195,000	£4,200,000
Indicative 2018/19 saving <i>(50% of wholesale site area charges for SWHD (excluding retail element))</i>	£427,000	£655,000	£14,100,000

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the forum notes the content of this report.

David Armstrong
Director for Business Services (Assistant Chief Executive)

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM – 5 JULY 2017

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR FOR BUSINESS SERVICES

ENERGY PURCHASING FOR SCHOOLS UPDATE

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper provides a brief update on the procurement of electricity and natural gas on behalf of Schools and describes changes for the 2017/18 financial year as agreed at the Wirral Schools Forum held on 18 January 2017.

2. PURPOSE OF THIS UPDATE

The purpose of this report is to provide schools with information on:

- Increases in natural gas and electricity prices that were anticipated for the 2017/18 year in January 2017.
- Unit prices achieved by the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) framework.
- Budget change suggestions to ensure provision for purchase of electricity and natural gas over the 2017/18 Financial Year.

The report content is only applicable to accounts that are part of the CCS framework agreement. The Council holds no information for schools that make their own energy supply arrangements and therefore cannot make any meaningful comment on these accounts.

3. ANTICIPATED 2017/18 PRICE INCREASES FROM JANUARY 2017

Under the framework arrangement, natural gas and electricity is purchased on our behalf by CCS over a six month window that ran from 1 September 2016 to 31 March 2017.

In the last quarter of 2016, gas and electricity markets entered a period of volatility that pushed up prices. In January 2017, a CCS budget forecast suggested the following increases could be expected if conditions did not change.

Energy type	Final delivered cost: % annual change 2017 vs 2016 (11/01/17)	Climate Change Levy (CCL) increase
Gas (Supplied by Corona)	23.16%	1.5%
HH (Supplied by EdF)	18.42%	1.6%
NHH (Supplied by British Gas)	23.19%	1.6%

4. AVERAGE UNIT PRICES ACHIEVED BY CCS

The CCS risk managed approach has reduced the increases that were a real possibility in January. The final average unit prices achieved for 2017/18 are shown overleaf together with previous years for reference and context.

	2014/15 (p/kWh)	2015/16 (p/kWh)	2016/17 (p/kWh)	2017/18 (p/kWh)
HH Elec. Day (07:00 to 24:00)	11.546	9.407	11.391	11.8287
HH Elec. Night (00:00 to 07:00)	7.337	6.704	6.886	7.6427
NHH Electricity	11.849	11.554	11.241	12.642
Natural Gas	2.355	1.893	1.916	1.926

Please note that these unit prices are indicative as each supply point is individually priced.

All unit prices (p/kWh) for natural gas under the CCS arrangement are below 2p/kWh. This is an increase from last year because of the rising costs on the wholesale markets. A business energy comparison website suggests that the average price currently available is 2.62p/kWh, 30% higher than the unit prices that Crown Commercial service has achieved.

5. INCREASE IN PROVISION FOR GAS & ELECTRICITY EXPENDITURE

Market forces have led to a rise in energy prices that, if patterns of consumption do not alter significantly, inevitably mean higher expenditure on energy. Weather conditions, especially over the winter period are significant as a cold winter will increase the use of gas for heating and costs will rise. Similarly, increasing the use of electricity with additional equipment will also push up costs.

In order to determine realistic recommendations, sample calculations comparing £/kWh for 2016/17 to the new pricing information that applies to the current financial year were carried out. The projections included all energy costs, standing charges, metering costs, availability costs and the Climate Change Levy.

Rises in non-energy costs are set by the Government regulator, Ofgem. These now make up over 50% of an electricity bill. A proportion of the revenue is used to fund Government schemes including the Feed-in-tariff scheme, the Renewables Obligation and Contracts for Difference.

The following increases from 2016/17 expenditure are suggested as precautionary provisions to take account of the increased prices.

- Increase provision for **natural gas** supplied by Corona by 2%
- Increase provision for **electricity** supplied by British Gas Business by 14%
- Increase provision for **electricity** supplied by EdF by 9.5%

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the forum notes the content of this report.

David Armstrong
Director for Business Services (Assistant Chief Executive)

WIRRAL COUNCIL

WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM 5th July 2017

REPORT OF THE INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Free School Meals Update

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report updates the Forum on the work to maximise the uptake of Free School Meals by the Benefits Team, for which a contribution of £21,200 is made from the Schools Budget.

2. BACKGROUND

The statutory eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM) is unchanged from previous years and is based on the following criteria for parents / carers:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit

Application forms can be found at www.wirral.gov.uk/free-school-meals

FSM Applications

When applications are made on-line the applicant receives an immediate response regarding eligibility. The application is then automatically forwarded for processing. The immediate response is achieved via an automatic on line check, using the Department for Education's ECS facility (and links with DWP and HMRC records). Unfortunately the system cannot check for Universal Credit (UC) entitlement with DWP. As a result all negative applications are retrieved and re-checked for UC.

Automatic Opt Out

A report to the Forum in October 2015 described the automatic Opt In / Opt Out system put in place for FSM's in order that the award of FSM's was maximised. Potential FSM qualifiers are cross checked with Benefits data. There is an automatic Opt In assumption which ensures all eligible children receive a FSM award, whether or not they actually have the meal in school each day. Parents are advised of this outcome and may if they choose ask for an Opt Out for their child. To date very few replies have been received requesting this.

As a result the decline in the overall number of FSM's has ceased and since 2015 numbers have increased as indicated in the table overleaf. This increase has a positive impact on Pupil Premium and any future National Funding Formula for Schools.

FSM Awards

The total FSM awards at 11th June 2017 are 8,396 which include 219 in respect of sixth formers.

The table below indicates the number of FSM's over the past 5 years and the more recent increase in numbers:

Free School Meal Numbers

Period		Primary / Secondary	6 th Form	Total
26/03/2012	01/04/2012			9621
18/03/2013	24/03/2013	8900	367	9267
24/03/2014	30/03/2014	8516	321	8837
30/03/2015	05/04/2015	8068	308	8376
28/03/2016	03/04/2016	8129	252	8381
27/03/2017	02/04/2017	8273	233	8506

Early Years

There is no provision for FSM's in Early Years; however the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) is based on the equivalent data used for FSM eligibility in schools.

All applications for EYPP are copied to the Benefits team where they are stored to be checked for eligibility when the child enters Reception.

Details of children starting in Reception are confirmed each year by School Admissions.

This information enables checks to be carried against Benefits records to maximise awards.

Ed Bens Connect System

There are noticeably fewer queries from individual schools since the web based system Ed Bens Connect was implemented. Most arise now from new staff dealing with FSM administration in schools. The FSM team based in Cheshire Lines will provide advice where needed (tel 0151 666 3455).

Most schools find Ed Bens Connect extremely helpful at census time to match pupil number totals. Schools are supported by Benefits to do this where needed. There are now very few schools that don't access their FSM data on the prescribed census date.

Registrations for pupils in non LA funded schools (special placements)

Following recent legal clarification eligibility for FSM will be assessed for pupils placed in non-maintained and independent special schools both in and out of area. This will further maximise the pupil premium income for a group of about 90 children and young people.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Forum Notes the report and the work of the Benefits team in maximising the award of FSM's in schools

Deborah Gornick
Interim Director of Children's Services

WIRRAL COUNCIL

WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM: 5th July 2017

REPORT: MANAGING DIRECTOR, ESENTIAL COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Edsential has had a successful first year fulfilling its mission as a Community Interest Company. We have delivered our business plan and we are on target to be the sustainable, high quality provider that schools need during these challenging times.

We have reduced our cost base by £2 million pounds versus the costs of providing services pre-launch. This has been passed on to schools via price freezes and some reductions, as we have absorbed pay and price increases of between 6-12%.

In the upcoming year, we will be making further cost savings through new opportunities to organise ourselves more efficiently and continuing to leverage our purchasing power as contracts become due for renewal.

During 2017/18 we plan to set up **our first grant fund with an initial contribution of £50,000**. How this fund will be made available to schools will be decided by the Edsential board during 2017 and agreed with our shareholders. This highlights the key difference between Edsential and other service providers, we are a Community Interest Company and the **money you spend with us stays within the system**. We have achieved this milestone **3 years ahead of schedule**, due to an opportunity to renegotiate our terms with the Cheshire pension fund.

2. BACKGROUND

Improving outcomes for children and young people, a summary of our first year:

Directly delivered services to children	
Residential and Outdoor Education Service	35,000 pupils
Creative, performing and visual arts service	12,000 pupils
Swimming Service	10,000 pupils
Sports Festivals	3,500 pupils
Arts Festivals	1,229 pupils
Music service	6,500 pupils
Catering Service	28,000 pupils per day

- **£2 million in cost savings achieved** since launch that have been passed on to schools through price freezes and reductions
- Directly supported **500,000** individual pupil visits for learning outside the classroom activities in the local authorities of Halton, Wirral and Cheshire West and Chester.

- **5531** students received their first experience of learning to play an instrument free of charge in First Access programmes
- Edsential have developed a **'Whole School Approach to Health'** to support Primary schools with the new Healthy Schools Rating. Focusing on Social, Emotional and Physical Health Edsential has used its knowledge of health and wellbeing, nutrition and data to support pupils, staff and the whole school community.
- Support **608 GCSE and A-level students in 'Raising Attainment residential courses'** enabling them to develop and prepare for exams and coursework
- Undertook a 6-week **family engagement project** focused on fun activities that parents can use at home, activity levels and ideas to get the whole family more active. Because of the programme families have reported that they are more active and engaged in whole family activities, ensuring they spend quality time together
- **Young Artist's in Tuscany** – 43 pupils undertook an 8-day tour; this very successful project has been displayed in a public exhibition in the Williamson Museum in Birkenhead for the first time; the exhibition opened to the public on Wednesday 18th January and is on show until the 26th February.
- Edsential's first two 'Coffee Shops' opened in Queens Park High School and Tarporley High School - this innovative idea has created a retail society that allows sixth formers to get involved in running the business, providing real life skills and experience **giving them the edge when it comes to starting their careers.**
- 'Our Family' Cooking workshops for parents pilot scheme ran in our first year to **support parents in providing healthy nutritious meals at home** – to be launched in full in September 2017
- Supported **126 young people in Cheshire West and Chester in accessing funding** from the Chairman's Trust Charity
- Supported Wirral families in accessing Mountain View Lodge and Champions Lodge – **accommodation for severely disabled children and their families** to enjoy self-catering breaks
- In its first year, Edsential has worked with **240 schools to support or to deliver music education** programmes and activities.
- Edsential provides **21 ensembles (bands, orchestras & choirs) for 466 children.**
- Launched a new website, which has currently been **accessed by over 6000 teachers and parents.** This will be further developed to support schools in 2017.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the report is noted.

ian.mcgrady@edsential.co.uk

WIRRAL COUNCIL

WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM Wednesday 5th July 2017

REPORT OF THE INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

WIRRAL TRADED SERVICES FOR SCHOOLS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a brief update on Wirral Traded Services for schools.



2. BACKGROUND

Wirral Council operates a range of traded services to its schools and beyond. The current range of Wirral Traded Services includes:

- Cash Collection for Schools
- Construction and Facilities Management
- Educational Social Welfare Service
- Financial Support for Schools
- Health & Safety
- HR Consultancy Services
- simpliciT including ITSOS
- Minority Ethnic Achievement Service (MEAS)
- Occupational Health
- Payroll & Human Resources Administration
- Risk and Insurance
- Software Support
- Schools' Library Service
- Wirral Community Patrol

Some of these services, such as Educational Social Welfare Service and the Minority Ethnic Achievement Service provide their service almost exclusively for schools. Others, such as Payroll & Human Resources Administration and Health & Safety are integrated into providing their services for other customers such as the Council.

Wirral Traded Services is coordinated by a Senior Manager and for 17/18, a Wirral Traded Services brochure was produced for all the traded services listed above and sent out to all schools on Wirral. This included a summary of each of the annual service level agreements (SLA) on offer from the services. Also within the brochure:

- MEAS was included with their full annual offer.
- School Library Service offered a new premium service to primary schools.

A new version of WESCOM was also launched early in 2017 and this includes the full SLAs for all the services. The online presence for Wirral Traded Services is being developed for 17/18.

There was a successful launch event attended by over 80 school colleagues in January 2017.

Overall the value of Wirral Traded Services in 16/17 was around £4.5 million. All of the services look to maintain a break even position so that their income at least matches their expenditure. Collectively they employ nearly 150 Wirral Council staff (around 120 FTE).

For 17/18 the level of annual buyback for schools has held up across most of the traded services with some services winning back school customers.

A number of school traded services that the Council had offered previously were transferred across to Edsential in December 2015 and these included EQ, Metro Catering, Metro Cleaning, Music and Oaklands. Wirral Traded Services continues to work alongside Edsential to ensure there is an effective, comprehensive offer of support services to schools and academies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Forum notes the report.

Deborah Gornik
Interim Director of Children's Services

Children and Young Peoples Directorate Targeted Services/Early Childhood Services

Report

To: School Forum
Title: SEN and Disability Funding Reforms – Early Years
Author: Carol Fenlon, Early Childhood Service Manager
Date: 5th July 2017

Purpose:

This report will summarise the recent reforms within early years SEND, from Department of Education Statutory guidance notes. It will inform on the Local Authorities response to the reforms and specifically outline proposals on funding arrangement processes. Furthermore, the paper will enable decision making and seek ratification from the School Forum for the proposals to be implemented within the financial year 17/18.

Background:

In September 2014 the Children and Families Act (CFA) set out reforms, to the duties of Local Authorities provision of special educational needs (SEN) and disability services (SEND). The act encompassed the requirements of both the Early Years Foundation Stage and The Equality Act 2010. The CFA set out specific requirements of Local Authorities (LA) to implement a SEND framework spanning across 0 – 25 with a joint approach across education, health and social care planning (EHCP). In addition, that the LA publishes services through a “Local Offer” website, so that parents are clear of the local support available. Furthermore, that funding arrangements are in place for early identification of an additional need within a child’s earliest years.

Specifically for early years the three duties combined the requirement for providers to have a regard to the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 2014, even if there are no children with SEND attending. Those practitioners have access to a policy informing on how SEND will be met in their settings, which in turn is available to parents and carers. That maintained nursery

schools **must** have a suitably qualified Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and all other providers are **expected** to identify a SENCO.

The duties clearly outline that, early years providers must co-operate with the LA in meeting its duties of children with SEND. Thereafter that the LA will offer “top-up” funding to providers delivering the universal 3 and 4 year free educational entitlement, where SEN has been identified and an additional support resource needed to be put in place.

In March 2017 the DfE revised the Early Education and Childcare Statutory guidance for Local Authorities; in the main embedding the new arrangements for the increased +15 hours free childcare offer (30 hours). In addition, the statutory guidance reinforced the duties on the following two key areas;

- 1) SEN Inclusion Fund – which Wirral currently operates as Inclusive Practice Fund.
- 2) Disability Access Fund – new arrangement.

Current Funding arrangements:

The LA currently provides advice and funding for SEND support in early years settings who receive nursery grant funding for 3 and 4 year olds. Support is provided up to the 15 hours statutory free educational entitlement. The setting must demonstrate it has already provided support, as detailed in the SEND Code of Practice. In considering the application for “top up” funding the setting must seek advice from the LA Early Years Intervention Team.

Currently arrangements for funding awards are approved at a monthly meeting attended by the Early Childhood Service Manager, Educational Psychologist and Early Intervention Team leader. The meeting reviews termly applications taking a view of the unique needs of the child, what initial interventions have been actioned, other professional reports and the resource required to further meet the child’s needs. Funding awards are retrospective to the start of a term, and the process for successive applications is the same each term.

Currently the LA does not accept “top-up” funding children in maintained nursery schools, instead a lump sum is payable. In addition, there are separate funding arrangements for the provision of children with severe and complex needs attending nursery classes attached to special schools.

For 16/17 the hourly rate of “top up” funding was = £3.85

No. of children supported = 92 in PVI’s and 68 in maintained nurseries

The actual budget was = £292,000

There was an underspend of approximately £100,000

A recent analysis of the funding process has identified a number of areas that are in need of development and improvement to ensure that the Inclusive Practice “top-up” fund is accessible to all 3 and 4 year olds (where applicable). Also, that funding providers have clarity of the process and are able to submit high quality applications that are child centred.

Proposals for delivering on new early years reforms:

SEN Inclusion (top-up) Fund;

Whilst there are current arrangements for SEN funding support for children in early years settings across the Wirral, the following areas are a key focus to improve; utilise the funding alternate to 1-1 support, develop a clear pathway for identification/application, consider the support on transition; streamline paperwork so not onerous; allocation of funding award is timely; that the 2 year integrated review is informative to the process, to outline a few.

The overall objective is that over time the early identification and funding processes will be better aligned to that of the educational, health care planning (EHCP) processes and thereafter better inform on the potential number likely to access for EHCP funds.

The allocated budget for 17/18 is = £450,000

The proposals in detail;

1. Secure the increased budget for the sole purpose of SEN Inclusion Fund. It is expected that this will better reflect the 11% annual cohort population of children, potentially in need of additional support.
2. To secure the hourly rate of £4.22 for both 3 and 4 year olds. This takes into account the increased rates of the new early years funding formula.
3. To develop a funding awards allocation panel that has wider representation of both health and social care. Firstly, in terms of health it will enable the outcomes of the 2 years integrated review/developmental checks to inform the panel of children with an identified need and thereafter act as a conduit to the health professionals involved in support plans. Secondly, in terms of social care it will enable the panel to analyse further whether a presenting child's needs could be supported by early help preventative interventions either or alongside SEN interventions.
4. To replace the termly allocation of funding with a “one payment” scheme for a child's academic period with a setting (further detail to be considered).
5. The application pack for this scheme to panel will require more robust and qualitative, ensuring evidence of on entry assessments, early observations, early interventions by the setting and professionals and SMART personalised actions plans on the resource against sought funds.

6. In terms of “resource”, it is envisaged that the “one off” payment be an estimated £2,000 per academic year which could enhance skills, knowledge and expertise of existing staff cohorts.
7. For the awards allocation panel to sit 2-3 times per year, to process the main cohort on entering academic 3 and 4 year placements. Thereafter, panel to capture those non entrants at a natural academic year start up, those new to area, those whose presenting needs emerge later and the monitoring of initial awards.
8. To extend the access to the “top-up” award to those maintained nursery schools and nursery classes in receipt of the universal 3 and 4 year old free entitlement funding for children.
9. Where a child is in receipt of the “top-up” fund and then becomes eligible and takes up the +15 additional **FREE** childcare offer, this “top up” fund will **NOT** be applicable for the +15 additional childcare hours. These arrangements are outlined in the LA funding agreement with providers.
10. In exceptional cases the panel may also consider and make awards to 2 year olds.

Disability Access Fund (DAF);

The Disability Access Fund is a new measure which aids access to early year’s places by, for example, supporting providers in making reasonable adjustments to their settings and/or helping with creating capacity.

Three and four year olds will be eligible for the DAF if they meet the following criteria;

- 1) The child is in receipt of a child Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and
- 2) The child receives free early education

**Please note that four year olds in primary school reception classes are not eligible for DAF funding.*

The settings of three and four year olds eligible for the DAF will be entitled to receive a one-off payment of £615 per financial year. The DAF is not based on an hourly rate and is an additional entitlement. Where a child is splitting their universal entitlement across more than one provider then it should be by parents’ choice as to which is the main setting to receive the DAF.

Children do not need to take up the full 15 hours of entitlement to receive the DAF payment. If a child moves setting within the financial year of payment then a payment to the new setting would not occur until the next financial year (meaning the DAF payment does not follow the child in a financial year,). Early years providers are responsible for identifying eligible children through strong partnerships with parents and informing the LA direct.

Funding to the LA will be based on latest data available from the Department for Work and Pensions on the number of children entitled to DLA aged three and four in England. The projected DAF budget for the LA within this financial year, 17/18 is £100,000.

Implementation timeline:

Action	By When/Whom	Outcome
Early Years Working Group	26/6/17 – Andrew Roberts, Senior Finance Manager	Meeting schedule agreed and attendees confirmed.
Report presented at School Forum	5/7/17 – Carol Fenlon, Early Childhood Service Manager.	School Forum agrees proposals and ratifies the consultation with early year's sector for new funding arrangements.
Consultation opens with sector.	10/7/17 – Andrew Roberts, Senior Finance Manager Carol Fenlon, Early Childhood Service Manager.	Outline of new arrangements shared with opportunity for views/comments from the sector.
Present results of consultation to School Forum	27/9/17 – Andrew Roberts, Senior Finance Manager	School Forum satisfied consultation fair/frank process and ratify implementation of new funding arrangements
New funding arrangements/process implemented	31/10/17 – Carol Fenlon, Early Childhood Service Manager	SEN Inclusion Fund maximised. DAF arrangements for children secure

Content of autumn consultation;

In addition to the proposals of new SEN funding arrangements the autumn consultation with early years providers will also seek views on increasing the “pass through rate” % from 93% to 95% for 18/19 and making monthly payments.

Summary:

To summarise, this report sets out detail of refreshed/new statutory duties in accordance with SEN and Disability within the early years. It offers an overview of current funding arrangements with outlined spend within 16/17. Thereafter it offers firm proposals to satisfy the fulfilment of the LA's duties giving consideration to the early years sectors views.

Recommendations;

1. The School Forum agrees with proposals for refreshing the SEN Inclusion Fund.
2. The School Forum agrees that the SEN Inclusion Fund is accessible by maintained nurseries and nursery classes with 3 and 4 year funded children on roll.
3. The School Forum is satisfied that the fund is not required to be applied to the additional 15 hours of free childcare, for working families, should a child already be receiving “top up” funds for universal 15 hours.
4. The School Forum agrees for the commencement of consultation on details within this report.

Wirral Borough Council

EARLY YEARS FUNDING ENTITLEMENT AGREEMENT

**For Providers of Early Years
Funding Entitlement**

September 2017 – August 2018

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1. Introduction

This agreement is to support providers to deliver the Early Years Funding Entitlements (EYFE), to ensure they understand the roles and responsibilities of Wirral Borough Council (WBC) and themselves as a EYFE provider. All providers of EYFE (Private, Charity / Voluntary, Independent sectors) will be required to sign up to the Funding Agreement in order to remain eligible for Funding and/or support through Wirral Borough Council (WBC).

The Funding Agreement is a one year arrangement, and WBC reserves the right to amend this Agreement in accordance with required changes as stated by the Department for Education (DfE) / Secretary of State, or through mutual agreement with local providers.

It is expected that providers are fully conversant with all their responsibilities and the role of WBC in supporting providers. If providers have any queries about the process, WBC's role, provider responsibilities, or rights of parents / carers please do not hesitate to contact the Early Childhood Service, Quality Improvement and Business Support team Tel: 0151 666 3980 or fis@wirral.gov.uk.

The following frameworks and legislation underpin this agreement:

- Early Education and Childcare, Statutory Guidance for Local authorities 2017
- Childcare Act 2006
- Childcare Act 2016
- Equality Act 2010
- School admissions code 2014
- Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage 2014
- Local Authority, (Duty to Secure Early Years Provision Free of Charge) Regulations 2014
- The Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) Regulations 2016
- Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years 2015
- Data Protection Act 1998

Wirral Borough Council (WBC) reserves the right to vary the agreement to reflect changes in legislation and departmental guidance.

References to legislation will be to that legislation as amended from time to time, without express change in the provider agreement.

2. Key Responsibilities

Local Authority

2.1. Local authorities must secure a funded entitlement place for every eligible child in their area.

2.2. The local authority should work in partnership with providers to agree how to deliver funding entitlement places.

2.3. The local authority should be clear about their role and the support on offer locally to meet the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) as well as their expectations of providers.

2.4. The local authority must contribute to the safeguarding and promote the welfare of children and young people in their area.

Provider

2.5. The provider must comply with all relevant legislation and insurance requirements.

2.6. The provider should deliver the funding entitlements consistently to all parents, whether in receipt of 15 or 30 hours and regardless of whether they opt to pay for optional services or consumables. This means that the provider should be clear and communicate to parents details about the days and times that they offer funded places, along with their services and charges. Those children accessing the funding entitlements should receive the same quality and access to provision.

2.7. The provider must follow the EYFS and have clear safeguarding policies and procedures in place that link to the local authority's guidance for recognising, responding, reporting and recording suspected or actual abuse.

2.8. The provider must have arrangements in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These arrangements should include a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEND. Providers should utilise the SEN inclusion fund and Disability Access Fund to deliver effective support, whilst making information available about their SEND offer to parents

3. Safeguarding

3.1. The local authority has overarching responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people in their area. They have a number of statutory functions under the 1989 and 2004 Children Acts which make this clear, and the 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2015 guidance¹ sets these out in detail.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/592101/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children_20170213.pdf

3.2. The provider must follow the EYFS and have clear safeguarding policies and procedures in place that are in line with local guidance and procedures for responding to and reporting suspected or actual abuse and neglect. A lead practitioner must take responsibility for safeguarding and all staff must have training to identify signs of abuse and neglect. The provider must have regard to 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2015 guidance.

4. Eligibility – Universal and + 15 hours for working parents

4.1. The provider should check original copies of documentation to confirm a child has reached the eligible age and criteria for eligibility on initial registration for all Early Years Funding Entitlements. The provider can retain paper or digital copies of documentation to enable the local authority to carry out audits and fraud investigations. Where a provider retains a copy of documentation this must be stored securely and deleted when there is no longer a good reason to keep the data. All parents must complete the Parental Consent to Early Years Funding Entitlements (EYFE 1a form) (Please see Annex A)

4.2. The provider should offer places to eligible two-year-olds on the understanding that the child remains eligible until they become eligible for the universal entitlement for three- and four-year-olds.

4.3. Wirral Borough Council (WBC) is responsible for ensuring that a child has a funded entitlement place no later than the beginning of the term following the child and the parent meeting the eligibility criteria for the funding entitlements.

4.4. Alongside the 30 hours eligibility code, which is the child's unique 11-digit number, and original copies of documentation (see 4.1), a provider must acquire written consent from, or on behalf of, the parent to be able to receive confirmation and future notifications from the local authority of the validity of the parent's 30 hours eligibility code. The provider should use the EYFE 1a form (Please see Annex A)

4.5. Once a provider has received written consent from the parent, they should verify the 30 hours eligibility code with the local authority. (For details please see Annex B)

4.6. WBC will confirm the validity of 30 hours eligibility codes to allow providers to offer 30 hours places for eligible three- and four-year-olds. The local authority will provide a validity checking service to providers to enable them to verify the 30 hours eligibility code swiftly and efficiently. The Eligibility Checking Service (ECS) allows all local authorities to make instant checks for code validity. This will be completed via the Capita provider headcount portal.

4.7. Thereafter, the local authority should complete audit checks to review the validity of eligibility codes for children who qualify for 30 hours funding entitlements childcare at 6 fixed points in the year, both at half-term and at the end of term across the year (in line with the dates as listed at table A below). It is the local authority's responsibility to notify a provider where a parent has fallen out of eligibility and inform them of the grace period end date.

Table A:

Date Parent receives ineligible decision on reconfirmation:	LA audit date:	Grace Period End date:
1 st Jan – 10 th Feb	11 th February	31 st March
11 th Feb – 31 st March	1 st April	31 st August
1 st April – 26 th May	27 th May	31 st August
27 th May – 31 st Aug	1 st September	31 st December
1 st Sept – 21 st Oct	22 nd October	31 st December
22 nd Oct – 31 st Dec	1 st January	31 st March

5. The Grace Period

5.1. A child will enter the grace period when the child's parents cease to meet the eligibility criteria set out in the Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) Regulations 2016, as determined by HMRC or a First Tier Tribunal in the case of an appeal.

<http://legislation.data.gov.uk/cy/uksi/2016/1257/part/4/made/data.htm?wrap=true>

5.2. WBC will access information about whether a child has ceased to meet the eligibility criteria and entered the grace period via the Eligibility Checking Service (ECS). The grace period end date will automatically be applied to eligibility codes.

5.3. WBC will continue to fund a place for a child who enters the grace period as set out in the Early Education and Childcare Statutory guidance for local authorities 2017.

5.4. When a child/ family falls out of eligibility the provider will be notified of their grace period end date through email and the Capita Provider Headcount portal.

6. Flexibility

6.1. Provision must be offered within the national parameters on flexibility as set out in Section A2 of Early Education and Childcare Statutory guidance for local authorities.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/596460/early_education_and_childcare_statutory_guidance_2017.pdf

6.2. The provider should work with the local authority and share information about the times and periods at which they are able to offer funded places to support the local authority to secure sufficient stretched and flexible places to meet parent demand in the local authority. The provider should also make information about their offer and admissions criteria available to parents at the point the child first accesses provision at their setting.

6.3. All parents must complete an EYFE form 1 (see Annex A) which details multiple providers and hours. The funding will then be split accordingly.

7. Partnership working

7.1. Partnerships will be supported by WBC on four levels between:

- I. Local authorities and providers
- II. Providers working with other providers, including childminders, schools and organisations
- III. Providers and parents
- IV. Local authorities and parents

7.2. WBC encourages and supports partnership working between different types of providers, including childminders, across all sectors and encourage more providers to offer flexible provision, alongside other providers.

7.3. The provider should work in partnership with parents, carers and other providers to improve provision and outcomes for children in their setting. An interactive toolkit has been developed to help providers set up or join a partnership, maximise the benefits of working together and tackle the challenges joint working can bring.

7.4. The provider should discuss and work closely with parents to agree how a child's overall care will work in practice when their funding entitlement is split across different providers, such as at a maintained setting and childminder, to ensure a smooth transition for the child.

8. Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

8.1. WBC strategically plan's support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to meet the needs of all children in their local area as per the Special Educational Needs and Disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years (January 2015)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf

8.2. The provider must ensure owners and all staff members are aware of their duties in relation to SEND code of Practice and the Equality Act 2010.

8.3. The local authority must be clear and transparent about the support on offer in their area, through their Local Offer, so parents and providers can access that support.

<http://localofferwirral.org/>

8.4. Wirral SEND inclusion fund is paid in relation to a child's Universal 15 hours only and is granted by the SEND inclusion fund panel for more details visit the Local Offer website. The Disability Access fund is a one off yearly payment to providers who have evidenced the child is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance, for more information please visit the Local Offer website.

8.5. The provider should be clear and transparent about the SEND support on offer at their setting and make information available about their offer to support parents to choose the right setting for their child with SEND.

9. Social mobility, disadvantage and EYPP

9.1. WBC promotes equality and inclusion, particularly for disadvantaged families, looked after children and children in need by removing barriers of access to funded places and working with parents to give each child support to fulfil their potential.

9.2. The provider should ensure that they have identified the disadvantaged children in their setting as part of the process for Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP). There is a process of "opt in/opt out" for parents to automatically take up of EYPP with providers, ensuring maximising the support through this funding scheme. They will also use EYPP and locally available funding streams or support to improve outcomes for this group.

10. Quality

10.1. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework is mandatory for all schools that provide early years provision and Ofsted-registered early years providers in England. The EYFS sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/596629/EYFS_STATUTORY_FRAMEWORK_2017.pdf

10.2. Ofsted are the sole arbiter of quality and Ofsted and inspectorates of independent schools have regard to the EYFS in carrying out inspections and report on the quality and standards of provision.

10.3. Local authorities have a legal duty to provide information, advice and training on meeting the requirements of the EYFS, meeting the needs of children with SEND and

on effective safeguarding and child protection for providers who are rated less than 'good' by Ofsted or newly registered providers.

10.4. Provision must be offered in accordance with the national parameters on quality as set out in Section A3 of Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local authorities and the EYFS statutory framework.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/596460/early_education_and_childcare_statutory_guidance_2017.pdf

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/596629/EYFS_STATUTORY_FRAMEWORK_2017.pdf

11. Business Planning

11.1. The local authority should not carry out audit regimes which are disproportionate or are unnecessarily burdensome to providers.

11.2. The objective of the audit process is to confirm that the funding provided for the provision of funded places is being claimed in accordance with the terms and conditions of the funding and that delivery models are in accordance with the statutory guidance.

11.3. The provider should ensure they submit timely and accurate information, including but not limited to, headcount data, census data, parental declarations/consent and invoices, as per the financial guidelines of their local authority. Failure to do so may result in inaccurate, delayed or suspended funding. Settings should retain on site all documentation to support their funding claim, such as parent application forms, proof of children's age (birth certificate or passport), registers etc. It is advised these are retained for 7 years after the conclusion of the claim.

11.4. The provider should maintain accurate financial and non-financial records relating to funding entitlement places and should give the local authority access on reasonable notice to all financial and non-financial records relating to funded entitlement places funded under the provider agreement, subject to confidentiality restrictions.

12. Charging

12.1. Government funding is intended to cover the cost to deliver 15 or 30 hours a week of funded, high quality, flexible childcare. It is not intended to cover the cost of meals, consumables, additional hours or additional services.

12.2. The provider can charge for meals and snacks as part of Early Years Funding Entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds and they can also charge for consumables such as nappies or sun cream and for services such as trips and yoga. These charges must be voluntary for the parent. Where parents are unable or unwilling to pay for meals and consumables, providers who choose to offer the funded entitlements are responsible for setting their own policy on how to respond, with options including waiving or reducing the cost of meals and snacks or allowing parents to supply their own meals.

12.3. The provider should deliver the funded entitlements consistently so that all children accessing any of the funded entitlements will receive the same quality and access to provision, regardless of whether they opt to pay for optional hours, services, meals or consumables.

12.4. WBC will not intervene where parents choose to purchase additional hours or provision or additional services, providing that this does not affect the parent's ability to take up their child's funded place. The provider should be completely transparent about any additional charges.

12.5. The provider should publish their admissions criteria and ensure parents understand which hours/sessions can be taken as funded provision. Not all providers will be able to offer fully flexible places, but providers should work with parents to ensure that as far as possible the pattern of hours are convenient for parents' working hours.

12.6. The provider can charge a deposit to secure their child's 3 and 4 year Early Years Funding Entitlement but should refund the deposit in full to parents within a reasonable timescale.

12.7. The provider cannot charge parents "top-up" fees (the difference between a provider's usual fee and the funding they receive from the local authority to deliver funded places) or require parents to pay a registration fee as a condition of taking up their child's funded place.

12.8. The provider should ensure their invoice and receipts are clear, transparent and itemised, allowing parents to see that they have received their funded entitlements completely free of charge and understand fees paid for additional hours. The provider will also ensure that receipts contain their full details so that they can be identified as coming from specific provider.

13. Funding

13.1. WBC will consult with providers in the Autumn term 17 to decide on payment intervals.

13.2. Current process - each term providers will receive two payments; the first payment is an estimate payment and will be sent through automatically before the start of term. This payment will be calculated using 50% of the indicative termly budget based on the attended hours for the previous calendar year. The second payment will be made to providers following the submission of **actual** headcount information.

13.3. Providers must remember that the estimate payment of 50% will be deducted from the second payment based on actual attendance levels - there is no half term adjustment. Providers are funded for a term based on the children on the register on the headcount day.

13.4. Payments, as above will be paid directly into the provider's nominated bank account. Providers are responsible for providing details of a change to bank details.

WBC accepts no responsibility were bank details have changed and WBC was not informed or WBC has been misinformed.

13.5. The provider should accurately complete and submit headcount and other necessary data returns by the agreed dates to support the local authority to make payment.

Headcount Dates 17/18 Academic Year

Autumn Term 17	5th October 2017	claims to be submitted by 12/10/17
Spring Term 18	18th January 2018	claims to be submitted by 25/01/18
Summer Term 18	17th May 2018	claims to be submitted by 24/05/18

13.6. A revised application form (EYFE 1a) has been completed which will be introduced for new children commencing in the Autumn 17 term the form will take into account the additional 15 hours that will be available to eligible children.

13.7. Registers for children attending in the summer term will be rolled forward to the autumn term; the new registers will include a section which will take into account the additional 15 hours that will be available to eligible children.

13.8. A dual process is currently in place which requires providers to complete their headcount claims on line and submit hard copy returns. It is anticipated that this arrangement will be temporary, with the intention being to move to just an on-line process. Settings will be advised when hard copies are no longer required to be submitted to the Authority.

13.9. Providers can expect to receive the second headcount payment by approximately 6 weeks after headcount date, although errors or queries on submissions may delay payments beyond this.

13.10. The standard number of weeks per term is 14 weeks in the autumn term, 11 in spring and 13 in the summer term. However, not all settings operate on this standard model. Providers who are only open for 38 weeks per year are able to allocate weeks to each term however they chose, but only 38 weeks of funding can be claimed for any child in a financial year, unless stretching the offer see below, point 13.12.

13.11. Providers who take on new children during the financial year are advised to liaise with the parents and previous setting as to how many funded hours have already been claimed for that year, and it is the responsibility of the Provider and parents to arrange how any shortfall will be charged/recovered.

13.12. For Providers who are open for more than 38 weeks per year, parents can opt to have their childcare entitlement stretched over a longer period of up to 52 weeks rather than the standard 38 weeks. However, hours claimed for an individual child cannot exceed 570 for a financial year for the basic offer (equivalent of 15 hours per week for 38 weeks) and the same for additional entitlement.

13.13. As in section 13.10. if a child changes provider midway through the year it is the responsibility of the new provider to liaise with the parents and the previous provider as to how many funded hours have already been claimed for that year, and to arrange with parents how any shortfall will be charged/recovered

14. Compliance

14.1. WBC will carry out checks and /or audits on providers to ensure compliance with requirements of delivering the funded entitlements.

14.2. The Finance Team will provide notice to the provider of the intention to carry out an audit. The provider will be issued with an outline of the checks that will be examined out together with a list of documents that they will require access to.

14.3. Each term WBC will check compliance of 10% of each type of childcare provider. These providers will be randomly selected from the directory.

14.4. Providers will asked to supply the following documentation electronically

- Admissions policy
- Parental funding contract or parental contract
- Delivery models/ offer for funded hours if applicable

14.5. WBC will check compliance through the documentation and may interview the manager or parents if it is felt this is needed. Providers will be given one week's notice prior to any interviews. Failure to comply with the requirements of delivering funding entitlements may result in the withdrawal or termination of funding.

14.6. Any information regarding compliance to deliver funded hours by parents or professionals will result in a compliance check reviewing the above documentation and meeting with the relevant provider.

15. Termination and withdrawal of funding

15.1. Suspension of registration by Ofsted or a breach of statutory requirements or safeguarding issues may result in the termination of the arrangement and withdrawal of funding.

15.1. If a provider would like to stop providing funded hours, they must give parents and the Local Authority FIS@wirral.gov.uk one term's notice. Exceptional circumstances should be discussed with your quality improvement officer.

15.2. Once a provider receives an Inadequate, Requires Improvement, not met or non-compliance judgement from OFSTED; the provider will be asked to complete a EYFE judgement form. The funding officer will complete a sufficiency check within a one mile area of the provider, the Quality Improvement and Business Support Team Leader will arrange to visit the setting once the report is published to discuss the continuation of funding. All the reports will be reviewed and a decision made in line with regulation 7 (termination of the arrangements) of the Local Authority, (Duty to Secure Early Years Provision Free of Charge) Regulations 2014 and regulation 37 (arrangements between local authorities and early years providers: termination) of The Childcare (Early Years Funded Entitlement) Regulations 2016. The provider will be informed in writing following sign off of decision from senior manager, within 5 working days of the visit.

16. Appeals process

16.1. A provider may be denied approval to offer the Early Years Funding Entitlements or have their funding withdrawn as set out above. The provider can appeal against that decision.

16.2. Where a provider receives confirmation that Wirral Borough Council intends to remove them from the Directory of EYFE Providers, they will have the right to appeal. This appeal should be made within 1 month of receiving the letter confirming the intention to remove them from the Directory.

16.3. Appeals should be sent to the Early Childhood Service Manager, Hamilton Building, 132 Conway Street, Birkenhead, CH41 6JE. Tel no:0151 606 2000 in the form of a written report, outlining the reason(s) for appeal.

16.4. The Early Childhood Service Panel has the responsibility to make a decision on the appeal based on the written evidence presented, or it may request personal representation from the provider.

16.5. A decision to the appeal will be made and the provider notified in writing of the decision within 14 days. There is no further appeal against a decision.

16.6. A provider will be permitted to Re-register, after a period of 6 months, but would need to demonstrate a good OFSTED judgement for 2 year old funding and/or a Requires Improvement OFSTED judgement for three and four year funding.

16.7. A provider who has been De-registered for failing to comply with the Terms and Conditions of EYFE Funding or who has made a fraudulent claim would not be allowed to Re-register with WBC's Directory of providers of EYFE.

17. Complaints

17.1. Where a parent has a complaint about the quality of provision or a provider, they should be advised to follow the provider's Complaints Procedure. The provider should ensure that their complaints procedure is clearly publicised and accessible to parents and is in accordance with their registration requirements. The provider can refer the parent to OFSTED (or their regulatory agent) where the parent remains unsatisfied after the complaint has been addressed and the provider believes that it has done all it can to resolve matters.

17.2. Where a parent has a complaint that there is insufficient childcare or EYFE provision for them to access, or where they believe that they have not received their EYFE in an agreed manner according to the local definition of the EYFE offer, then this concern is in relation to WBC carrying out its' Childcare Sufficiency Duty, and parents should be signposted to the WBC Early Childhood Service (QIBS) who are contactable on (0151) 666 3980, email: fis@wirral.gov.uk

17.3. Where a provider has a complaint or concern that WBC has not acted properly in discharging its duties in relation to Childcare Sufficiency or Improving outcomes for children through its' Quality Improvement Process, then the WBC's Complaints Procedure can be used to make such a complaint. For more information on making a complaint please go to:

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/about-council/complaints/how-complain-wirral-council>

or phone: 0151 666 5677

or email: cypdcomplaints@wirral.gov.uk

17.4. If a complaint in relation to WBC's actions or behaviour remains unresolved, then a parent or provider has the right to take this concern to the Local Government Ombudsman.

<http://www.lgo.org.uk/>

17.5. The provider should ensure they have a complaints procedure in place that is published and accessible for parents who are not satisfied their child has received their funded entitlement in the correct way, as set out in this agreement and in the Early Education and Childcare Statutory guidance for local authorities.

17.6. If a parent or provider is not satisfied with the way in which their complaint has been dealt with by the local authority or believes the local authority has acted unreasonably, they can make a complaint to the local authority Ombudsman. Such complaints will only be considered when the local complaints procedures have been exhausted.

<http://www.lgo.org.uk/>

This Contract is an agreement between Wirral Borough Council and the Provider indicated below, to abide by the Terms and Conditions relating to the provision and funding of Early Years Entitlement:

Signed on behalf of Wirral Borough Council

Name of Nominated Officer: Deborah Gornik

Signature of Nominated Officer

Date

Provider Setting:

Name of Authorised Signatory:

Position of Authorised Signatory:

Signature of Authorised Signatory:Date:

E-signature or signature:

To be returned to:

Quality Improvement and Business Support Team

Bromborough Satellite Centre

Gratrix Road

Bromborough, CH62 7BW

Or email to: fis@wirral.gov.uk

Early Years Schools Forum working group meeting 26th June 2017

Present: Andrew Roberts, Margaret Morris, Jill Billinge, Sheila Robinson, Michael Forber, Lynn Ireland, Nicky Prance, Simon Davies, Penny Bishop, Sarah Harper, Carol Fenlon, Shaun Allen

Early Years Inclusive Practice grant - current arrangements

DfE require all local authorities to have a local SEN Inclusion Fund by April 2017 to support providers improve outcomes for young children with SEN. Wirral has had an Inclusion Fund for a number of years.

In 2016/17 rates paid to providers were £3.85 per hour for 3/4 year olds. £86k was paid to 3 nursery schools in 16/17 for 68 children. £100k was paid to PVI's in 16/17 for 91 children (approx. 40 FTE). Only 10 of the children in PVI's were supported for the full year. Numbers per setting are higher in nursery schools than PVI's, partly due to children being referred into nursery schools by doctors following SEN assessments.

Providers submit a claim, and funding is based on a review by the assessment team. It is felt within the sector that the system is poor, with the application process being too time-consuming, especially when providers have to reapply each term. The process is also retrospective as 2 terms evidence has to be provided before funding can be accessed.

Resources available

The 2016/17 budget was £292k. In 2017/18 budget has increased to £450k (excluding DAF), so the potential is there to review and enhance the current system.

Extended offer from September 2017

The purpose of the inclusion fund is to enable children to access early education. The extra 15 hours is for childcare. The fund will therefore remain alongside the core offer, but not the extended hours. Comments from some of the group were they see 'education' as being holistic and an offer which is needed throughout the day.

Changes to funding applications and assessment panels

150 children were identified as having additional needs in 16/17. The primary intake is about 3,500 and about 11% of children are believed to have additional needs. On this basis there are 200 children not yet identified. Settings believe this is partly because providers think that by the time they actually receive the funding the child will have moved into Foundation year. Work needs to be done on early identification, both early in a child's age, but also early in their time at a setting. This could involve training for providers, and raising the profile of the SENCO.

Proposed ideas include reviewing the application process to improve the quality of applications, reviewing the process of issuing funds, one-off annual payments that

are front-loaded rather than retrospective, raising profile of early identification to alleviate the need for EHCPs, a more frequent award panel. Consideration points for the review panel are how often they meet, who would sit on the panel and the consistency of the approach;

Annual payments rather than termly applications would be beneficial for providers, but the child is awarded the payment, not the setting so **the payment would follow the child** in the event of a child changing providers.

Funding bands could be introduced that are linked to needs. However differentiation between children is difficult as younger children naturally have more needs, and needs become more noticeable as children get older and the gap widens.

Early Years and providers need to be able to measure the impact of funding and show positive outcomes. It is felt there needs to be a simple process that can show how the funding is used and what difference it has made to the child.

Disability Access Fund (DAF)

This fund supports children with disabilities, and is a one-off £615 payment for children aged 3 or 4 in receipt of Disability Living Allowance and receiving Early Years Funding Entitlement. There is a DAF budget of £100k for 17/18. Payment is reliant on a setting providing necessary information, and eligibility checks will be made before a payment is processed. A letter will be sent to providers advising of the process along with forms to enable them to claim the money.

Early Years Funding Entitlement Agreement

This has been produced as a best practice guidance document. Unlike in previous years when the document has just been sent to PVI's, this will also be issued to maintained primary and nursery schools with Foundation 1 classes. The document has attracted the interest of parents. It could be published on the Council website, as it is in other Local Authorities. The agreement is based on DfEs model.

An Early Years Funding consultation will include questions on:

- The Inclusion Fund

- Monthly payments

- Increase in the pass-through rate from 93% to 95% from April 2018.

- A local requirement for providers to offer places after headcount date should they have places available.

Next Steps and Timescales

Consultation questions will be drawn up with the intention of issuing the consultation mid-July running until mid-September so the findings can be reported to Schools Forum at the end of September.

REPORT OF THE INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

MAINSTREAM SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a brief outline of Mainstream Admissions during the most recently completed 2015-2016 admission year and the usage of the Council's online admission application system, Parent Portal.

2.0 Mainstream Admissions

- 2.1 Statutory roles of the Mainstream Admissions team include the administration and allocation of places in all primary and secondary schools, and representing the Council in school place appeals.

For entry to primary/secondary school in September 2016 there were over 3,800 applications for primary school (Foundation 2) and 3,700 for secondary schools (Year 7). The team co-ordinates admission to school with all own admission authority schools within Wirral and other admission authorities in England.

- 2.2 The team produces appeal statements and presents appeals on behalf of all community and voluntary controlled (VC) schools as a statutory function. For information, the outcomes for the community and VC school appeals handled by the team are shown below.

	Withdrawn (%)	Resolved (%)	Refused (%)	Agreed (%)	Total
2013-2014	55 (21%)	57 (22%)	136 (53%)	10 (4%)	258
2014-2015	61 (23%)	66 (24%)	125 (46%)	18 (7%)	270
2015-2016	97 (26%)	82 (22%)	173 (47%)	20 (5%)	372

Outcome of appeals lodged for community and voluntary controlled primary and secondary schools by academic year.

The number of appeals was significantly higher than in previous years, however the outcome of appeals was proportionately similar.

- 2.3 The team administers the grammar school selection tests on behalf of the four non-Catholic grammar schools. Around 1,800 children are tested each year. The team also administers the Independent Assessment Board, and is responsible for disseminating the outcome of the selective tests to parents.
- 2.4 As well as admissions to Foundation 2 and Year 7, the team also processes around 2,000 in-year transfers between and into/out of Wirral schools. This includes the administration of the Council's Fair Access Protocol. This Protocol applies to "hard to place" young people with a history of poor attendance or significant behavioural issues. 12 young people were placed through the Fair Access Protocol in 2015-2016, compared to 10 in the previous year.
- 2.5 For information, Negotiated Transfers (NTs) also form part of the Wirral Fair Access Protocol. NTs follow a similar process to Managed Moves for young people at risk of Permanent Exclusion, however NTs are intended for young people with lower level behaviour and/or attendance issues who might benefit from a fresh start in another Wirral school. NTs are discretionary and are overseen by a former secondary headteacher. 98 NTs were instigated in 2015-2016 of which 52 resulted in a

successful transfer of school, 4 were withdrawn by the parent and 42 were ultimately unsuccessful.

- 2.6 The Wirral Fair Access Protocol arrangements, including hard to place young people, Managed Moves, Negotiated Transfers and those who are permanently excluded, will be re-evaluated in 2017-2018 in order to provide a clear consistent process leading to the most appropriate outcome for young people.

3.0 Online Admissions – Parent Portal

- 3.1 The Council has a statutory obligation to enable parents to apply for school places via an on-line application system. On 16th June 2011, delegated authority was given to replace the pre-existing in-house online admission system with a proprietary software module, CACI eAdmissions, which links into the Admissions administrative software, CACI Impulse. This went live in October 2011.
- 3.2 Prior to the introduction of eAdmissions, levels of online applications for Wirral schools were low in comparison with other local authorities. In 2010-2011, 25% of applicants used the in-house system (5% secondary, 45% primary). Other nearby Authorities operate at over 80% online applications and this remains the target for applications to Wirral primary and secondary schools. Benefits to parents of eAdmissions include a secure user account which will manage all their children's school place applications, instant acknowledgement that their application has been received and allocations sent by e-mail rather than waiting for a letter in the post.
- 3.3 Former technical issues with eAdmissions have now been resolved by the introduction in September 2016 of Parent Portal from Capita, which also ties in with the Capita Admissions administrative software in use by the Admissions team.
- 3.4 In 2015-2016 (the most recent fully completed year, using the old online system), 92% of 7,161 on-time home pupil applications were made online (92% secondary, 91% primary). This is an increase from the previous year (87% overall, 88% secondary, 86% primary) and brings Wirral in line with the regional and national averages.

On this basis, this item will not be reported to Schools Forum in future years unless there is a significant change or issue.

- 3.5 In 2014-2015, the Admissions team introduced in-house online registration for Year 6 selective testing, which has proved popular with parents, reduces manual data entry for the team, and will continue to operate for forthcoming years in conjunction with the new Capita modules.
- 3.6 The Mainstream Admissions team is continuing to actively look for ways to optimise usage of ICT in order to increase efficiencies and provide value for money.

4.0 Update on changes to selective testing

- 4.1 The non-Catholic grammar schools now comprise a Wirral Consortium of schools (as from September 2013). This reduced the total cost of administering the selective tests for non-Catholic grammar schools by approximately £20,000 annually to £80,000 (2013 costs compared with 2012 costs). The number, duration, format, style and administration of the tests did not change as a result of this action.

- 4.2 Further discussions with the working group of headteachers took place during 2014-2015, including demonstrations from the existing and another test provider and discussion of the introduction of non-verbal reasoning, as well as a potential change of test provider.
- 4.3 The outcome is that the test provider for the selective tests has now changed from GL Assessment to CEM Durham with effect from testing being carried out in September 2016 for entry to school in September 2017. The tests comprise two tests taken on the same day, with a mixture of verbal reasoning, non-verbal reasoning and mathematics questions.
- 4.4 A two year contract has been signed covering 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 testing years. Financially, the change to the new test provider is expected to further reduce the total cost of administering the selective tests for non-Catholic grammar schools by approximately £35,000 annually.
- 4.5 The possibility of obliging grammar schools to introduce a priority admission criterion for children from low income families has also been discussed at government level. The proportion of children from low income families attending grammar schools is lower than the local cohort in Wirral, as elsewhere. However, it is open to all parents to register their child to take the test, and the parents of lower income families are less likely to apply. Only those tested and reaching the standard are then eligible to apply for a place.
- 4.6 It is open to all schools (September 2016 onwards) to introduce an admission priority criterion for “pupil premium” children following statutory consultation on the policy. Looked after children and previously looked after children are already the highest priority for admission to Wirral secondary schools.
- 4.7 The four non-Catholic grammar schools have now formally consulted on changing their policies to introduce a priority criterion in relation to low income families. From September 2018 entry onwards, each school will admit up to 15 children who have reached the standard, and who are in receipt of free school meals at the time of application (e.g. Autumn 2017).
- 4.8 The Admissions team have therefore amended the selective test registration and secondary school application forms to allow parents to provide the personal information required to validate low income eligibility in Autumn 2017. Validation of low income will now be an additional administrative task falling to the Admissions team, using the Department for Education’s FSM Eligibility Checking Service.

5.0 Software changes

- 5.1 The Capita Admissions and Transfer modules which integrate with the Capita ONE Pulse module have been implemented. The GIS (mapping) element of the system is expected to be installed in the next few months.
- 5.2 In relation to Special Educational Needs and Disability Assessment software, this has been installed. Staff changes have resulted in a delay to the implementation of the software and negotiations are underway as to the best way forward for the migration of data from the former system. The Capita ONE modules are now expected to be implemented by June 2017.

6.0 Finance

6.1 The overall budget for School Admissions in 2017-2018 remains at £341,800. The costs include:

Staffing (8.1 FTE)	£232,200
Software and implementation	£64,800
Selective tests	£40,000
Overheads	£43,300
Income/recharges	(£38,500)
Total	£341,800

The budget has been reduced by £70,000 compared to spend levels in 2011-2012. There is potential for a further reduction in one-off costs in future years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Forum notes the report.

Deborah Gornick
Interim Director of Children's Services

REPORT OF THE INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

COMMISSIONING HIGH NEEDS PLACES

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides the background to the upcoming evaluation of high needs places commissioning in Wirral with an overview of the timescale and scope.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Stage 1 National Funding Formula consultation provided early indications that strategic consideration would need to be given to high needs place commissioning in Wirral.
- 2.2 The National Funding Formula has been delayed until 2018-19, however the evaluation of high needs places in Wirral remains essential in order to achieve a sustainable High Needs budget and meet the current and future needs of Wirral's children. There has been a substantial change in the children educated in Wirral special schools and bases, in particular, an increase in referrals for some types of need, such as autism.
- 2.3 The Stage 2 National Funding Formula consultation includes an expectation from the Department for Education (DfE) that all Local Authorities would conduct an evaluation of provision for children and young people with SEN and disabilities, in line with the Children and Families Act 2014.
- 2.4 To this end, the DfE have provided a High Needs Review grant to all LAs. Wirral has been awarded £132k in 2016-2017 which has been carried forward to 2017-2018.
- 2.5 The aim of the High Needs evaluation project is to assess whether the current provision is meeting the needs of Wirral's children, in the right locations, and in an efficient manner, and to enable a strategic view of provision with children with SEN in the context of anticipated trends and the available resources, informing options for change.

3.0 Evaluation of SEN provision

- 3.1 The initial phase will involve a data gathering project, to be co-ordinated by the Senior Officer for Admissions and School Place Planning, examining statistical information from a variety of sources. In order to release time from existing staff and support the project, a temporary 12 month appointment will be made for a Band E administrator.
- 3.2 The range of aspects to be considered include data on SEN locally, trends and likely future changes; evidence on how the current pattern of provision meets young people's needs, including mainstream and special schools and other providers.
- 3.3 The number of places in schools, bases and units was reported to Schools Forum on 28th September 2016.

The table overleaf summarises the number of places in schools, units and bases (as at September 2017), and the number of pupils attending schools between 2007 and January 2017.

Schools	Learning Difficulty	Places	2007	2017
Clare Mount School	Moderate	216	201	217
Elleray Park School	Complex	110	61	111
Foxfield School	Complex	133	138	132
Gilbrook School	Behavioural, emotional and social	55	52	54
Hayfield School	Moderate & Communication	120	120	120
Kilgarth School (boys)	Behavioural, emotional and social	55	51	53
Meadowside School	Complex	75	64	57
Orrets Meadow School	Specific	70	63	72
Stanley School	Complex	120	85	121
The Observatory School	Behavioural, emotional and social	55	44	58
Emslie Morgan Academy	Alternative Provision	80	53	96
Wirral Hospital School	Physical & Mental Health	80	51	74
Units and Bases				
Bebington High Sports College	Moderate	25		16
Hilbre High School	Moderate & Aspergers	30		22
Oldershaw Academy	Moderate	20		11
Woodchurch High School	Aspergers	15		14
Townfield Primary	Hearing Impairment	10		10
New Brighton Primary	Language & Moderate	22		22
The Priors CE Primary	Language	10		10
Devonshire Park Primary	Language & Social/Communication	26		25
Bidston Village CE Primary	Moderate	24		23
Woodslee Primary	Social/communication	8		6
Fender Primary	Social/communication	16		16
Eastway Primary	Social/communication	16		16
Riverside Primary	Social, emotional and mental health	8		8
St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary	Social, emotional and mental health	8		8

- 3.4 An interim report will be produced which will then inform a phase of pre-consultation on options for transformation, involving maintained and non-maintained schools, colleges, independent special schools, Wirral Hospital School and the Pupil Referral Unit and other partners who provide special educational provision for Wirral pupils. This phase will include parents and other stakeholders with the aim of co-designing the vision for high needs provision for Wirral. The lead for this phase of the project will be the Senior Manager for Special Educational Needs.
- 3.5 The outcome of the pre-consultation phase will then be reported to Council's Cabinet, identifying the preferred option(s) to proceed to formal consultation. These will be carried out according to the statutory requirements set out by the Department for Education.

- 3.6 The timescale for the first phase is to commence in May 2017, with the interim report due in October. Pre-consultation with partners will take place during Autumn term, with the intention of submitting a report requesting permission to consult (if required) to Council's Cabinet in January 2018. This timescale will enable the LA to agree the future of specialist provision, including location and size, with relevant schools and other providers from September 2018, which is the first year of the High Needs National Funding Formula.
- 3.7 There may be changes identified that do not require a formal consultation. For example, this might include commissioning additional or different types of places in existing bases within mainstream schools. This kind of change will be implemented at the appropriate time.
- 3.8 The High Needs evaluation project will require the participation and support of all involved schools and partners to collectively examine historic and best practice, and thresholds for young people accessing specialist provision. It will include social care and health, the voluntary and community sector, looking at how we can work with children and young people and their families to achieve the best outcomes within the resources available.
- 3.9 Reports will be made to Schools Forum as the High Needs commissioning evaluation progresses. The view of Schools Forum members will be welcomed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. That the Forum notes the report.**

Deborah Gornick
Interim Director of Children's Services

9.6 Strategic planning

If they have not already done so, having reviewed their provision for children and young people with SEN and disabilities, local authorities should develop and publish strategic plans that set out how such provision should be made, using the high needs funding they expect to receive in future, in a way that works for parents and young people. They need to make sure the pattern of provision is suitable to meet changing needs, that parents and young people find it attractive, and that it will be affordable within future allocations.

These plans should cover the special educational provision offered by early years providers, mainstream and special schools (including academies, and non-maintained and independent special schools), and the range of post-16 institutions (including further education and sixth form colleges, and special post-16 institutions) and the way in which those mainstream and special schools and other institutions access the training and workforce development relating to SEN and disabilities they need. They should be developed in consultation with neighbouring authorities, particularly where children with SEN and disabilities from one local authority area receive their special provision in another.

Such strategic plans might include, for example:

- measures to support mainstream schools in meeting the SEN of a wider range of pupils, for example through workforce training or clear routes to access specialist expertise
- changes to the focus of existing specialist places, to cater for different or more complex needs
- the creation or expansion of specialist provision attached to mainstream schools (special units or resourced provision)
- identification of the need to create or expand special schools
- strategic engagement with specialist providers in the non-maintained and independent sector, to make sure that the places they are offering reflect the changing needs of children and young people

Many local authorities have carried out such reviews and planning recently or are currently consulting with providers, parents and young people, to explore the extent to which special provision needs to be adjusted. In sections 9.7 and 9.8 below we set out the financial support that is available so that all local authorities can take forward their reviews and preparation of strategic plans.

9.7 High needs strategic planning fund

We have allocated £23 million of additional funding in 2016-17, to increase local authorities' capacity to undertake this strategic review and planning activity. We intend that this high needs strategic planning fund will be used both to fund high-quality collaborative review and planning of special provision (where appropriate, jointly with neighbouring authorities) and, particularly where such review and planning work has already been undertaken along the lines envisaged, to help implement the outcomes of the reviews.

The funding has already been distributed to local authorities, as it is anticipated that most authorities will wish to start or develop their review and planning as soon as possible, if they have not already done so. As the funding will not be ring-fenced they will be able to carry

forward the funding for spending in 2017 to 18. We will not only expect a review to be carried out (if one has not already been done) but also, to encourage transparency and engagement with local communities on these issues, for the outcome to be published. And we will of course expect the review to lead to changes that are deliverable in practice and implemented effectively, with support from the local community of parents, schools and other institutions.

We have published details of the level of allocations of this [strategic planning fund](#). Also on that webpage we have published a benchmarking tool so that local authorities can compare their high needs spending with that of other local authorities, and seek out good practice in organising special provision elsewhere. We will develop this benchmarking tool and other guidance material in response to feedback and demand from local authorities.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

SCHOOLS FORUM – 5th JULY 2017

REPORT OF THE INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

SCHOOLS BUDGET OUTTURN REPORT 2016/17

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the year end position for the 2016/17 Schools' Budget and variations during the year. At this time accounts are provisional and subject to audit.
- 1.2 The position has improved from the £345,000 overspend reported to Schools Forum in January. Overall the budget had an under spend of £29,400. However, this includes a £109,000 under spend against the Council's contribution to the PFI budget, leaving a £79,600 over spend against the School's budget. This was mainly within the High Needs budget, offset by under spends elsewhere.

2.0 BUDGET VARIATIONS

- 2.1 The table attached compares the Schools Budget with the indicative spends for the year. The main variations are set out below.

- 2.2 **Primary, Secondary and Special Schools - £3.0m reduction / under spend**
Adjustments have been made following St. Mary's Catholic College's conversion to Academy status. There is also a £100,800 under spend against SEN Bases due to an error on budget setting.

- 2.3 **Early Years – £346,800 reduction**

The Early Years budget of £14.6m reflects the funding required for 2, 3 and 4 year olds who are entitled to receive free Early Education and Early Years Pupil Premium. The budget is based on the January 2016 census and the projected costs have been updated to reflect actual payments made in relation to the spring term.

The take up of the 2 year old offer has again increased during the spring term, but there was an unexpected reduction in claimed hours for 3 year olds. This reduction was supported by a fall in birth rates for the relevant period, and the reduction will be offset by a corresponding adjustment to DSG funding.

The Early Years Portal is now in place and all providers will now submit online headcount information from 1st April. This should result in a more efficient process and greater accuracy in preparation for the extended 30 hour offer from autumn 2017.

- 2.4 **Central Early Years Budget – £17,100 under spend**

Within this centrally managed budget, there were small uncommitted budgets across employees and supplies.

2.5 School Admissions – £42,300 under spend

This is a centrally managed budget, which had uncommitted budgets against employees due to part year vacancies, as well as reduced costs in relation to examination fees.

2.6 School Closure / Retirement Costs - £4,400 under spend

The enhanced pension costs arising from previous school closures were £81,600, resulting in an under spend of £4,400.

2.7 Schools Forum – £10,600 under spend

There has been no spend against this budget of £10,600.

2.8 Contribution to Combined Budgets – no variance

There was an under spend of £34.6k in relation to the City Learning Centres. This under spend has been moved to the ring-fenced CLC reserve in order to fund remaining final closure costs (see paragraph 3.1). The combined budgets of £1.7m were therefore fully spent across the following areas:

	Budget £
School Improvement	359,900
Discretionary Rate Relief Top Up	106,600
LCSB contribution	30,000
Governors Forum	2,200
Wellbeing & School Staff Surveys (5/12)	18,600
PFI Support Team	61,800
LACES	140,500
School Intervention	674,500
City Learning Centres (5/12)	196,500
CLC PFI	108,200
Total	1,698,800

2.9 Planned Preventative Maintenance - £46,600 over spend

There was an over spend of £46k against this budget of £249,000.

2.10 PFI Affordability Gap - £109,000 under spend

The PFI contract makes provision for the total costs to increase each year by the December Retail Prices Index (RPI), less 10% of that RPI. The 2016/17 budget was set at £2,886,500 based on an assumed RPI of 1.9% as the December rate is not released until January / February. However, the actual RPI rate for December 2015 was only 1.2%, resulting in a £109,000 under spend.

2.11 Library service - £10,100 under spend

There was a small under spend in this service resulting from a reduced premises recharge.

2.12 Insurances – £16,300 under spend

The Governors Liability Insurance was £16,300 less than budget.

2.13 Behaviour Support – £77,400 under spend

Additional income received this year in relation to 2015/16 Managed Moves as well as reduced costs for embedded police contribute to an under spend of £77,400.

2.14 Special Staff Costs – £9,600 under spend

There was a £9,600 under spend on Special Staff costs, as shown in the table below:

	Budget £	Outturn £	Variance £
Maternity, Paternity & Other Staff Costs	613,000	603,600	(9,400)
TU Facilities	80,000	79,800	(200)
Insurance & Recharges	6,700	6,700	0
Total	699,700	690,100	(9,600)

2.15 School Specific Contingency - £6,500 over spend

The allocation of how the contingency budget was spent is summarized below:

	Budget £	Outturn £	Variance £
<u>Primary and Secondary Schools</u>			
Vulnerable children managed moved / support		56,000	
Devonshire Park KS1 Teacher		30,000	
Pension costs		17,700	
Rates adjustments		9,000	
Other budget support		300	
<u>Special Schools</u>			
Support for additional places		110,000	
Closed school outstanding balance		13,100	
Pension costs		4,900	
Other budget support		1,800	
Special School buyback		(155,400)	
Special School balance to be redistributed		23,400	
Total	104,300	110,800	6,500

2.16 Special Education Needs Top Ups – £184,400 over spend

A budget of £8.8m funds the Pupil Led Top Up funding in Specialist Provision, Resource Bases, FE, Colleges and Alternative Provision. There are £198k of costs relating to additional learners at Wirral Metropolitan College and Birkenhead Sixth Form College and £115k of additional costs due to placements at Emslie Morgan Academy. The breakdown of this budget is as follows:

	Budget £	Spend £	Variance £
Top Ups for Maintained Special Schools	6,406,300	6,463,800	57,500
Top Ups for Resourced provision	602,000	555,700	(46,300)
Alternative provision	243,800	358,300	114,500
FE and 6 TH Form Top Ups	728,000	925,600	197,600
Additional Nursing Support	127,100	30,100	(97,000)
Exceptional Needs	645,000	603,100	(41,900)
Total	8,752,200	8,936,600	184,400

2.17 Special Education Needs Statements – £200,000 over spend

Costs for both Primary and Secondary schools exceeded their budgets, but this has been partially offset by a £100k under spend within the Early Years provision.

2.18 Independent Special Schools – £466,300 over spend

The budget in this area was increased to reflect demand for the number of young people with complex needs in Independent Special Schools. At 31st March 2017 there were 91 places. The cost of placements increased during the year, partly due to students moving into 6th Form provision.

2.19 High Needs Contingency - £184,700 under spend

The High Needs Contingency budget of £434,000 was not allocated in full during 2016/17. Commitments during the year included:

	£
90% SEN guarantee for maintained schools	136,000
Additional school support	100,000
High Needs Minimum Funding Guarantee	8,200
Additional school support	5,100
	249,300

2.20 Home Tuition - £33,400 under spend

Demands on this service were less than anticipated, resulting in an under spend of £33,400 during the year.

2.21 Support for SEN – £343,100 under spend

There are vacancies and uncommitted budgets in this area which are helping to offset the pressures within the High Needs budget.

2.22 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - £168,921,200

The DSG budget for 2016/17 was £172,175,500, of which £168,921,200 was received during the year. The table below shows the reasons for this reduction:

	£
DSG Budget	172,175,500
Early Years reduction (Jan-17 census)	(373,800)
St Mary's Catholic College recoupment	(2,880,500)
	168,921,200

3.0 UPDATE ON SPECIFIC RESERVES

3.1 The DSG reserves carried forward into 2016/17 were £2.5m, and the amounts carried forward into 2017/18 total £1.9m as follows:

- **Job Evaluation and Pay Harmonisation – Balance at 31.03.17 - £0.65m**

- **DSG Reserve – Balance at 31.03.17 – £1.07m**

	£
DSG Carry Forward from 2015/16	1,602,200
Budgeted use of Reserve in 2016/17	(568,900)
Additional contribution from reserve 2016/17	(79,600)
Transfer from CLC reserve	118,700
	1,072,400

- **Early Years – Balance at 31.03.17 - £0.13m**

This reserve of £130,500 is expected to fund the Early Years Portal and expand the 2 year old provision.

- **City Learning Centres – Balance at 31.03.17 - £0.045m**

The £34k under spend on City Learning Centres will be moved into this reserve as referred to in paragraph 2.6. It is anticipated that there will be some remaining final closure costs in relation to the City Learning Centres, but that these will not exceed £45k. It is proposed that the remaining £118k is transferred to the DSG reserve.

	£
Balance brought forward from 2015/16	129,100
2016/17 under spend transferred to reserve	34,600
Transferred to DSG reserve	(118,700)
	45,000

4.0 COMMUNITY WORKS

- 4.1 Provision has been made within the attached figures for schools contingency to carry forward £20,000 for Community Works – a project developed from the Family Works scheme.
- 4.2 The evaluation of Community Works indicated that the scheme had a positive impact on children's behaviour, children's attendance, children's learning, and attendance for the majority of children whose parents attended the programme.
- 4.3 However, although hard to reach parents engaged well with Family Works the impact for some parents diminished after the programme had finished. Community works recognises that for some of these vulnerable families parents cannot sustain the skills that Family Works helped them to gain and as such need more support than the programme could offer. This is addressed in the Community Works scheme.
- 4.4 The Community Works Programme is designed to support the parents of the most vulnerable children in school to help parents support their child's development of self-esteem, motivation, attention skills, emotional regulation, managing relationships and empathy. It has been piloted in a number of primary schools and as a result:
- Families engage better with schools;
 - Children's behaviour improves both at home and at school;
 - Children's attitude to learning improves;
 - Children become more responsible at completing homework,
 - The children become noticeably happier in school;
 - Children's attendance in school improves.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The £109k under spend recorded against the PFI Affordability Gap relates to the Council's contribution to the school budget. The remaining services had a cumulative over spend of £79,600, mainly due to pressures within High Needs. However, these additional costs have been met from existing reserves.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 That the Forum notes the report and the financial position of the Schools Budget for 2016/17.
- 6.2 That the Forum agrees that underspends on de-delegated services are used to offset budget pressures, and that provision is made for Community Works.
- 6.3 That the net over spend of £79,600 on the schools element of the budget is funded from the DSG reserve.

Deborah Gornik
Interim Director of Children's Services

Appendix 1 – Budget Variations 2016/17

	Budget 2016/17	Actual Spend 2016/17	Variations 2016/17
	£	£	£
Individual Schools Budget			
Primary Schools	93,463,700	93,463,700	0
Secondary Schools	27,081,100	24,198,800	-2,882,300
Special Schools	8,861,700	8,861,700	0
SEN Bases	1,701,500	1,600,700	-100,800
Wirral Hospital School	1,356,300	1,356,300	0
Early Years	14,673,000	14,326,200	-346,800
Individual Schools Budget Total	147,137,300	143,807,400	-3,329,900
Central School Costs			
Early Years	378,700	361,600	-17,100
Admissions	341,800	299,500	-42,300
School Closure / retirement costs	86,000	81,600	-4,400
Licences and Subscriptions	223,800	223,800	0
Schools Forum	10,600	0	-10,600
Contribution to Combined Budgets	1,698,800	1,698,800	0
PPM	249,000	295,600	46,600
PFI affordability gap	2,886,500	2,777,500	-109,000
Costs de-delegated from schools			
Library Service	191,700	181,600	-10,100
Insurances	32,300	16,000	-16,300
Minority Ethnic Achievement Service	104,100	104,100	0
School Specific Contingencies	104,300	110,800	6,500
Special Staff Costs	699,700	690,100	-9,600
School Meals	21,200	21,200	0
Behaviour Support	92,300	14,900	-77,400
High Needs Pupils			
Statements	3,799,000	3,999,400	200,400
SEN Top Ups	8,752,200	8,936,600	184,400
High Needs Contingency	434,000	249,300	-184,700
Independent Special Schools	3,689,000	4,155,300	466,300
Home Tuition	308,900	275,500	-33,400
Support for SEN	2,031,500	1,688,400	-343,100
Special School Transport	58,200	58,200	0
Non Delegated School Costs Total	26,193,600	26,239,800	46,200
Dedicated Schools Grant	-172,175,500	-168,921,200	3,254,300
Budged Contribution from Reserves	-568,900	-568,900	0
Additional Contribution from Reserves	0	-79,600	-79,600
Grand Total	586,500	477,500	-109,000

WIRRAL COUNCIL

WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM 5th JULY 2017

REPORT OF THE INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Delegated School Balances as at 31st March 2017 Indicative Balances for 2017-18 and 2018-19

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report advises the Forum of the level of school balances as at 31st March 2017, together with an indication of balances for the financial years 2017-18 and 2018-19.

1. School Balances

School balances at 31st March 2017 are £10.5m. This represents a reduction of £1.1m compared to the previous year (£0.8m) when academy conversions are excluded).

	31.3.2016 Balances	31.3.2017 Balances	Difference	Change
Nursery	604,737	277,421	-327,316	Reduction
Primary	7,410,417	7,748,664	338,247	Increase
Secondary	1,145,853	474,275	-671,578	Reduction
Special	2,116,885	2,000,181	-116,704	Reduction
Total	£11,277,892	£10,500,541	£-777,351	Reduction
Academy Schools	460,619			
Total	£11,783,511			

The average school balance for a primary is £88,053 compared to £84,209 in 2015-16. A Secondary schools' average balance has reduced from £267,745 to £94,855.

There was one academy conversion in the 2016-17.

The actual balances as at 31st March 2017 have improved significantly since last reported.

2. Deficit Budgets

There are 9 primary schools with a deficit balance as at 31st March 2017. Three secondary schools had a deficit at the end of the year, of which one was licenced. One special School had a deficit at 31st March 2017. There are currently 2 licenced deficits, one existing and one being finalised.

3. Monitoring School Balances 2017-18 and 2018-19

Schools must set their budgets by 30th June. 62 out of 107 budgets have been finalised at the point of writing this report. So far, this indicates that at the end of

March 2018 balances will be £4.2m, reducing to £1.2m in March 2019. There are 21 schools with provisional deficits in 2019-20 out of the 55 submitted.

There are continuing difficulties for schools over the medium term. Whilst balances improve over the year at budget period 6 and 9 budget monitoring, there is still a noticeable downward trend.

4. Action Taken to Date

- During the spring term letters have been sent to a number of schools with expected deficit budgets in 2017 and 2018 to request details. There have in addition been meetings with some schools and governors.
- Where schools are reviewing staffing levels this is in a number of cases leading to consideration of redundancies.
- A Notice of Concern is in place at one school.
- LMS and HR continue to work with schools to balance budgets and plan any reduction in staff numbers or hours.
- Briefings and discussions with headteachers and school finance staff.
- School Bursar support working with Headteacher and governors to provide more detailed projections.

5. Future Action

- Review financial plans to ensure they are sustainable.
- Contact schools with projected deficits in 2018-19 to discuss plans.
- Schools requesting a licenced deficit are required to demonstrate how the budget will come back into balance within 3 years (4 years in exceptional circumstances).
- Where agreement cannot be reached a Notice of Concern will be issued, requiring an immediate action plan to be agreed by governors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Forum notes the report.
2. That schools balances continue to be monitored.

Deborah Gornick
Interim Director of Children's Services

WIRRAL COUNCIL

SCHOOLS FORUM – 5th July 2017

REPORT OF THE INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Schools Budget update 2017-18

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report updates the Schools Budget for changes that have been made since it was reported on 18th January 2017. The overall Schools Budget has reduced from £252m to £172m, mainly as a result of academy recoupment adjustments. A revised budget breakdown is included in the appendix attached.

2.0 BUDGET CHANGES

2.1 Primary & Secondary School Budgets

The Primary School budget was previously reported as £100m. This has been reduced by £1.0m for de-delegation and £4.0m for 3 Primary Academies.

The Secondary School budget has been reduced by £73m from £94m to £21m, taking account of de-delegation and the budgets for 16 Secondary Academies which are paid directly by the Education Funding Agency (EFA). There will be further adjustments during the year if other schools convert to academies

2.3 Special School Places

The adjustment from £10m to £8.9m is made to show the separate grant funding for 6th form places – there continues to be 106 places in total.

2.4 Early Years

Since the budget report was written the Early Years Census for 2017 has been finalised. The anticipated Early Years spend has reduced from £18.9m to £18.1m. The numbers of 3 and 4 year olds have decreased from 3,116 to 2,960. For each pupil the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is reduced by £4,094.50 (£638,000 in total). At this time the budget assumes there will be no further changes to the 2018 census although this may not be the case if the falling roll continues throughout the year. The makeup of the budget assumes the reduction in DSG is managed by a matching reduction in expenditure and this has been the case to date. The change is also relevant to Primary Schools, a reduction in numbers (5%) will also start to impact on Primary rolls from September.

The estimated budget for 2 year olds has reduced. Whilst now reaching 88% of those eligible, the January 2017 census recorded 739 FTE pupils a reduction of 43 against those estimated in the budget. The grant reduction of £211,200 is based on each FTE having a value of £4,959.

Although no significant change is anticipated, the final nursery protection grant has still to be confirmed for 2017-18. This grant which is for 3 years aims to provide funding stability. Locally this will be through maintaining the previous hourly rates and lump sums in respect of the core 15 hour offer.

Finally the Early Years Pupil Premium numbers for January 2017 are confirmed as 814, giving a grant of £246,000. There are about 17% of children who are

now eligible for Pupil Premium, a percentage that has increased following the opt out exercise and is now more in line with the school population.

2.5 Central Budgets PFI

Two adjustments have been made to this area:

1. DfE guidance confirmed that amounts delegated to schools for the PFI Affordability Gap should not include Council funding and on this basis delegation has been revised. The total Affordability Gap was £3,063,500, of this amount £2,300,000 has been delegated and £763,500 remains at the centre, funded by the LA.
2. Secondly following discussions with the EFA in January an adjustment has been made to increase central PFI budgets by £814,600. This has been done to meet the contractual PFI amounts for the financial year starting in April, whilst the amounts delegated for PFI do not increase academy budgets until the start of the new academic year in September. The funding for this change is made through an adjustment to academy recoupment and is for the current year only.

2.6 High Needs Pupils

Compared to the original budget for High Needs, deductions have now been processed by the EFA for places in academies and Further Education. These are made on the basis of changes previously discussed and agreed:

- To increase ASC provision at Hilbre and Claremount
- To close MLD provision at Birkenhead Park and Kingsway
- To increase provision at Wirral Met College and Birkenhead 6th Form

The table below summarises the new High Needs Place numbers for 2017-18. There are still some outstanding queries to resolve with the EFA which will be resolved over the next few weeks.

Wirral - High Needs Place Numbers

	Pre 16		Post 16		Total	
	2016-17	17-18	2016-17	2017-18	2016-17	2017-18
Bases	232	218			232	218
Secondary			49	43	49	43
Alt Provision	91	117			91	117
Sp. Schools	891	903	106	106	997	1,009
Further Ed.			132	182	132	182
Total	1,214	1,238	287	331	1,501	1,569

2.7 Dedicated School Grant

At this time the overall DSG for Wirral's Maintained Schools, Early Years and High Needs will reduce from £252m to £170m. Further changes may be made during the year to reflect Academy conversions or the Early Years census in January 2018.

3.0 Recommendation

That the Forum notes the report.

Deborah Gornik
Interim Director of Children's Services

EDUCATION - SCHOOLS

	Base Estimate 2017-18	Adj. Estimate 2017-18
	£	£
Individual Schools Budget		
Primary Schools	100,308,700	95,172,700
Secondary Schools	94,366,800	20,884,800
Special Schools	10,040,000	8,941,300
SEN Bases	2,398,300	1,580,000
EMAP	926,700	-
Wirral Hospital Schools	1,359,100	1,356,300
6 th Form / FE	1,264,000	-
Early Years	18,888,200	18,104,900
Individual Schools Budget Total	229,551,800	146,040,000
Central School Costs		
Early Years	518,700	518,700
Admissions	341,800	341,800
School closure / retirement costs	60,000	60,000
Licences and subscriptions	226,100	226,100
Schools Forum	10,600	10,600
Contribution to Combined Budgets	875,600	875,600
PFI Affordability Gap		1,551,100
Retained Duties – ex ESG	730,000	1,021,600
Costs delegated to / de-delegated from schools		
Library Service	-	191,700
Insurances	-	29,200
School Specific Contingencies	-	100,500
Special Staff Costs	-	676,400
School Meals	-	19,700
Behaviour Support	-	84,200
School Improvement	-	101,600
High Needs Pupils		
Statements	4,174,800	4,174,800
SEN Top Ups	9,175,600	9,175,600
High Needs Contingency	314,000	305,100
Independent Special Schools	3,770,000	3,770,000
Home Tuition	348,900	348,900
Support for SEN	1,971,500	1,971,500
Special School Transport	58,200	58,200
Non delegated School Costs Total	22,575,800	25,612,900
Total School and Central Costs	252,127,600	171,652,900
Dedicated Schools Grant Total	(250,795,200)	(170,320,500)
Use of Reserves	(568,900)	(568,900)
Grand Total	763,500	763,500

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

SCHOOLS FORUM – 5th JULY 2017

REPORT OF THE INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

SCHOOLS BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2017/18

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Forum on the Schools Budget position and anticipated variations in the current year. No specific variations are expected at this time.

2.0 ANTICIPATED BUDGET VARIATIONS

- 2.1 The table attached summarises the Schools Budget for 2017-18. Although no variances are currently anticipated, comments on specific budget areas are set out below.

2.2 Primary, Secondary and Special Schools

Four Primary Schools – Egremont, Great Meols, Poulton Lancelyn, and Stanton Road - converted to Academy status as part of a Multi-Academy Trust from 1st June 2017, with a further school to join later in the year. Balances for these schools at the date of conversion will be finalised in the coming months.

Schools converting to Academy status result in a reduction in DSG grant income received, which is matched by reduced spending through the delegated budget. Further Academy conversions are also anticipated during the year, although transfer dates are not yet confirmed.

2.3 Early Years Grant

The Early Years budget of £18.1m reflects the funding required for 2, 3 and 4 year olds who are entitled to receive free Early Education and Early Years Pupil Premium. The budget for this is based on the January 2017 census.

It also includes funding for DfE's estimate of 3 and 4 year olds eligible for additional hours, although there is not yet data available on how many will be eligible. Allocations to providers will be determined by take up from September 2017, while final DSG allocations for the extended offer will be based on the January 2018 census.

2.4 Special Staff Costs

This budget is currently projecting no variance, and will be monitored closely throughout the year. It is broken down as follows:

	Budget £
Maternity, Paternity & Other Staff Costs	582,700
TU Facilities	86,800
Insurance & Recharges	6,900
Total	676,400

2.5 Contribution to Combined Budgets

The combined budgets of £0.9m are broken down as follows:

	Budget £
School Improvement	330,000
Discretionary Rate Relief Top Up	106,600
LCSB contribution	30,000
Governors Forum	2,200
PFI Support Team	61,800
LACES	140,500
School Intervention	136,000
CLC PFI	68,500
Total	875,600

It is anticipated that these budgets will be fully committed. The provision in future years is uncertain due to the implementation of the National Funding Formula being postponed until 2018-19.

2.6 School Specific Contingencies

There is a contingency budget of £100,500 to take into account any specific costs that need to be met. The purposes of this budget are discussed elsewhere on this agenda. Business Rates charges for Children's Centres that were not included in the schools budgets will be met from this budget.

2.7 Special Education Needs Top Ups

A budget of £9.2m funds the Pupil Led Top Up funding in Specialist Provision, Resource Bases, FE, Colleges and Alternative Provision. Budgets have been increased to reflect additional learners at Wirral Metropolitan College and Birkenhead Sixth Form College and increased placements at Emslie Morgan Academy.

The Summer Term census figures are not yet available but as previously reported pressures on High Needs budgets continue to increase nationally and this area will continue to be monitored throughout the year.

	Budget £
Top Ups for Maintained Special Schools	6,527,400
Top Ups for Resourced provision	704,000
Alternative provision	367,000
FE and 6 TH Form Top Ups	946,000
Additional Nursing Support	127,100
Exceptional Needs	504,100
Total	9,175,600

2.8 Special Education Needs Statements

The budget has been increased in this area to reflect the greater number and cost of EHCPs and a 50% increase within Early Years. Numbers vary during the year, and will continue to be monitored closely.

2.9 Independent Special Schools

The budget in this area was increased to reflect demand for the number of young people with complex needs in Independent Special Schools. The budget is based

on 89 places with an additional amount for part-year places. There are expected to be 77 places in September, but this area will be closely monitored and reported to Forum throughout the year.

2.10 Home Tuition

The Home Tuition Service is subject to review in 2017-18, the impact of which will be reported to future Forums.

2.11 DSG - £170,320,500

The revised Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2017/18 will be published in July and will confirm Wirral's allocation. The budget includes £568,900 of DSG carried forward from 2016/17.

Original DSG Budget	250,795,200
Academy Recoupment – Schools Block	(75,613,500)
Academy Recoupment – High Needs Block	(4,083,000)
Early Years reduction (Jan-17 census)	(783,300)
Other Adjustments	5,100
	170,320,500

3.0 UPDATE ON SPECIFIC RESERVES

- 3.1 The final figure of DSG reserves carried forward into 2017/18 was £1.9m as follows:

- Job Evaluation and Pay Harmonisation Reserve - £0.65m

- DSG Reserve - £1.0m

	£
DSG Carry Forward from 2016/17	1,072,400
Budgeted use of Reserve in 2017/18	(568,900)
	503,500

- City Learning Centres - £0.045m

This reserve will be used in 2017/18 to fund the remaining final closure costs in relation to the City Learning Centres.

- Early Years £0.13m

This reserve of £130,500 is expected to fund the Early Years Portal and expand the 2 year old provision.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Schools Budget will be monitored throughout the year, and any projected variances against budget will be reported to the Forum.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 That the Forum notes the report.

Deborah Gornik
Interim Director of Children's Services

Appendix 1 – Budget Variations 2017/18

	Revised budget 2017/18
Individual Schools Budget:	
Primary Schools	95,172,700
Secondary Schools	20,884,800
Special Schools	8,941,300
SEN Bases	1,580,000
EMAP	0
Wirral Hospital School	1,356,300
Further Education	0
Early Years	18,104,900
Individual Schools Budget Total	146,040,000
Central School Costs:	
Early Years	518,700
Admissions	341,800
School Closure / retirement costs	60,000
Licences and Subscriptions	226,100
Schools Forum	10,600
Contribution to Combined Budgets	875,600
PFI affordability gap	1,551,100
Retained duties - ex Education Support Grant	1,021,600
Costs delegated to schools:	
Library Service	191,700
Insurances	29,200
School Specific Contingencies	100,500
Special Staff Costs	676,400
School Meals	19,700
Behaviour Support	84,200
School Improvement	101,600
High Needs Pupils:	
Statements	4,174,800
SEN Top Ups	9,175,600
High Needs Contingency	305,100
Independent Special Schools	3,770,000
Home Tuition	348,900
Support for SEN	1,971,500
Special School Transport	58,200
Non Delegated School Costs Total	25,612,900
Total School and Central Costs	171,652,900
Dedicated Schools Grant	-170,320,500
Use of Reserves	-568,900
Grand Total	763,500

WIRRAL COUNCIL

SCHOOLS FORUM – 5th JULY 2017

REPORT OF THE INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT BASELINE FOR 2018 TO 2019 FINANCIAL YEAR ALLOCATIONS

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Forum on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) baseline for 2018-19, following a data collection exercise carried out by the Education Funding Agency (EFA).

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In March/April 2016, the EFA conducted a data collection exercise in order to obtain up to date information on Local Authorities' split of expenditure between the four blocks of DSG – Schools, High Needs, Early Years, and the Central School Services block.
- 2.2 This exercise has been repeated during March/April 2017, with the information provided being the starting position for the first year of the schools and high needs national funding formulae in 2018-19.
- 2.3 The early years block information provided as part of last year's baseline exercise was used to establish the baseline for the early year's national funding formula, which is in place from April 2017. There is therefore no update to the early year's baseline.

3.0 BASELINE 2017-18

- 3.1 The table attached compares the 2017-18 planned spend with the DSG baseline information.
- 3.2 The schools block baseline has increased by 2.34% to £193.559m, which reflects PFI Affordability Gap (£2.3m) and other historic budgets (£825k) being delegated to schools from April 2017.
- 3.3 The baseline for the Central School Services Block totals £2.217m, which is split between ongoing responsibilities (£1.282m) and historic commitments (£935k). This includes £730k for the former ESG retained duties, but has reduced by 58.8% due to the PFI affordability Gap and other budgets being delegated to schools (see paragraph 3.1).
- 3.4 The High Needs block baseline is £35.167m, which includes £1.359m funding for Wirral Hospital School.

4.0 MOVEMENT BETWEEN DSG BLOCKS

- 4.1 The baseline figures in paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3 also reflect a transfer of £106k from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block following the transfer of central budgets to schools (including Special Schools). This was agreed by Forum on 18th January 2017.

5.0 HISTORIC COMMITMENTS

- 5.1 As part of the process for confirming baselines for DSG, EFA are asking local authorities to confirm historical commitments they expect to spend against in the 2017 to 2018 financial year, and do not expect historic commitments to increase from the level arising from the 2016 to 2017 historic commitments exercise. Wirral's historic commitments include combined budgets and pension costs:

	2016-17	2017-18
School wellbeing / staff surveys	18,600	0
Discretionary Rate Relief top ups	106,600	106,600
School improvement	359,900	330,000
LCSB contribution	30,000	30,000
School Intervention	674,500	136,000
PFI – CLCs	108,200	68,500
LACES	140,500	140,500
PFI support team	61,800	61,800
Governors Forum	2,200	2,200
City Learning Centres	196,500	
Retirement costs	86,000	60,000
Total	1,784,800	935,600

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 That the Forum notes the reports and the DSG baseline figures.

Deborah Gornik
Interim Director of Children's Services

Appendix 1 – Dedicated Schools Grant baselines for 2018-19 financial year allocations:

	Schools Block (£m)	Central School Services Block (£m)	High Needs Block (£m)	Early Years Block (£m)	Total (£m)
Total planned spend	193.939	2.981	35.356	19.857	251.566
Council Contribution		(0.764)			(0.764)
Reserves	(0.38)		(0.189)		(0.569)
Estimated additional EY changes				0.567	0.567
2017-18 DSG baseline	193.559	2.217	35.167	19.29	250.233
2017-18 DSG allocation	193.559	2.323	35.061	19.29	250.233
Transfer between blocks	0	(0.106)	0.106	0	0

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E-mail from Niki Crookdale, chair of the Schools Forum Association

I am writing to you as Chair of your local Schools Forum. If this message has been sent to you in error, I would be grateful if you could forward it to the relevant person.

All 152 Schools Forums are being invited to join the 'The Schools Forum Association'. The association will be independent and apolitical and could provide those involved with school funding:

- A forum to share best practice;
- Feedback on DFE consultations and proposals;
- Help and advice
- A quarterly 'Funding Matters' newsletter; and
- Help with policy campaigns.

Coming together as a grass roots community, a national association will collectively have a more powerful voice in education debates than we would each have alone. This is particularly important at the moment, when providing feedback to the DFE on funding and, in future, forum consultation proposals.

If your local Forum, its members or the schools, nurseries or colleges you represent are interested in joining 'The Schools Forum Association', please complete the survey in the link below. Please forward the link to any associates who might also like to be involved.

Survey: <https://goo.gl/forms/Yc8puSwp00VPRHIH3>

We've already had responses from Forums responsible for the funding of over 1.7 million children who are keen to be involved. Currently, respondents are particularly interested in sharing best practice amongst the Forums and providing feedback to the DFE on consultations and proposals. I would appreciate your view on what your Forum would find most useful.

I am recruiting an Advisory Board to help us stay at the forefront of education funding debates and policy decisions. One of the survey questions asks if you or any colleagues are interested in being part of this steering committee. I would be grateful for any relevant experience you or your colleagues are able to offer.

If you have any queries, or would like to discuss this further, please e-mail me at niki@schoolsforumassociation.co.uk.

I look forward to hearing from you,
Many thanks,
Niki Crookdale
Chair, Schools Forum Association
<http://www.schoolsforumassociation.co.uk>

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

WIRRAL SCHOOLS' FORUM 5th July 2017

REPORT OF THE INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Scheme for Financing Schools – Revisions

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report describes a number of changes that are being considered to the Scheme for Financing Schools. The Forum are asked to comment on the proposed changes prior to consultation with schools

BACKGROUND

Local authorities are required to publish schemes for financing schools setting out the financial relationship between them and the schools they maintain. DfE guidance lists the provisions which a local authority's scheme must, should or may include. Wirral's scheme was last updated in September 2016

In making any changes to schemes, local authorities must consult all schools in their area and receive the approval of the members of their schools forum representing maintained schools.

Appendix 1 summarises the contents of the scheme.

With regard to Section 4 this includes a section on Circumstances in which Charges may be made to a school

This currently reads:-

- 6.2.3 Awards by courts and industrial tribunals against the LA, or out of court settlements, arising from action or inaction by the Governing Body contrary to the LA's advice.

And is proposed to be amended to:-

- 6.2.3 Judgements and awards by Courts and Employment Tribunals against the Council or out of court settlements arising from action or inaction of the governing body or its staff or agents which was either contrary to the Council's advice or where the governing body or its staff or agents did not seek the Council's advice when it was open to them to do so.

The change being considered is necessary to clarify the current position whereby a charge may be made against the schools delegated budget where losses are incurred by resulting from either a failure to follow advice or a failure to seek advice where it should reasonably have done so.

Schools will be consulted on this scheme change in September 2017 in accordance with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, the results of which will be reported to the Forum in the autumn term.

Service Level Agreements

To bring the scheme into line with agreements made with schools concerning SLAs over the last three years, it is proposed to change the wording in 8.3.2. It currently reads:

8.3.2 All services offered by the LA through service level agreements will be available to schools for the term of the agreement irrespective of whether extended agreements are offered. The LA may offer extended agreements and where it does so, may charge at a different rate. Schools wishing to end an agreement must give a terms notice.

And is proposed to be amended to:

8.3.2 All services offered by the LA through service level agreements will be available to schools for the term of the agreement irrespective of whether extended agreements are offered. The LA may offer extended agreements and where it does so, may charge at a different rate. Schools wishing to end an agreement must give one year's notice. Academy conversions may be treated outside this process.

School Redundancy Costs

Due to changes to the redundancy policy in September 2016, which has already been consulted on this section will be changed as follows:-

11.11.2 Schools will pay the full redundancy costs from September 2016. Where a school is managing falling rolls some provision will continue to be made centrally for the redundancy costs incurred based on specific criteria. Schools will also be responsible for the 'pension strain' where staff in the Local Government Pension scheme are entitled to access their pension as part of the redundancy process.

Annex A

The following schools that have converted to Academy will be removed from the list:-

4611	St Mary's Catholic Aided College
2244	Egremont Primary School
2234	Great Meols Primary School
2231	Poulton Lancelyn Primary School
2200	Stanton Road Primary School

Licenced Deficits (4.9.1(g))

The scheme currently has a maximum licenced deficit of 5% of the school budget share. There have been some schools needing a licence in excess of this and it is proposed to increase the threshold upto 10% in exceptional circumstances.

Other Changes

A number of other references within the scheme will be updated as part of the consultation.

Recommendation

That Forum notes the report.

Deborah Gornick
Interim Director of Children's Services

Scheme for Financing Schools - Summary of Contents

Schemes must deal with the following matters:

1. The carrying forward from one funding period to another of surpluses and deficits arising in relation to schools' budget shares.
2. Amounts which may be charged against schools' budget shares.
3. Amounts received by schools which may be retained by their governing bodies and the purposes for which such amounts may be used.
4. The imposition, by or under the scheme, of conditions which must be complied with by schools in relation to the management of their delegated budgets and of sums made available to governing bodies by the authority which do not form part of delegated budgets, including conditions prescribing financial controls and procedures.
5. Terms on which services and facilities are provided by the authority for schools maintained by them.
6. The payment of interest by or to the authority.
7. The times at which amounts equal in total to the school's budget share are to be made available to governing bodies and the proportion of the budget share to be made available at each such time.
8. The virement between budget heads within the delegated budget.
9. Circumstances in which a local authority may delegate to the governing body the power to spend any part of the authority's non-schools education budget or schools budget in addition to those set out in section 49(4)(a) to (c) of the 1998 Act.
10. The use of delegated budgets and of sums made available to a governing body by the local authority which do not form part of delegated budgets.
11. Borrowing by governing bodies.
12. The banking arrangements that may be made by governing bodies. 6
13. A statement as to the personal liability of governors in respect of schools' budget shares having regard to section 50(7) of the 1998 Act.
14. A statement as to the allowances payable to governors of a school which does not have a delegated budget in accordance with the scheme made by the authority for the purposes of section 519 of the 1996 Act.
15. The keeping of a register of any business interests of the governors and the head teacher.
16. The provision of information by and to the governing body.
17. The maintenance of inventories of assets.
18. Plans of a governing body's expenditure.
19. A statement as to the taxation of sums paid or received by a governing body.
20. Insurance.
21. The use of delegated budgets by governing bodies so as to satisfy the authority's duties imposed by or under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.
22. The provision of legal advice to a governing body.
23. Funding for child protection issues.
24. How complaints by persons working at a school or by school governors about financial management or financial propriety at the school will be dealt with and to whom such complaints should be made.
25. Expenditure incurred by a governing body in the exercise of the power conferred by section 27 of the 2002 Act.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

WIRRAL SCHOOLS' FORUM – 5th July 2017

REPORT OF THE INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Wirral Schools Forum Membership

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarises representation on the Schools Forum, and advises on terms of office, current vacancies and arrangements to increase academy places and reduce primary places due to academy conversions.

2. Schools Forum Current Representation

The schools forum has 30 members made up as follows:-

Table 1

Total Membership	
5	Primary Headteachers
5	Primary Governors (3 vacancies)
1	Secondary Headteachers
1	Secondary Governors
1	Special Headteacher
1	Special Governors
1	Nursery Representative
15	Total Schools Membership
1	Academy Pupil Referral Unit (EMAP)
7	Academy Representative
8	Total Academy Membership
1	Non-teacher representative
1	Teacher representative
1	Catholic Diocese
1	Church of England Diocese
1	Further Education
2	PVI Early Years Providers
7	Total Non-Schools Membership
30	Total Membership

3. Membership changes

Regulations governing the forum requires school/academy membership to take account of pupil weighting. Table 2 below details the total pupils in each school phase based on January 2017 census, but taking account of the latest academy conversions in June 2017. The current membership requires a change in accordance with these ratios, reducing primary to 9 places and increasing academy representation to 8 places:-

Table 2

Phase	Current Representation	Pupil Numbers (Jan 17 Census)	New Forum Representatives
Primary	10	23,311	9
Secondary	2	4,128	2
Academy	7	19,333	8
Total	19	46,772	19

4. Schools Forum Terms of Office

Generally forum members are elected to serve a 4 year term of office. The table 3 identifies when the current terms of office expire.

		2013-2017	2014-2018	2015-2019	2016-2020	2017-2021	Total
Total Membership							
5	Primary Headteachers	1	1	1	2		5
5	Primary Governors		1		1	1	3
1	Secondary Headteachers				1		1
1	Secondary Governors			1			1
1	Special Headteacher				1		1
1	Special Governors			1			1
1	Nursery Representative				1		1
15	Total Schools Membership						
1	Academy Pupil Referral Unit (EMAP)				1		1
7	Academy Representative	3		2	1	1	7
8	Total Academy Membership						
1	Non-teacher representative				1		1
1	Teacher representative		1				1
1	Catholic Diocese			1			1
1	Church of England Diocese			1			1
1	Further Education					1	1
2	PVI Early Years Providers			1	1		2
7	Total Non-Schools Membership						
30	Total Membership	4	3	8	10	3	28

5.Changes to Membership

There are currently a 2 primary governor vacancies. This report recommends that 1 vacancy becomes an academy role and is offered in the first instance to the primary academy schools. Although there is no requirement for a primary/secondary split for academy representation there are no representatives from the primary academies. The other primary governor vacancy will be re-advertised shortly

There are 3 terms of office due for renewal at the end of August and one at the end of November.

- Colleen Hibbard will replace Deborah Marchant as a primary Headteacher (Wallasey) representative.
- The 3 academy posts will be advertised shortly The existing members will be able to re-apply.

There has been two new members since the last report in January 2017, as follows:-

- Primary Headteacher Representative (Beb/Brom) – Viv Woods, St Andrews CE Primary School
- Primary Governor Representative – David Spencer, Governor of Pensby Primary School

6. Forum Working Groups

Early Years Working Group

Jill Billinge (Chair)
Simon Davies (PVI rep)
Nicky Prance (PVI Rep)
Michael Forber (Nursery Rep)
Lynne Ireland (Primary Governor)

High Needs Working Group

Jill Billinge (Chair)
Deborah Marchant (Primary) - Leaves August 2017
Steve Baker (Special)
Jane Goalen (PRU rep)

School Funding Formula Working Group

All representatives are invited to attend meetings

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Forum notes the report and agrees to change a vacant Primary governor role to an academy role, giving first preference to the primary academy schools.

Deborah Gornik
Interim Director of Children's Services

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**WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM – 5th July 2017
WORK PLAN**

Meeting Date	27th September 2017	17th January 2018	25th April 2018	Wed 4th July 2018
	Elect chair & vice chair			
Budget	Budget monitoring Update on School budgets/balances	Schools Budget 2018-19 Changes to Schools, High Needs and Early Years funding formula Budget monitoring De-delegation of budgets Update on School budgets/balances	Schools Budget update 2018-19 Schools Budget provisional outturn Update on School budgets/balances	Schools Budget Outturn 2017-18 School Balances and Reserves School Budget Monitoring
Consultation	Early Years Inclusion and Funding	National Funding Formula for Schools & High Needs		
DfE Regs & guidelines		School Finance Regulations Schools Forum Structure (identifies voting rights)		
Working Groups	School Formula High Needs Early Years	School Formula High Needs Early Years	School Formula High Needs Early Years	School Formula High Needs Early Years
Other	Forum Membership Combined budgets PFI budgets Other central budgets High needs funding & places Primary place planning De-delegated services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contingency Special Staff Costs Library Service Insurance Behaviour Support 	School Contracts MEAs Update Academy update	School Admissions Early Years Traded services Free School Meals eligibility update	Arrangements for Alternative Provision Energy update Arrangements for High Needs /SEND

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