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To: The Chair and Members
of the Devon Education
Forum

County Hall
Topsham Road
Exeter
Devon
EX2 4QD

Date: 9 March 2021

Contact: Fiona Rutley 01392 382305
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DEVON EDUCATION FORUM

Wednesday, 17th March, 2021

A meeting of the Devon Education Forum is to be held on the above date at 10.00 am, virtual meeting (via Teams) to consider the following matters.

Phil Norrey
Chief Executive

A G E N D A

PART I - OPEN COMMITTEE

1 Apologies for absence and welcome new Members

2 Minutes (Pages 1 - 8)

Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2021, attached

3 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

Items which in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered at the meeting as matters of urgency.

4 Matters Arising from the Last Meeting and Report back on Issues Raised with Cabinet/from F40

To consider any matters arising from the last meeting where not otherwise covered on this agenda and to report on items considered at the Cabinet/by F40.

5 Membership

County Solicitor to report on any matter not covered at item 1 above.

6 Introduction from Chief Officer for Children's Services

10.10am

Introduction from Melissa Caslake, newly appointed Chief Officer for Children's Services.

7 Head of Education & Learning Update (Pages 9 - 10)

10.20am

Head of Education & Learning to report for information on matters including:-

(a) Education and Inclusion Services

Future arrangements for the provision of Education and Inclusion Services Report (CS/21/04) to Cabinet on 10 March 2021 (Cabinet agenda item 14) is available at [Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 10th March, 2021, 10.30 am - Democracy in Devon](#)

(b) School Attendance, 27 February 2021

Data attached.

SPECIFIC AGENDA ITEMS

ITEMS FOR DECISION

8 Finance Update (Pages 11 - 18)

10.40am

Joint report of Chief Officer for Children's Services and County Treasurer (DEF/21/05), attached.

9 2020/21 Advance Notice of Planned Carry Forwards (Pages 19 - 20)

11am

Joint report of Chief Officer for Children's Services and County Treasurer (DEF/21/06,) attached.

STANDARD AGENDA ITEMS

ITEMS FOR DEBATE AND INFORMATION

10 Standing (and other) Groups (Pages 21 - 34)
11.20am

To review action for the Forum from standing (and other) groups and to receive minutes (or summary for information):-

(a) Schools' Finance Group

Minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2021, attached.

Also available at

<https://new.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/school-information/devon-education-forum/schools-finance-group>

(b) School Organisation, Capital and Admissions Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2021, attached.

Also available at

<https://new.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/school-information/devon-education-forum/school-organisation-capital-and-admissions-group-soca>

(c) SEND Transformation Steering Group

Summary of progress for information, attached.

11 Correspondence

12 Dates of Future Meetings

Meetings usually held at County Hall, Exeter, at 10am (unless otherwise specified). However please check venue during the current situation:-

Wednesday 16 June 2021

Wednesday 17 November 2021

Wednesday 19 January 2022

Wednesday 16 March 2022.

<https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?GL=1&bcr=1>

11.30am CLOSE

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Induction Loop available



DEVON EDUCATION FORUM

20 January 2021

Present:-

Schools Members

Primary Headteachers

Mr A Dobson

Marwood Primary

Mr J Stone

Denbury Primary

Ms R Shaw

Exeter Learning Academy Trust (Academy)

Mr P Walker

First Federation Trust (Academy)

Primary Governors

Ms K Brimacombe

Whitchurch Primary

Mr M Dobbins

Exmouth Marpool Primary

Mr A Hines

Rydon Primary (Education SW Trust)(Academy)

Secondary Headteachers

Mrs S Crook

Federation of Tiverton Schools

Mr A Davis

Exmouth CC (Academy)

Ms M Marder

The Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust (Academy)

Secondary Governors

Ms J Elson

Exmouth CC (Academy)

Mrs J Larcombe

Uffculme Academy Trust (Academy)

Mr A Walmsley

The Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust (Academy)

Nursery School

Mrs S Baker

Westexe

Special Headteacher

Mrs J Warne

Learn to Live Federation

Special Governor

Mrs F Butler

Marland School **(Chair)**

Alternative Provision

Mr R Gasson

WAVE Multi Academy Trust

Non-Schools Members

Ms S Lockwood

Exeter Diocesan Board of Education

Mr B Blythe

PETROC

Observer

Councillor J McInnes

Cabinet Member – Children’s Services and Skills

Apologies

Mr J Stokes

West Exmoor Federation (DAG)

Mr L Cottrell

Tavistock Primary (DAG)

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176 Minutes

DECISION:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2020 be signed as a correct record.

177 Matters Arising from the Last Meeting and Report back on Issues Raised with Cabinet

DISCUSSION:

The Cabinet Member - Children, Schools & Skills reported that as Chair of the national fairer funding f40 group advised that he would arrange Forum members to receive a copy of correspondence being sent to MPs at the end of this week.

ACTION: County Solicitor (Fiona Rutley)

178 Membership

DISCUSSION:

The Chairman welcomed new members and the following membership changes were noted:-

Ms S Baretto – Diocesan Schools Commissioner, Plymouth (faith substitute member);

Ms K Brimacombe – Whitchurch Primary (maintained governor); and

Mr J Stokes – West Exmoor Federation (maintained governor).

Mrs A Blewett, maintained primary governor had now stood down following governor elections, after 10 years of service to the Forum. Mrs Blewett continued to support the Forum's governor elections.

DECISION:

That Mrs Blewett be formally thanked for her contribution and long service to the Forum.

ACTION: County Solicitor (Fiona Rutley)

179 Head of Education & Learning Update

DISCUSSION:

The Head of Education & Learning reported on SEND transformation project very recent meetings that had taken place last week and this week (SEND 100 Project Options also considered at minute 183 below).

The aim was to improve the lived experience of children and young people with an integrated service working together to provide children and young people the right support at right time. Phase 1 of the transformation programme completed last summer, was a consultation the needs of users.

SEND was a multi-agency approach, with local area responsibility not just with DCC, but also schools, health, social care and all partners. The project board was multi partnership and included parents and carers.

There were currently three task and finish workstreams:-

-vision and strategy - online consultation with schools and parent groups, which had been positively received. This was due to signed off and ratified in January and published in the first week of February 2021;

-consultation on the provision of more rapid and shorter SEND updates; and

-redesigning and bringing together community based services closer to parents and schools in a partnership approach, with a 4th design now much closer to children and family needs and with professionals linking closer to schools and parents.

Forum members advised it would be helpful to receive a regular written update either as a short summary or any appropriate minutes to be included as a standard item on the Forum's agenda.

DECISION:

That a written summary or minutes be included as appropriate as a standard DEF agenda item.

ACTION:

Head of Education & Learning (Dawn Stabb) and County Solicitor (Fiona Rutley)

180

Finance Update

DISCUSSION:

The Forum considered the joint report of the County Treasurer and acting Chief Officer for Children's Services (DEF/21/01).

The Forum also noted the respective minutes of the Schools Finance Group (SFG) of 6 January 2021.

The report (DEF/21/01) covered budget monitoring, month 8 (2020/21) Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit and monitoring position:-

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-the month 8 outturn forecast saw a significant overspend of £30.4m, due to continued High Needs demand (and growing demand on SEN independent sector placements despite creating more places in Devon's special schools).

-the DSG deficit had increased by £2.6m since month 6 to £30.4m, with a cumulative deficit of £50.36m.

-this could have a considerable impact on the future DSG budget as well as impacting on the financial stability fo Devon County Council. Urgent action was still required to reduce demands of EHCPs and independent placements.

-the Covid-19 pandemic impact on student mental health identified potential additional £297,000 costs in this financial year (not included in the forecast).

In response to Members' questions, including the achievability of the DSG deficit management plan, County Treasurer advised:-

-the draft DSG deficit management plan was due for completion by end January 2021 with proposed actions to address the significant deficit and achieve a balanced budget over a 5 year period. The plan would be brought to the next Forum meeting for consideration as a stakeholder;

-the government position and expectations of LAs nationally regarding HNB deficits was still uncertain post April 2023, with Devon holding ongoing discussions with other comparative LAs;

-the government SEND review was due in Spring 2021, any potential revised timeline was not yet known;

-the SEND 100 project to be considered further by the Forum would include best national practice to bring about transformation within an integrated service and address the demands on the HNB.

DECISION:

(a) that the DSG Deficit as at month 8 as set out in section 1 of the Report (DEF/21/01) be noted;

(b) that month 8 DSG monitoring position as set out in section 2 of the Report (DEF/21/01) be noted.

ACTION: -

181 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2021/2022 - Budget Planning

DISCUSSION:

The Forum considered the joint report of the County Treasurer and acting Chief Officer for Children's Services (DEF/21/01) including:-

-the DSG Deficit further increase of £27.9m due to continued demand for SEN placements, with concern at the ability to balance the budget over time and management action being taken;

-the total DSG settlement £582.155m (2021/22) compared to £533.938m (2020/21 adjusted baseline);

-the position on the various budget blocks.

Members' discussion included:-

-Whether within the 2021/22 budget management actions of £2.2m and the consideration of a further £5.96m were achievable? (see also minute 180 relating to the DSG deficit management plan); and

-clarification requested regarding the removal of ten Alternative Provision medical places (paragraph 6.5 of Report (DEF/21/01))

DECISION:

(a) that the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Deficit as set out in section 1 of Report (DEF/21/01) be noted;

(b) that the DSG 2021/22 announcement on 17 December 2020 as set out in section 2 of Report (DEF/21/01) be noted;

(c) that the Schools Block, Central School Services Block, High Needs Block and Early Years Block as set out in section 3 to 9 of Report (DEF/21/01) be noted; and

(d) that clarification regarding the removal of ten Alternative Provision medical places (paragraph 6.5 of Report (DEF/21/01)) be provided to the Alternative Provision representative.

ACTION: (d) Head of Education & Learning (Simon Niles)

182

Maintained Nursery Schools - De-delegation (DEF minute 157, 17 June 2020)

(Maintained Nursery School representative, Mrs Baker declared an interest in this matter).

DISCUSSION:

The Forum considered the joint report of the County Treasurer and acting Chief Officer for Children's Services (DEF/21/03), following the Forum's decision on 17 June 2020 (minute 157) i.e.:-

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“that Maintained Nursery Schools be permitted to buy into de-delegated services as set out by the DfE for 2020/21, but that the Schools Finance Group review a longer term solution within the next 12 months.”

Ethnic Minority Achievement was not included in this arrangement as these services were not provided at early years age, with funding rates reduced accordingly.

DECISION:

That for 2021/22 Maintained Nursery Schools continue to buy into de-delegation services at the Primary School rates (i.e. contingency, trade unions, maternity and copyrights services only).

(Vote: Maintained primary representatives)

(Vote: Maintained secondary representatives)

ACTION:

County Treasurer (Adrian Fox).

183

SEND 100 Project (DEF minute 170, 18 November 2020)

(Special School Heateacher representative, Mrs Warne declared an interest in this matter as the Head of SW Specialist Schools Teaching Alliance (SW SSTA)).

DISCUSSION:

The Forum considered the report of the Schools Finance Group (DEF/21/04) following the Forum’s request at the last meeting for further costings and potential savings analysis on various model options for future SEN provision, with all stakeholders working together to achieve the savings to bring a balanced DSG budget in coming years.

Members comments included:-

-SFG had requested further detail on monitoring the project, as well as costings for years 2 and 3;

-Members viewed this as a 2-3 year project to implement any recommended cultural and institutional change across Devon settings and that the remaining £60-70k within the initial allocation of funds could also be used to help fund this past the first year;

-that this project could be led by a designated project manager, calling in the expertise of a small multi- agency team to oversee all aspects including commissioning, monitoring effectiveness of options, invest to save evidence to support the ongoing project and reporting to SFG (and this Forum). A designated lead responsible for moving this forward could make quicker

progress than adding on the work to any existing role or only sitting within the Forum and;

-the Alternative Provision representative advised that he had had experience of various alternatives and best practice in other local authority areas and offered his support in developing the project in Devon. He considered a small multi-agency group rather than one individual was likely to be more effective, together with AP representation on SFG;

-in response Forum members generally supported in principle, a designated person to lead the project with multi agency, integrated working to bring about transformation. AP representation at a senior level should be included on SFG on a permanent basis due to this project and other significant ongoing HNB and SEN issues.

DECISION:

(a) that the initial year of the projects and multiples thereof from the underspend from the Growth Fund at the end of 2020/21 be approved; and

(b) that all stakeholders work with LA colleagues to enable continued progress in future years, where the projects have been successful;

(c) that in principle, a designated person to lead the project with multi-agency integrated working, be supported; and

(d) that 1 Alternative Provision seat be included on the Schools Finance Group.

(Vote: Schools, Academies and PVI representatives (excepting (d))).

ACTION:

Head of Education & Learning (Dawn Stabb; and Heidi Watson-Jones (for SFG representation))

184 Standing (and other) Groups

The Forum received the following minutes of its standing groups:-

(a) Schools' Finance Group (SFG)

Minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2021 (considered under Finance Update minute 180 above)

(b) School Organisation, Capital and Admissions (SOCA)

Minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2020.

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185 Dates of Future Meetings

Meetings usually held at County Hall, Exeter, at 10am (unless otherwise specified). However please check venue during the current situation:-

Wednesday 17 March 2021 (virtual meeting)

Wednesday 16 June 2021

Wednesday 17 November 2021

Wednesday 19 January 2022

Wednesday 16 March 2022.

<https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?GL=1&bcr=1>

186 Exclusion of the Press and Public

DECISION: that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information namely, information relating to the financial or business affairs of a third party and of the County Council (as the authority holding that information) and by virtue of the fact that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

187 Education & Inclusion Contract Update

(An item taken in the absence of the press and public – see minute 186 above)

DISCUSSION:

The Head of Education & Learning updated the Forum on the position with the Learner Services to Schools re-commissioning.

The Meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 12.10 pm

The Schools Forum web is

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/school-information/devon-education-forum>

Attendance Update



The picture in Devon Schools and National 27th Feb

	Devon	National
All schools	22%	19%
Primary schools	31%	22%
Secondary schools	9%	5%
Special schools	60%	33%
EHCPs	47%	36%
Social Worker	58%	43%

FINANCE UPDATE

REPORT OF THE COUNTY TREASURER AND CHIEF OFFICER OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Recommendations

It is recommended that Schools Forum:

- a) Note the DSG Deficit as at month 10 as set out in section 1
- b) Note month 10 DSG monitoring position as set out in section 2

All to note

Budget Monitoring Report - Month 8 (2020/21) – Dedicated Schools Grant

Executive Summary

- The month 10 outturn forecast for 2020/21 sees the overall DSG having a significant overspend of £30.1 millions which is associated with the continued demand on High Needs and the growing demand on SEN placements within the Independent Sector despite creating more places within Devon's special schools.
- The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit has seen an increase since month 9 of £204,000 to £30.1 millions. The cumulative deficit has increased to £50 millions.
- This could have a considerable impact on future education budgets within the DSG as well as impacting on the financial stability for Devon County Council. An urgent action is still required to reduce the call on EHCPs and Independent placements.
- The demand wave profiling related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of students has identified potential additional costs of £297,000 for this financial year, these costs are currently not included in the forecast (see section 7).

1. DSG Deficit Management Plan

- 1.1. In 2019/20 we reported the High Needs Block (HNB) deficit of £19.7 millions, carried forward as a deficit reserve as per government guidance. This year we are predicting an increase to the deficit of £30.3 millions, this will be carried forward to 2021/22.

Table 1: Summary of DSG Deficit

	£'000
Deficit High Needs Budget Reserve	19,772
Identified funding gap (year 2)	22,848
In-year deficit 20/21	7,416
Total DSG Deficit Reserve	50,036

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- 1.2.** Service and Finance colleagues are currently working on a management recovery plan. For endorsement by the County Treasurer and Director of Services.
- 1.3.** The DfE have extended the DSG conditions of grant to state that any local authority with an overall deficit on its DSG account, must co-operate with the department in handling that situation by:
- providing information as and when requested by the department about its plans for managing its DSG account in the 2020 to 2021 financial year and subsequently.
 - providing information as and when requested by the department about pressures and potential savings on its high needs budget.
 - meet with officials of the department as and when they request to discuss the local authority's plans and financial situation.

1.4. Recommendation

That Schools Forum note the DSG Deficit as at month 10 as set out in section 1
All to Note

2. Schools

- 2.1.** In November the revised DSG settlement allocation stands at £539.9 millions including Early Years (before recoupment for academies) based upon pupil numbers as at the October 2019 Schools census and January 2020 Early Years census. The working budget is now inclusive of recoupment adjustments totalling £272.3 millions plus other schools grants of £30.7 millions.
- 2.2.** The 2019/20 carry forwards total £19.8 millions and have been approved by cabinet and included in the report. The Schools' Growth Fund underspends will be ring fenced and carried forward to 2021/22 to in part fund the SEN 100 project outcomes.

Table 2: Summary of Month 10 forecast position and significant variations

	Net Budget £'000	Net spend Mth 10 £'000	Forecast at Mth 10 £'000	Variance £'000	Deficit / (Surplus) Balance £'000	Movement from Previous Mth £'000	Ringfenced C/Fwd included in forecast £'000
Schools delegated budget	197,275	151,526	197,275	0	0	0	1,689
Academy Grants	378	378	378	0	0	0	0
DSG and School funding	(302,989)	(256,760)	(303,164)	(175)	(175)	0	0
Total DSG	(105,336)	(104,856)	(105,511)	(175)	(175)	0	2
De-delegated budgets	5,969	2,525	5,969	0	0	0	2,887
Central School Services Block	4,189	2,654	4,189	0	0	0	0
High Needs Funding	97,924	85,040	105,340	7,416	7,416	205	0
Early Years & Childcare Services	39,862	31,435	39,861	(1)	(1)	(1)	63
Total DSG central budgets	147,944	121,654	155,359	7,415	7,415	204	
Identified funding gap (year 2)	(22,848)	0	0	22,848	22,848	0	0
Overall Net DSG budget	19,760	16,798	49,848	30,088	30,088	204	

2.3. De-delegated budgets

- 2.3.1.** The budget covers Copyrights and Licences, Contingencies and exceptional events funds, Babcock contracts budget, Maternity Fund and Trade Unions.

2.3.2. The Schools DSG contingency budget has a surplus of £2.2 millions due to schools delaying planned redundancies due to COVID-19, whilst Maternity fund forecast to underspend by £700,000 as claims remain low. These balances will be ringfenced for carry forward to 2021/22.

2.4. Central School Services Block (CSSB)

2.4.1. The budget is projected to breakeven. The CSSB continues to provide funding for local authorities to carry out central functions on behalf of maintained schools and academies, comprising two distinct elements:

- ongoing responsibilities
- historic commitments

2.5. High Needs

2.5.1. The High Needs Block remains under significant pressure and is reporting an in-year deficit of £7.4 millions. This is in addition to the DSG deficit of £22.8 millions for this financial year resulting in a total deficit position of £30.5 millions. The table below explains the £7.4 millions.

Table 2: Summary of High Needs budgets and forecast position as at Month 10

	Budget £'000	Mth 10 Forecast £'000	Deficit / (Surplus) Balance £'000	Variance £'000	Movement Previous Mth £'000	Notes
Alternative Provision	3,290	2,896	(394)	(394)	6	2.5.2
Children in Care and Exclusions	1,367	1,367	0	0	0	
Closing the Gap	1,500	1,500	0	0	0	
Inclusion	334	334	0	0	0	
Nursery Plus	1,164	1,071	(93)	(93)	0	2.5.3
Safeguarding Every Learner	144	144	0	0	0	
SEN Mainstream	12,969	16,270	3,301	3,301	86	2.5.4
FE Colleges	1,318	2,720	1,402	1,402	40	2.5.5
SEN Services	876	874	(2)	(2)	(45)	2.5.6
Maintained & Academy Special Schools	35,850	36,199	349	349	154	2.5.7
Hospital Education Services	443	443	0	0	0	
Recoupment	682	929	247	247	247	2.5.8
Other Special School Fees	36,558	39,218	2,660	2,660	(250)	2.5.9
Support Centre Funding	1,429	1,375	(54)	(54)	(34)	2.5.10
TOTAL	97,924	105,340	7,416	7,416	204	

2.5.2. Alternative Provision (AP) – Underspend £394,000

The budget includes the main AP contract for 160 planned places, the forecast assumes 134 average AP placements, giving a total contract saving of £324,000. Since month 9 there has been an increased pressure of £6,000 overall. Within AP Other Provision additional expenditure is due to specialist packages for 4 students with high complex needs costing £32,000, this is offset by Post 16 Medical Support savings of £25,000 from commitments no longer required.

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2.5.3. Nursery Plus – Underspend £93,000

Forecast expenditure is based on the last financial year and assumes redundancy clawback from settings will occur where funding in schools exceeds £25,000. This is expected to see £96,000 returned from schools.

2.5.4. SEN Mainstream – Overspend £3.3 millions

This covers personalised education packages and Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) as well as the central SLAs which support them. There is currently a forecast overspend outturn of £3.3 millions, which is an adverse change to forecast of £86,000 since month 9.

Service Area	Price variance			Volume variance			Total Over/(under) spend
	Budget	Actual Average	Total price forecast variance	Budget	Actual Average	Total volume forecast variance	
	EHCP	£3,259	£3,318	£149,978	2,486	2,542	
Plus Packages	£9,595	£9,475	(£41,880)	210	349	£1,333,705	£1,291,825
Mainstream EHCPs			£160,240			£1,516,209	£1,624,307

The mainstream pre-16 EHCP forecast includes lump sums £113,000; prior year payments of £57,000; prior period growth £33,000; invoices paid direct £32,000 as well as the more significant shortfall for element 2 funding at £794,000 overspend. Since month 9 the EHCPs have decreased in volume resulting in a reduction in cost of £16,000, plus packages have a saving of £30,000 due to average cost reduction along with net funding pressure of £21,000 for ongoing shortfall element 2 funding.

Post 16 overspend of £68,000 relates to the shortfall of element 2 funding for maintained schools and element 3 funding in maintained and academies compared with demand.

The Home Education personal budget is forecast to overspend by £325,000. The budget forecast was based upon 68 pupils with an average cost of £6,779, the current forecast is 73 pupils with an average cost of £10,774. Increase in costs of £44,000 from month 9 as personal budgets have been updated and provision for a new starter of £20,000.

Tutoring -specialist provision budget is forecast to overspend by £410,000. The budget forecast was based on 49 pupils with an average cost of £5,880. The current forecast is 89 pupils with an average cost of £7,677.

The SEN Therapies budget is forecast to save £178,000 following renegotiation of the MSI contract hourly rate, this is partially offset by reduced commissioning costs.

2.5.5. FE Colleges – Overspend £1.4 millions

FE colleges is reporting an overspend of £1.4 millions, this is an adverse shift of £39,000 from month 9 to the result of additional funding for South Devon college and Learn to live. Currently there are 683 students, which is 109 (19%) more than budgeted. Any savings that were considered to be achievable have been absorbed by students moving into a higher bandings.

2.5.6. SEN services – Underspend £2,000

Savings of £55,000 in Early Years Complex Needs Service have been identified through a review of staffing and running costs. This has been offset by £53,000 to continue the Employment and Skills team contribution for a further year.

2.5.7. Maintained Special Schools – Overspend £349,000

The maintained special schools currently have 1,431 pupils on roll compared to the budgeted number of 1,418. The forecast assumes further growth of 7 placements for the academic year and that some of those may well attract additional base payments as they would exceed planned numbers.

Service Area	Price variance			Volume variance			Total Over/(under) spend
	Budget	Actual Average	Total price forecast variance	Budget	Actual Average	Total volume forecast variance	
Special School top ups	£11,789	£11,724	(£89,631)	1,381	1,379	(£18,665)	(£108,296)
Exceeded places				0	21	£205,000	£205,000
Plus Packages	£11,333	£13,361	£47,472	12	23	£129,389	£176,861
Maintained & Academy Special Schools			(£42,159)			£315,724	£273,565

There has been an increase of £154,000 since month 9 primarily due to enhanced offer payments. The core offer and residential placements have seen a 2% increase for 2020/21 resulting in £50,000 increase in costs.

In addition, there has been an increase to joint funded residential placements identified since budget prep and further income is expected and included in forecast of £146,000.

2.5.8. Recoupment – Overspend £247,000

Based on the latest schedules received from Plymouth and Torbay an overspend of £247,000 is forecast. This area is still under review and further changes are expected. The current estimate allows for £150,000 spend on Tier 4 beds

2.5.9. Other Independent Special Schools – Overspend £2.7 millions

The independent budget is reporting a forecast overspend of £2.7 millions, this an improvement of £250,000 since month 9. There are currently 883 placements in the Independent sector, set to rise to 902 by the end of the Spring term. There have been 180 new starters in September 2020, an increase of 134% from the level of starters in September 2019.

Service Area	Price variance			Volume variance			Total Over/(under) spend
	Budget	Actual Average	Total price forecast variance	Budget	Actual Average	Total volume forecast variance	
Sole Funded	£49,891	£49,611	(£210,840)	673	753	£3,991,280	£3,780,440
Joint Funded	£85,680	£95,420	£224,020	25	23	(£171,360)	£52,660
Adults	£52,345	£67,380	£225,525	17	15	(£104,690)	£120,835
Virtual School	£10,000	£10,000	£0	5	2	(£30,000)	(£30,000)
Independent Schools			£238,705			£3,685,230	£3,923,935

Agenda Item 8

A task and finish group continues to meet with the top 12 independent sector providers. The aim is to achieve cost savings on placements to help to manage the overspend projected on the High Needs Funding Block.

There are £206,000 of costs identified for students aged 19+ in relation to COVID-19 where placements have been extended for either a further term or an academic year.

The saving of £250,000 relates to a reduction of 3 placements with a favourable volume variance of £162,000 and price variance of £20,000. Joint funded changes and updates cost a further £13,000 net overall.

2.5.10. Support Centres – Underspend £54,000

Savings of £61,000 in element 1 base funding, £40,000 in exceeded place funding along with reduced Babcock commissioning of £28,000 and prior year adjustment savings of £10,000 have been offset by extra element 3 funding of £25,000 and a new unit for September 2020 costing £60,000 this financial year.

Compared to Month 9 £34,000 cost savings identified: Exceeded Place Funding forecast not utilised £58,000 offset by Babcock Hearing Impairment anticipated saving of £15,000 not realised; Element 3 funding of £10,000.

2.6. Early Years – Underspend £1,000

2.6.1. Take up of all age groups is noticeably lower in the first two terms of the financial year due to the pandemic. Protection funding is in place for autumn (income based on last year's January census) so should not cause budget pressure.

2.6.2. SEND applications for funding for Autumn Term is 50% lower than requests for Autumn 2020 but this could be offset by SEND children deferring their school start date.

2.7. Assumptions for the impact of COVID-19 on Mental Health demand (modelling)

2.7.1. The impact of the pandemic on the mental health of students and the support they require for the new academic year have been considered and costed.

Budget		£'000
G8224	AP Medical (10% Rapid rise in demand)	72
G8280	Home Education	17
G8281	Tutoring & specialist provision*	0
Various	Yr0 – Yr11 5% increase in Mental Health EHCP provision (Rapid rise scenario)	193
Various	Yr12 – Yr19 5% increase in Mental Health EHCP provision (flatter rise scenario)	15
	TOTAL:	297

*Assume now in forecast as growth in forecast seen months 7 and 8

2.7.2. £72,000 has been identified for the demand and expected increases where it is assumed WAVE will not have capacity for the level of demand.

2.7.3. The impact on EHCPs has been costed and under the scenario of a rapid rise in demand of 5% for Year 0 – Year 11 Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) related EHCPs (plus 10% on Home Education). Whilst a flatter rise of 5% on post-16 was and is across settings so expected to occur from January – March 2021.

2.8. Risk

- 2.8.1. The SEN placements continue to cause increase in the demand on the High Needs Block. Support from schools to take action to mitigate the growing demand and begin reducing the call on Independent placements is necessary to bring the DSG back in line over the coming years.
- 2.8.2. The SEND 100 projects agreed by Schools Forum in January to enable the projects to commence at the start of the new financial year and put in place for the beginning of the school academic year. Allocations to meet these projects will be taken from the surplus funds within the Growth Fund brought forward to 2021/22.
- 2.8.3. The Management Plan is being completed in line with the DfE template and assumes average cost savings for the actions being undertaken.
- 2.8.4. The Autumn term 2020 for Early years will be based on January 2020 census (normally would be January 2021). Need to consider if we would expect our January 2021 census to be higher. 2-year-old uptake may increase with unemployment yet equally the entitlement to 30 hours may reduce.

2.9. Recommendation:

Schools Forum is asked to note the month 10 DSG update as set out above in section 2.
All to note

MARY DAVIS
County Treasurer

MELISSA CASLAKE
Chief Officer of Children's Services

Please ask for: Adrian Fox
Adrian.fox@devon.gov.uk

2020/21 ADVANCE NOTICE OF PLANNED CARRY FORWARDS

REPORT OF THE COUNTY TREASURER AND CHIEF OFFICER OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Recommendations

It is recommended that Schools Forum:

- a) Agree in principle surplus budget carry forwards to 2021/22 as set out in Table 1.
All to vote

1. Surplus Carry Forward Requests

- 1.1. The table below sets out all current known (estimated) carry forward requests, these will be confirmed and finalised during the closedown process. The total DSG overspend as at month 10 is £30.09m after allowing for the requested carry forwards as detailed below:

Table 1: Surplus budget carry forward requests

Budget Line	Amount £'000	Notes
Growth Fund	154	Rolled forward 2020/21 underspend to fund ongoing growth fund
Growth Fund	1,544	Rolled forward to fund agreed SEND 100 Projects
Total Schools	1,689	
Maternity	700	Rolled forward 2020/21 underspend to fund ongoing maternity cover
Schools and DSG Contingency	2,187	Rolled forward to fund contingency agreements in 2020/21 onwards
Invest to save projects	91	Rolled forward for payments linked to projects in 2020/21
Total De-delegated budgets	2,978	
Hospital Education	82	Rolled forward 2020/21 underspend to fund ongoing Medical AP students
SEND 100	70	
Total High Needs	152	
Total Carry forward requested	4.828	

- 1.2. Maintained School balances and Special School balances will automatically carry forward to 2021/22 in individual budgets. The values of these will not be known until year end accruals have been undertaken.

- 1.3. We are asking schools to explain both surplus and deficit balances as part of the year end accruals process in 2020/21 to remove the chasing of such data during May and June as in previous years.

Agenda Item 9

2. Recommendations

2.1. Schools Forum to agree in principle surplus carry forwards to 2021/22 as set out in Table 1

All to vote

**MARY DAVIS
CASLAKE
County Treasurer**

**MELISSA
Chief Officer of Children's Services**

Please ask for: Adrian Fox
Adrian.fox@devon.gov.uk

Schools Finance Group: Notes of meeting on Wednesday 3 March 2021

Items for DEF to note:

- **Item 4 – SEND / High Needs Block**
DEF to note the preparation of the Dedicated Schools Grant Deficit Management Plan currently being developed to mitigate the current position with the High Needs Block.
- **Item 5 – SEND 100 Project**
DEF to note that a Project Steering Group has been established which is currently finalising terms of reference for the group and drafting a job description for a Project Lead role.
- **Item 6 – Carry Forwards**
SFG recommends to DEF that the reported Carry Forward position be endorsed for Cabinet approval.
- **Item 8 - Education & Inclusion Services Recommissioning**
DEF to note the proposal considered at Cabinet on 10 March regarding future delivery of Education and Inclusion Services.

Attendance

DCC

Karlien Bond	Senior Accountant (Schools)
Adrian Fox (chair)	Head Accountant (Education & Learning)
Dawn Stabb	Head of Education & Learning
Heidi Watson-Jones (notes)	Service Support Officer (E&L)

Devon Schools Leadership Services

Primary:

Alun Dobson	Marwood Primary
Jamie Stone	Denbury Primary
Paul Walker	First Federation MAT

Secondary:

Sammy Crook	Tiverton Federation
Andrew Davis	Exmouth Community College
Lorraine Heath	Uffculme Academy

Alternative Provision:

Rob Gasson	Wave Multi Academy Trust
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SENTient Heads

Keith Bennett	Marland School
Sarah Pickering	Mill Water School

DAG

Faith Butler	Special School Governors
Malcolm Dobbins	Primary Governors
Alex Walmsley	Secondary Governors

Early Years Providers

Dianne Roberts (apologies)	Early Years / PVI providers
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Other DCC Officers

Katrina Harverson	Senior Accountant (Education)
Angie Sinclair	Finance

Agenda Item 10

Schools Finance Group:

Notes of meeting on Wednesday 3 March 2021

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 6 January 2020

- **JF** to consider how EHCP outcomes are articulated within the plan, and the impact on Progress 8 measures being scrutinised by Ofsted.
- All other actions complete.
- Minutes agreed as an accurate record.

2. Growth Fund

- Noted current position.
- Holistic review of falling rolls criteria to be undertaken to ensure central government guidelines are fully taken into account. No schools were eligible for falling rolls funding this year.
- DEF agreed funding at 20 Jan meeting of £1.5m from growth fund surplus
- Top-slice from DSG confirmed.
- Noted new schools coming online.
- Noted some movement since last report due to increased clarity on pupil numbers and timeframes for new school projects. (SW Exeter Free School expected to be completed ahead of schedule).

3. DSG Month 10 monitoring

- Overall DSG overspend at month 10 at £30m. Increase of £204k from Month 9.
- Expecting DfE to request information about the DSG deficit management plan as their intention to contact LAs with significant deficits.
- High Needs Block in-year deficit increasing.
- Recoupment arrangements with other LAs being reviewed.
- Saving of £250k from month 9 due to a reduction in costs and number of placements, and some changes to joint funding arrangements.
- Bid to seek support for improving mental health and wellbeing as a result of Covid-19
-

ACTION:

- **AF** to circulate high level summary of high needs recovery plan strategy to group.

4. SEND/ High Needs

Independent placements monitoring

- Report circulated to the group.
- Noted ASD, SEMH, and Speech & language difficulties continue to be the prevalent needs which will need to be targeted.
- Conversations ongoing with Health around earlier escalation of diagnosis and support for particular needs.
- SFG requested information about high cost placements due to need identified as a direct result of Covid and whether additional funding is available to address these needs. **JF** to provide response

High Needs funding formula consultation

- Process looking at formula factors within the High Needs Block
- Concern was expressed about the baseline of 2017/18 as not representative of the current spend profile in high needs.
- Suggested the LA provide a proforma response which schools could submit

DSG deficit management plan

Schools Finance Group:

Notes of meeting on Wednesday 3 March 2021

- Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan currently being drafted and will be shared following sign-off. High level summary has been fed into medium term finance strategy.
- DS explained that the wider SEND Transformation Programme will consider how Education, Health and care partners can wrap services around schools at an earlier stage to provide effective intervention support and reduce requirement for EHCPs to be in place in order to meet need. SEN deficit in other LAs with wrap-around services are comparatively much lower.
- Additional 300 special school places now coming online which will contribute to reduction of placements in the independent sector.
- DfE have issued updated criteria specifying that DSG may not be used to meet health and care needs which are not related to education.
- Considered management of the deficit and accountability of the LA and the Schools Forum for the recovery plan. AS explained the process of the LA holding a negative reserve relating to the 2019/20 deficit. Noted current 3-year arrangement for LAs to continue to hold an 'unusable reserve' with the expectation that the position will be improved during that time. Anticipated that the recovery timeframe in Devon will be longer.
- SFG sought reassurance that the deficit position will not fall to schools to fund in the longer term. Clear dialogue at DEF and communication of the long-term impact.
- Support of schools in engaging in the SEND Transformation programme will be vital to the success of a longer-term recovery plan. Reduced confidence in schools' ability to adapt practice to meet SEN need can influence a parent's decision that may not be required.
- Considered the perception of the £20m currently in maintained school underspend balances within the DSG.
- Considered risk management of the HNB recovery plan; risk register is currently being drafted.

Action:

- **JF** to provide response around additional funding to meet needs identified as a result of Covid.
- **AF** to provide schools with a draft response from the LA to assist in completing the HNB funding formula consultation for 2022-23.

5. SEND 100 Project update

- Steering Group has now met with good representation across DEF, SFG, schools and LA/Babcock, to be chaired by Rob Gasson.
- Terms of Reference to be finalised.
- Job Description to be developed for Project Lead. Post to be funded by seed funding for SEND 100 scoping, as agreed at January DEF. Hoping for a secondment arrangement to expedite the recruitment process.
- Project coordinators from 3 core projects to consider the alignment of the projects to ensure no duplication and identify how different pieces of work will slot into the individual child's journey.

6. Carry Forwards 2020-21

- SFG noted the surplus carry forward requests to be confirmed and finalised during the closedown process.
- Maintained mainstream and special school budgets will automatically carry forward, with schools being asked to provide explanations for any exceptional amounts.
- SFG agreed in principle for the carry forward proposal to be forwarded to DEF

Agenda Item 10

Schools Finance Group:

Notes of meeting on Wednesday 3 March 2021

7. Mutual Fund Board

- Mutual fund claims had dropped in the first part of the year, with a significant increase towards the end of the financial year with £644k total spend forecast. £1.2m balance brought forward from 2019/20.
- Rebate planned at year end, and premiums to be reduced to address the predicted ongoing surplus.
- SFG requested data to evidence the effect of Covid on staffing levels (e.g. longer-term impact of long-Covid symptoms). Noted that Covid was not specified as a claim category.
- Data over the year clearly shows an increase in absence due to stress, which should continue to be monitored.

ACTION:

- **KB** to look at claim data to determine if any evidence of Covid impact on staff absence is available.

8. Education & Inclusion Services Recommissioning

- Noted updates following consultation processes.
- Final proposals to be considered by Cabinet on 10 March with a view to ensuring ongoing sustainability of all current services alongside promoting an effective SEND Transformation programme. Cabinet report proposes bringing all services in-house under the Education and Learning Service and that **in the event that the LLP is wound up or otherwise ceases to provide the traded services that the new arrangements for the Education and Inclusion Services will ensure the traded services are not impacted.**
- No cost savings are proposed, but will provide an opportunity for fully integrated SEND services, and different delivery models for school improvement support.
- If approved, all service staff would fall under TUPE arrangements for transfer to DCC. DCC Education and Learning staff and Babcock staff have been informed of the proposal.
- The current contractual arrangement may end between March 31st 2022 and March 31st 2023.
- Agreed that communication to schools will be planned for circulation after the Cabinet decision is known.
- Keen for schools to continue to be involved in the strategic planning

Cabinet Report



Education and
Inclusion Services C:

9. Any Other Business

- **Consultation on national funding formula sparsity factors** – submission due by 9 April. Proposing to increase the level of sparsity funding using road distances rather than as the crow flies. An additional £2.2m could be allocated to Devon using the proposed modelling.
- **Free School Meals Take-up** – Devon to roll out Holiday Activities and Food programme over Easter and Summer holidays for children with FSM. Keen to ensure that as many families as possible are able to access the holiday provision through take up.
- Noted DCC have put in place process to check for early years FSM eligibility which will enable ongoing eligibility checks for those children.

Schools Finance Group:

Notes of meeting on Wednesday 3 March 2021

- Communications about the holiday provision will include a prompt for eligible parents to ensure they are signed up for free school meals.

Items for 17 March DEF:

- Month 10 DSG report, Carry Forward, highlighting consultation on Sparsity Funding
- Cabinet paper for background information re. Education & Inclusion
- DSG Deficit Management Plan
- Consideration of ongoing risk in planning.

Next meetings:

Wednesday 26 May 2021 (09.15 – 12.00 – venue TBC)

Wednesday 14 July 2021 (09.15 – 12.00 – venue TBC)

Wednesday 8 September 2021 (09.15 – 16.00 – venue TBC)

Wednesday 3 November 2021 (09.15 – 12.00 – venue TBC)

Wednesday 5 January 2022 (09.15 – 12.00 – venue TBC)

Wednesday 2 March 2022 (09.15 – 12.00 – venue TBC)

Schools Organisation, Capital and Admissions Group: Notes of meeting on Tuesday 2 March 2021

Key Issues for DEF to Note:

-

Attendance

DCC

Neil Pateman (chair)	Built Environments Capital Programme Manager
Andrew Brent	Policy Officer
Fran Butler	Early Years – Childcare Sufficiency Lead
Christine McNeil	School Organisation Policy Manager
Heidi Watson-Jones (notes)	Service Support Officer (E&L)

Devon Schools Leadership Services

Primary

Colin Butler	Otter Valley Federation
Penny Hammett	FORT Federation

Secondary

Phil Randall	St Peters C of E Aided School
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SENTient Heads

Sam Barham	Lampard Community School
Stuart Allman	Pathfield School

DAG

Ian Rogers

Diocesan / Faith School Representatives

Neil Maslen	Plymouth CAST
Christina Mabin	Exeter Anglican Diocese (Admissions)
Richard Power - <i>apologies</i>	Exeter Anglican Diocese (Capital)

Union Representative

Nigel Williams	Corporate Forum (Education) NASUWT
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In Attendance

Nigel Coleman (part)	NPS
Simon Niles (part)	DCC

Schools Organisation, Capital and Admissions Group: Notes of meeting on Tuesday 2 March 2021

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 1 December 2020

- Minutes agreed as an accurate version.
- Fair Access Protocol task & finish group delayed due to new Admissions Code still awaiting publication. Understand amendments will be published in Spring for implementation from September.
- Noted that a number of primary schools now have admissions priority for their nursery children.
- All other actions completed.

ACTION:

- **AB** to convene when more clarity is available
- **AB & FB** to discuss nursery admissions priority for nursery children

2. Annual Admissions report

- Annual report to be submitted by end June.
- Members invited to propose any matters for inclusion to Andrew Brent before the submission date.

3. Determined Admission Arrangements 2022-23

- Coordinated schemes and policies for Community & VC schools now determined by Cabinet. All own admission authority schools should by now have also determined their arrangements and provided a copy of their admissions policy.
- Likely that new admissions code will include provision for children who have been adopted out of state care abroad. Amendments will be made by policy officer to policies as required for 2021 and 2022.
- The Admissions Relevant Area has been determined for the next two years – sets the geographical area for admission arrangements consultations.
- Schools are reminded that the annual determination process is final and should not be amended following the Governing Board meeting. In exceptional circumstances a revision may be made but there is a formal process to follow for this.

- **DSLS** requested to share the message with schools regarding the determination of admission arrangements being the final step in reviewing arrangements, and should not be further amended following determination.

4. Admission Arrangements 2023-24

- Noted in-year coordinated scheme implemented for 2 years to fall in line with the coordinated policy for clarity.
- AB to draft policy documents on behalf of schools for their approval as part of traded admissions service.
- Schools to confirm changes and agree the final document with Admissions.
- Determination of admission arrangements required by 28 February 2022. Schools/Trusts must schedule a meeting in advance to ensure this deadline is met.
- Noted particular focus for sixth form applications (external students) which are not coordinated by the LA requiring clarity around an appropriate application form, application closing dates and offer dates and an appeal process must be in place.

ACTION:

- All admission authorities must schedule a meeting to determine policies during late January/February 2022

Schools Organisation, Capital and Admissions Group: Notes of meeting on Tuesday 2 March 2021

5. Flexi Schooling

- Schools continue to request advice regarding flexi-schooling arrangements.
- Specific advice now included in policy for schools on children with EHCPs or known to Inclusion team.
- Draft policy to be shared. SOCA Members to forward any proposed amendments to Andrew Brent by Monday 15 March

ACTION:

- **HWJ/AB** to circulate draft policy (done). **SOCA** to forward any amendments to AB
- **Special Schools & DSLS** to share updated Flexi Schooling policy with schools

6. Requests for Education out of the normal year group

- Advice continues to be that children should continue to be taught in their academic year groups.
- Draft guidance to be circulated to SOCA members – any amendments to be returned to Andrew Brent.

ACTION:

- **HWJ/AB** to circulate draft policy. **SOCA** to forward any amendments to AB
- **Special Schools & DSLS** to share updated Flexi Schooling policy with schools

7. Early Years update

- Termly survey of providers established to determine number of early years and childcare places that are available (formerly annual).
- Termly survey of parents now introduced to establish demand for childcare. Anticipating a reduced demand due to parents making alternative arrangements while working from home during Pandemic. Social media being used to target parents. Survey closed 28.2.21
- Keen to focus on geographical areas where additional feedback and information on demand is required.
- **Attendance:** New weekly attendance survey in place now, replacing daily attendance register which gathers data to be fed back to DfE each week. 690 out of 822 providers have made a return since January – disappointing that not all settings have submitted a response. At 25.2.21 64 providers were closed. 439 vulnerable children attending which was an increase from 354 on 18.2.21. Unmet demand is being monitored. RD&E childcare setting under particular pressure due to demand and seeking to expand.
- **Early Years Census:** returns made on behalf of PVI providers. Changes have been made to provider portal which will enable settings to provide information to enable the LA to complete the DFE return. Some providers still to update portal. All funded providers are required to complete the survey.
- **Nursery Admissions Arrangements for VC and Community Schools** – concerns that a number schools are still not following the agreed LA arrangements.
- **2-year-old funding** - anticipating increase in number of parents eligible for funded 2-year-old places due to pandemic. As a result, fewer 3- and 4-year old 30-hour places likely to be needed, which may impact on settings with only 3 and 4 year old children.
- Considering capacity in the sector to meet this anticipated increase in demand.

ACTION:

- **DSLs** requested to reiterate need for VC and community schools to follow agreed nursery admissions arrangements.

Schools Organisation, Capital and Admissions Group: Notes of meeting on Tuesday 2 March 2021

8. NPS Update

- Considered difficulties in schools providing site access to contractors. Mindful of concerns in the current climate, however statutory compliance testing should be continuing during the pandemic and should be facilitated wherever possible within the school risk assessments.
- Noted new performance tracking across all maintenance schemes.
- DSLS to remind schools of the importance of statutory compliance/servicing and where possible that schools should facilitate contractor access.
- Report noted

ACTION:

- **DSLS** to remind schools of the importance of statutory compliance/servicing and where possible that schools should facilitate contractor access.

9. Capital Programme Update

- Capital maintenance programme 2021-22 now approved by Cabinet. Team will make contact with schools individually regarding specific work plans. Work expected to be targeted during summer holiday where possible.
- DfE has begun next round of condition data collection of all schools. Anticipated will take 4-5 years to complete whole round – a number of Devon schools were included in the pilot; awaiting reports to monitor benchmarks of condition assessments.
- Net capacity methodology is expected to be revised which will involve a further round of DfE survey assessment. Team to undertake internal review of a number of schools using the draft Net Capacity Tool to assess the impact.
- Anticipating impact on primary schools to be minimal. NP to liaise with FB re. impact on Early Years sector.
- Devon successfully bid for Public Sector Decarbonisation funding submitted corporately which included 3 schools prioritised due to construction of the building and energy efficiency. Direct contact will be made regarding the proposed investment.
- [Link to budget book](#) (pages 31 and 34 pertain to schools' capital maintenance) s

ACTION:

- **NP** to liaise with Fran Butler re. impact of net capacity methodology on Early Years sector.

10. School Organisation Update

- LA has met with a number of local learning communities regarding Covid 19 support. Offer still open for further contact.
- Noted 4 proposers have submitted bids for new special school in Okehampton.
- Noted consultations planned for increase in special school and specialist resource base places in a number of schools.
- **Term dates 2022-23** – drafted to align with neighbouring LAs. SOCA members to forward any comments to Christine McNeil.

ACTION:

- **SOCA members** to review proposed term dates for 2022-23 and respond to CM if any comments.

**Schools Organisation, Capital and Admissions Group:
Notes of meeting on Tuesday 2 March 2021**

Future meeting dates:

- **Tuesday 25 May 2021** (9.30 – 11.30)
- **Tuesday 21 September 2021** (9.30 – 11.30)
- **Tuesday 7 December 2021** (9.30 – 11.30)
- **Tuesday 1 March 2022** (9.30 – 11.30)

Update on the SEND transformation programme.

The **Transformation Steering group** is meeting monthly, with multi-agency involvement, to implement the transformation. Work is being progressed through the following workstreams, with additional ones commencing in line with the SEND Transformation work programme:

1. Vision and strategy workstream

The **SEND vision and strategy 2021-24** was agreed by the Children and Families Partnership Executive on 5th February. It has been developed in co-production with parent carers and people from a wide range of organisations and services, including schools. The draft vision and priorities were consulted on with children and young people (25 replies), parent carers and professionals (400 replies and groups feedback activities); as was the draft strategy (15 and 89 replies respectively).

The strategy can be accessed from either the [SEND homepage](#) or the [SEND vision and strategy page](#) on the Local Offer website.

Two additional slides will be added to the strategy this month with the areas of focus for the next 18 months to 2 years.

An Easy Read video and Easy Read paper are currently in development, to accompany the strategy. This will be completed this month.

2. Design workstream

The following ideas are being considered for the new SEND service model, which are in line with the agreed SEND Design Principles:

- The SEND service model could consist of eight SEND Support Hubs, broadly in line with district boundaries, and four Locality Teams (each of which has two Support Hubs within its area) across Devon (see the diagram below).
- The **SEND Support Hubs** could:
 - Provide **First SEND Support** to children and young people aged 0-25 years, and their families, from services wrapped around their settings (early years settings, schools, special schools, and further education).
 - They would include the SEND support services, members or representatives from other services, and links to other services.
 - Be both virtual and physical bases, potentially with a single point of access.
 - Provide telephone advice, support, and signposting to schools, and when needed to parent carers.
 - Schools could make a referral for support after they have used their own resources to provide support through the graduated response, but where there remain difficulties with supporting the child with SEN/D.
 - Referrals would have multi-agency triage, to determine the response.

- The needs of the child or young person, where necessary, could be assessed with consideration of the wider context, e.g. family situation, experience of the setting and involvement of other agencies.
 - The Support Hubs would do all they could not to say 'no'; with agreed timeframes for a quick response and service provision, e.g. 1-2 weeks.
 - A shared database/IT system (as far as possible); a Hub manager, and a Navigator or Coordinator role to help the child/family/setting to access the support required and coordinate support.
- The Locality Teams could provide **Further SEND Support** for when further help or support is needed from statutory services and other services with a higher threshold for access. They would have good communication links with the hubs, locality teams and other services; provide a quick response; and share information.
3. **The Communications and Engagement workstream** is meeting monthly, with multi-agency involvement, to engage widely, and communicate the work of the SEND Transformation programme.
 4. **The Staff Reference Group** is meeting regularly, to involve staff from all services, including schools, in the SEND service transformation, stimulate innovation, obtain ideas and feedback, and address concerns. Its representatives are called STARS: SEND Transformation Advocate Representatives. Their role is to be a link between staff and the transformation programme, to support the exchange of views, ideas, and information.

SEND Support Hub and Locality Team possible design

