



SCHOOLS FORUM

Tuesday, 18 January 2022 at 4.00 pm

Meeting to be held via: **Microsoft Teams**

| | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---|
| MEMBERSHIP: | Mr M. Vlahakis | Primary Head Teacher, Cadmus Family of schools |
| | Mrs C. Draper | Primary Head Teacher, Short Heath Federation |
| | Mrs J. Garratt | Primary Head Teacher, Walsall Wood |
| | Mr S. Davies | Primary Head Teacher, Christ Church CE (C) JMI School |
| | Mrs N. Boys | Primary Academy Head Teacher, Lodge Farm |
| | Mr M. Moody | Primary Academy Representative, Goldsmiths and Rivers Academies |
| | Mrs S. Bowen | Secondary Maintained Head Teacher, St. Thomas More Catholic School |
| | Mr A. Seager | Secondary Academy Head Teacher, Bloxwich Academy |
| | Mrs H. Keenan | Secondary Academy Head Teacher, Brownhills Academy |
| | Mr W. Downie | Secondary Academy Head Teacher, Streetly Academy |
| | Mrs L. Foster | Primary Governor, Short Heath Federation |
| | Mr M. Fox | Primary Governor, Kings Hill Primary |
| | Mr I. Baker | Secondary Academy Governor, Grace Academy |
| | Mrs C. Fraser | Special School Head Teacher, Castle Business and Enterprise College |
| | Mrs E. Phillips | Academy Special School, Phoenix Academy |
| | Mr C. Bury | Principal, The Ladders School, Alternative Provision |
| | Ms J. Barr | Special School Governor |
| | Ms M. Turley | Nursery Head Teacher, Ogle Hay Nursery |
| | Mr T. Hopkins | PVI Representative |
| | Mr S. Pritchard-Jones | Pupil Referral Unit representative |
| | Vacancy | 16-19 School Forum Representative |
| OBSERVERS: | Councillor C. Towe | Cabinet Portfolio holder for Education and Skills |
| | Mr A. Orlik | Observer, C of E Diocese |
| | Ms S. Guy | Observer, National Education Union |

Quorum – 8 members

A G E N D A

| | | |
|-----|--|--|
| 1. | Welcome and explanation of rules of procedure for virtual meeting | |
| 2. | Apologies | |
| 3. | Minutes – 7 December 2021 – enclosed | |
| 4. | Matters arising from the Minutes: To consider any matters arising from the minutes which do not occur elsewhere on the agenda. | |
| 5. | Late items (urgent) to be introduced by the Chair. | |
| 6. | Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended): To agree that the public be excluded from the private session during consideration of the agenda items indicated for the reasons shown on the agenda. | |
| 7. | Update on the SEND Local Area Improvement Programme and EHCPs – enclosed | |
| 8. | Final Mainstream School Funding Formula for 2022/23 – enclosed | |
| 9. | Approval of Central Expenditure Budgets for 2022/23 – enclosed | |
| 10. | Correspondence – to receive any other items of correspondence that might be of interest or have an effect on the Forum: | |
| 11. | Forward Plan – enclosed | |
| 12. | Late items (if any) | |
| 13. | Dates of future meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 March 2022 at 4.00 pm (Due to a clash with another meeting, Schools Forum agreed for this to be changed from 8 March to 9 March 2022) • 21 June 2022 at 4.00 pm | |

The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012

Specified pecuniary interests

The pecuniary interests that are specified for the purposes of Chapter 7 of Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011 are the interests specified in the second column of the following:

| Subject | Prescribed description |
|---|--|
| Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation | Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain. |
| Sponsorship | <p>Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by a member in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of a member.</p> <p>This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Regulations (Consolidation) Act 1992.</p> |
| Contracts | <p>Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority:</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p> |
| Land | Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority. |
| Licences | Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer. |
| Corporate tenancies | <p>Any tenancy where (to a member's knowledge):</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the relevant authority;</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.</p> |
| Securities | <p>Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where:</p> <p>(a) that body (to a member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) either:</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">(i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">(ii) if the share capital of that body is more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.</p> |

Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)

Access to information: Exempt information

Part 1

Descriptions of exempt information: England

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes:
 - (a) to give any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
 - (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.
8. Information being disclosed during a meeting of a Scrutiny and Performance Panel when considering flood risk management functions which:
 - (a) Constitutes a trades secret;
 - (b) Its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the risk management authority);
 - (c) It was obtained by a risk management authority from any other person and its disclosure to the public by the risk management authority would constitute a breach of confidence actionable by that other person.

Schools Forum

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 7 December 2021 at 4.00 pm Digital Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Held in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulation 2020; and conducted according to the Council's Standing Orders for Remote Meetings and those set out in the Council's Constitution.

Schools Forum Members Present:

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| Mr M. Vlahakis (Chair) | – | Primary Head teacher |
| Mr A. Seager (Vice-Chair) | – | Secondary Academy Head teacher |
| Mr C. Bury | – | Alternative Provision School Principal |
| Mr B. Downie | – | Secondary Academy Head teacher |
| Mrs C. Draper | – | Primary Head teacher |
| Ms L. Foster | – | Primary Governor |
| Mr M. Fox | – | Primary Governor |
| Mr T. Hopkins | – | PVI representative |
| Mr M. Moody | – | Primary Academy representative |
| Mr S. Pritchard-Jones | – | Pupil Referral Unit representative |
| Ms S. Guy | – | National Education Union (Observer) |
| Mr A. Orlik | – | C of E Diocese (Observer) |

Officers Present:

Mrs S. Rowe – Executive Director of Children's Services
Mrs S. Kelly – Director of Access & Inclusion
Ms J. Nash – Interim Head of SEND
Mr N. Perks – Quality Assurance Team Manager
Mr R. Thomas – Head of Access
Mr R. Walley – Technical Accounting, Treasury Management & Education Finance Manager
Dr P. Fantom – Democratic Services Officer

| | | Action |
|-------------------------------|--|--------|
| 1. 07.12..21 | Welcome The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and explaining and rules of procedure and legal context in which the meeting was being held. He also directed members of the public viewing the meeting to the papers, which could be found on the Council's Committee Management Information System (CMIS) webpage. Members confirmed they could both see and hear the proceedings. | |

| | | |
|---|--|----------------|
| <p>2. 07.12.21</p> | <p>Apologies</p> <p>Apologies for absence had been received from Mr I. Baker, Mrs N. Boys, Mr S. Davies, Mrs C. Fraser, Mrs J. Garrett, Miss E. Phillips, Mrs M. Sheehy and Councillor C. Towe.</p> | |
| <p>3. 07.12.21</p> | <p>Minutes – 12 October 2021</p> <p>The Schools Forum received the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2021 (see annexed).</p> <p>The Chair put the recommendation to the vote and it was:</p> <p>Resolved:</p> <p>That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2021, a copy having been previously circulated to each Member of Schools Forum, be approved and signed as a true record.</p> | <p>To note</p> |
| <p>4. 07.12.21</p> | <p>Matters Arising from the Minutes of 12 October 2021</p> <p>There were no matters arising from the minutes.</p> | |
| <p>5. 07.12.21</p> | <p>Late Item/s (urgent) to be introduced by the Chair</p> <p>There were no late items.</p> | |
| <p>6. 07.12.21</p> | <p>Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)</p> <p>The Schools Forum noted that there were no items for consideration in the private session.</p> | |
| <p>7. & 8. 07.12.21</p> | <p>SEND Improvement Programme Update and EHCP Timeliness and Performance Update</p> <p>In relation to AOC4 – Autism, it was noted by Mrs C. Draper that she had been involved in an autism outreach service development, and that a limited pilot – of six schools and six children – was currently underway.</p> <p>Further to a question from the Chair regarding the number of EHCP assessments exceeding the 20-week deadline, an explanation of the steps being taken to address this was provided by Ms J. Nash, Interim Head of SEND. She highlighted the following measures recently introduced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A recovery plan had been introduced on 1 November 2021 and which would run until 1 March 2022, with a ‘deep-dive’ being undertaken to understand where the pressure points and weaknesses lay. | |

| | | |
|--|---|---------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To tackle the annual review backlog, the statutory assessment backlog and issues within placements where children were waiting for a placement, the SEND teams had been formed into four areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Statutory assessment recovery team - Review recovery team - Commissioning and placements recovery team - Tribunals and liaison team • The Statutory assessment recovery team was to remove all out-of-date assessments by 1 March 2022. <p>During discussion, the following further points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That in relation to timeliness, when there was a backlog of statutory assessments, this meant that the 60 – 80% target could not be achieved. Therefore, it was necessary to clear the backlog by 1 March 2022. • That the majority of the backlog was in the primary sector, due to the bulk of assessments coming from primary schools, and that this was the case nationally. • A review of processes and systems was being undertaken and Ms Nash explained the measures introduced to achieve timeliness within the 20 weeks. • That this information should be communicated to the various Heads fora and briefings. <p>Mrs S. Kelly, Director of Access & Inclusion, reminded the Forum that having regard to the annual review backlog, whilst steps were being taken to address this in terms of process and systems as outlined, support was also required from schools, including the timely submission of paperwork and she urged all Forum Members to relay this to representative agencies and partners.</p> <p>Further to a question concerning the availability of the online system for new assessments, Mrs Kelly explained the arrangements for this via the hub and the training that was available.</p> <p>Resolved:</p> <p>That the correspondence be noted.</p> | To note |
| | <p>Correspondence</p> <p>The following items of correspondence were submitted (see annexed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter of 11 November 2021 to Minister for Schools Standards from Chair of Walsall Association of Secondary Head teachers. | |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter of 16 November 2021 to Minister of Schools Standards from Walsall Council. • Letter of 2 December 2021 from Minister for Schools Standards <p>Resolved:</p> <p>That the correspondence be noted.</p> | To note |
| <p>10. 07.12.21</p> | <p>Forward Plan</p> <p>A copy of the Forward Plan was submitted (see annexed). The following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the item: Proposed for Mainstream Schools Local Funding Formula 2022/23, scheduled for the December 2021 meeting, if required, it was noted that this would an item for the January 2022 meeting. • That the Strategic Education and Inclusion Board had now become the Walsall Learning Alliance. This body was to meet and once it had done so a report would be presented to the Schools Forum. • That an item on De-delegation was to be added to those to be considered at the March 2022 meeting of the Schools Forum. <p>In relation to the Forward Plan item: Proposed Early Years Funding Formula for Two, Three and Four Year Olds (if required), a Member enquired whether this could be brought forward from the March to the January 2022 meeting.</p> <p>In response, Mr R. Walley, the Technical Accounting, Treasury Management & Education Finance Manager, explained that the funding allocations were received in late December but he undertook to check whether it would be possible to bring the item to the January meeting and to advise School Forum Members accordingly.</p> <p>Resolved:</p> <p>That the Forward Plan be noted.</p> | To note |
| <p>11. 07.12.21</p> | <p>Late Items</p> <p>There were no late items for consideration.</p> | |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| <p>12. 07.12.21</p> | <p>Date and Time of future meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 January 2022 at 4.00 pm • 9 March 2022 at 4.00 pm (It was agreed that the date of this meeting be changed from 8 March due to another meeting being scheduled for that date/time and it only being possible to live stream one meeting.) • 21 June 2022 at 4.00 pm <p>The Chair ended the meeting by wishing all Members of the School Forum the compliments of the season and he extended his congratulations to Mrs S. Rowe, the Executive Director, and all staff in the Children’s Services Directorate for the recent positive outcome of the Ofsted inspection.</p> | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|

The meeting terminated at 4.26 pm.

Signed

Date:

Date: 18 January 2022

Update on the SEND Local Area Improvement Programme and EHCPs

1. Aim

The SEND Local Area Improvement Programme is designed to address the areas of concern identified by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission in the SEND Local Area inspection February 2019. This is being delivered through a Written Statement of Action (WSOA). The WSoA includes focus areas within the nine areas of concerns, along with agreed actions to improve the quality and timeliness of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

2. Recommendations

For the Forum to consider the content of this report and comment on the progress.

3. Report detail – know

3.1 Preparation for Re-inspection

3.1.1. There has been 117 Local Area Inspections since the Walsall SEND inspection in February 2019. Of these, 60 (51.3%) have been instructed to implement a WSoA. Typically, all Local Areas who are instructed to develop a WSoA will undergo inspection within two years; however, these have been delayed by the Covid -19 pandemic.

3.1.1. SEND re-inspections are typically completed in the order of the original SEND inspections, however this is not an exact science; Walsall expects to be re-inspected in February 2022.

3.1.2. We are currently in the process of gathering evidence for re-inspection, which will clearly evidence our journey, detailing achievements and the outcomes and difference they have made to children, young people and families. Walsall's DFE Advisors are supporting the LA through this process, providing additional guidance and support.

3.2. Programme update

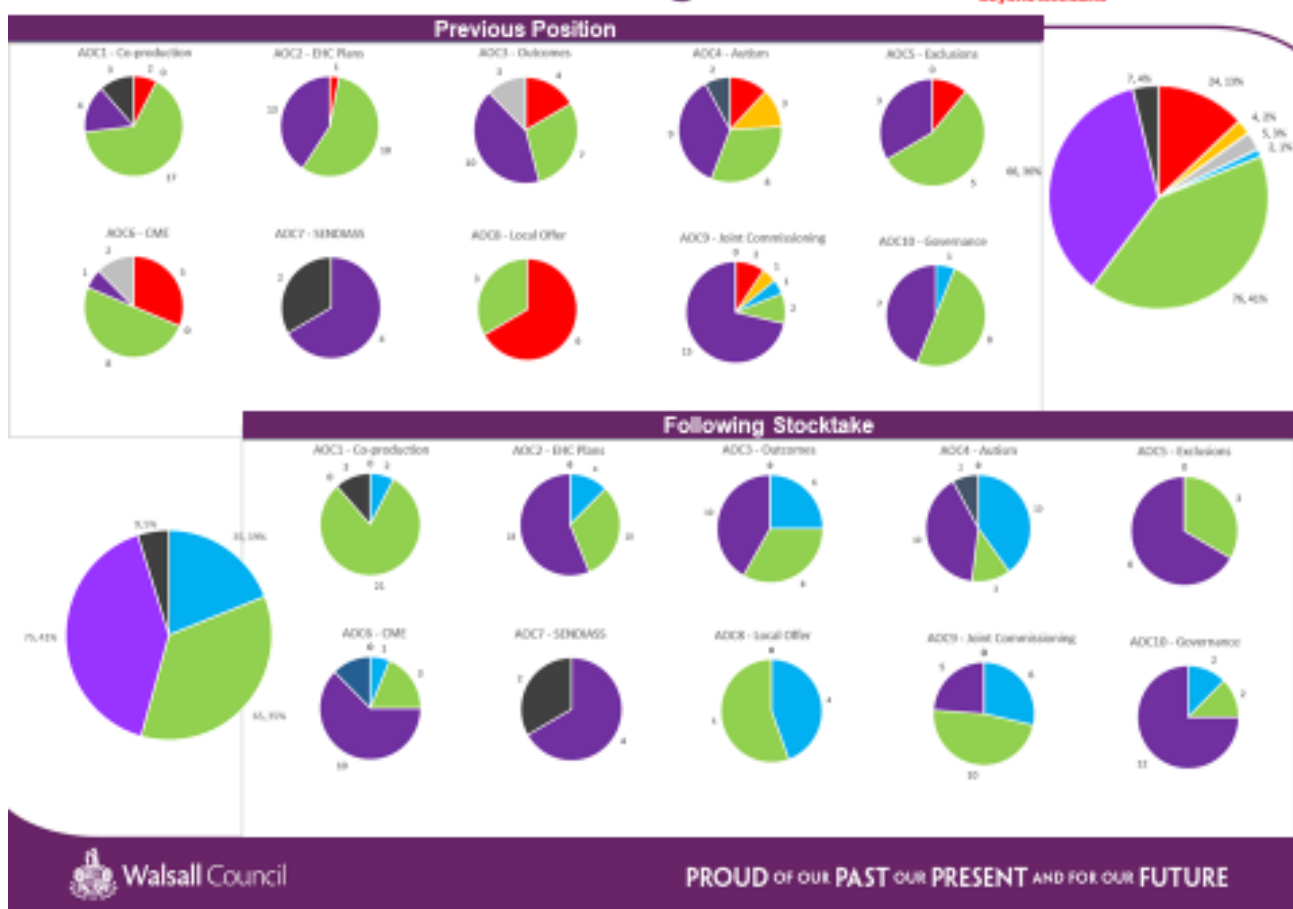
3.2.1 In line with the aforementioned evidence gathering, a 'stocktake' has been undertaken of the actions in the Written Statement of Action (WSOA) to accurate depiction of our current progress. This is outlined in the programme status below:

| Not Started | Beyond Milestone | Delayed | Paused - Covid Exception | In Progress | Complete | Complete and Embedded | Closed | |
|-------------|------------------|---------|--------------------------|-------------|----------|-----------------------|--------|--|
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 35 | 65 | 75 | 9 | Current Action RAG Ratings - Following Stocktake |
| Not Started | Beyond Milestone | Delayed | Paused - Covid Exception | In Progress | Complete | Complete and Embedded | Closed | |
| 0 | 24 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 76 | 66 | 7 | Previous Period Action RAG Ratings |

The following table shows the progress within each Area of Concern.

WSoA Stocktake – following stocktake

Key
 Closed, Completed and Embedded,
 Completed, In Progress, Paused, Delayed,
 Beyond Milestone



3.2.2. Analysis of the programme status shows that the majority, 81% (149 out of 184) of actions are completed. These actions are also clearly evidenced in the form of documentation.

3.2.3. Commencing the stocktake has also highlighted the significant developments and progress which have also been made alongside the progress in the WSoA. Although not directly listed as areas of concern within the WSoA, it is important to acknowledge the additional developmental activity the LA has conducted, evidencing them as appropriate. Where appropriate, these have been

interlinked with the areas of concern in the WSoA, and added into the 'key components of change' which identify areas of improvement.

Additional activity identified includes:

- Covid support including risk assessments for children with an EHCP and monitoring of keeping in touch.
- Support for education staff throughout Covid including the Headspace programme
- Introduction of the SEMH and Behaviour Frameworks (see AOC5)
- Significant amounts of training opportunities (a training summary is currently being produced)
- The implementation of the Shadow Board, which will maintain the effective cross partnership links and strategic collaborative work developed in the LAIB
- Recruitment of Emotional and Literacy support workers to work with parents and children who are Electively Home Educated
- Holiday Home and Food Scheme (HAF)
- Health review and the merger of the Clinical Commissioning Group into the Black Country and West Birmingham

3.2.5 EHCP Assessment Processes Work stream

EHC timeliness and compliancy is a key focus within the EHC assessment team. Timeliness data has been reported to the LAIB board on a monthly basis and action plans have been developed accordingly.

Significant projects have been undertaken within the SEND system in Walsall to ensure continued developments and future sustainability. These are outlined below:

- Review of specialist provision and SEND sufficiency
- Completion of Inclusion, SEND and Accessibility Strategies
- Implementation of a new High Needs Funding (HNF) Model
- Implementation of EHC Panel, ensuring improved scrutiny of EHC needs assessments, quality assurance and processes
- Quality Assurance of EHC Plan writing and professional advice
- Revised processes to EHC plan phased transfers, transitions and annual reviews
- Development of a Tribunal working group to ensure effective management of tribunal matters
- Commissioning of a new Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information and Advice Support (SENDIAS) service to support parents, carers, children and young people.
- Procurement of a new Mediation and Disagreement Resolution Service (PRIME Resolution)

3.3. Education Health and Care Plans – updated progress

3.3.1 Compliance Update Figures

EHCP performance figures are reported on monitored on a weekly basis by the EHC Assessment team and a reported on a monthly basis to the LAIB and DFE. The current figures reported to the DFE are summarised below: We still continue to focus on the development of the EHCP alongside the timeliness.

Progress Report Re. Completion Of EHCP Plans in 20 Weeks 2021 – LA Name Walsall

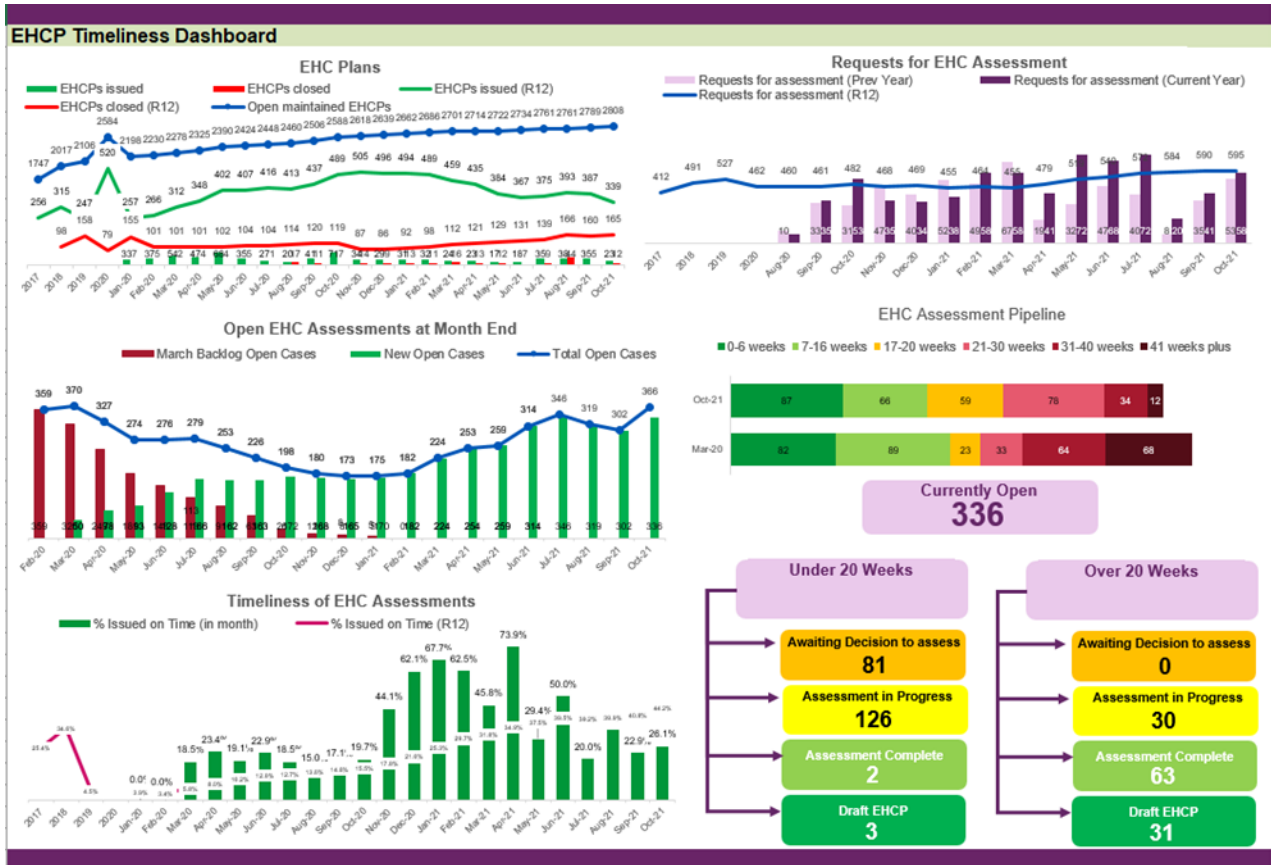
| | 2021 | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov |
| Number of EHCP Plans Issued, excluding exceptions | 31 | 32 | 24 | 23 | 17 | 18 | 35 | 38 | 35 | 23 | 25 |
| Number of these issued in 20 weeks | 21 | 20 | 11 | 17 | 5 | 9 | 7 | 13 | 8 | 6 | 6 |
| % in 20 weeks | 67.7% | 62.5% | 45.8% | 73.9% | 29.4% | 50.0% | 20.0% | 34.2% | 22.9% | 26.1% | 24% |
| Cumulative % in 20 weeks | 25.3% | 29.7% | 31.8% | 34.9% | 37.5% | 39.5% | 39.2% | 39.9% | 40.8% | 44.2% | 40% |

Comparison of Cumulative % in 20 weeks since Inspection in 2019

| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 to date |
|---|------|------|--------------|
| Number of EHCP Plans Issued, excluding exceptions | 247 | 488 | 301 |
| Number of these issued in 20 weeks | 11 | 96 | 123 |
| Cumulative % in 20 weeks | 4% | 20% | 40% |
| Direction of travel | | ↑ | ↑ |

3.3.2 Headlines as of the November '21 are demonstrated in the EHCP Timeliness dashboard below:

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has still continued to impact the SEND service pathways, causing an increased pressure on the EHC Assessment Team and supporting services such as the Educational Psychology Service. More information and context is provided in section 3.3.4. *Risks and Further Actions Taken.*



3.3.3. Achieving EHC Pathways Recovery Plan

From the 29th November to 1st March 2022, the SEND team will all operate within a EHC Pathways Recovery Programme (RP). All the team have been reallocated temporary focused roles to support with the work under either an assessment recovery pathway or a review recovery pathway. Training, development, and support will be offered throughout the programme.

The aim of the programme is to reduce and remove backlogs through a dedicated systematic approach. Clearer roles and process will result in improvements within the EHC assessment backlog and timeliness being consistently above 60%. All processes within the SEND team have been and are continually being reviewed or developed to ensure long term compliancy and timeliness. The recovery programme will end on the 1st March 2022 and be replaced with a ‘transformation programme’ which will look to the future to secure better outcomes and aspirational practice across pathways. The transformation programme will last a further 6 months to embed and strengthen both pathways.

An interim senior management team has been appointed and will support with the oversight and supervision of the recovery programme and regularly report to the SEND team manager and Head of Inclusion. This will allow for frequent and accurate feedback to senior leaders within the council. The SEND team has been split into 2 teams with one focusing on completion of the 20-week

EHC assessments within time, and the other dedicating resources to EHC Annual Reviews. Each team is supervised by highly experienced interim senior officers who are able to support, challenge and give capacity to the focus pathway. Furthermore, both teams are directly managed by an interim manager who will have oversight of the progression and outcomes of the children and young people identified within the programme. Caseloads for all staff, both interim and permanent have been reallocated dependent on their area of work. This is supported by regular supervision over tasks, timescales and step by step guides for consistency.

During the programme, the senior programme management team are meeting weekly to discuss outcomes and completion rates and for quality assurance feedback.

Attached as Appendix 1 is an update on program activity in the Autumn Term.

Key EHC Assessment performance milestones:

- Number of backlog assessments reduced by 50% (75 out of 151)
- New and current statutory assessments managed at compliant (58%) timeliness or above.

3.3.3 Risks and Further Actions Taken

Nationally, there were 430,697 children and young people with an EHC plan maintained by local authorities as at January 2021, this is an increase of 40,588 (10%) from 2020. This increase is also reflected in the West Midlands, with an increase of 4,230 (10%) EHC plans from 2020. In Walsall there is a significant increase in the number of CYP for whom the Council maintain an EHC Plan. On the census return date (14th January 2021) this stood at 2,596; the highest number of EHC Plans recorded in Walsall over the past five years. Walsall's increase is much higher than of National and the West Midlands, at 23.3%; this is an increase of 490 EHC plans from 2020.

The number of children and young people with an EHC Plan has been gradually increasing since March 2019. In November 2020, this stood at 2,622 and has increased by 8.2% over the last 12 months and now stands at 2,838. As of the 30th November 2021, there were 1,976 school age children (NCY 0-11) with an EHC plan maintained by Walsall. 34.6% are attending maintained special schools, 25.8% attend mainstream academies and 24.7% attend mainstream LA schools. 5.4% attend an independent special school and 3.6% attend a special school: academy/free. The remaining school age children account for less than 2% each across all of the remaining SEN school types.

The current increase in EHCP's is placing a greater demand on special school places. As a result the LA are undergoing a specialist provision and sufficiency review which will enable greater capacity planning to meet this increase in need.

Research on the Educational Psychologist workforce was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) in 2019 examined the distribution and demographics of the current Educational Psychologist (EP) workforce in England, and looked to provide evidence of any factors driving recruitment shortages. They found that there are insufficient EP's both in the workforce and in the training pipeline, to meet demand. Monthly recruitment data from the Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP) showed that public sector recruitment of Educational Psychologists fell by a third between 2015 and 2017, with a downward trend continuing into 2018.

In Walsall, the aforementioned recruitment pressures, in conjunction with the Covid-19 pandemic, are happening at a time when educational psychology services are at higher demand. Both of which provide an additional challenges to EHC Assessment Pathways and SEN Support. However positively, we have managed to secure a number of locum EP's and more will be joining the service in to provide support with EHC needs assessments (EHCNA's) in January 2022. Furthermore, as a short term measure, we have redesigned our service delivery, which will enable us to support schools, children/young people and their families most effectively through both the EP traded offer and the completion of EHCNA's. The EP service will be adjusting their offer to schools over the next two terms, allowing for greater capacity to complete EHCNA's in addition to the increase of locum EP support.

Author:

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Achieving EHC Pathways

Update 1 – December 2021

*High Collaborative Expectations; Improving SEND and EHC Pathways in Walsall
for all children, young people, and their families*



Walsall Council

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IMPROVE
outcomes and
customer experience



IMPROVE
employee satisfaction
and engagement



IMPROVE
service efficiency
and performance

Milestone 1 - Planning for Delivery

Completed on Track November 2021

Fran Davies appointed as Interim team Manager

Agree interim structure for recovery project

Review SEN team EHC processes

Review development needs of SEN team

Initial review of EHC assessments

Examine Annual Review process

Initial review & summary of decisions

Review and appoint interim staff to support project

Data review

Papers and Summary for Sharon Kelly

Project start

Milestone 1 - Planning for Delivery

Milestone 1

To have a team structure and function equipped and skilled to manage recovery project
To review and establish changes needed to current practices to ensure efficient project delivery

Identified Risks

None

Completion Rate

November 2021 – Completed

Summary

- Issues with timeliness have been recognised and interim processes ensure that backlogs will not accumulate further.
- Assessment team and review team are clear on processes. Training started and further opportunities in January
- Staff working on scheme of delegation from January 2022 to clarify decision making levels and outcomes
- There has been some unexpected staff changes in oversight of the statutory assessments and these have caused changes to initial staffing structure. Interims have been quickly reorganised and replaced. This has ensured no time is lost with project
- Data has been reviewed and new assessment and review trackers are being developed which will highlight cases for priority with senior management oversight

Milestone 2 – Implementation Assessment and Review Backlog

Completion date December 2021

SEND Team Training Day - roles and responsibilities

New case load allocations

Implement new assessment process

Implement new annual review process

Implement new decision making process

JN and AW comms to schools

Examine link between wider SEN services

Updated tracker for team use and reference

Data links to capita - cleansing data

Begin parental survey for statutory assessment

Case studies for lived experiences learning

Quality assurance to begin on every draft plan

Milestone 2 – Implementation Assessment and Review Backlog

Milestone 2

To begin initial implementation of the project and ensure all staff are prepare for project start

Completion Rate

December 2021 – Completed

Identified Risks

Robust comms to schools to explain project and expectations
Examine link between wider SEN services and any implications for wider teams

Summary

- **Away team day postponed until January due to changes of staffing and annual leave. Ensure all team are able to attend.**
- Case loads have been reallocated and all staff working within confirmed area with flexible arrangements dependant on demand
- AR school papers are returned late and meetings are out of time which means that LA response has become also been out of time, however in Dec 2021 all annual reviews were being processed within LA time scales (2 weeks from meeting) for an outcome. Parents notified.
- **Comms postponed until Jan (partially linked to COVID and uncertainty of face to face or virtual) to tie in with project launch to schools and new expectations. Virtual briefing sessions for schools to be booked in. These will explain changes to teams. JN and AW to work with schools in Jan to improve returns**
- A SEND consultant is starting a new role in January to concentrate on backlog and links between wider teams, allowing AW to focus on schools and transformation
- There are delays with EP returns due to staffing, Locums now focusing on statutory assessments.
- Statutory assessments not impacted by change of staff. New interim senior started and has good oversight of this area. On track to complete M3 backlog targets from January 2022.
- Data has been cleansed and new trackers are ready to use in January. CME data has been significantly improved and perm seniors will now focus on finding placements for CYP
- Case studies underway and Quality assurance complete. [Page 20 of 37](#) every plan before issue. Parental questionnaire now in use for EHC Stat Ass

Milestone 3 - Reduce backlogs and maintain timeliness

Completion date January 2022

Number of backlog and over due statutory assessments reduced by 50% (70 out of 140)

New and current statutory assessments managed at 60% timeliness or above

Highest vulnerable children and young people in confirmed settings with completed annual reviews

All Special school annual reviews began for updates

25% of missing school annual review paperwork completed and returned (target 188 out of 750)

All current annual reviews to follow new pathway and completed notification outcomes by week 2

SEND Consultant to begin in January 2022 and to focus on oversight of assessment and review backlog.

JN and AW to focus on comms to schools and require improvements in joint working

Planned team training day and training schedule planning for 2022

Final Mainstream Schools Funding Formula for 2022/23

1. Purpose of report

1.1 Schools Forum endorsed, and Cabinet approved, the funding formula for mainstream primary and secondary schools for 2022/23 in October 2021. Following this decision, the DfE have now published details of the amount of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) that Walsall will receive in 2022/23. This has allowed the authority to carry out further analysis of the cost of applying the formula at the factor values approved in October, therefore making small positive adjustments to the inflation rates applied to the following factor:

- Low Prior Attainments (Primary & Secondary) +0.10%

1.2 The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) requires the final submission of the 2022/23 Authority Pro-forma Tool (APT) by 21 January 2022. The aim of this report is to obtain the endorsement of Schools Forum, which for legal and governance reasons will then require approval by the Director of Children's Services at Walsall Council, in consultation with the portfolio holder for Education and Skills, before then being submitted to the ESFA.

2. Recommendations

2.1 To note the overall level of DSG funding.

2.2 To note the funding factor values for 2022/23 to ensure that allocations to mainstream schools via the local funding formula are affordable within the funding that is available (updated values are set out at Appendix A).

2.3 To endorse and recommend the formula (as set out at Appendix A), including the changes to funding factor values set out within the report, to the Director of Children's Services, the portfolio holder for Education and Skills, and the ESFA.

3. Background

3.1 This report sets out the changes to the local funding formula factor values for 2022/23 previously approved by Schools Forum to ensure allocations remain within available Schools Block DSG funding.

3.2 The Dedicated Schools Grant is divided into 4 notional blocks. These blocks are Schools, Early Years, High Needs and the Central Schools Services block. Walsall Council, with the endorsement of Schools Forum, has sought as much as possible to allocate funding in line with the ESFA notional blocks.

3.3 DSG can be broken down for the current and next financial year as per table 1 below:

| Table 1 – Total Walsall DSG Funding (before academy recoupment) 2021/22 and 2022/23 | | |
|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| | 2021/22 DSG £m | 2022/23 DSG £m |
| Schools Block | 238.954 | 249.278 |
| High Needs Block | 43.842 | 49.177 |
| Early Years Block | 21.920 | 20.835 |
| Central School Services | 1.561 | 1.663 |
| Total DSG | 306.277 | 320.954 |

4. 2022/23 Schools Funding Formula Pro-forma

- 4.1 Walsall's Schools Block Unit of DSG for 2022/23 totals £249.278m (an increase of £10.324m from the 2021/22 total of £238.954m). The amount of funding attracted on the basis of numbers of pupils totals £245.760m, the value per primary pupil being £4,833 and £6,251 per secondary pupil. In addition, the Schools Block has attracted £2.079m relating to premises costs and £1.439m pupil growth funding.
- 4.2 As stated in paragraph 1.1 Schools Forum has previously endorsed the funding rates for the 2022/23 funding formula for mainstream primary and secondary schools, with the aim that units of resource for each factor would largely remain unchanged from 2021/22, with inflationary increases applied to all factors.
- 4.3 Validated pupil data from the October 2021 census confirms that funded pupil numbers have increased overall by 1.3% compared to October 2020. Totals by sector indicate an increase of 0.6% in primary schools and an increase of 2.2% in secondary. Deprivation data also shows an overall increase of 1.3% in the number of disadvantaged pupils to be funded in 2022/23.
- 4.4 A more significant increase, however, is in the number of pupils eligible for free school meals, 9% in primary and 15% in secondary at an additional cost of £2.604m.
- 4.5 In summary the 2022/23 local funding formula allocates an additional £10.426m, when compared to 2021/22, across the four funding factors detailed below, which is largely funded by the £10.324m increase in the School Block for 2022/23. The balance of the funding needed has been possible by the redistribution of funds from four other formula factors where a reduction in allocated resources has occurred:
- £6.903m funds the 2.6% increase to Basic Entitlement rates, plus the increase in overall pupils.

- £2.579m of additional funding allocated on the basis of free school meals eligibility.
 - £155k additional funding for EAL.
 - £633k additional funding allocated for Deprivation.
 - £156k additional funding for Low Prior Attainment.
- 4.6 All factors have had an inflationary increase of at least 2.4% applied as endorsed by Schools Forum and approved by Cabinet in October 2021.
- 4.7 As in previous years, the local authority is required to set a minimum funding guarantee (MFG) in our local formulae to protect schools from excessive year on year changes. For 2022/23 the MFG has been set at the minimum permitted i.e. +0.5% and is unchanged from October proposals.
- 4.8 The +0.5% MFG will mean that all schools see an increase on per pupil level funding of at least 0.5% between 2021/22 and 2022/23.
- 4.9 The recommended final funding formula values for 2022/23, incorporating the change set out above is shown at Appendix A, and it can be confirmed that these factor values would be affordable within the available Schools Block of DSG.

5. Financial implications / Value for Money

- 5.1 After analysing the level of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) available for 2022/23 and the value of funding set out within the Schools Block, comparing it to the updated formula and values set out in Appendix A, this report confirms the formula would be affordable for 2022/23.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 The report ensures that the school funding formula complies with school funding regulations, and provides sufficient time to allow the authority to finalise the submission of the 2022/23 Authority Pro-forma Tool (APT) by 21 January 2022, in line with ESFA requirements.

7. School Improvement

- 7.1 As part of making any decisions regarding changes to the funding formula factor values, consideration should be made of the potential impact on the desired outcomes of the Walsall school improvement programme.

8. Members eligible to vote

- 8.1 This report provides an update on the changes that have been required to the formula endorsed by Schools Forum in October 2021 and seeks Schools Forums endorsement of the revised formula (as set out at Appendix A), and

recommendation to the Director of Children's Services, the portfolio holder for Education and Skills, and the ESFA. As such, no formal vote is required.

Local Funding Formula Factors and their values for 2022/2023

| Factor | | Indicator / Criteria / Data | | £ Unit / multiplier | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|--|--|--------|------|------|
| Basic Entitlement (AWPU) | Compulsory | October 2021 census | | Primary | £3,211 | | |
| | | | | Secondary | £4,831 | | |
| Minimum per Pupil Funding | Compulsory | MPPL rates have been set in guidance | | Primary | £4,265 | | |
| | | | | Secondary | £5,525 | | |
| Deprivation | Compulsory | Proportion of pupils eligible for Free School Meals | | Primary | £1,258 | | |
| | | | | Secondary | £1,508 | | |
| | | <p>Now changed to use IDACI 2019 ranks to group each lower super output area into one of six bands of decreasing deprivation. IDACI bands have previously been defined on basis of scores.</p> <p>Funding allocated on proportion of pupils in each band.</p> | | Pupils in the next 10% most deprived LSOAs | Band F | £215 | £307 |
| | | | | Pupils in the next 10% most deprived LSOAs | Band E | £256 | £415 |
| | | | | Pupils in the next 5% most deprived LSOAs | Band D | £384 | £548 |
| | | | | Pupils in the next 5% most deprived LSOAs | Band C | £415 | £594 |
| | | | | Pupils in the next 5% most deprived LSOAs | Band B | £445 | £640 |
| Pupils in the most deprived 2.5% of LSOAs | Band A | | | £614 | £860 | | |
| Lump Sum | | Maximum allowable | | £175,000 | | | |
| Low Prior Attainment | Optional | Primary pupils identified as not achieving the expected level of development in the early years foundation stage profile (EYFSP). | | Primary | £871 | | |
| | | Secondary pupils not reaching the expected standard in KS2 at either reading or writing or maths. | | Secondary | £1,302 | | |
| English as Second Language | Optional | Pupils identified in the October census with a first language other than English may attract funding for up to three years after they enter the statutory school system | | £548 | | | |
| Business Rates | Optional | Rateable value of premises with discretionary relief applied where appropriate. | | £0.499 for RV < £51,000 £0.512 for RV > £51,000 | | | |
| Split Site – fixed sum | Optional | A separate site is recognised either where a single school occupies more than one building separated by a public highway or following an amalgamation of two schools where the new school continues to use the two former sites and have two entrances | | £16,615 | | | |
| Premise Rental | Exceptional circumstance | An exceptional factor approved by DfE to fund one primary school for the premise rental charged by the diocese of the school | | £54,000 | | | |
| MFG | | Minimum funding guarantee | | Set at +0.5% | | | |

Approval of Central Expenditure Budgets for 2022/23

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 For Schools Forum to approve the proposed Central Expenditure for 2022/23 as determined by the ESFA and set out in the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Schools Forum approve tables 1 and 2 as set out to form the basis for central expenditure for the 2022/23 financial year.

3. Background

- 3.1 The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations state that “A local authority must not deduct the expenditure referred to in Part 1 (Central Services), Part 2 (Central Schools Expenditure), Part 3 (Central Early Years Expenditure) or Part 5 (Items that May Be Removed From Maintained Schools Budget Shares) of Schedule 2 without authorisation from their Schools Forum under regulation 12 (1), or from the Secretary of State under regulation 12 (3).
- 3.2 This report therefore sets out the amounts that Walsall Council proposes to utilise from the Central School Services Block of DSG and the central budgets to be retained from the Early Years Block of DSG.

4. Items Under Part 1 (Central Services)

- 4.1 **Table 1** below highlights the proposed Central Services that would be funded from the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) of DSG. The total value proposed is in line with the illustrative allocation for CSSB provided by the ESFA.

| Table 1 – Central Services | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Area | Value for 2022/23 (£) | Comments |
| Schools Admissions | 348,986 | This is based on the 2021/22 value funded within the Schools Central Services Block of DSG, increased using revised pupil count. |
| Music Service | 38,000 | Agreed by Schools Forum at their meeting on 21 September 2021, and is the value that has been funded within the Schools Central Services Block of DSG. |

| Area | Value for 2022/23 (£) | Comments |
|--|------------------------------|---|
| Servicing Schools Forum | 5,000 | This is the same value as that requested for 2021/22 and is the value that has been funded within the Schools Central Services Block of DSG |
| Licenses (coded under other items) | 258,537 | This is based on the value provided by the ESFA and included within the Schools Central Services Block of DSG and is in relation to a national agreement for copyright licences. |
| ESG Retained Duties - Responsibilities that Local Authorities hold for all schools | 1,012,695 | This represents funding that was previously paid to the authority as part of the Education Services Grant (ESG) which has now been transferred to the Central Schools Services Block of DSG, and is meant to be utilised to contribute toward the responsibilities that the authority holds for all schools (a full list of these services is provided at Appendix 1). |
| ESG General Duties - Responsibilities that Local Authorities hold for maintained schools | 0 | In line with the feedback from School Forum in previous years, as the funding that the authority previously received as part of the Education Services Grant (ESG) for responsibilities that it holds for maintained schools was not transferred DSG, the authority is not requesting any funding from schools to support these services (as it would represent a cut to school budgets). |

5. Part 2 (Central Early Years Expenditure)

5.1 Table 2 highlights the proposed Central Early Years Expenditure to be funded from the Early Years Block of DSG.

| Table 2 – Central Early Years Expenditure | | |
|--|------------------------------|--|
| Area | Value for 2022/23 (£) | Comments |
| Early Years Contingency | 500,000 | This is estimated based on actual costs required to be paid out to providers from the central early years contingency for 2022/23 and is used to fund termly changes in pupil numbers for 3 and 4 year olds. |
| Expenditure on Children under 5 | 500,000 | Under the updated Early Years finance regulations the local authority is allowed to retain up to 5% of early years funding centrally to fund central early years services, however the £500k requested here is below this level (circa 2.4% of overall Early Years DSG block funding for 2022/23) and in line with that approved by schools forum in previous years. |

6. Financial implications / Value for Money

- 6.1 All values set out are either at or below those agreed for 2021/22, or in line with forecast costs expected for 2021/22, and can be contained within the overall Schools Central Services Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant, and the Early Years Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant funding received by Walsall.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations state that “A local authority must not deduct the expenditure referred to in Part 1 (Central Services), Part 2 (Central Schools Expenditure), Part 3 (Central Early Years Expenditure) or Part 5 (Items that May Be Removed From Maintained Schools Budget Shares) of Schedule 2 without authorisation from their Schools Forum under regulation 12 (1), or from the Secretary of State under regulation 12 (3).

8. School Improvement

- 8.1 No issues directly arising from this report.

9. Members eligible to vote

- 9.1 All elected members with voting rights are eligible to vote on this matter.

| Appendix 1 - Responsibilities that Local Authorities hold for all schools |
|--|
| Statutory and Regulatory duties: |
| Director of children's services and personal staff for director (Sch 1, 20a) |
| Planning for the education service as a whole (Sch 1, 20b) |
| Revenue budget preparation, preparation of information on income and expenditure relating to education, and external audit relating to education (Sch 1, 20d) |
| Administration of grants (Sch 1, 20e) |
| Authorisation and monitoring of expenditure not met from schools' budget shares (Sch 1, 20fi) |
| Formulation and review of local authority schools funding formula (Sch 1, 20g) |
| Internal audit and other tasks related to the authority's chief finance officer's responsibilities under Section 151 of LGA 1972 except duties specifically related to maintained schools (Sch 1, 20i) |
| Consultation costs relating to non-staffing issues (Sch 1, 20r) |
| Plans involving collaboration with other LA services or public/voluntary bodies (Sch 1, 20v) |
| Standing Advisory Committees for Religious Education (SACREs) (Sch 1, 24) |
| Provision of information to or at the request of the Crown other than relating specifically to maintained schools (Sch 1, 20w) |
| Education Welfare: |
| Functions in relation to the exclusion of pupils from schools, excluding any provision of education to excluded pupils (Sch 1, 10c) |
| School attendance (Sch 1, 11) |
| Responsibilities regarding the employment of children (Sch 1, 29) |
| Asset management: |
| Management of the LA's capital programme including preparation and review of an asset management plan, and negotiation and management of private finance transactions (Sch 1, 10a) |
| General landlord duties for all buildings owned by the local authority, including those leased to academies |
| Central support services: |
| No functions |
| Premature retirement and redundancy: |
| No functions |
| Monitoring national curriculum assessment: |
| No functions |
| Therapies: |
| No functions |
| Additional note: |
| Services set out in the table above will also include overheads relating to these services (regulation 8(11) already refers to this for schedule 2 services) for: |
| · Ensuring payments are made in respect of taxation, national insurance and superannuation contributions (Sch 1, 20e). |
| · Recruitment, training, continuing professional development, performance management and personnel management of staff (Sch 1, 20k) |
| · Investigations of employees or potential employees, with or without remuneration (Sch 1, 20l) |
| · Investigation and resolution of complaints (Sch 1, 20t) |
| · Legal services related to education functions (Sch 1, 20u) |

WALSALL

SCHOOLS FORUM

FORWARD PLAN OF DECISIONS

The forward plan sets out decisions which the Schools Forum intend to take over the following 4 months. Preparation of the forward plan helps the Schools Forum to programme its work. The purpose of the forward plan is to give plenty of notice and an opportunity for consultation on the issues to be discussed. The plan is updated in the middle of each month with the period of the plan being rolled forward by one month and republished. The plan is available for public inspection at the First Stop Shop, Civic Centre, Darwall Street, Walsall. Copies of the plan can be obtained from Democratic Services, Walsall MBC, Council House, Lichfield Street, Walsall, WS1 1TW. The forward plan can also be accessed from the Council's website at www.walsall.gov.uk.

Please note that the decision dates are indicative and are subject to change. Please contact the above addressee if you wish to check the date for a particular item.

The Schools Forum agenda and reports are available for inspection by the public 7 days prior to the meeting of the Forum. The papers can be seen at First Stop Shop at the Civic Centre, Walsall. The papers are also available on the Council's website referred to above shortly before the meeting. Background papers are listed on each report submitted to the Schools Forum and members of the public are entitled to see these documents unless they are confidential. The report also contains the name and telephone number of a contact officer. These details can also be found in the forward plan.

Meetings of the Schools Forum are open to the public and take place at a venue within Walsall. Occasionally there are items included on the agenda which are confidential and for those items the public will be asked to leave the meeting.

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**FORWARD PLAN OF DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN
BY SCHOOLS FORUM
FROM SEPTEMBER 2021**

| DECISION TO BE CONSIDERED | BACKGROUND PAPERS AND CONTACT OFFICER | DATE ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| SEND Improvement Programme | SEND Team Manager | Standing Item for each meeting |
| EHCP Performance Framework / Timelines | SEND Team Manager | Standing Item for each meeting |
| Election of Chair and Vice Chair for 2021/22 | Democratic Services Officer | September 2021 |
| School Music Service | Walsall Music Education Hub & Service. Walsall Arena & Arts Centre (Forests Arts Centre) | September, 2021 |
| Update on Local Government Pension Scheme Charges (if required) | Finance Manager | October, 2021 |
| SEND Improvement Programme (Standing Item for each meeting) | SEND Team Manager | October, 2021 |
| EHCP Performance Framework / Timelines (Standing Item for each meeting) | SEND Team Manager | October, 2021 |
| Proposed for Mainstream Schools Local Funding Formula 2022/23 | Finance Manager | October, 2021 |
| Maintained Schools Delegation | Finance Manager | October, 2021 |

| | | |
|---|--|----------------|
| Review of Maintained Schools Balances 2020/21 | Finance Manager | October, 2021 |
| Review of Dedicated Schools Grant – update on 2021/22 Forecast Position | Finance Manager | October, 2021 |
| Strategic Education and Inclusion Board Update on Impact of Board | Chair of Walsall Strategic Education Inclusion Board and School Governance Manager | October, 2021 |
| SEND Improvement Programme (Standing Item for each meeting) | SEND Team Manager | December, 2021 |
| EHCP Performance Framework / Timelines (Standing Item for each meeting) | SEND Team Manager | December, 2021 |
| SEND Improvement Programme (Standing Item for each meeting) | SEND Team Manager | January, 2022 |
| EHCP Performance Framework / Timelines (Standing item for each meeting) | SEND Team Manager | January, 2022 |
| Mainstream Funding Formula 2022/23 | Finance Manager | January, 2022 |
| Central Expenditure Budgets 2022/23 | Finance Manager | January, 2022 |
| SEND Improvement Programme (Standing item for each meeting) | SEND Team Manager | March, 2022 |
| EHCP Performance Framework/Timelines (Standing item for each meeting) | SEND Team Manager | March, 2022 |
| High Needs Funding Formula 2022/23 (if required_ | Finance Manager | March, 2022 |

| | | |
|--|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Proposed Early Years Funding Formula for Two, Three and Four Year Olds (if required) | Finance Manager | March, 2022 |
| De-delegation | Director of Access & Inclusion | March, 2022 |
| SEND Improvement Programme (Standing item for each meeting) | SEND Team Manager | June, 2022 |
| EHCP Performance Framework / Timelines (Standing item for each meeting) | SEND Team Manager | June, 2022 |
| Schools Forum Annual Report | Democratic Services Officer | June, 2022 |
| Dates & Venue for 2022/23 meetings | Democratic Services Officer | June, 2022 |