



Wirral Schools Forum

Date:	Tuesday, 30 June 2020
Time:	4.00 p.m.
Venue:	TEAMS virtual Meeting

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AGENDA

1. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15TH JANUARY 2020 (Pages 1 - 8)**
2. **MATTERS ARISING**
3. **EARLY YEARS UPDATE (Pages 9 - 14)**
4. **HIGH NEEDS - CLARE MOUNT SCHOOL PLACES (Pages 15 - 16)**
5. **HIGH NEEDS - FOXFIELD PLACES (Pages 17 - 20)**
6. **SCHOOLS BUDGET OUTTURN 2019-20 (Pages 21 - 28)**
7. **SCHOOL BUDGET 2020-21 UPDATE (Pages 29 - 32)**
8. **GROWTH AND FALLING ROLLS FUND 2020-21 (Pages 33 - 36)**
9. **SCHOOL BALANCES AS AT 31ST MARCH 2020 AND DEFICIT BUDGETS (Pages 37 - 38)**
10. **SCHOOLS FORUM REGULATION UPDATE (Pages 39 - 40)**

For Information only. This document changes the Schools Forum Regulations to allow virtual meetings until March 2021.
11. **WORKPLAN (Pages 41 - 42)**
12. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

WIRRAL SCHOOLS' FORUM

15th January 2020

MINUTES

Present: Adrian Whiteley (Chair)

Schools Group

L Ayling	R Mahoney
M Bellamy	E Morris
R Bridges	M Morris
J Bush	E Neal
L Davidson	Cllr Norbury
C Fenna (Deputy)	T Taylor
M Forber	J Weise
H Johnson	R Wood

Non-Schools Group

S Bennett	E Longbone
S Davies	S Ralph
G Edwards	A Ryecroft

In Attendance:

S Allen	T Ghosh
Y Allen	S Talbot
S Ashley	A Turnbull
K Frost	

Apologies:

K Brown	T Kelly
G Fraser	N Lightwing
N Prance	D Spencer

1. Minutes from the Meeting held on 6th November 2019

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

2. Matters Arising

There was a matter arising on the School Funding Consultation. An additional report has been added to propose an increase to the MFG for 2020-21 budget.

The final DSG is £2m more than previously indicated and initial workings show that the budget can be set with a +.5% and no capping which leaves excess funding of over £1m to create the falling rolls/growth fund. The report recommends that the MFG is increased to the maximum allowed of +1.84% to direct more to more funding to schools. This will still leave £0.5m in a falling rolls/growth fund without a gains cap being required.

The views of the Forum was that there is no significant growth or falling rolls presently, so the falling rolls/growth fund would be manageable at the lower rate. Forum supports the model of the +1.84% MFG.

There were no other matters arising.

3. MEAS Update

Anna Turnbull updated Forum on recent changes to the Minority Ethnic Achievement Service (MEAS) and future plans for the service.

The main income for the service comes from Schools purchasing the SLA. More than 70 languages are spoken within Wirral schools, with an increase Arabic but a reduction in Polish speakers.

The 24 Schools of Sanctuary within Wirral are:-

Barnston Primary
Clare Mount Secondary Specialist Sports College
Hayfield Primary
Hillside Primary
Prenton Primary
St Anselm's college
St Joseph's Upton
Thingwall Primary
Egremont Primary
Holy Cross primary
Mersey Primary
Our Lady of Pity Primary
Well Lane Primary
Bedford Drive Primary
Holy Spirit Catholic & CE Primary
Lingham Primary
Riverside Primary
Sacred Heart Primary
St Joseph's Wallasey
West Kirby Primary
Liscard Primary School
Park Primary School
St Anne's Catholic Primary School
St John's Infant Primary School

Forum was interested to know the position of refugees within Wirral, what the Authority's plans are in terms of resettlement programmes, and the potential impact on schools. Housing Services will report to the next Schools Forum meeting to give an overview briefing on the service, the resettlement programme and it's potential impact

Resolved

Forum noted the report.

4. Early Years Update

Carol Fenlon updated Forum on the Early Years Working Group discussion and the consultation on the quality supplement.

Although the uptake in all areas of early years is above national levels it can fluctuate between terms. The Extended offer has a particularly good uptake in 2019-20.

After the quality supplement consultation the quality rate for 2020-21 will remain the same, but the number of settings receiving it may reduce for a period until settings identify staff with the appropriate qualifications in each eligible setting.

Uptake of the Inclusive Practice Fund has increased and the budget may overspend in year if access continues to This will be offset by the reserve. There is a slight increase of DAF claimants this year. This fund is also used to support a Mediquip contract providing specialist equipment to settings.

Positive uptake of training and development with 45 settings having completed training in language development, early literacy and numeracy, which will be cascaded to other settings across the sector. The early Years team are developing a SLCN pathway and CPD programme in response to "closing the word gap."

Resolved

Forum noted the report.

5. High Needs Update

Tarun Ghosh updated the Forum on a number of high needs areas, as follows:-

- Confirmation that the final SEND Review Report has been received from the Premier Advisory Group and passed to senior colleagues. It will then be passed to councillors.
- SENDCo Locality Boards are in the process of being set up to shape future priorities and strategy moving forward
- The Review of the pilot provision agreed in 2018 is ongoing.
- The Review of Individual Pupil Funding Agreements (IPFAs) is ongoing to ensure that pupil outcomes are met. This will include setting up a Local Area Board to assess and monitor the process.
- No further Group PFAs have been agreed since Autumn 2019.

- A proposed change to the inclusion funding allocated to special schools at preliminary discussion level within the Local Authority. This would be a significant reduction for one school, who the Authority are due to meet with to discuss.
- There is an ongoing review of KIND Team with a view to move the emphasis from a clinical model to an educational approach.
- To consider a High Needs funding review, with a consideration to explore further the following 3 options:-
 - Option 1 – retaining the current system, which includes EHCP funding (special school top ups, resource of units, exceptional needs and out of borough funding), IPFAs, Early Years Funding entitlement.
 - Option 2 – Additional funding/interventions specific to each child using an Individual Provision Map, with annual reviews. There would be no change in mainstream to the elements 1 & 2 funding through the formula budget.
 - Option 3 – Pupil needs based model based on the 7 Ranges Model. Range 1-3 would not attract extra funding. Range 4a – 4d mainly mainstream funding, 5-7 top ups for special schools.

Forum requested that options 2 & 3 are reviewed and costed identifying the effect on each school. This is a large piece of work between the SEN and Finance teams. A wider consultation would also be required.

Forum agreed the timeline as follows:-

- High Needs working group to review the options
- Update at the September 2020 Forum Meeting.
- Consultation after September meeting.
- Feedback to influence budget setting for 2021-22

The special schools representatives asked the following questions on behalf of the Special School head teachers

- In light of the additional money being delegated to mainstream schools, what are the proposals for the distribution of the extra 6 million that the Local Authority is receiving for High Needs in April 2020. There are serious concerns that 6 of the 10 special schools already have a deficit and an additional 2 are likely to have a deficit in April 2021. The money needs to be distributed to SEN in all sectors as soon as possible.

Forum agreed that the distribution of the high needs funding should be discussed at the next High needs working Group.

- Additional funding (8%) has been given to the LA for Hospital School Provision. Could the LA outline the plans for the distribution of this money.

The Hospital Education element in the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is increasing in 2020-21. However, the allocation to Wirral Hospital School will remain unchanged in 2020-21, with the increase to be held to be used to meet the special educational needs of children/young people (CYP) meeting the admission criteria. The Wirral Hospital Schools will be offered a meeting to discuss the 8% increase, and how it will be allocated to support and improve outcomes for children/young people (CYP).

- Concerns have been raised by Special School Headteachers regarding the sudden proposals to remove £119,500 from Clare Mounts school budget. The consequence of the school only being informed on Monday 6th January 2020 about these proposals has meant that they have had no opportunity to factor this into their budgetary commitment for 2020-2021. Loss of this money will have a huge impact upon the pupils and the school. Due to the meeting that has been scheduled for Monday 20th January 2020 with Clare Mount and the Local Authority could any decision be deferred until after the meeting. The school are intending to highlight the reasons why Forum members agreed to continue with the allocation of this funding.

Specialist School status funding ended several years ago, with the grant allocations moved to the DSG. A decision was made at the time by the LA to leave the funding with Clare Mount school due to their budget position at the time and the impact removing it would have had on the school and its pupils. However, following Schools Forum's request that the LA conduct a review of Inclusion Funding it was felt that it is no longer appropriate that the school continue to receive this funding, and that, instead, it is used to continue the review of Inclusion and Outreach funding and impacts. This would also mean that the funding the school receives is clear and transparent.

Resolved

Forum noted the report and the views of the Forum.

6. Budget 2020-21

Shaun Allen outlined the Schools Budget for 2020-21 highlighting the following:-

- minimum levels of per pupil funding of £5,000 for Secondary pupils and £3,750 per primary pupils are now compulsory in local formula from 2020-21.
- The MFG for 2020-21 must be between +0.5% and +1.84%
- Teachers Pay Grant and Teachers Pension employers Grant will continue to be paid for 2020-21 financial year.
- Core NNF formula factors will increase by 4% except for FSM factors which will increase 1.84% in line with inflation.
- Early Years hourly rates paid to Local Authorities will increase by £0.08.
- The contribution to combined budgets and school's retirement costs (school closure) has reduced by 20%.
- Changes to High Needs places from September 2019
 - Elleray Park increase by 23 places to 151
 - Gilbrook places increase by 5 places to 40
- Changes to high Needs places from April 2020
 - Emslie Morgan AP reduce by 80 places to 0 following the closure of the school in August 2019, with the Alternative Provision top-up budget being increased to fund replacement provision
 - Additional fund introduced equivalent to 40 places, for schools who take pupils over their current places, with a policy to be produced defining the criteria.
- SEN Top ups to increase by £2.8m to meet current need.

- EHCP budget to increase by £500k to meet current need

School Forum members highlighted their concern at the sudden reduction in the combined budgets of 20% reduction in central block in combined budgets. Council will provide this funding to ensure that services continue. Thanks to council for support.

Schools Forum also expressed their view that despite additional grant allocations for schools, Early Years, and Special Education Needs via the Dedicated Schools Grant, the increase does not do enough to offset existing and increasing pressures within schools, and the budget is insufficient to fully meet children's needs.

Resolved

1. Forum views were sought on the Schools Budget for 2020-21 and they will be referred to Cabinet on 17th February 2020.
2. Forum members approved the contributions to the combined budgets in 2020-21 as detailed in the report
3. Forum members agreed to transfer the surplus High Needs funding for 2020-21 to the DSG reserve to partially offset the deficit position.
4. The School Budget be referred to Cabinet on 17th February 2020.

7. De-delegation of Budgets

The following budgets can be de-delegated: Contingency, Special Staff Costs (including TU facility time), School Library Service, Insurance, Behaviour Support, School Improvement and former ESG Costs.

The Vulnerable Children's Budget, currently held in contingency will be moved to behaviour support. There are increases in rates for the TU facility costs, library service and maternity/paternity de-delegation costs.

There are no changes to the rates for School improvement & Insurance.

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

1. The Primary Forum Representatives agreed to de-delegate each of the following budgets for the financial year 2020-21:-
 - Contingency
 - Special Staff Costs including Trade Union Facilities time
 - School Library Service
 - Insurance
 - School Improvement
 - Behaviour support
2. Primary Forum Representatives agreed a contribution to former ESG costs for General Duties of £371,973
3. The Secondary Forum Representative agreed to de-delegate each of the following budgets for the financial year 2020-21:-
 - Contingency

- Special Staff Costs including Trade Union Facilities time
- School Improvement
- Behaviour support

4. Secondary Forum Representatives agreed a contribution to former ESG costs for General Duties of £56,267
5. Special Schools Forum Representatives agreed a contribution to former ESG costs for General Duties of £71,760.

8. Budget Monitoring 2019-20 Quarter 3

Shaun Allen advised the Forum on the expected position and variations with regard to the Schools Budget in the current financial year, particularly an in-year overspend of £1.23m mainly within the high needs budget.

One school converted to academy at the beginning of the financial year which resulted in a further reduction of the DSG (and corresponding reduction in spend).

The previous year's commitment has been overstated in respect of Independent special schools by £195k, which has led to a one-off saving. Unpaid commitments from 2018-19 are still being investigated with a potential for the projected costs to reduce further.

Resolved

Forum noted the report

9. Update on School Balances and Deficit Position

Sue Ashley updated Forum on the balances and future projections at period 6 monitoring. The projections for future years show a large decrease in overall balances, but it is noted that the projections are based current year budget and do not include any increased grant in the 2020-21 formula budget and the additional grant for TPG and TPECG. However, some schools will gain more than others so it is important that schools where in-year deficits are still large in 2020-21 schools do not assume that the extra funding will sort out the budget issues, many schools will still need to manage their budgets with savings going forward.

Resolved

Forum noted the report

10. Workplan

The workplan was provided for information.

It was agreed that the current timing of Schools Forum meetings – 18:00 – 20:00 on a Wednesday are not suitable and regularly restrict attendance. The dates of the remaining meetings for the 2019-20 academic year have therefore been changed to the following:

Tuesday 12th May 2020

Tuesday 30th June 2020

The times of the meetings have been changed to start at the earlier time of 4pm for future meetings.

These meetings will be held in Council Chamber at Wallasey Town Hall

11. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

**WIRRAL COUNCIL
SCHOOLS FORUM 30th June 2020
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
EARLY YEARS WORKING GROUP UPDATE**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to update the School Forum on the Early Years operations across the Summer Term, with a particular focus on the response to **COVID19**.

2.0 RESPONSE TO COVID19

2.1. Universal 15/30 hours – 2, 3 + 4 early years free entitlements (EYFE) funding arrangements re COVID-19;

On 17 March 2020, [the Chancellor confirmed](#) the government would continue to pay for free early years entitlement places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds even if settings were closed on the advice of the government, or children were not able to attend due to coronavirus (COVID-19). That Local Authorities were to continue early entitlements funding for all childminders, nurseries and schools.

Wirral's response: all funded payments for 2, 3 + 4-year free entitlements continued. There was a re-scheduling of summer term payments; estimates were paid out approx. one month earlier than anticipated. Ahead of the Department for Education (DfE) guidance on summer "headcount" arrangements Wirral took the decision to open the returns to the Private and Voluntary Sector, to again ensure actuals could be made in good time. This was actioned through existing early years portal, with schools taking a different approach due to different reporting system. A roll over of Spring term on roll data took place with a manual apportionment, for any new starters to schools' post Easter Break.

2.2. Double funding

At the onset of "lockdown", when early years settings were asked to remain open for vulnerable and keyworker children only, resulting in a number of settings closing due to low number or COVID19 issues, it was identified that some children would need to be placed elsewhere.

Wirral's response; where a child's primary setting of 15/30 hours universal funding was not open and the child needed to attend another setting, the closed setting retained the funding and the new setting received a "double funded" payment

following the recording on attendance logs. This was an agreed temporary arrangement until settlement of placements was resolved.

The arrangement was reviewed on 31st March, by which time around 10 children was supported totalling a sum of £6,547.40. The “temporary” arrangement ceased on 1st June, when all settings were invited to be open. Double funding is still considered only in exceptional circumstances as a needs lead approach.

2.3 Sufficiency During COVID19

Following the announcements made on March 23rd for a “lockdown” to commence of the 378 settings on Wirral (inclusive of F1 provision in 61 schools), 162 (57%) remained open, with remainder 216 closing. Closures were predominantly highest in the childminder provision, due to a lack of demand for places or through themselves having a follow the shielding advise from Public Health.

Following the number of closures at this initial stage, there remained throughout the 3-month period a steady number of providers continuing to offer childcare to vulnerable/keyworker children.

To date, week commencing 22nd June, there are 258 providers (68%) now open, a rise from 1st June following Central Governments easing of educational establishments for certain cohorts but particularly for all ages across early years.

There continues to be a high number of childminders, 69, that have not re-opened due to parents not requiring childcare having made alternate arrangements. Thereafter, the next highest number is amongst the extended care provision of which 22 state again no requirement at this time. ***There is expected updates on extended care for the summer holiday period from DfE shortly.***

Whilst sufficiency has been met across this period the remobilising of the childcare market is a cause for concern in terms of sustainability, not just now but looking to the future something of which the Early Years team regularly highlights in discussions with DfE/Ofsted.

2. Demand for places During COVID19

During the COVID19 period there was a steady demand of childcare placements for vulnerable and keyworker children. The demand audit of the week prior to “lockdown” informed there were approximately 1,500 places required however as we entered the period this significantly reduced to an average of 650 children across the 162 open settings.

F1 provision in schools had a much-reduced demand, potentially as older siblings were not attending school as parents worked from home and home schooled all children in their households.

From the change to educational settings guidance from 1st June the demand significantly rose, by around 55%, resulting in approximately 1,500 places being taken made up by;

- 1010 –key worker children
- 72 – were vulnerable children
- 342 – children not in either category

To note; all data reporting requires the caveat that only 40% of open settings successfully submitted weekly data accounts, required by the Department for Education.

2.4 Financial Support – Sustainability

Wirral's Early Years in working closely with providers, acknowledged the financial impact on Wirral's Childcare Providers particularly those that remained open in order to provide "**critical**" childcare for keyworker and vulnerable children, as called upon by Central Government during the COVID19 pandemic. In doing so experienced significant cashflow hardships whilst either awaiting financial support or found they did not qualify for the varied Central Government financial support schemes.

As a result, it was very much welcomed that a Childcare Response Exceptionally Circumstance Grant Scheme was approved, through appropriate channels, to make available emergency funding. An amount of 350k was secured and through a robust application process, the following number of settings have received financial support;

From 63 applications across two tranche periods;

- 39 small applications (£3,000 *pa) – childminders
- 5 medium applications (£7,000 pa) - preschools
- 16 large applications (£10,000 pa)– day-care nursery
- 3 applications did not meet criteria.

**pa - per application*

There is a small underspend on this grant that will be further considered to support settings where identified

Future sustainability discussions with providers highlight key areas for officers to take up with strategic leads and key connectors across the Early Years system;

- VAT – Early years providers being able to claim VAT back

- Business Rates – Clarity around Wirral’s Business rates position, potential continuation of business rates holiday for early years providers.
- Council reserves – the value and accessibility.
- Quality supplement and any surplus from review be put back into increasing the quality supplement rate for this year.
- Clearer explanation of underspend / contingency monies from Early Years devolved budget.

3.0 BUSINESS AS USUAL

3.1. Two Year Funding;

During COVID19 vulnerable 2 year olds eligible for free early years entitlement were not identified as being in the “vulnerable” category for “critical” childcare (***unless had an allocated social worker, EHCP or was a child of keyworker***), which saw a drop off in take up. However, this has now become a priority for the September cohort and take up is being promoted and applications monitored closely;

Take up as comparison; Summer 2019 - 804

Summer 2020 - 649

3.2 Early Years Free Entitlement Consultation

A working group has been established to review Wirral’s EYFE funding rates, with a view to preparing an outline for consultation during the autumn, to inform the 2021/2022 funding rates for Wirral. Subsequently the Early Years School Forum working group has asked for transparency of the preparation and reporting on the components that make up the budget. This is being considered by the financial/budgeting department.

3.3 Inclusive Practice Funding

Whilst access to these funds were available during COVID19 the requests significantly reduced. For settings that remained open some children were referred to a May panel, however due to reliance of health assessments there were some delays in awards.

As more children start to return to their early years setting a recent Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) has gone out to all providers, including schools to outline the following;

- If the child has attended between April – May, payment of Inclusive Practice (IPF) would be for the full term
- If the child has not attended between April – May, IP funding would apply from when the child returns
- If the child does not return in summer term for any reason the funding will be paused.

To note; IPF is devolved through the Early Years block similar to the Early Years Free Entitlement funds which have not been reclaimed, therefore to continue to apply this where children had not accessed their entitlements it would be a “top up” to the already committed public funding.

3.4 Transitions

We know that **transition is a process and not an event**. This is more difficult this year in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic. Taking current circumstances into consideration a multi- agency approach has been taken, inclusive of Educational Psychologists, EY’s SEND, EY’s QTs and practitioners and carefully considered the process.

For September 2020 new documentation has been devised which invites the parents account of the “child’s experience” whilst being in “lockdown” and for those that have continued in settings the practitioner’s assessment.

In addition, with the potential gap of information exchanges between settings and schools and with the depletion of home visits to meet the children the new document offers some suggestions about additional and different ways of managing transitions.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Forum to note the report.

Paul Boyce - Director of Children’s Service

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

SCHOOLS FORUM – Date 30 June 2020

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

Title Clare Mount Specialist Sports College, Proposed Change to Place

Funding (increase +10)

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 On 27th January 2020 the Headteacher of Clare Mount Specialist Sports College formally requested the local authority look at the funded number of pupils at Clare Mount Specialist Sports College and take to School Forum a request to increase place numbers by 10 pupils (from 216 currently to 226).

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 For several years Clare Mount Specialist Sports College (also known as school) has had more students on roll than the Pupil Admission Number. Pupils on roll have increased over several years, for example to the point that in 2018 Clare Mount Specialist Sports College had 230 pupils on roll, whilst only being place funded for 216. Previously the local authority has approached Clare Mount Specialist Sports College requesting an increase Pupil Admission Numbers.
- 2.2 The cohort of pupils in school has changed significantly from the moderate/mild learning difficulties (MLD) pupils traditionally on roll at Clare Mount and the school now has a population of predominantly students diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC), with in excess of 60% having ASC as their primary need. In addition, Clare Mount have a significant number of pupils diagnosed as having Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties. Because of this shift, school need to be funded for the correct number of pupils to ensure these pupils receive the highest quality of education and resources they require in order that their needs can be met successfully.
- 2.3 For September 2020, (approximately) 244 pupils have been identified as requiring educational provision aligned to the Clare Mount Specialist Sports College Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) offer. The current Pupil Admission Number (PAN) is 216. Therefore some 28 pupils over and above the PAN are expressing a preference to attend Clare Mount Specialist Sports College.
- 2.4 The local authority is proposing Banding funding only for these 18 places (227-244); whilst Clare Mount Specialist Sports College want both place funding and Banding funding. Both the local authority and Clare Mount Specialist Sports College do agree that the College can meet the special educational needs of the 244 children/young people (CYP). For clarity and certainty, the local authority agrees with the request for an additional 10 places (216-226) x £10,000 place funding.

- 2.5 It is the local authority's view that it should not automatically be charged an extra £10,000 per pupil place funding for a pupil or student with high needs if an educational institution has filled all funded places. The local authority recognizes that often the number of funded high needs places and actual pupils or students will vary. It is for schools to apportion the total allocated place funding across the actual number of pupils and students with high needs. In some cases, the variance between place numbers and pupils or students is small with no, or marginal, impact on cost. The amount should reflect the actual costs of making additional special provision available.
- 2.6 From the financial information available it appears that the pressures on the High Needs funding block is one of the most serious financial challenges that local authority's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion services are currently dealing with. The local authority does not have long-term certainty on levels of high needs funding. There are concerns that unless additional funding is made available, the local authority will continue to find it challenging to be able to meet statutory duties to support children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Inclusion.
- 2.7 The school budget has carried forward a surplus balance.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Agree an increase in places for Clare Mount Specialist Sports College from September 2020 from 216 places to 226 places, i.e. ten additional places
- 3.2 Agree 226 Clare Mount Specialist Sports College places receive a base level funding of £10,000 per place from September 2020 + Banding per pupil
- 3.3 That the additional ten funded places be included in the deadline for the high needs place change notification process in November 2020.

Tarun Ghosh
Head of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities & Inclusion

Paul Boyce
Director for Children, Families and Education

WIRRAL COUNCIL

SCHOOLS FORUM – 30 June 2020

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

Title Foxfield School Change to Place Funding (increase +6)

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Schools Forum is being asked to agree an increase in place funding for Foxfield School from September 2020. An increase from 141 places (on roll as at 06.03.20) to 147 places (from 01.09.2020). This will require all 147 places from the High Needs Funding Block of the Designated Schools Grant to be funded at £10,000 per place + Banding per place.
- 1.2 In January 2020 it was brought to the attention of the local authority that the Governors of Foxfield School (secondary special) were amenable to discussions around increasing places at the school. These types of discussions had previously been undertaken over several years between the local authority and school.
- 1.3 The main difference this time appears to be the (a) increase in numbers of children and young people (C&YP) requiring specialist educational provision and (b) the severity and range of special educational provision identified and assessed as a need.
- 1.4 Foxfield School can meet the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) of children & young people (C&YP) who have complex and profound learning difficulties. This is also known as severe learning difficulties (SLD).
- 1.5 Most Children who attend Foxfield School in Year 7, Key Stage 3, have previously attended Elleray Park School (Community special school) or Stanley School (Community special school).

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The increasing number of pupils who will require provision in Wirral's secondary schools for pupils who have complex learning difficulties has been a cause of concern for Governors and the local authority for a number of years and so the Head of Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) & Inclusion went to discuss with the Governors of Foxfield School the possibility of increasing places. The discussions were frank.

Number on roll

- 2.2 At present (March 2020) Foxfield has 141 pupils on roll and began this academic year 2019 – 2020 with 142 pupils. The Indicative Budget 2020/21 information sent to the school clearly states Places – 140 at £10,000.

In the Spring term 2020 Foxfield School had the following numbers:

Spring term 2020 number on roll:	141
Current number of places funded at £10,000 per place:	140
Current number of places not funded at £10,000 per place:	1

In the Spring term 2020 Foxfield had the following pupils on Top up Banding:

Top Ups band 3 = 119 pupils x £7,100 Banding
Top Ups band 4 = 13 pupils x @ £8,100 Banding
Top Ups band 5 = 9 pupils x £16,100 Banding

Total top ups funded = 141

Therefore all 141 pupils receive Top up Banding

- 2.3 There are 19 leavers in July 2020 and Foxfield Governors are provisionally supportive of accepting 19 new Year 7 pupils plus an additional 6 Year 7 pupils to offer 25 new places in total in Year 7. The Governors expect that the Local Authority would then fully fund all the pupils on roll from September 2020 (the whole school population). This means funding 147 pupils in both their place funding and the level of top up funding each child is allocated for their SEN Band.
- 2.4 Governors strongly believe that fully funding every pupil placed at Foxfield is essential in order that the school can meet their special education and safety needs. A reasonable level of staffing is required for this. As a new Key Stage 3 class will need to be created for September 2020 to accommodate these additional pupils Foxfield report that they cannot employ staff for this without the funding to do so.
- 2.5 The school budget has carried forward a deficit balance. The local authority has previously issued a notice of concern.

Health and Safety

- 2.6 If the number on roll at Foxfield increases by 6 pupils in September 2020 a new class group will need to be created. The Governors have identified a suitable classroom for this within the Key Stage 3 department and school leaders will consider and plan for the health and safety implications of this in the operation and organisation of the school. Class based issues will also be considered including a safe staffing level. Governors have requested that a relevant Local Authority officer with Health and Safety expertise, also assesses the impact of creating this additional class at Foxfield, given that this will mean the number of pupils on roll will become greater than this building was designed and built to accommodate.

Accommodation

- 2.7 Foxfield's Governors are extremely concerned about the future accommodation needs of the school given the forecast growth in the demand for places. They expect to remain a popular and essential part of Wirral's special school provision but the school's physical capacity to offer more places is limited. From 2022 there will be a clear lack of physical places available at Foxfield School.

High Needs Places

- 2.8 Places in specialist provision within Local Authority areas continue to be determined by each local authority in consultation with schools and providers. There is flexibility to make adjustments so that places more broadly reflect take up by pupils. In January 2019 it was reported to Schools Forum that additional complex learning difficulties (CLD) places will be required from September 2020, although the number required at that time was unknown. For 2020-21 an amount equivalent to 40 places has been set aside for this purpose.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Agree an increase in funded places for Foxfield School from September 2020 from 141 places to 147 places, i.e. six additional places
- 3.2 Agree 147 Foxfield School places receive a base level funding of £10,000 per place from September 2020 + Banding per pupil
- 3.3 That the additional six funded places be included in the deadline for the high needs place change notification process in November 2020.

Tarun Ghosh
Head of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities & Inclusion

Paul Boyce
Director for Children, Families and Education

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

SCHOOLS FORUM – 30th June 2020

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

SCHOOLS BUDGET OUTTURN REPORT 2019/20

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the year end position for the 2019/20 Schools' Budget. At this time, the accounts are provisional and subject to audit.
- 1.2 Overall the schools' budget has overspent by £1,264,497 which is mainly due to pressure in the High Needs Block. The overspend is the cumulative closing position and thus reflects the position after use of the opening balance in the DSG reserve. There has been no impact on the 2019/20 budget from Covid-19 as the additional costs and funding have occurred in 2020/21.
- 1.3 The table attached at appendix 1 compares the detailed Schools Budget with the spend for the year and the reasons for the main variations are included below. The Budget and Outturn for each block of the Dedicated Schools Grant is as follows:

	Budget (£)	Outturn (£)	Variance (£)
Schools Block	109,295,600	103,656,477	5,639,123
Schools de-delegated	1,653,700	1,859,995	(206,295)
Central Schools Services Block	3,413,400	3,424,724	(11,324)
High Needs Block	36,227,300	37,723,057	(1,495,757)
Early Years Block	21,172,200	20,673,561	498,639
DSG	(168,114,700)	(162,559,881)	(5,554,819)
LA contribution – SEN restructure	(186,000)	(186,000)	0
Use of DSG reserves – High Needs deficit	(2,343,200)	(2,209,136)	(134,064)
Total	1,118,300	2,382,797	1,264,497

2.0 SCHOOLS BLOCK

2.1 Secondary Schools – £5.639m reduction/underspend

Adjustments have been made following the conversions to Academy status during the year for Bebington High School and this has resulted in an underspend of £5.869m. The reduced spend through the delegated budget is offset by a reduction in the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) income.

The schools' budget for 2019/20 was set prior to Bebington High School converting to Academy status thus £64.4k of Bebington's school budget had already been allocated to School de-delegated activities. The conversion to Academy status resulted in a recoupment of the gross budget for Bebington thus generating a £59.4k overspend in Secondary schools and this has been offset against the £5.869m underspend.

The underspend has been further offset by expenditure of £165.4k for 3 secondary schools that is to be funded from the re-allocation of the one-off 'growth' fund that was set up following the closure of Kingsway Academy. The funding for this activity had been ring-fenced in the DSG reserve at the end of 2018-19. The overspend is, therefore, offset by DSG income.

2.2 School Specific Contingency - £12.7k underspend

This budget underspent by £12.7k, and the allocation of how it was spent is as follows:

	Budget £	Outturn £	Variance £
<u>Primary and Secondary Schools</u>			
Business Rates variations	6,018		
Vulnerable Children support	39,500		
Other school support	33,342		
<u>Special Schools</u>			
School budget support	5,267		
Other budget support	1,800		
Special School buyback	(144,254)		
Special School balance redistributed	136,702		
Total	78,375	91,100	(12,725)

The purpose of this budget is to meet exceptional and unforeseen costs, which would be unreasonable to expect the schools and governing bodies to bear. As such these costs can fluctuate year on year.

2.4 Special Staff Costs - £226.3k overspend

There was a £226.3k overspend on Special Staff costs as shown in the table below:

	Budget £	Outturn £	Variance £
Maternity, Paternity & Other Staff Costs	531,267	757,577	(226,310)
TU Facilities	89,433	89,433	0
Insurances & Recharges	6,900	6,900	0
Total	627,600	853,910	(226,310)

The overspend is due to the additional staff costs associated with the increasing number of maternity cases in primary and special schools. The continuing pressure on this activity has been reflected in the increased pupil rate in the de-delegation budget proposals for 2020-21.

2.5 Schools Block DSG

As noted above, DSG income reflects the recouplement of grant in respect of Bebington High School that converted to Academy status with effect from 1 April 2019.

3.0 CENTRAL SCHOOLS SERVICES BLOCK

3.1 School Admissions – £12.9 overspend

This centrally managed budget has overspent by £12.9k due to increased pension costs and agency cover for maternity leave.

3.2 School Closure / Retirement Costs - £14.4k overspend

The enhanced pension costs arising from previous school closures were £74.4k against a budget of £60k. The budget for this activity has been increased for 2020-21 to reflect the pressures in recent years.

3.3 Schools Forum – £10.6k underspend

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

3.4 Contribution to Combined Budgets – no variance

The £875.6k budget was utilised across the following areas:

	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

4.0 EARLY YEARS BLOCK

4.1 The overall position on the Early Years block was an underspend of £499.4k when comparing actual spend with DSG received, as summarised by the following table:

	2019-20 DSG Grant £	2019-20 Outturn £	2019-20 variance £
2 Year Old's	3,124,444	3,140,037	(15,593)
3/4 - universal	10,871,093	10,805,854	65,239
3/4 - extended	5,416,025	5,150,521	265,504
EYPP	186,991	195,917	(8,926)
DAF	103,300	39,360	63,940
MNS Protection	572,000	522,237	49,763
Central Costs	518,700	433,776	84,924
Inclusive Practice Fund	450,000	455,438	(5,438)
Total	21,242,553	20,743,140	499,413

4.2 2-Year-old offer - £15.6k deficit

Payments to providers during the year for 2-year-old funding was £15.6k more than DSG received. This is caused by the actual take-up of eligible 2-Year old's being greater than the expected level on which the funding is based.

4.3 3 & 4-Year-Old Universal Offer - £65.2k surplus

Take-up of places is still growing but is still less than the expected level on which the funding is based, and this has resulted in a surplus of £65.2k against anticipated DSG funding.

4.3 3 & 4-Year-Old Extended Offer - £265.5k surplus

The extended offer for working parents of 3- and 4-year old's saw a surplus of £265.5k against anticipated DSG funding. Take-up of the extended offer has increased considerably but is still less than the expected level on which the funding is based.

4.4 Disability Access Fund – £63.9k surplus

Following its introduction in 2017-18, take up of the Disability Access Fund (DAF) has been less than expected. EFSA have confirmed that final 2018-19 allocations of DAF funding will be based on DLA data rather than Early Years census data, so the 2019-20 DSG allocation will not be adjusted.

EFSA have stated that they expect authorities to spend any additional funding over and above DAF actually paid out in 2019-20 on services in line with the principles and aims of DAF. It is therefore proposed that the £63.9k unspent DAF funding is spent on further initiatives to support the purpose of DAF, such as training, equipment etc., in addition to the total £114.3k surplus from 2017-18 and 2018-19.

4.5 Early Years Central Budget - £84.9k underspend

The underspend is due to staff vacancies that occurred during the year. Further analysis is to be undertaken to determine if the vacancies will continue into 2020-21.

5.0 HIGH NEEDS BLOCK

5.1 Bases - £108.8k underspend

Adjustments have been made following the conversions to Academy status during the year for Bebington High School and this has resulted in an underspend of £108.8k. The reduced spend through the delegated budget is offset by a reduction in the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) income.

5.2 Special Education Needs Statements (excluding Early Years) - £394.9k overspend

Pressure on this budget continues with an overspend of £394.4k despite an increase in the budget from 2018-19. There has been an increase in awards and the number of out of area children for Primary Schools and this has generated an overspend of £518.2k. This includes £14,500 committed for a nurture group at Rock Ferry Primary and £60k committed for a group PFA at Egremont Primary.

There was an underspend of £128.7k for Secondary Schools. The underspend is due to actual awards being less than expected.

5.3 Special Education Needs Top Ups - £1.439m overspend

The overall position on the High Needs Block was an overspend of £1.439m which is summarised as follows:

	Budget £	Spend £	Variance £
Top Ups for Maintained Special Schools	7,708,600	8,113,933	(405,333)
Top Ups for Resourced provision	1,038,200	1,067,641	(29,441)
Alternative provision	434,900	949,984	(515,084)
FE and 6 TH Form Top Ups	1,700,000	1,648,939	51,061
Additional Nursing Support	106,600	145,330	(38,730)
Exceptional Needs	504,100	1,005,465	(501,365)
Total	11,492,400	12,931,292	(1,438,892)

Top Ups for Maintained Special Schools was overspent by £405.3k due to several schools being over place numbers. This includes 5 pupils at Gilbrook School and 23 extra pupils at Elleray Park from September 2019. In addition, there were additional costs relating to backdated banding assessments.

Alternative Provision top-ups budget was overspent by £515.1k which is mainly due to the provision of new initiatives. The overspend is partially offset by £263k of DSG income in relation to Emslie Morgan Academy which closed in August 2019.

FE and 6TH Form Top Ups were underspent by £51.1k which is mainly due to a £90k contribution from Department of Health and Social Care in respect of one particularly costly placement.

Exceptional Needs was overspent by £501.4k which is mainly due to increased demand. There are currently 53 pupils being funded with up to 60 pupils being funded earlier in the financial year. In addition, unplanned costs were incurred in relation to the installation and rental costs of a portacabin at a special school. As reported to Forum earlier in the year, all awards as well as the award process for Exceptional Needs funding are currently being reviewed.

5.4 High Needs Contingency - £78.6k overspend

The overspend is due to additional place funding and this includes 5 pupils at Gilbrook School and 23 extra pupils at Elleray Park from September 2019.

5.5 Independent Special Schools - £28.9k overspend

The budget overspent by £293.9k due to actual students being greater than expected. The budget is based on 84 students but activity has been as high as 103 during the year.

The overspend has been mostly off-set by lower than expected costs relating to 2018/19. As previously reported, there were around £400k of 2018/19 commitments which remained unpaid/uninvoiced. £195k of these have been found to have been overstated and have resulted in a one-off reduction in overall costs for 2019-20.

5.6 Home Tuition - £93.4k overspend

Although the Home Tuition budget was increased in 2018-19 to ensure the service could meet statutory requirements, due to increasing costs and demand an overspend of £93.4k has been generated for 2019-20. This service provision will be reviewed during 2020.

5.7 Support for SEN - £250.9k underspend

The underspend is mainly due to several posts that have been vacant throughout the year in this area. There has also been a staffing restructure of the SEN service as previously reported to Forum including the formation of a Clinical Psychologists Team.

6.0 UPDATE ON SPECIFIC RESERVES

6.1 The DSG reserves carried forward into 2019/20 were £2.2m. Following the planned usage for 2019/20 plus the subsequent in-year overspend the reserve balance to be carried forward into 2020/21 is in deficit by £1.264m as follows:

	Brought forward balance at 1 Apr 19 £	2019/20 Activity £	Carried forward balance at 31 Mar 20 £
DSG Reserve	1,414,669	(3,473,633)	(2,058,964)
Job Evaluation and Pay Harmonisation	655,396	0	655,396
Early Years – development in the Early Years Portal	94,071	0	94,071
City Learning Centre's	45,000	0	45,000
Total surplus/(deficit)	2,209,136	(3,473,633)	(1,264,497)

Following the return of an overall deficit position at 31 March 2020, the DSG reserve is now represented by an overall merged position of (£1,264,497).

- 6.2 Regulations require that where the deficit is 1% or more of the DSG allocation, gross of recoupment, a recovery plan must be submitted to EFSA. The Wirral DSG reserve deficit at the end of the 2019/20 is less than the 1% thus there is no requirement to submit a recovery plan to EFSA at this time. Updated regulations are expected in July 2020 thus the basis for submitting recovery plans to EFSA may change.

Whilst a Recovery Plan may not need to be formally submitted to the EFSA, a plan must be developed and put in place to recover the deficit and thus is currently in the planning stages. The base budget estimate presented to Schools Forum in January 2020 identified an underspend of 644k for 2020-21. Whilst this will go some way to off-setting the deficit if it is achieved, there will still be a shortfall of £620k at the end of 2020-21.

- 6.3 Whilst the overall DSG reserve to be carried forward to 2020/21 is in deficit by £1.264m, this includes a cumulative surplus of £178.2k in respect of the Early Years Disability Access Fund.
- 6.4 Since the 2019-20 financial year closed to transactions, further charges for 2019/20 of £67.2k have been identified for Early Years activity which will be paid in 2020/21. To avoid pressure on the 2020/21 budget, it is proposed that £67.2k of the 2020/21 DSG reserve be ring-fenced to meet these costs.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The overspend recorded for 2019/20 has resulted in an overall DSG reserve deficit of £1.264m at 31 March 2020.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That the Forum notes the report and the financial position of the Schools Budget for 2019/20.
- 8.2 That £245,305 of DSG for 2020-21 be ring-fenced as follows:

Disability Access Fund underspend	£178,140
Early Years late charges for 2019-20	£ 67,165

- 8.3 That the High Needs working group meets with the Head of Service for SEND and Inclusion and Finance Business Support colleagues to discuss the Councils' deficit recovery plan.

Paul Boyce

Corporate Director for Children Services

Appendix 1 – Budget Variations 2019-20	Budget 2019-20	Spend 2019-20	Variation 2019-20
	£	£	£
Individual Schools Budget			
Primary Schools	85,814,000	85,814,000	0
Secondary Schools	23,481,600	17,842,477	5,639,123
Special Schools	10,328,600	10,328,600	0
Wirral Hospitals School	1,354,300	1,354,300	0
Bases	1,108,000	999,187	108,813
Early Years Funding	20,203,500	19,784,347	419,153
Individual Schools Budget Total	142,290,000	136,122,912	6,167,088
Central School Costs			
Early Years	518,700	433,776	84,924
Admissions	372,200	385,151	(12,951)
School Closure / retirement costs	60,000	74,448	(14,448)
Licences & Subscriptions	246,600	241,126	5,474
Schools Forum	10,600	0	10,600
Contributions to Combined Budgets	875,600	875,600	0
PFI Affordability Gap	1,118,400	1,118,400	0
Retained duties (ex-ESG)	730,000	730,000	0
Costs delegated to / de-delegated from schools			
Library Service	170,100	172,311	(2,211)
Insurances	25,900	17,286	8,614
School Specific Contingencies	91,100	78,375	12,725
Special Staff Costs	627,600	853,910	(226,310)
Behavior Support	86,000	85,113	887
School Improvement	159,100	159,100	0
General duties (ex-ESG)	493,900	493,900	0
High Needs Pupils			
Statements	5,715,100	6,109,999	(394,899)
SEN Top Ups	11,492,400	12,931,292	(1,438,892)
High Needs Contingency	310,000	231,378	78,622
Independent Special Schools	3,700,000	3,728,872	(28,872)
Home Tuition	400,500	493,945	(93,445)
Exclusions	60,000	43,463	16,537
Support for Special Education Needs	2,150,200	1,899,260	250,940
Special School Transport	58,200	58,200	0
Non-delegated school costs total	29,472,200	31,214,903	(1,742,703)
Total School and Central Costs	171,762,200	167,337,814	4,424,386
Dedicated School Grant	(168,114,700)	(162,559,881)	(5,554,819)
LA contribution - SEN restructure	(186,000)	(186,000)	0
Use of reserves - Schools budget overspend	(2,343,200)	(2,209,136)	(134,064)
Grand Total	1,118,300	2,382,797	(1,264,497)

WIRRAL COUNCIL

SCHOOLS FORUM – 30th JUNE 2020

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN SERVICES

SCHOOLS BUDGET UPDATE 2020-21

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Schools Budget for 2020-21 for changes that have been made since it was reported to Schools Forum on 15th January 2020.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 The Schools Budget for 2020-21 totals £279,960,200 across Early Years, Maintained Schools, Academies, colleges, and providers and reflects the following views and formula proposals agreed at the January 2020 meeting:

- Adoption of the formula factors rates of the National Funding Formula
- A Minimum Funding Guarantee of 1.84% for Wirral mainstream schools
- The continuing Contributions to Combined Budgets should be £700,500
- The surplus High Needs funding of £643,900 is transferred to the DSG reserve

The Schools Budget for 2020-21 was agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 17th February 2020 and by Council at its meeting of 2nd March 2020.

2.2 DSG Reserve

Whilst the 2020-21 budget reflects an in-year surplus of £643,900 to contribute to the High Needs deficit, the actual deficit brought forward at 31 March 2020 is £1,264,497. This means that the DSG reserve is expected to be in deficit by around £0.6m at the end of 2020-21.

3.0 BUDGET CHANGES

- 3.1 The budget for costs delegated to / de-delegated from schools has now been re-allocated. The table attached in appendix 1 compares the original 2020-21 with the budget following this change.

3.2 Further changes

The adjustment to reflect the Academy recoupment is in progress. Once this has been completed, the £466k Growth Fund will be released into the DSG grant income budget and is available for distribution subject to the terms and conditions of its usage. Conditions for use of the Growth Fund are to be discussed elsewhere on the agenda.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 That the Schools Forum note this report.

Paul Boyce
Corporate Director for Children Services

Appendix 1 - Schools Budget 2020-21

	2020-21 Budget 2020-21 £	2020-21 Budget (January 2020) £
Individual Schools Budget		
Primary	105,710,300	107,149,400
Secondary	104,530,400	104,962,600
Special	11,368,300	11,440,000
Wirral Hospital Schools	1,354,300	1,359,100
SEN Bases	1,672,000	1,672,000
Alternative Provision	0	0
6th Form / Further Education	1,344,000	1,140,000
Early Years	21,511,800	21,511,800
Individual Schools Budget Total	247,491,100	249,234,900
Central School Costs		
Early Years	518,700	518,700
Admissions	372,200	372,200
School Closure / Retirement Costs	81,000	81,000
Licenses and subscriptions	244,900	244,900
Schools Forum	10,600	10,600
Contribution to combined budgets	700,500	700,500
PFI Affordability Gap	1,247,700	1,247,700
Retained duties (ex-ESG)	730,000	730,000
Costs delegated to / de-delegated from schools		
Library service	188,200	0
Insurances	25,600	0
School Specific contingencies	66,100	0
Special Staff costs	701,400	0
Behaviour Support	107,000	0
School Improvement	150,700	0
General duties (ex-ESG)	504,800	0
High Needs pupils		
Statements	6,237,000	6,237,000
SEN top-ups	13,360,300	13,360,300
High Needs contingency	360,000	360,000
Independent Special Schools	4,134,000	4,134,000
Home Tuition	400,500	400,500
Support for SEN	2,269,700	2,269,700
Special School Transport	58,200	58,200
Non-delegated school costs total	32,469,100	30,725,300
Total School and Central costs	279,960,200	279,960,200
Dedicated Schools Grant	(279,356,400)	(279,356,400)
Contribution to DSG reserve (High Needs deficit)	643,900	643,900
Grand Total	1,247,700	1,247,700

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

SCHOOLS FORUM – 30th JUNE 2020

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN SERVICES

2020-21 GROWTH FUND AND FALLING ROLLS FUND

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to propose the criteria for accessing the Growth Fund and Falling Rolls Fund in 2020-21, which have been created for the first time as part of Wirral's funding formula.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Following a consultation across all Wirral maintained primary, secondary, and special schools, academies, and 6th form colleges, feedback was presented to Schools' Forum on 6th November 2019 who supported the following recommendations:

1. To adopt the individual factor rates from the National Funding Formula (NFF) in Wirral's school funding formula in 2020-21.
2. To include a +0.5% Minimum Funding Guarantee within Wirral's funding formula in 2020-21.
3. To include all funding received in the Schools Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) within the funding formula by minimising the cap applied to the highest gaining schools should the NFF be adopted, and that any remaining funding be split between a falling rolls fund and a growth fund to be accessed by schools meeting specific criteria to be agreed.

2.2 Following completion of the autumn 2019 school census, final schools block allocations were published on 19th December 2019, along with the other 3 blocks of the DSG. Wirral's schools block had increased to £211.9m, a £2m increase from the previously indicated total of £209.9m, partly due to an increase in pupil numbers from October 2018 to October 2019.

2.3 This improved funding allowed an increased Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) to be implemented without the need for a cap on schools due to gain most from the formula. It was therefore agreed at Schools Forum on 15th January 2020 to increase MFG to the maximum permitted 1.84%.

2.4 Once the formula rates and 1.84% MFG had been applied to pupil data, there was £465,900 remaining to be split equally between a Growth Fund and a Falling Rolls Fund.

3.0 GROWTH FUND - £233,000

3.1 Schools Funding regulations state that a growth fund must fund all schools on the same criteria, and can only be used to:

- support growth in pre-16 pupil numbers to meet basic need.

- support additional classes needed to meet the infant class size regulation.
 - meet the cost of new schools.
- 3.2 In addition, the growth fund must not be used to support:
- schools in financial difficulty.
 - general growth due to popularity (this is managed through lagged funding).
- 3.3 Local Authorities are required to produce criteria on which any growth funding is to be allocated, which must be agreed by the Schools Forum. The Schools Forum should also be consulted on the size of the growth fund and receive regular updates on the use of the funding.
- 3.4 Criteria for allocating growth funds should contain clear objective trigger points for qualification, and a clear formula for calculating allocations with these criteria applying to all schools on the same basis.
- 3.5 Methodologies for distributing funding could include:
- a lump sum payment with clear parameters for calculation.
 - a per-pupil rate (usually based on AWPU and reflecting the proportion of the year which is not funded within the school's budget share).
 - a per-pupil rate, with a maximum ceiling.
- 3.6 Where growth funding is payable to academies the local authority should fund the increase for the period from the additional September intake through until the following August.
- 3.7 Local authorities should report any unspent growth funding remaining at the year-end to the Schools Forum. Funding may be carried forward to the following funding period, as with any other centrally retained budget, and local authorities can choose to use it specifically for growth. Any overspent growth funding will form part of the overall DSG surplus or deficit balance.
- 3.8 The proposed criteria for Wirral's 2020-21 Growth Fund is as follows:
- Mainstream schools and academies can access the fund.
 - pupil numbers grow as a result of basic need to above 6.5% of the budgeted numbers between the budget setting period and October census.
 - growth funding will be equivalent to the Basic Entitlement factor (AWPU) only for the additional pupils (i.e. over the 6.5%).
 - funding is for the remainder of their relevant funding period (pro rata).
- 3.9 These criteria have been submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) as provisional criteria along with school budgets for 2020-21.

4.0 FALLING ROLLS FUND - £233,000

- 4.1 Schools funding regulations state that Local authorities may set aside schools block funding to create a small fund to support good schools with falling rolls, where local planning data shows that the surplus places will be needed within the next three financial years.

- 4.2 The Schools Forum should agree both the value of the fund and the criteria for allocation, and the local authority should regularly update the Schools Forum on the use of the funding. As with the growth fund, the falling rolls fund is also within the NFF schools block.
- 4.3 Criteria for allocating falling rolls funding should contain clear objective trigger points for qualification, and a clear formula for calculating allocations. Differences in allocation methodology are permitted between phases.
- 4.4 Methodologies for distributing funding could include:
- a rate per vacant place, up to a specified maximum number of places (place value likely to be based on AWPU)
 - a lump sum payment with clear parameters for calculation.
- 4.5 Where falling rolls funding is payable to academies, the local authority should fund the increase for the period from the additional September intake through until the following August.
- 4.6 Local authorities should report any falling rolls funds remaining at the end of the financial year to the Schools Forum. Funding may be carried forward to the following funding period, as with any other centrally retained budget, and local authorities can choose to use it specifically for falling rolls.
- 4.7 The proposed criteria for Wirral's 2020-21 Falling Rolls Fund is as follows:
- the fund is accessible to 'Good' or 'Outstanding' mainstream schools and academies.
 - the Number On Roll (NOR) is less than 80% of its Published Admission Number (PAN);
 - planning data shows surplus places will be required within 3 years.
 - falling rolls funding will be equivalent to the basic entitlement factor (AWPU) only over the 6.5% threshold
 - e.g. if drop by 8%, would receive basic entitlement for 1.5% of its previous intake for the relevant funding period.
- 4.8 These criteria have been submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) as provisional criteria along with school budgets for 2020-21.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 That the Forum notes the report.
- 5.2 Schools Forum agrees the criteria for the 2020-21 Growth Fund as outlined in paragraph 3.8.
- 5.3 Schools Forum agrees the criteria for the 2020-21 Falling Rolls Fund as outlined in paragraph 4.7.

Paul Boyce
Corporate Director for Children Services

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM 30th June 2020

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Delegated School Balances as at 31st March 2020 Indicative Balances for 2020-21 and 2021-22

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report advises the Forum of the level of school balances as at 31st March 2020, together with an indication of balances for the financial years 2020-21 and 2021-22.

1. School Balances

School balances at 31st March 2020 are £7.9m. This is a reduction of just under £750k from the previous year after one academy conversion during 2019-20 has been excluded from the balances.

School Phase (no of schools)	31.3.2019 Balances	31.3.2020 Balances	Difference	Change
Nursery (3)	188,833	340,638	151,805	Increase
Primary (78)	7,004,918	6,428,693	-576,225	Reduction
Secondary (4)	-232,118	-352,809	-120,691	Reduction
Special (11)	1,711,265	1,506,892	-204,373	Reduction
Total (96)	£8,672,898	7,923,414	-749,484	Reduction
Academy Conversions (1)	216,914			
Total	£8,889,812			

The average school balance for a primary is £82,419 compared to £89,806 in 2018-19. The overall secondary school balance continues to be in a deficit position, with 2 out of 4 in deficit and working through agreed licenced deficits plans. One secondary school moved back into credit during the year.

There was one secondary school academy conversion in 2019-20.

Deficit Budgets

There are 21 schools that have ended the financial year with a deficit balance (compared to 15 in 2018-19). This is made up of 17 primary schools, 2 secondary schools and 2 special schools. In most cases schools are managing this position in year, however, there are 3 licenced deficit plans in place and 5 notices of concern. This may increase further as budget plans are in the process of being finalised, particularly due to the number of schools who ended the year with a deficit balance.

2. Monitoring School Balances 2020-21 and 2021-22

Projections from the Period 9 review in February indicated that school balances would reduce significantly over the next 2 years, as illustrated below. Balances are projected to reduce by £3.7m in 2020-21 and £10.7m in 2021-22 resulting in an overall deficit of £(8.2)m by March 2022.

Balances as at	Period 9	Actual
31/03/2020	£6.2m	£7.9m
31/03/2021	£2.5m	To be confirmed
31/03/2022	(£8.2m)	To be confirmed

However, the actual position for March 2020 is £1.7m better than anticipated. The position for the next 2 years will be clearer after budget setting in July. The period 9 estimates take into consideration the 2020-21 budget allocations, where the Minimum guarantee was set at +1.84% and a minimum per pupil funding level of £3,750 in primary and £5,000 in secondary schools provided some increased funding to mainstream schools.

Period 9 estimates confirm continuing difficulties for schools over the medium term, with 63 (out of 96) schools indicating a deficit position in 2021-22. Balances are projected to improve over 2020-21 from period 6 and 9 budget monitoring as schools work hard to reduce costs, and information is provided concerning funding for the following year. Whilst schools have received Teachers Pay Grant and Teachers Pension Employers Contribution Grant for 2020-21 financial year, indications are that these will be included in the DSG from April 2021, leaving uncertainty of how the funding will be distributed to schools through the Schools Funding Formula and special schools budgets.

3. Action Taken to Date

- There have been meetings with some schools and governors to review and consider the financial position going forward.
- 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 5 schools.
- 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.

4. Future Action

- Contact schools with projected deficits in 2020-21 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.
- The effect of the DfE proposal to increase the starting salary for newly qualified teachers to £26,000 from September 2020, and the effect on the other mainscale grades to ensure appropriate differentials.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Paul Boyce
Corporate Director for Children's Services

S T A T U T O R Y I N S T R U M E N T S

2020 No. 540

EDUCATION, ENGLAND

The Schools Forums (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020

<i>Made</i> - - - -	<i>26th May 2020</i>
<i>Laid before Parliament</i>	<i>28th May 2020</i>
<i>Coming into force</i> - -	<i>18th June 2020</i>

The Secretary of State, in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 47A and 138(7) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998(a), makes the following Regulations.

Citation, commencement and expiry

1.—(1) These Regulations may be cited as the Schools Forums (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020.

(2) They come into force on 18th June 2020 and shall cease to have effect on 1st April 2021.

Amendment to meetings of Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012

2.—(1) The Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012(b) are amended as follows.

(2) After regulation 8(1) insert—

“(1A) A meeting of the schools forum is not limited to a meeting of persons all of whom, or any of whom, are physically in the same place and includes meetings held through remote means.”

(3) After regulation 8(2) insert—

“(2A) “public meeting” includes a meeting of the schools forum that the public can access through remote means.”

(4) After regulation 8(3) insert—

“(3A) For the purposes of regulation 8(3) reference to being “present” at the meeting includes members being present through remote means. A member will not be considered to be present through remote means unless the conditions in 8(3B) are satisfied.

(3B) A member accessing the meeting by remote means must be able to—

- (a) hear and be heard by, and where practicable, see and be seen by any members present;
 - (b) be heard and, where practicable, seen by any members of the public at the meeting.
- ”.

(a) 1998 c. 31
(b) S.I. 2012/2261

(5) After regulation 8(13) insert—

“(14) “Remote means” means access to a meeting to enable persons to attend or participate simultaneously by electronic means, including (but not limited to) telephone conferencing, video conferencing, live webcast, and live interactive streaming.”.

26th May 2020

Nick Gibb
Minister of State
Department for Education

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Regulations)

These Regulations make amendments to the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012 (the 2012 Regulations) to allow, in light of the coronavirus pandemic, for schools forums meetings to take place by remote means.

These Regulations cease to have effect on 1st April 2021.

An impact assessment has not been produced for this instrument as no, or no significant, impact on the private or voluntary sector is foreseen.

An Explanatory Memorandum is published alongside this instrument on www.legislation.gov.uk. Hard copies are available from the Department of Education, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT.

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**WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM – 30th June 2020
WORK PLAN**

Meeting Date	September 2020	November 2020	January 2021	May 2021	June 2021
	Elect chair & vice chair				
Budget	Budget monitoring and Final DSG Update on School budgets/balances		Budget Monitoring Schools Budget 20-21 De-delegation of budgets Update on School budgets/balances	Schools Budget update 2020-21 Schools Budget provisional outturn 19-20 Update on School budgets/balances	Update on School Balances and Reserves School Budget Monitoring Schools Budget provisional outturn 19-20
Consultation	2021-22 National Funding Formula for Schools, High Needs and Early Years	Outcome of school funding formula consultation			2021-22 School Funding Arrangements if new info out
DfE Regs & guidelines	DfE Operational Guide Schools Forum Constitution Scheme for Financing Schools – Directed updates	DfE Operational Guide Schools Forum Constitution School Forum Membership	School Finance Regulations Schools Forum Structure (identifies voting rights)		School Forum Membership
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 High needs funding & places Home Tuition Update Sensory Support Service Update High Needs Funding arrangements Alternative Provision School Admissions	De-delegated services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contingency • Special Staff Costs • Library Service • Insurance Energy update Wirral	MEAs Update	Edsential Business Plan High Needs Funding arrangements Home Tuition Update Sensory Support Service Update	Traded Services Update LACES /LAC PP TL Growth Fund - Update on allocations

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