

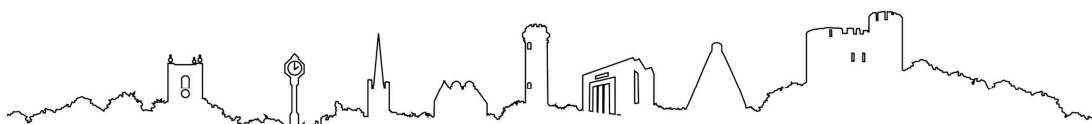
Meeting of the Dudley Schools Forum

**Tuesday 16th January, 2024 at 6.00pm
on Microsoft Teams**

[Click on this link to access the Meeting](#)

Agenda - Public Session (Meeting open to the public and press)

1. Introductions by the Chair
2. Apologies for absence.
3. To report the appointment of any substitutes for this meeting of the Forum.
4. [To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 14th November, 2023 \(Pages 5 - 17\).](#)
5. Any other matters arising from the Minutes of the meetings of the Forum held on 14th November, 2023, not included on the agenda for this meeting.
6. Head Teachers Consultative Forum – Budget Working Group Verbal Feedback
7. [Schools Forum Membership – Verbal Update](#)
8. [Dedicated Schools Grant Budget Process 2024/25 \(Pages 18 – 36\)](#)
9. [Pupil Growth Fund 2023/24 and 2024-2025 \(Pages 37 – 41\)](#)
10. [Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan 2024 \(Pages 42 – 50\)](#)



11. [Delivering Better Value in SEND Update \(Pages 51 – 63\)](#)
12. [Directorate of Children's Services Verbal Update](#)



Chief Executive

Dated: 8th January, 2024

Distribution:

Members of Dudley Schools Forum

Nursery School Headteacher: Miss A Ward;

Primary School Headteachers: Mrs M Harris, Mrs A Hannaway, Ms L Maskell, Mrs S Parkes;

Primary School Governors: Mrs J Belcher (Chair), Mrs J Morgan (Vice-Chair) Mr B Roe and Vacancy;

Secondary School Headteacher: Mr T Harris;

Secondary School Governor: Mrs S Watson;

Special School Headteacher: Miss J Colbourne;

Special School Governor: Mr P Leyshon;

Academy Members: Mrs R Cox, Mr C Finnerty, Mrs J Higgins, Mr M Kelay, Mr S Lanckham, Ms E Stanton, Miss F Sumner, Mr K Tranter, Mrs A Webb and Vacancy;

Pupil Referral Unit Representative: Mrs V Howard;

Non-School Members: Mrs E O'Brien, Mrs J Williams, Mr T Reid and Mrs V Turner;

Non-Voting Attendees

Councillor R Buttery - Cabinet Member for Children and Young People;

Councillor K Lewis - Chair of Children and Young People Select Committee;

C Driscoll – Director of Children's Services;

S Thirlway, Service Director of Education, SEND and Family Solutions

M Palfreyman – Head of Education Outcomes and Inclusion;

C Ludwig – Finance Manager;

J Wilson – Senior Principal Accountant.

Please note the following:

- This meeting will be held virtually by using Microsoft Teams. The meeting will be held live via the Internet link. The meeting will be recorded for future viewing.
- This is a formal meeting and it will assist the conduct of business if participants speak only when invited by the Chair.
- Members of the public are welcome to view the proceedings but should not make contributions at this meeting.
- The Chair reserves the right to adjourn the meeting, as necessary, if there is any disruption or technical issues.
- All participants should mute their microphones and video feed when they are not speaking.
- Please remember to unmute your microphone and switch on your video feed when it is your turn to speak. Speak clearly and slowly into your microphone.
- The Council reserves the right to record meetings. Recording/ reporting is only permitted during the public session of the meeting.

Schools Forum Members

- Agendas containing reports with exempt information should be treated as private and confidential. It is your responsibility to ensure that information containing private and personal data is kept safe and secure at all times. Following the meeting you should ensure that the information is securely stored and destroyed within six months.
- Members can submit apologies by contacting Democratic Services. The appointment of any Substitute Member(s) should be notified to Democratic Services at least one hour before the meeting starts.
- The Democratic Services contact officer for this meeting is Gemma Gray, Telephone 01384 815334 or E-mail gemma.gray@dudley.gov.uk

You can view the [Democratic Services Privacy Notice](#) and more information about the Council and our meetings on the website www.dudley.gov.uk

If you are reading these documents on an electronic device, you have saved the Council £7.00 (on average) per printed agenda and helped reduce the Council's carbon footprint

**Minutes of Dudley Schools Forum
Tuesday, 14th November, 2023 at 6.00 pm
Microsoft Teams**

Present:

Mrs J Belcher (Chair)
Mrs J Morgan (Vice-Chair)
Mrs R Cox, Mr C Finnerty, Mrs M Harris, Mrs J Higgins, Mrs V Howard,
Mr S Lanckham, Ms L Maskell, Mrs E O'Brien, Mr T Reid, Mr B Roe,
Miss F Sumner, Mr K Tranter, Miss A Ward, Mrs A Webb and Mrs S Watson.

Non-Voting Officers:

C Driscoll (Director of Children's Services), C Ludwig (Finance Manager),
J Moules (Senior School Improvement Officer), M Palfreyman (Head of
Education Outcomes and Inclusion), S Powell (Acting Head of SEND), S
Thirlway (Service Director Education, SEND and Family Solutions), J Wilson
(Senior Principal Accountant) and K Malpass (Democratic Services Officer).

12 **Introductions by the Chair**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

13 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Mrs A Hannaway, Mr M Kelay, Mr P Leyshon and Councillor R Buttery.

14 **Substitute Members**

There were no substitute Members appointed for this meeting of the Forum.

15 **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd October 2023, be approved as a correct record.

16 **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

No issues were raised under this agenda item.

17 **Head Teachers Consultative Forum – Budget Working Group Verbal Feedback**

Mrs V Howard, Pupil Referral Unit Representative, provided feedback on the discussions held at the previous Head Teachers Consultative Forum – Budget Working Group (HTCF-BWG) meeting advising that the Local Authority were taking steps to increase the number of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) bases by a further eight on mainstream school sites in the Borough.

It was advised that Dudley Catering Services would cease on the 31st March 2024 and new providers would be arranged for schools.

Alternative Provision and Inclusion Strategy Workshops had now taken place and it was envisaged that a draft strategy would be developed by the end of the year.

It was reported that seven Ofsted assessments had taken place since September, 2023.

Headteacher meetings had been arranged for November and December, 2023 and a Senior Officer would be attending to provide appropriate updates.

It was noted that training on complaints had been held in October, 2023 with approximately 60 schools in attendance, however, complaints continued to be received.

The Dudley Community Toothbrush Scheme, which provided free toothbrushes for all Key Stage 1 children to tackle issues of poor oral health, had commenced and the Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire aiming to support and understand the lives of children and young people would be circulated to all schools during the current academic year.

An update on the position of the Dudley Schools Grant (DSG) was provided highlighting key points and areas of overspend. The de-delegated budget was also discussed, together with a request for the union facility time and changes to the primary outreach for behaviour to be maintained.

An update was provided regarding the latest developments and progress in relation to delivering better value (DBV) in SEND indicating that significant funding had been awarded to the Local Authority by the Department for Education (DfE) to support ongoing development and the initial delivery of the DBV programme outcomes. Information in relation to the four key strategic workstreams were also referred to.

The Chair expressed her appreciation for the detailed feedback provided.

Resolved

That the feedback provided be noted.

18 **Schools Forum Membership**

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted on an update in respect of Schools Forum membership changes effective from 1st November, 2023.

The Democratic Services Officer presented the report submitted, and in doing so, outlined the membership changes as a result of the recent election process. It was reported that Mrs A Hannaway, Primary School Head Teacher representative, had been reappointed for a three-year term of office to 31st October, 2026. Representatives were advised of an error in the second paragraph of paragraph 6 of the report submitted, which should indicate that following the resignation of Mrs C Finnegan, Primary School Head Teacher of Our Lady and St Kenelm RC Primary School, Mrs M Harris, Headteacher at Cradley C of E Primary School, would continue in the existing term of office to 31st October, 2024 as Primary School Head Teacher Representative.

In referring to paragraph 16 under the heading Council Priorities and Projects, Mrs R Cox, Academy Member representative, queried the period the Dudley Council Plan should cover, indicating that it should be for the period 2022/25. The Chair indicated that the date be queried and updated if necessary.

Resolved

- (1) That the updated position in respect of the membership of Dudley's Schools Forum, as referred to in Appendix A of the report submitted, be noted.
- (2) That Democratic Services be requested to query the period of the Dudley Council Plan and update the paragraph under heading Council Priorities and Projects if necessary.

19 Dedicated Schools Grant Projected Outturn Update 2023/24

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted on the latest financial forecast in respect of the Schools Budget for the 2023/24 financial year ending 31st March, 2024.

The Finance Manager presented the report in detail and referred representatives to Appendix A, which highlighted a forecasted cumulative overspend of £30.662m, in respect of the centrally retained Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budget for 2023/24 as at 30th September, 2023.

A further analysis of the DSG Forecast Outturn by Funding Block 2023/24 as of 30th September, 2023 was outlined in Appendix B of the report submitted. The total in-year position reflected an overspend of £7.345m.

It was noted that the High Needs Block had an overspend position amounting to £7.303m, which predominately related to the increased in-year Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) top up payments, outborough placements, imports/exports and adjustment and the implications of the proposed pay award.

Representatives were advised that the Central School Services Block had an overspend of £0.327m which related to pressures in relation to fines from the Education Investigation Service, the proposed pay award across the service and payments in relation to outborough non-Special Educational Needs (SEN) independent school.

It was noted that the Early Years Block had an underspend of £0.285m which related to lower pupil numbers and noting the impact of lagged funding which had been partly offset by pay award pressures.

It was assumed that the forecast overspend would be carried forward into the 2024/25 financial year against the DSG reserve, to be resolved as part of the strategic recovery of the High Needs Block in future years. The Local Authority were working collaboratively with Newton Europe and the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) as part of the Delivering Better Value in SEND Programme and were now reviewing and updating the financial recovery plan which would be shared with Schools Forum as part of the regular reporting cycle.

Resolved

That the 2023/24 forecast outturn position at 30th September, 2023 in respect of the centrally retained areas of the Schools Budget, which was funded by the Dedicated School Grant, be noted.

20 **Growth Fund Methodology 2024/25**

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted seeking approval from Schools Forum to continue to apply the existing eligibility criteria and funding methodology to funding allocated through a growth fund contingency for 2024/25.

The Senior Principal Accountant presented the report submitted, and in doing so, advised that following approval of the Growth Fund Methodology at the meeting in October 2023, an error in the way that the DfE had calculated the number of pupils for the 2024/25 academic year had been highlighted. The error had resulted in a reduced pupil rate that managed the growth funding to £45 per pupil for primary schools and £55 for secondary school pupils. Further information was outlined in the methodology section of Appendix A to the report submitted.

Resolved

- (1) That the information contained in the report submitted be noted.
- (2) That the eligibility criteria and funding methodology to be applied to funds allocated from the growth fund contingency in 2024/25, be approved.

21 **De-delegated Service Options for 2024/25**

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted on the proposed de-delegation services for 2024/25. Additional information was circulated to representatives following discussions at the Budget Working Group on Tuesday 7th November regarding de-delegation for the Behaviour Support Team for 2024-25.

The Finance Manager presented the report and, in doing so, outlined proposals to continue the de-delegation for Union Facilities Time and the Behaviour Pupil Referral Unit, Primary Outreach Service in 2024/25.

Representatives were advised that work was in progress to move the Behaviour Pupil Referral Unit, Primary Outreach Service from a de-delegation to a traded service, however, a further year of de-delegation was required whilst work was being completed in the context of the overall Directorate Redesign, the Delivering Better Value Programme work and the Alternative Provision (AP) Review. Discussions had taken place with Headteachers, who agreed that the service was vital for schools, particularly in the growing need for support as the diversity of children's needs in mainstream school continued to increase. The line management of the team had recently transferred to Education Outcomes and whilst it was recognised that funding from de-delegation could not continue indefinitely, given the significant changes and pressures experienced during 2023/24, it was considered that a further year's funding was required. The additional documentation circulated to Representatives prior to the meeting outlined information relating to the nature of the provision provided.

The Senior School Improvement Officer referred to the current financial position of the Local Authority, the process in relation to the redesign of the Directorate and the implications of the AP Strategy Review and indicated that transferring the Behaviour Pupil Referral Unit, Primary Outreach Service to a traded service was currently not an option.

Mrs R Cox, Academy Member Representative, expressed concern at the lack of information provided in relation to the impact of the support provided by the Behaviour Pupil Referral Unit, Primary Outreach Service. Anecdotal evidence did not provide information on whether suspensions had been reduced or statistical information relating to pupils accessing reduced timetables.

In responding, the Senior School Improvement Officer indicated that identifying statistical impact data on effectiveness was problematic. The success of the team's work was manifested by something not happening and it was difficult to capture in a statistical method. The team did not have access to statistical impact data and would be required to contact each school to gain information in relation to the impact created from strategies that had been put in place. Mrs R Cox, Academy Member Representative referred to the historic problems in relation to the issue and expressed disappointment that progress had not been made. It was considered that various service areas could be utilised to gain information to provide statistical impact data.

Eligible members voted on the de-delegated services for maintained mainstream schools for the 2024/25 financial year as follows:-

Union Facilities Time

Primary Sector

Approved

Secondary Sector

Approved

Behavioural Pupil Referral Unit – Primary Outreach Service

Primary Sector

Approved

Secondary Sector (N/A)

N/A

Resolved

- (1) That the de-delegated services proposed for the 2024/25 financial year, be approved as voted by eligible members, as outlined above.
- (2) That the comments outlined above in relation to identifying statistical impact data on support provided by the Behaviour Pupil Referral Unit, Primary Outreach Service be considered.

22 Dudley’s Scheme for Financing Schools 2023/24

A report of the Director of Children’s Services was submitted on the proposed amendments to the Local Authority’s Scheme for Financing Schools, as outlined in Appendix A to the report submitted.

In presenting the report submitted, the Senior Principal Accountant confirmed that as the proposed changes clarified existing information only, no formal consultation was required on this occasion.

Eligible members voted on the proposed changes to Dudley’s Scheme for Financing Schools for 2022/23 financial year.

Resolved

That the proposed amendments to the Local Authority’s Scheme for Financing Schools, as voted by eligible members, as set out in Appendix A to the report submitted, be approved for implementation with immediate effect.

23 **Delivering Best Value (DBV) in SEND Update**

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted updating Schools Forum on the Delivering Best Value in SEND programme in Dudley.

The Acting Head of SEND presented the report and, in doing so, indicated that the report had been developed building on previous discussions and provided the latest developments and progress made. Ongoing effort would be focused on addressing the challenges outlined in previous reporting streams and provide insight into the journey towards a more sustainable and cost effective Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision.

Detailed information had been included in the report submitted and efforts to address the challenges had been refined to four core key strategic workstreams namely:

- Redesigning our specialist services and Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) offer
- Developing and delivering our sufficiency strategy
- Preparation for Adulthood
- Redesigning our Spend Profile

It was reported that an Interim Lead for Delivering Best Value Programme had been appointed to support the workstream leads in driving the delivery of the four key strategic workstreams.

Mrs R Cox, Academy Member Representative queried whether the strategic measures put in place would support the reduction of the deficit accumulated and whether a financial recovery plan would be developed. In responding, the Acting Head of SEND indicated that Dudley had been identified as a high need Local Authority and strategies were essential to prevent increased spending within SEND services. It was envisaged that the £1m grant funding from the DfE was to support the ongoing development and initial delivery of the DBV programme outcomes and prevent the deficit increasing and not to reduce the current deficit.

The Service Director Education, SEND and Family Solutions referred to the DBV Programme proposition developed for Dudley following work undertaken by Newton Europe alongside Dudley colleagues and funded by the DfE. The Programme had been developed to understand service provision and the financial implications associated with service. Phase 2 of the DBV Programme was to identify key focus areas within the service to assist and improve the Council's spend profile to prevent any further increase in the current deficit accumulated. Reference was made to the Safety Valve Delivery Programme, which had been designed to help Local Authorities tackle overspend on SEND services and whilst Dudley was not currently part of that specific programme, it was envisaged the DBV Programme would contribute towards the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Management Plan. Work to update the DSG Management Plan was currently taking place and would be presented to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and DfE in January 2024. A comprehensive report would be provided to Members at the Dudley Schools Forum on 16th January, 2024.

In responding to a question from Mrs R Cox, Academy Member Representative and acknowledging that the core strategies would not rectify the current financial position of the SEND arrangements, the Service Director Education, SEND and Family Solutions indicated that the DBV Programme would maximise opportunities around utilising the high needs block and DSG funding more effectively moving forward. It was clear that the historical arrangements for the funding of SEND provision had not been effective, and it was essential that adjustments were made to tackle the significant ongoing deficit.

The Director of Children's Services reminded Representatives that the DSG Management Plan had been submitted to Dudley Schools Forum frequently and whilst previous actions had been taken, it had not resulted in the reduction in spend on the high needs block as expected as current financial projections directed to an increased deficit by the end of the 2023/24 financial year. The DSG Management Plan required a fundamental review to stabilise spending whilst continuing to provide effective outcomes for children.

Ms J Higgins, Academy Member Representative suggested that projected financial impact statements be included in the DBV Programme and the AP Strategy as SEND learners in mainstream schools did not have appropriate SEND provision available to them to meet their specific needs. A holistic approach was essential in aligning SEND services to ensure the financial recovery plan was successful.

Mrs R Cox, Academy Member Representative queried the judging techniques in terms of the RAG status against each workstream activities and what measures had been put in place to ensure Headteachers were involved. In responding, the Service Director Education, SEND and Family Solutions indicated that currently the status of work areas were tracked in relation to progression. Regular fortnightly meetings were taking place involving the DfE SEND Advisor to review workstream progress plans to ensure that targets were delivered. It was acknowledged that engagement with schools was an essential part in successfully delivering the objectives outlined in the DBV Programme and engagement activities with Headteachers were taking place. A number of workshops had been arranged separately for primary and secondary school provision with feedback activities included. A significant number of individual case reviews had also taken place over a fortnightly period involving schools, headteachers and SENCOS as part of phase one of the DBV Programme. There was an opportunity for further involvement and Representatives were invited to join meetings associated with each workstream to provide appropriate contribution.

The Acting Head of SEND indicated that phase one of the Programme had taken place during October, 2022 and May, 2023 which had been the work undertaken between Newton Europe and Local Authority to identify core workstreams. Representatives were advised that a DBV Project Lead had been appointed in September, 2023 and meetings had taken place following that appointment. Minutes of meeting would be made publicly available moving forward. Whilst it was acknowledged that the DBV Programme was still in its early stages and not many meetings had taken place, details of representation on each workstream would be circulated to Members of the Forum.

Ms L Maskell, Primary School Headteacher Representative referred to a stakeholder meeting that had taken place in October, 2022 where a briefing had been provided by Newton Europe on the DBV Programme, however, whilst it was argued that sufficient opportunity had been provided for engagement and questions from attendees, Ms L Maskell, Primary School Headteacher Representative refuted the comment. However, it was agreed that collaborative working and effective communication streams were essential to ensure the objectives of the DBV Programme were met.

Resolved

- (1) That the content of the Delivering Best Value in SEND Update be noted.

- (2) That a report be submitted to the Dudley Schools Forum on 16th January, 2024 on the updated Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Management Plan prior to it being presented to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and Department for Education (DfE) in January 2024.
 - (3) That details of Headteacher Representation on each workstream of the Delivering Better Value in SEND be circulated to Members of the Forum.
 - (4) That Representatives contact the Acting Head of SEND to submit requests to join meetings on interested workstream areas.
-

24 **Directorate of Children's Services – Verbal Update**

The Director of Children's Services referred to the Council's financial position and measures agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 25th October, 2023 designed to improve the overall budget position moving forward. Dudley was a low tax, low spending and low reserves authority and the financial position was concerning. Following an external peer review carried out in September, 2023, concerns had been raised regarding the scale of reserves and the pressures identified across the Local Authority. Significant overspend had been projected by the end of the 2023/24 financial year from the Council's General Fund. Spending control measures identified and approved and in place until the Summer of 2025 included:-

- No new contracts for works and services to be let
- Existing contracts not to be extended beyond end or break point
- No discretionary spending on existing contracts
- End agency and interim contracts
- End fixed term contracts of employment at end or break point
- External Recruitment freeze

The controls applied to all funds of the Council, revenue and capital except where exemptions were applied, namely, where services were completely funded by grant with no call on Council reserves, where any expenditure generated a surplus, where the expenditure was required to deliver an essential service or that expenditure supported an essential service, where there was a clear case that expenditure prevented higher cost essential services or where a service was essential to good governance. A number of services would be impacted as a result of the control measures and the impact would be monitored and reviewed regularly. Whilst the higher needs block deficit was not included in the Council's general financial position, the statutory funding received by the DfE was due to cease at 31st March, 2026.

The formal launch of the Family Safeguarding Model, as part of the Directorate of Children's Services redesign had taken place on 13th November, 2023 with colleagues in attendance from the DfE which included a live parent case study. The event had been well attended by schools representatives and received very positive feedback.

Resolved

That the verbal update on the Directorate of Children's Services, be noted.

25 **Comments made by the Chair**

The Chair wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

The meeting ended at 7.08pm

CHAIR

Meeting of the Dudley Schools Forum – 16th January 2024

Report of the Director of Children’s Services

Dedicated Schools Grant Budget Process 2024/25

Purpose

- 1 To update Schools Forum on the 2024/25 Dedicated Schools Grant budget process.

Schools Forum Role and Responsibilities

- 2 The Forum is the ‘guardian’ of the local Schools Budget and its distribution among schools and other bodies, and therefore must be closely involved throughout the development process.

Recommendations

- 3 Schools Forum is invited to note the contents of the report and in particular:
 - The provisional Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) settlement for 2024/25 and the impact for Dudley.
 - A further DSG update will be provided at the 27 February 2024 and 16 April 2024 meetings, to include the central expenditure budget allocations for Schools Forum approval.
 - To approve a Minimum Funding Guarantee for 2024/25 between 0.0% and 0.5% per pupil as specified in latest operational guidance and as detailed in Dudley’s Authority Proforma Tool (APT).
 - To note Dudley’s APT submitted to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), to be tabled as Appendix 1 to this report.

Background

- 4 The DfE issued its first consultation in respect of a national funding formula for early years and mainstream school pupil funding in March 2016 with a second consultation in December 2016. The original planned timeline was delayed owing to focused efforts in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021 a further consultation was held and following the feedback to that consultation, the Government, in March 2022, confirmed its commitment to introducing the direct National Funding Formula. Further consultation during the summer of 2022 focused on the detail of implementation.

In 2024/25 the ESFA will again calculate notional budgets for schools according to the national funding formula. These will then be aggregated and allocated to local authorities as the Schools Block within the DSG for distribution to schools according to the locally agreed formula.

Role of the Department for Education (DfE)

- 5 The Department for Education is responsible for children's services and education, including early years, schools, higher and further education policy, apprenticeships and wider skills in England.

Role of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)

- 6 The Education and Skills Funding Agency is the Department of Education's delivery agency for funding and compliance. The ESFA provides revenue and capital funding for education for learners between the ages of 2 and 19, or the ages of 0 and 25 for those with learning difficulties and disabilities and also supports the delivery of building and maintenance programmes for schools, academies, free schools and sixth-form colleges. The ESFA is the first port of call for queries from open academies, and carries out a number of compliance and assurance activities on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education, including monitoring funding agreements and admission appeals. The ESFA implemented the funding reforms for pre and post 16 education.

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Process For 2024/25

- 7 The provisional DSG funding settlement for 2024/25 was announced on 19th December 2023. This report summarises the DfE settlement for Dudley, identifying any issues or actions for Schools Forum.

The DSG can only be used for the purposes of the Schools Budget as defined in the School and Early Years Finance Regulations. The Schools Budget consists of delegated budgets allocated to individual schools, Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and Early Years Provision in Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) providers, a budget for other provision for pupils which local authorities fund centrally, which now includes the bulk of high needs

provision, including post-school provision up to age 25, together with centrally retained expenditure in respect of special educational needs and early years services.

The distribution of the DSG to local authorities is allocated in four funding blocks:

- Schools Block
- Early Years Block
- High Needs Block and
- Central School Services Block.

Centrally Retained Services

- 8 The central expenditure limits, which are subject to Schools Forum approval, will be presented at the 27 February 2024 meeting for Schools Forum approval.

Schools Block

- 9 The pupils counted for the purpose of calculating the DSG Schools Block allocation are those recorded in the School Census in maintained schools and academies going through recouplement in National Curriculum Year Groups R-11 aged 4 or above including those pupils in SEN (Special Education Needs) units or Resourced Provision within such institutions. Any pupils recorded as Year R but who are less than 4 years old are not counted, because funding for these pupils is provided under the Early Years block.

The Schools Block allocation is derived from the October 2023 School Census pupil count.

Schools Block Units of Funding

For 2024/25 the Schools Block Units of Funding for primary and secondary sectors which determine the Schools Block element of the DSG are £5,037.56 and £6,737.25 respectively.

As Dudley has not yet fully implemented the National Funding Formula, our Local Funding Formula will guarantee a Minimum Funding Guarantee of between 0.0% and 0.5% increase, which will be confirmed to schools on completion of the Authority Pro-forma Tool (APT).

Where a mainstream school has a number of funded places in a SEN unit or resourced provision, then funding will be allocated as follows:

- i) Funding for pupils recorded on October 2023 school census as registered at a school and taking a place at that school will be funded through the schools delegated budget in accordance with

Dudley's local funding formula, and additional funding of approximately £6,000 per pupil will be made available from the High Needs Block.

- ii) Funding for pupils not recorded on October 2023 school census as registered at the school and taking up a place will be funded at £10,000 per place from the High Needs Block.

The Schools Block funding covers:

- Mainstream Schools delegated budgets (but excludes High Needs top up funding which will be funded from the High Needs Block);
- Items that may be removed from Maintained Schools' Budget Shares – De-delegation, as approved by Schools Forum in November 2023.

Early Years Block

- 10 The DSG Early Years Block is based on participation and covers all pupils in maintained schools and academies going through recoupment in National Curriculum year groups N1 and N2, all relevant pupils in Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) providers, and under-fives in Alternative Provision. In addition, any pupils recorded as Year R, but who are less than four years old, are counted in the Early Years Block together with the early years pupil premium and funding for disadvantaged two year olds. Two year olds with SEN are funded under the High Needs Block.

The Early Years Block allocation is funded on a lagged basis being initially derived from the January 2023 Early Years Census, Schools and Alternative Provision Census to be updated for the January 2024 and January 2025 School Census pupil data counts. The allocation announced by the DfE in December 2023 is therefore provisional and will be updated in the Summer of 2024 and the Spring of 2025 to produce the Early Years Block allocations for the financial year 2024/25.

For 2024/25 the Early Years Block DfE funding is as follows:

- For three and four year old nursery children has increased from an hourly rate of £4.88 to £5.47 or £5,197 per full time equivalent Dudley pupil;
- Funding in respect of participation funding for disadvantaged two year olds has increased from an hourly rate of £5.67 to £7.78 or £7,391 per full time equivalent Dudley pupil.
- Funding in respect of under 2's entitlement has been introduced at a rate of £10.61 or £10,080 per full time equivalent Dudley Pupil
- Disability Access Funding has increased from £828 to £910 per eligible pupil;

- The amount per pupil for the early years' pupil premium has increased from £0.62 to £0.68 per hour;
- Transitional supplementary funding for Dudley's maintained nursery school continues and is estimated at £0.390m for 2024/25.

The Early Years Block funding for 2024/25 will cover:

- Early Years Individual Budget Shares (ISB) for:
 - Netherton Park nursery school's budget share;
 - Maintained schools' nursery classes early years single funding formula budget allocation;
 - Participation funding for disadvantaged two year olds.
 - Early years PVI providers single funding formula budget allocation for three and four-year olds.
- Early Years Pupil Premium.
- Disability Access Funding
- SEN Inclusion Fund
- Central Services – where the value of the budget is capped in line with the previous funding period, as agreed by Schools Forum.
- Central Early Years expenditure, as agreed by Schools Forum.

Hourly Rate Payable to Nursery Providers for Disadvantaged Two Year Olds Entitlement for 2024/25

Provider rates for the 15 hour entitlement for disadvantaged two year olds will be set at the same value of funding received from the DfE: £7.78 per hour. This follows the decision to pass through the full funding approved by Forum in February 2015 to encourage take up of the provision.

Hourly Rate Payable to Nursery Providers for Three and Four Year Olds Entitlement for 2024/25

Provider rates for the universal 15 hour entitlement for all three and four year olds will be less than the value of the funding received by the DfE of £5.47 per hour for a number of reasons. The £5.47 is also required to fund:

- The centrally retained services, to be a maximum of 5% in 2024/25;
- The early years nursery contingency budget;
- The SEN inclusion fund.

With effect from 2019/20 all local authorities were required to have a Universal Base Rate (UBR) of funding for all childcare providers in their local Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF). This impacted upon Dudley's maintained nursery school by reducing the hourly rate paid (£8.02 p/hour in 2018/19) to be the same as all other providers (£4.00 p/hour in 2018/19).

Local authorities with maintained nursery schools continue to receive Maintained Nursery Supplement (MNS) funding through the Early Years Block which is provided in order to enable local authorities to protect their 2016/17 funding rates for maintained nursery schools (that is, the rates that existed before the EYNFF) and the Government expects it to be used in this way.

The indicative Maintained Nursery Supplement (MNS) funding is £0.390m for 2024/25 and this will be passed directly to Dudley's maintained nursery school through the local EYSFF.

An update will be provided at the 27 February 2024 Schools Forum meeting to include an indicative Early Years budget with proposed hourly rates for 2024/25.

Pass-Through Requirement

For 2017/18 there was a new requirement on the amount of Early Years Block funding for three and four year olds that local authorities must pass to providers. This pass through requirement is intended to ensure the maximum amount of funding allocated to local authorities by the ESFA reaches providers.

The pass through funding level is set at 95% for 2024/25. This means that centrally retained funding (for central services or services in kind) combined with any funding movement out of the early years block will be constrained to a maximum of 5% of total Early Years Block funding from 2024/25.

In planning for this requirement, the value of the central service expenditure proposed by Dudley is estimated to be within the required percentages and further information will be presented at the next Forum meeting on 27 February 2024.

SEN Inclusion Fund

A separate paper will be presented to Schools Forum on the 27 February 2024 meeting outlining the value of the fund for 2024/25.

High Needs Block

- 11 The High Needs block supports provision for pupils and students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), from their early years to age 25, and alternative provision (AP) for pupils who cannot receive their education in schools. The block includes place funding for pre-16 and post-16 places in:

- Maintained mainstream schools (pre-16 places in special units and resourced provision and post-16 high needs places);
- Maintained special schools;
- Pupil referral units (PRU);
- Mainstream academies and free schools (pre-16 places in special units and resourced provision and post-16 high needs places);
- Special academies;
- Alternative provision (AP) academies;
- FE colleges and commercial and charitable providers (CCP).

For 2024/25 the High Needs block comprises the high needs block adjusted baseline plus a high needs national uplift based on the 2-18 population. The budget will be adjusted for imports & exports to reflect local authorities funding pupils who live in their area regardless of where they are educated. The imports/exports adjustment is indicative at this stage and will be finalised in later DSG updates.

For Dudley the High Needs block budget will cover:

- Special Schools budgets at £10,000 per place;
- Pupil Referral Unit delegated budgets at £10,000 per place;
- SEN Resourced provision/Unit at £10,000 per place;
- Top up budget (element 3) for Special Schools, PRUs, 16-18 SEN or 19 – 25 with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities, Mainstream SEN pupils, SEN Resourced provision, Dudley resident pupils in other local authority schools with SEN;
- Independent SEN Placements;
- Alternative Provision and commissioned provision;
- Special education needs services: Counselling, Learning Support, Physical and Medical, Visually Impaired, Autism Outreach, Early Years;
- Hospital Education;
- Central Services – where the value of the budget is capped in line with the previous funding period, as agreed by Schools Forum.

Planned Places and ESFA Return

- 12 Flexibility is available at local level to make adjustments to individual institutions' place funding in 2024/25. This is to ensure that the places funded broadly reflect both local authorities' recent commissioning activity relating to those children and young people with SEND, and the more strategic planning that they might undertake to secure suitable SEND provision and AP in line with their statutory responsibilities. Additional places at individual institutions will need to be funded from existing resources within the total high needs block allocated to local authorities.

The institution types that are in scope of the 2024/25 place change request are:

- Mainstream academies with SEN units or resourced provision (RP)
- Special academies
- Alternative provision (AP) academies
- Further education (FE) colleges
- Commercial and charitable providers (CCPs)

The process to notify ESFA of changes to 2023/24 academic year place numbers at institutions funded directly by ESFA, including academies, ended on 10 November 2023. For 2024/25 the place change notification process requests are:

- The Bromley-Pensnett Primary School – increase of 12 places
- Rufford Primary School – increase of 12 places
- The Crestwood School – increase of 12 places
- Dudley College – no change.
- Halesowen College – increase of 47 places
- King Edward VI College – no change
- Beacon Hill Academy – no change.
- Cherry Tree Learning Centre – no change
- Hob Green Primary School – no change.

The changes will have a direct impact on the recoupmnt of DSG funding: this is estimated to be a deduction of £0.282m on the High Needs block for 2024/25 for post 16 places. The ESFA will advise local authorities of the outcomes in March 2024. An update will be provided to Forum at the 16 April 2024 meeting.

From the academic year 2019/20, starting in August 2019, funding for post-16 places in maintained schools (including maintained special schools) and pupil referral units (PRUs) will remain in the DSG paid to local authorities, rather than being deducted from local authorities' DSG allocations and paid as sixth form grant.

The scope to change place numbers in academies applies to pre 16 only. This replicates the scope local authorities currently have to make place changes in maintained schools. The regulations do not allow local authorities to make adjustments to the post 16 place numbers used to calculate place funding. Post 16 place numbers are notified by the Secretary of State at school level through the sixth form grant. The DfE expect to consult on these arrangements for future years.

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2024/25 and Financial Impact for Dudley

13 Table 1 summarises the provisional DSG settlement for 2024/25 in line with the details outlined in section 7 to 12 above.

The following DfE adjustments are still required before the final DSG for 2024/25 can be determined:

- Early Years Block will be amended in the Summer of 2024 and Spring 2025 for updated early years census data for two, three and four year old children. The allocation shown in Table 1 relates to 2023 Early Years Census data.
- Pupil numbers are estimated based on the December 2023 allocation and will be finalised on receipt of the pupil numbers tool.

Table 1 -Dudley Provisional Dedicated Schools Grant 2024/25 at December 2023

	Pupil Data Oct 23	Pupil Data Jan 23	Unit of Funding per pupil PUF/SUF	School Block £ m	Central School Block £ m	Early Years Block £ m	High Needs Block £ m
Total Funding Pupil Led – Primary	26,376		£5,037.56	132.871			
Total Funding Pupil Led – Secondary	18,155		£6,737.25	122.315			
Premises including Rates and PFI				4.723			
Pupil Growth Funding				1.465			
Total Schools Block				261.374			
Historic Funding					0.112		
Teachers Pensions – Centrally Employed					0.218		
Ongoing Commitments					1.519		
Total Central School Block					1.849		
3 & 4 year olds early education pupil led funding- <i>provisional</i> lagged at January 2023 pupil data		2,596.5 <i>fte</i>	£5,196.50 per <i>fte</i>			13.493	
Netherton Park Nursery supplementary funding			Specific allocation			0.390	
2 year olds early education – Dudley <i>provisional</i> lagged at January 2023 pupil data		483.0 <i>fte</i>	£7,391.00 per <i>fte</i>			3.570	
Early Years Pupil Premium <i>provisional</i> lagged at January 2023 pupil data		490.6 <i>fte</i>	£0.68 per hour			0.317	

Additional 15 hours 3&4 year olds		992.4 fte	£5,196.50 per fte			5.157	
Additional 15 hours 2 year olds		606.1 fte	£7,391.00 per fte			4.480	
Under 2's		307.1 fte	£10,079.5 0 per fte			3.095	
Disability Access Funding		303.00	£910.00 per eligible child			0.276	
Total Early Years Block						30.777	
2023/24 Adjusted Baseline funding carried forward to 2024/25							57.162
Basic entitlement deductions for SEN Units							(0.244)
Hospital Education academy recoupment (76 places)							(0.760)
Post 16 SEN places Academies and Free Schools (7 places)							(0.042)
FE post 16 SEN place funding recoupment - funded by EFA grant (330 places)							(1.980)
Total High Needs Block							54.136
Provisional 2024/25 DSG Budget				261.374	1.849	30.777	54.136
Additional HNB Allocation 2024/25							0.000
Total DSG				261.374	1.849	30.777	54.136
Grand Total DSG				348.135			

Dedicated Schools Grant and Academy School Budgets

- 14 The calculation of each authority's DSG must include the pupils educated in the academy schools within the borough. The pupil data is required to be supplied to the local authority (LA) by the academy school at October School Census date.

It is a condition of the DSG that the LA must maintain a single formula for funding both maintained schools and academies in its area. The LA is responsible for calculating the academy schools' delegated budget by replicating the local funding formula and these details are communicated to the ESFA who are then responsible for funding academy schools. Key changes to the schools' funding formula for 2024/25 are:

- Introducing a new formulaic approach to allocating split site funding in the NFF from 2024/25. This replaces the previous locally determined split sites factor. We have not previously included a local split site factor, so from 2024/25, schools identified as eligible for split site funding will receive this in their formula allocation.
- Rolling the 2023/24 Mainstream Schools Additional Grant (MSAG) into the NFF. This will include adding the lump sum, basic per pupil and FSM6 (free school meals Ever 6) elements of the grant onto the respective NFF factors as well as uplifting the minimum per pupil values by all these factors. This appears to be a more sophisticated mechanism for mainstreaming the MSAG compared to the methodology used for mainstreaming Supplementary Grant in 2023/24 and should avoid some of the negative consequences that some schools experienced.
- On top of the amounts added for MSAG, NFF factor values are increased by:
 - 0% for premises factors other than PFI (10.4%) and split site funding which is now formularised
 - 0.5% increase to funding floor
 - 1.6% to FSM (free school meals) factor
 - 1.4% for all other factors.

There will be a separate grant for teachers' pay (TPAG) in 2023/24 and 2024/25 to support schools with the September 2023 teachers' pay award. This funding will be rolled into core budget allocations for 2025/26.

The base funding rates for mainstream schools for the 2024/25 financial year are (before Area Cost Adjustment ACA):

- a basic per-pupil rate of £62 for primary pupils, including pupils in Reception
- a basic per-pupil rate of £86 for key stage 3 pupils
- a basic per-pupil rate of £98 for key stage 4 pupils
- a lump sum of £2,306

- a FSM6 per-pupil rate of £53 per eligible primary pupil
- a FSM6 per-pupil rate of £77 per eligible secondary pupil

For special schools and Alternative Provision, the funding rate (before ACA) is £446 per place. Local authorities have flexibility in relation to special schools and Alternative Provision on how to pass on the TPAG: we are proposing to pass this funding on to schools using the rate per place and are consulting with eligible schools before confirming this methodology.

Local Authority Pro-forma Tool (APT)

- 15 The APT is an integrated tool which contains a range of information, including the underpinning data for mainstream school level allocations, details of how split site and PFI allocations have been calculated, and the methods used for de-delegation of services. It is a statutory requirement for each LA to submit the APT to the ESFA for scrutiny in order to establish compliance with Schools Finance Regulations.

The deadline for LAs to submit the 2024/25 financial year final APT and detailed tables to the ESFA is **22 January 2024**. Therefore, the latest draft summary pro-forma from the APT will be tabled for information as Appendix 1 to this report at the Schools Forum meeting on 16 January.

Coverage and Conditions of Dedicated Schools Grant

- 16 The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2023 prescribe how a local authority can allocate the DSG funding. The DSG is paid as a ring-fenced grant and is subject to formal grant conditions. The conditions include a requirement to use the grant in support of the Schools Budget and a provision for the Secretary of State to recover grant.

Pupil Premium

- 17 The ESFA confirmed on 19 December 2023 that the Pupil Premium funding rates for 2024/25 will increase on average by 1.56%.

Schools will receive £1,480 per primary pupil who is currently eligible for free school meals (FSM) or has been eligible for FSM in the past 6 years (FSM 'Ever 6') and the allocation for secondary sector will be £1,050 for FSM 'Ever 6' pupils. Eligible looked after children and those who have ceased to be looked after will receive £2,570 each, and service children £340 each.

Final allocations and grant conditions will be published in spring 2024.

National Copyright Licensing

- 18 The DfE have formalised an agreement with a number of licensing agencies to purchase a single national licence, to be managed by the DfE, for all state-funded schools in England. This means that local authorities and schools no longer need to negotiate individual licences. The Department pay the cost, including VAT, to the CLA and will provide this as a service to local authorities at a charge. These arrangements will cover recoupment Academies as well as maintained schools, and local authorities are allowed to hold this money centrally rather than include it in school budgets.

Details of the process and of licences covered are shown in Appendix 2. The annual fees are normally announced alongside the schools funding settlement, but DfE have advised that negotiations are still ongoing with some of the copyright management organisations so the fees for 2024/25 will be announced at a later date. This funding will be held centrally within Children's Services Directorate budget for payment to the DfE and is provided by a top slice from the Schools Block budget.

DfE Next Steps

- 19 Table 2 details the DfE next steps timetable.

Table 2 – DfE Timetable

<u>Date</u>	<u>Action</u>
22 January 2024	Local authorities submit final funding Authority Pro-forma Tool (APT) for 2024/25.
29 February 2024	Deadline for confirmation of schools' budget shares to maintained mainstream schools, PRUs and Special schools.
31 March 2024	Deadline for confirmation of estimated Early Years funding allocations to providers.
April 2024	Final DSG confirmed including final high needs deductions.
Summer 2024	Early Years Block updated for Early Years pupils from January 2024 Early Years pupil numbers.
31 March 2025	Final update for in-year recoupment and high needs deductions.
Summer 2025	Early Years Block updated for January 2025 Early Years pupil numbers (pro rata 7/12 th for September 2024 to March 2025).

HTCF - Budget Working Group Discussed – Yes, 9 January 2024.

Finance

20 From 1 April 2006, the Schools Budget has been funded by a direct grant; Dedicated School Grant (DSG).

Law

21 The Schools Forum is a statutory decision making and consultative body constituted in line with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, and its associated regulations, including the Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012, to enable members of the local school community to work in partnership with Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council when making decisions about school funding and finances.

The funding of schools is prescribed by the Department for Education (DfE) through the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2023.

Risk Management

- 22 There are no material risks to the Council's Risk Management Framework resulting from the contents of this report.

Equality Impact

- 23 This report has no direct implications for the Council's commitment to equality and diversity.

Human Resources/Organisational Development

- 24 This report has no direct implications for human resources, organisational development or service transformation.

Commercial/Procurement

- 25 There is no impact on the potential to commercially trade and no impact on our customer base.

Environment/Climate Change

- 26 This report has no direct implications on the environment or the Council's work in addressing Climate and achieving Net Zero target by 2030.

Council Priorities and Projects

- 27 The 2022/2025 Council Plan is clear in its ambitions for educational outcomes including raising skills, educational and work potential, increasing good or better schools and closing the gap for disadvantaged pupils. This report relates to the use of the Dedicated Schools Grant funding to support the educational outcomes of children and young people in the borough.



Catherine Driscoll
Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer:

Catherine Ludwig, Finance Manger

Telephone: 01384 815075

Email: catherine.ludwig@dudley.gov.uk

List of Background Documents

Appendix 1 – Dudley’s Authority Pro-forma Tool (APT) due for submission to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on 22 January 2023 (to be tabled at the meeting).

Appendix 2 – National Copyright Licences 2024/25.

2022/23 Authority Pro-forma Tool

To be tabled at the meeting

National Copyright Licences

The Department has agreements with the following agencies to purchase a single national licence managed by the Department for all state-funded schools in England:

- Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI)
- Copyright Licensing Agency (CLA)
- Education Recording Agency (ERA)
- Filmbank Distribution Ltd (for the PVSL)
- Mechanical Copyright Protection Society Ltd (MCPS)
- Motion Picture Licensing Company (MPLC)
- Newspaper Licensing Authority (NLA)
- Performing Rights Society (PRS)
- Phonographic Performance Ltd (PPL)
- Schools Printed Music Licence (SPML)

This means that local authorities and schools no longer need to negotiate individual licences, resulting in savings both in administration and in the overall cost of the licence. The Department will pay the cost, including VAT, to the agencies and will provide this as a service to local authorities at a charge. This means that local authorities can continue to reclaim VAT on the licences as they do now. These arrangements will cover academies as well as maintained schools, and local authorities are able to hold this money centrally rather than include it in school budgets. Local authorities will receive details of the charges for 2024/25 separately when these have been agreed (because the figures are commercial in confidence). In April 2024, ESFA will deduct the charge from the DSG and issue each local authority with a VAT invoice.

Meeting of the Schools Forum - 16 January 2024

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Pupil Growth Fund 2023/24 and 2024/25

Purpose

1. To provide Schools Forum with the latest financial information regarding funding allocated from the pupil growth fund contingency for 2023/24 financial year and the new growth funding allocation received in the National Funding Formula for 2024/25 financial year.

Schools Forum Role and Responsibilities

2. From 1 April 2006, the Schools Budget has been funded by a direct Department for Education (DfE) grant: The Dedicated School Grant (DSG).
3. The Local Authority proposes, and Schools Forum decides on the criteria for allocating growth funding to meet requirements for basic need including pre-opening and diseconomy of scale costs. The criteria and methodology are agreed annually by Schools Forum and are detailed in Table 2 for information.

Recommendation

4. Schools Forum is requested to note the latest financial information regarding funding allocated from the pupil growth fund contingency for 2023/24 financial year and the growth fund allocation received in the National Funding Formula for 2024/25 financial year.

Background

5. Authorities have a statutory duty under section 13(1) of the 1996 Act to ensure sufficient primary and secondary education places are available to meet the needs of the population in their area, promoting high educational standards, ensure fair access to educational opportunity, promote diversity, and increase parental choice.
6. In order to meet the demand for additional places, certain schools have been identified for expansion. The schools that have been selected are those that satisfied a number of criteria including whether the school was in the right geographical location, whether it was popular with local families, whether it was easy to add more capacity and whether it was well placed to provide a good education to additional pupils.
7. Growth funding enables local authorities to support schools with significant in-year pupil growth which is not otherwise immediately recognised by the lagged funding system.
8. From 2019/20 the DfE have introduced a formulaic approach to allocating growth funding to local authorities which is based on actual growth experienced in the academic year.
9. The criteria for eligibility and any funding methodology to be applied require approval of Schools Forum on an annual basis. This was agreed at the Schools Forum meeting on 4 October 2022 for the 2023/24 allocations and on the 14 November 2023 for the 2024/25 allocations.
10. The growth fund allocated to the Local Authority for 2023/24 financial year is £906,325.
11. Funding of £1,076,801.25 has now been allocated to 7 schools in respect of an additional 323 pupils for the period 1 September 2023 to 31 March 2024. The deficit of £170,476.25 will be transferred to the DSG contingency reserve for 2023/24. The allocation is in accordance with the approved criteria and funding methodology for pupils on roll at October 2023 School Census.
12. Table 1 provides detail of allocations made to individual schools for 2023/24:

Table 1 – Allocations made to schools for 2023/24

Dudley School	Pupils funded as per eligibility criteria	Funding allocated 2023/24
		£
Secondary:		
Leasowes Community College	47	156,686.25
Kingswinford Academy	25	83,343.75
The Earls High School	43	143,351.25
The Link Academy	46	153,352.50
The Crestwood School	33	110,013.75
St James Academy	58	193,357.50
The Wordsley School	71	236,696.25
Total	323	1,076,801.25

13. For 2024/25, the DfE have continued to allocate growth funding to Local Authorities based on actual growth in pupil numbers experienced in the previous year.
14. For 2024/25 the growth fund allocation is £1,464,770.
15. The eligibility criteria and funding methodology for the allocation of growth funding for 2024/25 were agreed by Schools Forum on 14 November 2023 as outlined in Table 2.

Table 2 Criteria and Methodology for allocating Growth Fund**Criteria**

Additional funding will be made available to Dudley schools in any of the circumstances:

- The local authority carries out a formal consultation and approves an increase in the capacity of a school in accordance with School Organisation legislation.
- The local authority requests schools to increase their published admission numbers (PAN) as necessary and publishes on behalf of maintained schools an increased PAN in accordance with the Schools Admissions Code.
- The local authority requests schools to admit significant additional pupils as a consequence of a school closure.
- The local authority requests a school to admit pupils above its PAN to meet localised demand.

- No allocation will be made to a school where the school admits over PAN at their own choice.
- The local authority has agreed with a school to provide an extra class to meet the basic need in the area.

Methodology

- Additional funding will be made available in relation to additional pupils admitted to the relevant school in Reception and Year 7 as recorded on October School Census, until such time as the increase is reflected in all year groups.
- Additional funding will be allocated only to those schools where the number of additional pupils admitted is greater than 10.
- Funding will be based on a reconciliation between year 6/11 leavers and reception/year 7 intake.
- October census data will be used to complete the reconciliation.
- The allocation will be based upon the growth fund allocation from the DfE.
- The allocations will be restricted to a maximum amount per pupil equivalent to 7/12ths of the Minimum per Pupil Funding (£4,610 and £5,995 for primary and secondary school pupils respectively for 2024/25).

*This will reflect the period September to March for maintained schools and from September to August for academy schools.

**To note that growth fund payments to Academies for the period April to August will be funded by the ESFA.

HTCF - Budget Working Group Discussed - Yes - 9 January 2024.

Finance

16. From 1 April 2006, the Schools Budget has been funded by a direct grant: Dedicated School Grant (DSG).

Law

17. The funding of schools is prescribed by the Department for Education (DfE) through the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2023.
18. The Schools Forum is a statutory decision making and consultative body constituted in line with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, and its associated regulations, including the Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012, to enable members of the local school

community to work in partnership with Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council when making decisions about school funding and finances.

Risk Management

19. There are no material risks to the Council's Risk Management Framework resulting from the contents of this report.

Equality Impact

20. This report has no direct implications for the Council's commitment to equality and diversity.

Human Resources /Organisational Development

21. This report has no direct implications for organisational development, human resources or service transformation.

Commercial/Procurement

22. There is no impact on the potential to commercially trade and no impact on our customer base.

Environment / Climate Change

23. This report has no direct implications on the environment or the Council's work in addressing Climate and achieving Net Zero target by 2041.

Council Priorities and Projects

24. The 2022/2025 Council Plan is clear in its ambitions for educational outcomes including raising skills, educational and work potential, increasing good or better schools and closing the gap for disadvantaged pupils. This report relates to the use of the Dedicated Schools Grant funding to support the educational outcomes of children and young people in the borough.



Catherine Driscoll
Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer:

James Wilson, Senior Principal Accountant

Telephone: 01384 815864

Email: james.wilson@dudley.gov.uk

Meeting of Schools Forum – 16th January 2024

Report of the Director of Children’s Services

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Management Plan 2024

Purpose

- 1 To provide an update to Schools Forum on the latest DSG Management Plan.

Recommendation

- 2 Schools Forum is invited to note the draft DSG Management Plan.

Background

- 3 The conditions of grant for the DSG require that any local authority with an overall deficit on its DSG account at the end of the previous financial year, or whose DSG surplus has substantially reduced during the year, must be able to present a plan to the DfE for managing their future DSG spend.

DfE have provided a standard template for local authorities to use in order to manage their DSG and to outline their strategic plans for provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The management plan can be used as a planning tool and should be shared regularly at Schools Forum meetings and appropriate high needs sub-groups.

- 4 In 2022 Dudley was identified as one of 55 Local Authorities with a significant overspend on its High Needs Block and was invited to engage with Round One of the national Delivering Best Value (DBV) in SEND programme, given that High Needs Block (HNB), spending has been increasing by 9% annually over the last 5 years. During the latter part of

2022/23, Newton Europe, commissioned directly via the Department for Education (DfE), undertook a deep dive analysis into Dudley's data to understand the local system and understand the impact on High Needs Block spend.

- 5 Through the modules undertaken as part of the DBV programme, three key areas were identified that are putting increasing pressure on the High Needs block:
- Increasing demand for specialist education provision (annual increase 23%)
 - Increasing demand for new EHCPs (was over 20% per year, is now in line with National at 10% per year)
 - Increasing demand in EHCPs for young people aged between 19 and 25 (annual increase 25% and reduced capacity to end EHCPs for young people aged 19 to 25)
- 6 In response to these areas key workstreams were established to respond to the Newton Europe findings, these being:
1. Redesigning our specialist services and Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) offer
 2. Developing and delivering our sufficiency strategy
 3. Preparation for Adulthood

A separate report on this agenda provides a progress update on these workstreams.

- 7 The DSG Deficit Management Plan must be submitted to DfE by 19 January 2024. Although the full Management Plan template covers the whole of the DSG, including all funding blocks, for the purposes of submission, DfE are focusing on High Needs Block and the measures being put in place to mitigate the increasing deficit. Annexes 1a, 1b and 1c provide the latest working draft in advance of submission. While Phase 1 of the DBV programme was in progress, we were not required to complete the DSG Deficit Management Plan and therefore did not report on it to Schools Forum: now that we have moved into the implementation phase, DfE has asked that we complete the Management Plan. The intention is for the Management Plan to be a live document which will be regularly updated and reported to Schools Forum.

Finance

- 8 From 1 April 2006, schools and related services have been funded by a direct grant, Dedicated School Grant (DSG), which is made up of four funding blocks (Schools, Central Services, Early Years and High Needs). As at the end of the financial year 2022/23, Dudley had a deficit balance on the DSG (High Needs Block) of £26.7m with a current budgeted deficit for 2023/24 of £31.3m and a forecast deficit of £34.0m. The Delivering Better Value in SEND programme aims to bring under control and reverse this increasing deficit, which can, until the end of the 2025/26 financial year, continue to be held in an unusable reserve and carried forward as a deficit on the local authority's DSG balance.

Law

- 9 The Schools Forum is a statutory decision making and consultative body constituted in line with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, and its associated regulations, including the Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012, to enable members of the local school community to work in partnership with Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council when making decisions about school funding and finances.

The funding of schools is prescribed by the Department for Education (DfE) through the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2023.

Risk Management

- 10 Work to mitigate and control the DSG High Needs Block deficit will reduce financial risk to the Council.

Equality Impact

- 11 This report has no direct implications for the Council's commitment to equality and diversity.

Human Resources/Organisational Development

- 12 This report has no direct implications for human resources, organisational development or service transformation.

Commercial/Procurement

- 13 There is no impact on the potential to commercially trade and no impact on our customer base.

Environment/Climate Change

- 14 This report has no direct implications on the environment or the Council's work in addressing Climate and achieving Net Zero target by 2030.

Council Priorities and Projects

- 15 The 2022/2025 Council Plan is clear in its ambitions for educational outcomes including raising skills, educational and work potential, increasing good or better schools and closing the gap for disadvantaged pupils. This report relates to the use of the Dedicated Schools Grant funding to support the educational outcomes of children and young people in the borough.



Sal Thirlway
Service Director for Education, SEND and Family Solutions

On behalf of

Catherine Driscoll
Director of Children's Services

Contact Officers:

Salahdin Thirlway, Service Director of Education, SEND and Family Solutions

Telephone: 01384 814405

Email: salahdin.thirlway@dudley.gov.uk

Susan Powell, Acting Head of Service SEND

Telephone: 01384 815712

Email: susan.powell@dudley.gov.uk

Catherine Ludwig, Finance Manger
Telephone: 01384 815075
Email: catherine.ludwig@dudley.gov.uk

List of Background Documents

Annex:

- 1a - Existing Mitigations – pre Delivering Better Value Programme
- 1b - Delivering Better Value Diagnostic Initiatives
- 1c - New Opportunities

Annex 1A - Existing Mitigations – pre Delivering Better Value Programme

Description of existing mitigations	What it involves	Potential financial impact each financial year				Key risks to implementation and potential mitigations.
		2023-24 £'000	2024-25 £'000	2025-26 £'000	2026-27 £'000	
1 Cessation of mainstream exceptional funding	Exceptional funding savings existed within mainstream schools without any consistency or equity and did not follow any prescribed eligibility criteria. This was removed on the basis that a needs led funding matrix was developed as a spend to save initiative to support mainstream schools with EHCPs.	948	948	948	948	Achieved – risk that the needs led funding matrix is unable to support mainstream schools appropriately and that pupils are instead placed in specialist settings.
2 Ceased or discontinued EHCPs	Dudley EHCPs are above the national average, savings target created on the basis that annual reviews result in reduction to overall cohort. Saving assumes that 80 EHCPs will cease from 2022/23 to 2024/25, and 50 in 2026/27. This assumes average cost of £13k is saved per EHCP. Figures derived on the same basis as average growth calculation, cumulative impact reflected.	2,080	3,120	3,900	4,550	Risk that number of EHCPs does not reduce, risk of increasing complexity of need.
3 Demand management savings	Review of placement composition and changes in line with graduated model, whilst ensuring that mainstream schools are the priority and independent school provision is utilised only when necessary. Cumulative impact reflected.	2,195	3,105	3,917	4,730	Risk that placements do not move towards mainstream in line with graduated model. Risk of increased numbers and complexity of need.
4 Efficiency savings	Achieved. Including staffing related and alternative provision savings	204	204	204	204	Achieved

Annex 1B – Delivering Better Value Diagnostic Initiatives						
Description of DBV Diagnostic Initiatives	What it involves	Potential financial impact each financial year				Key risks to implementation and potential mitigations.
		2023-24 £'000	2024-25 £'000	2025-26 £'000	2026-27 £'000	
Supporting pupils in mainstream without the need for an EHCP	Redesigning our Ordinarily Available Provision, ensuring that mainstream schools have the right resources and capability to support children within their school. Designing and delivering our sufficiency strategy.		1,000	2,000	3,000	Culture change, parental engagement, school capacity, appropriate support.
Supporting pupils to remain in mainstream instead of maintained special schools	Redesigning our Ordinarily Available Provision, ensuring that mainstream schools have the right resources and capability to support children within their school. Designing and delivering our sufficiency strategy.		700	1,400	2,100	Culture change, parental engagement, school capacity, appropriate support. Data analysis and information.
Supporting pupils to remain in mainstream instead of independent non maintained special schools	Redesigning our Ordinarily Available Provision, ensuring that mainstream schools have the right resources and capability to support children within their school. Designing and delivering our sufficiency strategy.		900	1,800	2,700	Culture change, parental engagement, school capacity, appropriate support. Data analysis and information.
Supporting pupils in maintained special schools instead of non maintained special schools	Redesigning our specialist services and staff to ensure appropriate provision. Designing and delivering our sufficiency strategy.		300	600	900	Culture change, parental engagement, school capacity, appropriate support. Data analysis and information.
Supporting pupils in resource bases instead of independent non maintained special schools	Redesigning our specialist services and staff to ensure appropriate provision. Designing and delivering our sufficiency strategy.		100	200	300	Culture change, parental engagement, school capacity, appropriate support. Data analysis and information.
Supporting children who no longer need an EHCP	Redesigning our specialist services and staff to ensure appropriate provision. Designing and delivering our sufficiency strategy.		200	400	600	Culture change, parental engagement, school capacity, appropriate support. Data analysis and information.

New Opportunities

Annex 1C – New Opportunities						
Description of opportunity areas	What it involves	Potential financial impact each financial year				Key risks to implementation and potential mitigations.
		2023-24 £'000	2024-25 £'000	2025-26 £'000	2026-27 £'000	
1. Health contributions	Joint Commissioning Strategy – review in conjunction with Code of Practice in relation to health related interventions and therapy costs, including school nurses, specialist equipment and therapy related costs	0	235	470	470	Capacity in Commissioning and resource constraints in Health
2. DSG block transfers	Explore 1% pa block transfer from Schools Block (costs at 2023/24 levels): decision required by November 2024 for 205/26 financial year.	0	0	2,400	2,400	Schools Forum approval, Secretary of State approval, relationships with schools, school budget capacity. Transfers are only for one year so annual approval needed if this is to continue. Proposal for 1% block transfer from Schools Block to High Needs Block (at current prices).
3. Post 16 – preparing for adulthood	Development of post 16 pathways for young people, ensuring age-appropriate, aptitude-based opportunities, leading to jobs, supported employment and apprenticeship opportunities.		TBC	TBC	TBC	Capacity, communications and engagement with stakeholders.
4. Transitions	Management of transitions and strengthening annual review process	0	50	100	100	Focus on cessation of EHCP at transition points, especially post 16. Over 100 EHCPs have

New Opportunities

						already been identified for review at transition although note that financial impact of cessation will not be significant in many cases. Strengthening annual review process will improve timeliness and ensure appropriate provision but again financial impact is not expected to be significant.
5. Alternative Provision	Review of AP strategy including clear understanding of what is being purchased and systems to ensure that pupils move back towards mainstream provision as swiftly as possible and that commissioned places match what is required.		TBC	TBC	TBC	Increasing demand and capacity identified as the key risks. AP Review in progress.

Meeting of the Dudley Schools Forum – 16th January 2024

Report of the Director of Children’s Services

Delivering Better Value (DBV) in SEND Update

Purpose

1. To provide Schools Forum with an update on the Delivering Better Value in SEND programme in Dudley.

Recommendation

2. That Schools Forum note the content of the DBV Update Report

Background

3. In our November 2023 report, we discussed the challenges faced in 2022, emphasising the overspend of the High Needs Block. We introduced the Delivering Better Value in SEND (DBV) programme and its key objectives. Notably, the Department for Education (DfE) has recently extended the DBV Grant period by 12 months, now spanning until March 2025. This extension highlights our dedication and allows us the additional time to make meaningful progress.

Building on our prior discussions, this report delves into the recent advancements and progress made in addressing our challenges. Our workstreams, as highlighted by Newton Europe's findings, remain central to our endeavours.

The four primary focus areas are:

- Redesigning our specialist services and OAP offer
- Developing and delivering our sufficiency strategy
- Preparation for Adulthood
- Redesigning our Spend Profile

Activity since last period: Key Developments

4. Workstream 1 - Redesigning our specialist services and OAP offer

Within Workstream 1, our collaboration with Genuine Partnerships to rollout the four cornerstones training continues. A total of eight training sessions were undertaken including 2 sessions with the Parent Carer Forum (PCF). A total of 88 attendees actively participated, underscoring the collaborative ethos we are fostering. Two additional sessions are planned for January 2024. We are also looking to extend the invite to all schools to access the same training so that we can develop a whole system understanding and language narrative around coproduction. Looking ahead, our focus will be to review the established success measures against the four cornerstones model to identify the expected positive outcomes we expect to see as part of coproduction successes.

A dedicated task and finish group, supported by four sub-groups, have been established to reframe our Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) Offer. The group is working collectively to standardise the title 'Ordinarily Available Provision' with a view to simplifying this for better understanding. Additionally, work is underway to draw insights from practices in other Local Authorities who have successfully developed their OAP framework to support our development process. Discussions are in progress to explore the possibility of the digitalisation of the framework for improved accessibility.

To further our collaborative efforts, we have scheduled a 'Schools Workshop Day' to take place on 15th January at Himley Hall. This day aims to allow school leaders and SENCOs to discuss and influence future SEN practice and provision. Alongside this event, a school's

questionnaire will be shared with educational settings in January 2024, to gather feedback from schools to refine our specialist services.

As part of the work specific to Redesigning our Specialist Services Delivery Model, a stakeholder working group has been established and is fully underway in undertaking a service assessment and gap analysis of the specialist services delivery, critical steps in shaping our future service delivery requirements.

An evaluation of training requirements for mainstream schools is in progress, this work will focus on building capacity in mainstream schools across all areas of the graduated model and will include workforce development of our own specialist advisory services.

Workstream 2 - Developing and delivering our Sufficiency Strategy.

We have recently commissioned 1st Planner as our delivery partner for the development of our SEND Sufficiency Strategy. This work will support Dudley in providing a comprehensive picture of capacity across the special school and the Alternative Provision estate. A stakeholder working group is in development to ensure full stakeholder engagement and coproduction.

As part of the implementation of Resource Bases, four SEND Units have been set up within primary schools, with Dawley Brook and Jessons in full swing. The tender process has commenced for all interested schools and 4 responses of interest have been received.

The establishment of the commissioning for Inclusion Hubs in early years settings is nearing completion. While we encountered some delays related to contract finalisation and staffing challenges, these issues are now nearing resolution. As we move forward, we plan to initiate the placement of children with SEND into these Hubs at the start of the January term, offering an average of 8 places per setting. As part of the implementation, a contract has been issued for Netherton Park Nursery, with a subsequent request underway for a Capital Grant award to facilitate necessary infrastructure changes.

Workstream 3 – Preparation for Adulthood

This workstream is now part of the formal agreement with the DfE.

Over recent weeks, we encountered some delays in establishing the workplan due to overlaps with activities within APP 6 area of work. However, following a comprehensive review and clarification of roles and responsibilities, we have now successfully developed a refined workplan for this critical area. We anticipate commencing the deliverables early January, ensuring that our efforts are streamlined and focused. For a high-level overview of planned work between January to March, please refer to the breakdown provided in Table 1. Our commitment remains steadfast to expanding post-16 developments.

Workstream 4 – Redesigning our Spend Profile

This workstream is not included in the formal agreement with the DfE, but it is a vital action that forms the foundation for all other DBV work being undertaken.

Redesigning our Spend Profile is a strategic response to our commitment to delivering high-quality educational support and services for children and young people with SEND while addressing budgetary constraints. The primary objective of this workstream is to optimise our spending by identifying Post 16 EHCPs suitable for cessation and improving the timeliness of annual reviews. Through these actions, we aim to enhance service quality, ensure appropriate outcomes within EHCPs, and drive down costs effectively.

Table 1 shows the programme plan of Workstream activities for the period from January 2024 to March 2024, providing a comprehensive overview of the next steps for each Workstream within the programme.

Table 1. Programme Plan of Workstream Activities for January 2024 to March 2024

Workstream 1 - Redesigning our specialist services and OAP offer.					
	Next Steps (Between Jan to Mar 2024)	Impact	RAG Status		
			On track	Monitor	At Risk
<p>1.1 Commissioning of Genuine Partnerships</p> <p>Purpose: Foster collaborative partnerships to enhance stakeholder engagement, leverage external resources, and promote co-production values.</p>	<p>Conduct a review of the success measures of the Four Cornerstones Model</p> <p>Articulate expected positive outcomes to indicate successful co-production efforts.</p> <p>Refresh partnership agreements and monitor their contributions to the DBV programme</p>	<p>Enhanced collaboration with external partners</p> <p>Improved stakeholder engagement-</p> <p>Strengthened co-production values</p>	On Track		
<p>1.2 Reframing our Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) Offer</p> <p>Purpose: An inclusive framework for improved access and effectiveness while setting clear expectations for schools and settings</p>	<p>Design & develop the OAP framework, focusing on clear expectations for schools and settings.</p> <p>Undertake a baseline assessment on EHCP requests and other relevant metrics before, during and after implementation.</p> <p>Undertake the Schools Workshop Day and incorporate the feedback into the work of 1.3 (Service Redesign)</p>	<p>Clear expectations for OAP in schools and settings</p> <p>Enhanced provision of support, resources, and services</p>	On Track		
<p>1.3 Redesigning our Specialist Services Delivery Models</p>	<p>Continue with service assessment and gap analysis, highlighting areas for improvement.</p>	<p>Improved support and confidence in schools</p>	Monitor		

Workstream 1 - Redesigning our specialist services and OAP offer.

	Next Steps (Between Jan to Mar 2024)	Impact	RAG Status		
			On track	Monitor	At Risk
<p>Purpose: Adopt an outward-facing approach to foster greater school support, confidence, and in-house capacity for children with SEND</p>	<p>Collaboratively design ideal services required to meet identified needs and align with the OAP framework. Develop a comprehensive training matrix to enhance staffing capacity and identify gaps, ensuring alignment with overall goals</p>	<p>Enhanced in-house capacity to meet children's needs</p>			
<p>1.4 Supporting Schools to Build Capacity</p> <p>Purpose: Identify training needs, develop tailored materials, and equip mainstream settings to support children without EHCPs</p>	<p>Determine the specific training gaps & needs of mainstream settings. Commission training providers and develop training materials</p>	<p>Improved capacity of mainstream schools Enhanced support for children without EHCPs</p>	Monitor		
<p>1.5 Communication Plan for the DBV Programme</p> <p>Purpose: To ensure effective and tailored communication strategies are established and executed for the DBV Programme.</p>	<p>Develop the draft DBV communication plan and present to the programme group for review and feedback. Craft messages aligned with the programme's goals, determine effective communication channels, and develop a timeline for dissemination. Implement the agreed plan, share messaging using relevant platforms. Establish a mechanism for feedback.</p>	<p>Parent and Carers of SEND, Schools including broader stakeholders and internal services are well-informed about the DBV programme's objectives, progress and opportunities. Systems in place to monitor the effectiveness of</p>	On Track		

Workstream 1 - Redesigning our specialist services and OAP offer.

	Next Steps (Between Jan to Mar 2024)	Impact	RAG Status		
			On track	Monitor	At Risk
		communication efforts, ensuring alignment with programme goals.			

Workstream 2 - Developing and delivering our sufficiency strategy.

	Next Steps (Between Jan to Mar 2024)	Impact	RAG Status		
			On track	Monitor	At Risk
<p>2.1 Developing and Implementing Sufficiency Plan</p> <p>Purpose: To create a comprehensive plan that ensures there are adequate services and resources to meet the current and future needs of children and young people with SEND in Dudley</p>	<p>Engage key stakeholders for strategy development and establish stakeholder working group.</p> <p>Work with 1st Planner to commence of in-depth assessment and understand needs.</p> <p>Perform a gap analysis to identify shortfalls</p>	<p>Improved service adequacy and resource allocation</p> <p>Enhanced understanding of children's needs and capacity gaps.</p>	Monitor		
<p>2.2 Implementation of Resource Bases/SEND Units</p> <p>Purpose: To establish and operate Resource Bases and SEND Units to</p>	<p>Continue the ongoing actions related to the implementation of Resource Bases/SEND Units, focusing on effective integration with mainstream</p>	<p>Establishment of resource bases and SEND units.</p> <p>Integration with mainstream schools</p> <p>Monitoring student progress</p>	On Track		

Workstream 2 - Developing and delivering our sufficiency strategy.

	Next Steps (Between Jan to Mar 2024)	Impact	RAG Status		
			On track	Monitor	At Risk
provide specialised educational support and services for children and young people with SEND	schools, data collection, and student placement				
2.3 Commissioning of Resource Bases/SEND Units for 2024	Continue the ongoing actions related to the commissioning of Resource Bases/SEND Units for 2024, including identifying specific schools, and progressing through the tender process.	Expansion of resource bases Stakeholder consultation and involvement	On Track		
2.4 Commissioning & Implementation of Early Years Inclusion Hubs Purpose: To ensure the smooth implementation and operation of the Early Years Inclusion Hubs	Complete contracts	Establishment & rollout of Early Years Inclusion Hubs	On Track		
2.5 Implementation of Early Identification Pathway with Health Purpose: To establish and execute an early identification process in collaboration with health services	Early Notification Process is now in place, to increase the profile of this process with GP's and other Health Partners	Enhanced early identification of children's needs through collaboration with Health	On Track		

Workstream 3 – Preparation for Adulthood

	Next Steps (Between Jan to Mar 2024)	Impact	RAG Status		
			On track	Monitor	At Risk
<p>3.1 Develop the Post 16 and Post 19 PFA Pathway</p> <p>Purpose: Create a clear transition pathway for young people with disabilities.</p>	<p>List all relevant stakeholders for Post 16 education in the borough. Conduct a survey of current education providers regarding curriculum provision.</p> <p>Create a new 'I-can' strategy highlighting potential career routes for Post 16 and Post 19 students.</p> <p>Establish a Post 16 working group to discuss career progression, retention, curriculum design, and NEET status</p>	<p>Empowering smooth transition for young people</p>	Monitor		
<p>3.2 Development of Apprenticeships and Supported Internships</p> <p>Purpose: Create Apprenticeship and Supported Internships opportunities for Young People with SEND in Dudley</p>	<p>Establish communication channels and partnerships with the local Employment & Skills Board</p> <p>Create a comprehensive list of training and apprenticeship providers across the borough.</p> <p>Evaluate the current availability and demand for supported internships and apprenticeships within the community</p>	<p>Enabling pathways to employment for young people</p>	Monitor		

Workstream 3 – Preparation for Adulthood

	Next Steps (Between Jan to Mar 2024)	Impact	RAG Status		
			On track	Monitor	At Risk
3.3 Implement Independent Travel Training Purpose: Empower young people with disabilities travel skills for independence	Identify travel challenges with stakeholders. Develop travel training curriculum. Allocate budget	Enhancing mobility and independence of young people	Monitor		

Workstream 4 – Redesigning our Spend Profile

	Next Steps (Between Jan to Mar 2024)	Impact	RAG Status		
			On track	Monitor	At Risk
4.1 EHCP Cessations – Post 16 Purpose: Improve the annual review process and identify Post 16 EHCPs due for cessation	Ongoing review to identify and prioritise Year 11 EHCPs to be targeted for cessation. Implement strategies for improved efficiency in annual reviews. Attend scheduled reviews as required.	Driving down costs	Monitor		

	Focus on resource allocation to ensure the cessation work continues		
4.2 Develop Data infrastructure for DBV Programme Purpose: Design and implement an effective data infrastructure	Determine data sources of impact measures. Finalise DBV dashboard	Enhance data driven decision-making	Monitor
4.3 Design & implement operational metrics for benefits. Purpose: Develop metrics for benefits calculation	Conduct an assessment to identify operational metrics. Review and update the existing forecast model in line with the DBV Programme	Improved financial analysis and decision-making	Monitor

Finance

5. Grant funding of £1m from DfE will support the ongoing development and initial delivery of the DVB programme outcomes. Base budgets within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) (High Needs Block) and capital funding approved within the local authority's capital programme will also support ongoing activities as detailed above which will seek to achieve required efficiencies. As at the end of the financial year 2022/23, the local authority had a deficit balance on the DSG (High Needs Block) of £26.7m with a current budgeted deficit for 2023/24 of £31.3m and a forecast deficit of £34.0m. The Delivering Better Value in SEND programme aims to bring under control and reverse this increasing deficit, which can, until the end of the 2025/26 financial year, continue to be held in an unusable reserve and carried forward as a deficit on the local authority's DSG balance.

Law

6. The Schools Forum is a statutory decision making and consultative body constituted in line with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, and its associated regulations, including the Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012, to enable members of the local school community to work in partnership with Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council when making decisions about school funding and finances. The funding of schools is prescribed by the Department for Education (DfE) through the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2023.

Risk Management

7. There are no material risks to the Council's Risk Management Framework resulting from the contents of this report.

Equality Impact

8. This report has no direct implications for the Council's commitment to equality and diversity.

Human Resources/Organisational Development

9. This report has no direct implications for human resources, organisational development, or service transformation.

Commercial/Procurement

10. There is no impact on the potential to commercially trade and no impact on our customer base.

Environment / Climate Change

11. This report has no direct implications on the environment or the Council's work in addressing Climate and achieving Net Zero target by 2030.

Council Priorities and Projects

12. The 2022/2025 Council Plan is clear in its ambitions for educational outcomes including raising skills, educational and work potential, increasing good or better schools and closing the gap for disadvantaged pupils. This report relates to the use of the Dedicated Schools Grant (HNB) funding to support the educational outcomes of children and young people in the borough.



Catherine Driscoll
Director of Children's Services

Contact Officers:
Susan Powell, Head of SEND
Telephone: 01384 816276
Email: susan.powell@dudley.gov.uk

Catherine Ludwig, Finance Manager
Telephone: 01384 815075
Email: catherine.ludwig@dudley.gov.uk