



You can view the agenda on the [website](#)
or use a smart phone camera and scan the code

To: The Chair and Members
of the Devon Education
Forum

County Hall
Topsham Road
Exeter
Devon
EX2 4QD

Date: 16 January 2024

Contact: Fiona Rutley 01392 382305

Email: fiona.rutley@devon.gov.uk

DEVON EDUCATION FORUM

Wednesday, 24th January, 2024

A meeting of the Devon Education Forum is to be held on the above date at 10.00 am at Committee Suite - County Hall to consider the following matters.

Donna Manson
Chief Executive

A G E N D A

PART I - OPEN COMMITTEE

1 Apologies for absence

2 Minutes (Pages 1 - 10)

Minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2023, attached.

3 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

Items which in the opinion of the Chair 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/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.

5 Membership

SPECIFIC AGENDA ITEMS

6 Deputy Director and Head of Education Update
(10.05am)

Deputy Director and Head of Education to report.

7 Special Education Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Transformation Programme Update (Pages 11 - 14)
(10.30am)

Report of the Director of Children and Young People's Futures (DEF/24/02), attached.

ITEMS FOR DECISION

8 Finance Update
(10.50am)

- a Schools Finance Group (SFG) Minutes (Pages 15 - 22)
Minutes of the Schools Finance Group (SFG), 12 January 2024, attached.
Also available at
[Schools Finance Group \(SFG\) – Education and Families \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/schools-finance-group-sfg-education-and-families)
- b High Needs Group Minutes (Pages 23 - 26)
Minutes of the High Needs Group, 8 January 2024, attached.
- c Finance Update (Pages 27 - 38)
Joint Report of the Director of Children and Young People's Futures and Director of Finance and Public Value (DEF/24/03) attached.
- d 2024/25 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Settlement (Pages 39 - 42)
Joint Report of the Director of Children and Young People's Futures and Director of Finance and Public Value (DEF/24/04) attached.
- e Schools Funding Consultation Proposal 4 (Transfer of 0.5% Schools Block to High Needs Block) (Pages 43 - 48)
Joint Report of the Director of Children and Young People's Futures and Director of Finance and Public Value (DEF/24/05) attached. Additionally, there is a report on the summary of survey responses by Devon School Leadership Services (DSLS) CIO (DEF/24/06) attached.

STANDARD AGENDA ITEMS

ITEMS FOR DEBATE AND INFORMATION

- 9 Standing (and other) Groups (Pages 49 - 54)
(11.50am)

To review action and receive minutes for the Forum from its standing groups (excepting Schools Finance Group and the High Needs Group, at set out above) and to receive summary/minutes from other groups:-

(a) Standing Groups

School Organisation, Capital and Admissions Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2023, attached

Also available at

[School Organisation, Capital and Admissions Group \(SOCA\) – Education and Families \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/education-and-families/school-organisation-capital-and-admissions-group)

(b) Other Groups

-

- 10 Correspondence

- 11 Dates of Future Meetings

Meetings at 10am. Please check venue/arrangements

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

Wednesday 20 March 2024

Wednesday 19 June 2024

Wednesday 20 Nov 2024

Wednesday 22 Jan 2025

Wednesday 19 March 2024.

(12.00) CLOSE

Members are reminded that Part II Reports contain exempt information and should therefore be treated accordingly. They should not be disclosed or passed on to any other person(s). They need to be disposed of carefully and should be returned to the Democratic Services Officer at the conclusion of the meeting for disposal.

MEETINGS INFORMATION AND NOTES FOR VISITORS

Getting to County Hall and Notes for Visitors

For SatNav purposes, the postcode for County Hall is EX2 4QD

[Further information about how to get to County Hall](#) gives information on visitor parking at County Hall and bus routes.

Exeter has an excellent network of dedicated cycle routes. For further information see the [Travel Devon webpages](#).

The nearest mainline railway stations are Exeter Central (5 minutes from the High Street), St David's and St Thomas. All have regular bus services to the High Street.

Visitors to County Hall are asked to report to Main Reception on arrival. If visitors have any specific requirements, please contact reception on 01392 382504 beforehand.

Membership of a Committee

For full details of the Membership of a Committee, please [visit the Committee page](#) on the website and click on the name of the Committee you wish to see.

Committee Terms of Reference

For the terms of reference for any Committee, please [visit the Committee page](#) on the website and click on the name of the Committee. Under purpose of Committee, the terms of reference will be listed. Terms of reference for all Committees are also detailed within Section 3b of [the Council's Constitution](#).

Access to Information

Any person wishing to inspect any minutes, reports or background papers relating to an item on the agenda should contact the Clerk of the Meeting. To find this, [visit the Committee page](#) on the website and find the Committee. Under contact information (at the bottom of the page) the Clerk's name and contact details will be present. All [agenda, reports and minutes of any Committee are published on the Website](#)

Public Participation

The Council operates a Public Participation Scheme where members of the public can interact with various Committee meetings in a number of ways. For full details of whether or how you can participate in a meeting, please [look at the Public Participation Scheme](#) or contact the Clerk for the meeting.

In relation to Highways and Traffic Orders Committees, any member of the District Council or a Town or Parish Councillor for the area covered by the HATOC who is not a member of the Committee, may attend and speak to any item on the Agenda with the consent of the Committee, having given 24 hours' notice.

Webcasting, Recording or Reporting of Meetings and Proceedings

The proceedings of any meeting may be recorded and / or broadcasted live, apart from any confidential items which may need to be considered in the absence of the press and public. For more information [go to our webcasting pages](#)

Anyone wishing to film part or all of the proceedings may do so unless the press and public are excluded for that part of the meeting or there is good reason not to do so, as directed by the Chair. Filming must be done as unobtrusively as possible without additional lighting; focusing only on those actively participating in the meeting and having regard to the wishes of others present who may not wish to be filmed.

Anyone wishing to film proceedings is asked to advise the Chair or the Democratic Services Officer in attendance.

Members of the public may also use social media to report on proceedings.

Declarations of Interest for Members of the Council

It is to be noted that Members of the Council must declare any interest they may have in any item to be considered at this meeting, prior to any discussion taking place on that item.

WiFi

An open, publicly available Wi-Fi network (i.e. DCC) is normally available for meetings held in the Committee Suite at County Hall.

Fire

In the event of the fire alarm sounding, leave the building immediately by the nearest available exit following the fire exit signs. If doors fail to unlock press the Green break glass next to the door. Do not stop to collect personal belongings; do not use the lifts; and do not re-enter the building until told to do so. Assemble either on the cobbled car parking area adjacent to the administrative buildings or in the car park behind Bellair.

First Aid

Contact Main Reception (Extension 2504) for a trained first aider.

Mobile Phones

Please switch off all mobile phones before entering the Committee Room or Council Chamber

Alternative Formats

If anyone needs a copy of an Agenda and/or a Report in another format (e.g. large print, audio tape, Braille or other languages), please contact the Customer Service Centre on 0345 155 1015 or email: committee@devon.gov.uk or write to the Democratic and Scrutiny Secretariat in G31, County Hall, Exeter, EX2 4QD.

Induction Loop available



DEVON EDUCATION FORUM

22 November 2023

Present:-

Schools Members

Primary Headteachers

Mrs R Saim

Mr C Tribble

Mr G Chown

Mr P Walker

Cedar Tree Federation

Honiton Primary

Ventrus MAT (Academy)

First Federation Trust (Academy)

Primary Governors

Mr P Elliott

Dartmoor MAT (Academy)

Secondary Headteachers

Mrs S Crook

Ms F Bowler

Ms J Fossey

Mr G Hill

Tiverton High, Federation of Tiverton Schools

Exeter St Peter's CE Aided, Substitute

Braunton Academy

West Exe School, Ted Wragg MAT (Academy)

Secondary Governors

Mr A Hines

Mrs J Larcombe

Mr A Walmsley

Education SW Trust (Academy)

Uffculme Academy Trust (Academy) Substitute

The Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust (Academy)

Nursery School

Mrs S Baker

Westexe

Special Headteacher

Mr K Bennett

Ms S Pickering

Marland School

Mill Water School (observing)

Special Governor

Mrs F Butler

Marland School (**Chair**)

Alternative Provision

Mr R Gasson

WAVE Multi Academy Trust

Non-Schools Members

Ms H Brown

Mr B Blythe

Mrs B Alderson

Ms G Rolstone

RC Diocesan Schools, Plymouth (Faith)

PETROC, 16-19

Teachers Consultative Committee (TCC)

Early Years, Private & Voluntary Independent

Observer

Councillor L Samuel

Cabinet Member – SEND Improvement

Agenda Item 2

2

DEVON EDUCATION FORUM

22/11/23

Apologies

Ms K Brimacombe

Ms G Sanders

Councillor A Leadbetter

Whitchurch Primary, First Fed'n (Academy)

Athena Learning Trust (Academy)

Cabinet Member – Children's Services and Skills (Observer)

101 Minutes

DECISION:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2023 be signed as a correct record.

102 Matters Arising from the Last Meeting and Report back on Issues Raised with Cabinet/f40

-

103 Membership (incl Appointment of Cabinet Member for SEND Improvement to DEF)

DISCUSSION:

The Chair welcomed new Members and the following membership changes were noted:-

(a) The Forum noted that following this new DCC Cabinet Member position wef 1 September 2023, Councillor Lois Samuel had been appointed to DEF as:

Cabinet Member for SEND Improvement (Formal Observer, non-voting).

This position was in addition to that on DEF of: Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Schools, Formal Observer (non-voting). Urgency procedures had been used for this approval following consultation with DCC Members and all DEF Members (September 2023), with Councillor Samuel invited to this meeting.

(b) Resignation of Ms S Channel (Tiverton High School), Secondary Governor.

Elections were currently in process for maintained governor representatives.

ACTION: Director of Legal and Democratic Services (Fiona Rutley)/DAG.

104 Education and Learning Update

DISCUSSION:

The Forum considered the report of the Director of Children's and Young People's Futures (DEF/23/12) including as follows:-

(a) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for attendance, exclusions, elective home education (EHE) and children missing education (CME), since autumn term 2021, to date:

– whilst there had been some improvement in Special Educational Needs (SEN)/Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) pupil attendance, there was some work still to be done. Attendance was a national issue and Devon's attendance and improvement team was doing further work to understand the reasons with schools and to improve the system;

-exclusions data indicated that SEN and struggling pupils were more likely to be excluded/suspended, with persistent disruptive behaviour followed by physical assault against a pupil, being the most common reasons for these sanctions;

-there was a Government consultation on proposed changes to the non-statutory EHE guidance for LAs and parents, open to all to comment, closing date 18 January 2024 [Elective Home Education guidance review - Department for Education - Citizen Space](#) Devon's monitoring of EHE pupils remained well below the annual review target unless there were safeguarding reasons. Whilst EHE remained a right of parents, there had been a significant increase and Devon needed to understand why, as more EHE pupils were as a result of parents dissatisfied with schools rather than lifestyle choices. EHE data was also time tracking pupils as to the length of time they were EHE. School transition years R, 1, 7, as well as year 10 were EHE spike years;

(b) Staffing changes of key personnel was reported, including that an appointment was not made to the Head of Education post following the recruitment process, with further interim measures to be announced shortly;

(c) Early Help was to be developed to reduce reliance on EHCPs to address SEN;

(d) Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) Partnership Project;

(e) Devon School Admissions had high levels of meeting parental preference/ children being offered places;

(f) 2022/23 Outcomes by key stage, indicated there was a lot of work to do regarding KS2 being below national and regional statistical neighbours, linking the spike in EHE and exclusions in year 7; the low attainment gap widened as pupils moved through the key stages, with pupils needing to be able to access the curriculum to meet their needs; Devon was working closely with Essex Local Authority (LA) which had a similar social mobility pattern; Devon's KS4 results were now improving from a historically lower rate;

Agenda Item 2

4

DEVON EDUCATION FORUM

22/11/23

(g) School Ofsted - the Head of Education wished to reassure school leaders of the LA's support to help school improvements where required.

Discussion also included:-

-Data indicated the more disadvantaged pupils were being EHE, but where there were patterns the LA discussed with schools to understand the context, as well as with Ofsted around inclusivity, to avoid concerns such as off-rolling;

-A consistent inclusive Devon schools approach and stronger partnership working of the LA, schools and health would improve attendance, exclusion and EHE rates. A deeper understanding of the data and review of systems could support these vulnerable pupil groups;

-DEF were keen to have clarity around Devon's arrangements to cover the Head of Education role to avoid disruption to the LA and schools partnership working.

DECISION:

That the Forum thank the two interim Heads of Education for their work and support over recent months and for stepping into the role (until end autumn term 2023).

ACTION:

Head of Education (Rachel Shaw)

105 Update on Devon's SEND Transformation Programme

DISCUSSION:

The Forum considered the Report of the Director of Children's and Young People's Futures (DEF/23/16), regarding Devon's partnership approach to SEND improvement and the development of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) management plan as part of the Safety Vale negotiations with the DfE.

Devon's SEND Improvement Director (interim) was now four months into a twelve month contract with Devon, presenting a revised approach to SEND Improvement following Ofsted requiring action to address four areas of significant weakness. The revised approach had broadened the SEND transformation programme; it was developing a new governance structure which was already operating well; developing of management plans for improved service and financial stability; looking at Devon's SEND cohort; primary needs; school provision and outcomes in absenteeism and SEN exclusion rates. The Early Help offer was crucial in reducing the demands and expectations of both schools and families for EHCPs. This was a system

wide challenge, requiring greater collaborative working and collective ownership across the LA, schools and health.

The SEND Improvement Director (interim) was happy to share Devon's more detailed data with schools, although national data was not available.

DECISION:

(a) that the revised approach to SEND improvement to enable system wide change be noted; and

(b) the current position in developing Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) management plan (Safety Valve) be noted.

ACTION:

SEND Improvement Director (interim), Kellie Knott (data for schools).

106

Finance Update

DISCUSSION:

(a) Schools Finance Group Minutes - 13 September and 6 November 2023

The Forum considered the above minutes, including the respective minutes relating to the Finance Update Report at (b).

Also available at

[Schools Finance Group \(SFG\) – Education and Families \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/schools-finance-group-sfg-education-and-families)

DECISION:

that the minutes of the Schools Finance Group (SFG), 13 September and 6 November 2023 be received.

(b) Finance Update Report

The Forum considered the report of the Director of Children and Young People's Futures and Director of Finance and Public Value (DEF/23/13).

The report (DEF/23/13) covered:-

-Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and Schools Funding Month 6 Report 2023/24;

-Schools;

-DSG Management Plan;

Agenda Item 2

6

DEVON EDUCATION FORUM

22/11/23

-High Needs;

-Management Actions; and

-Risks.

The summary indicated that:-

-Month 6 outturn forecast for 2023/24 saw a significant overspend in the overall Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) of £38.1 million which was associated with the continued demand on High Needs after taking into account management actions savings of £12.2 million identified in the current Safety Valve Intervention Management Plan;

-The management action of £20.2 million reflected the budgeted savings expected to be delivered in 2023/24 as per the current Safety Valve submission to the DfE. As at month 6, £9.8 million had been identified as being at risk of not being delivered due to either delays in projects not commencing or no longer happening;

-An additional £2 million savings within the independent sector had been identified from 3-5 year placements ending and Adult Social Care contribution;

-The DSG Adjustment Account, which showed the cumulative DSG Deficit was projected to rise to £162.5 million by the end of 2023/24;

-A high level of requests continued for Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) referrals, 1,648 requests had been received for the period January 2023 to September 2023 compared to 1,540 for the same period in 2022. However the number of requests being refused at 6 weeks and 16 weeks had increased since 2022 for the same period. Support from schools was required to take action to mitigate the growing demand;

-The increasing DSG deficit could have a considerable impact on future education budgets within the DSG as well as impacting on the financial sustainability for Devon County Council; and

-An interim SEND Improvement Director from the DfE was working with Devon to drive forward the SEND Improvement Plan and the Safety Valve. Programme Management support had also been identified within the LA to help both support and deliver the SEND Improvement Plan and the Safety Valve Plan to manage the High Needs Block deficit.

In response to questions, Officers advised that from their ongoing work with DfE advisers, the DfE needed to see an evidenced, robust and realistically deliverable Safety Valve Plan before Devon was accepted onto its programme. It was anticipated that a Plan to meet the DfE's requirements could be achieved by the 15 December 2023 submission date.

Whilst DEF was being asked to note the update, Members remained concerned about the ongoing difficult financial situation as above.

DECISION:

that the month 6 DSG monitoring position be noted.

107 **2024-25 Schools Funding Arrangements Consultation Responses**

DISCUSSION:

The Forum considered the Report of the Director of Finance & Public Value and Director of Children and Young Peoples Futures (DEF/23/14) following Devon's consultation on schools funding arrangements 2024/25 with schools (closed 22 October 2023).

Officers advised that in respect of Report recommendation (a)(ii)(a), proposal 4, regarding the transfer between books (section 4(c) of the Report), the Forum was not currently being asked to take a decision on Proposal 4 itself due to outstanding information still awaited, but to agree in principle on how funding would be distributed, in relation to the consideration of Proposal 4 at the Forum's meeting in January 2024. Should the Forum not agree to Proposal 4 at its January 2024 meeting, this would not form any part of the allocation should the County Council receive additional funds from Government in December 2023.

Some Headteacher representatives raised a concern regarding process and how the views of schools would be taken into account in the consideration of proposal 4, seeking an adjournment to consider their position.

Following a short adjournment:-

Headteacher representatives noted that schools' views could be further sought (where appropriate), before consideration by the Forum in January, if the County Council could provide the outstanding information shortly.

DECISION:

(a) that the proposals for schools funding (in line with the results of the consultation) be approved:-

(i) to set the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) to at 0%;

(ii) to distribute any unallocated funding in the following order:

(A) Go towards the amount being transferred to the high needs block up to a maximum of 0.5%, provided that Proposal 4 was agreed in principle;

(B) Increase AEN factors by up to the allowed maximum of 2.5%;

(C) Increase all other factors up to the allowed maximum of 2.5%;

(D) Increase the MFG up to a maximum of 0.5% per 2024-25 guidance;

Agenda Item 2

8

DEVON EDUCATION FORUM

22/11/23

(iii) to bridge any funding gap in the following order:

(A) reduced AWPU by up the allowed maximum of 2.5%; and

(B) reduced all other factors by up the allowed maximum of 2.5%.

(Vote: Schools, Academies and PVI)

(b) the de-delegation of the services listed in Section 5a of the Report, in line with the results of the consultation be approved;

(Vote: Maintained primary representatives)

(Vote: Maintained secondary representatives)

(c) that the funding of central services listed in Section 6 of the Report, in line with the results of the consultation be approved;

(Vote: Schools, Academies and PVI)

(d) that the proposal to submit a disapplication request for exceptional circumstances relating to school premises for 2024-25 (Section 7 of the Report) be approved; and

(Vote: Schools, Academies and PVI);

(e) that it be noted that further information relating to (a)(ii)(A) above would be forwarded to Forum Members as soon as possible this academic term, to enable them to discuss with their respective school colleagues (where appropriate) in advance of its consideration at the 24 January 2023 DEF meeting.

ACTION:

Director of Finance & Public Value (Adrian Fox)

108 Transfer of AWPU for Reasons other than Permanent Exclusion

DISCUSSION:

The Forum considered the Report of the Director of Children and Young People's Futures (DEF/23/15) regarding reclaiming Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) funding paid to all mainstream schools, where a pupil's education was provided under section 19 of the Education Act, "illness or otherwise." This was so that support was for those services supporting the student and reducing the demand on the High Needs Block and followed the child when they were reintegrated back into school.

The Alternative Provision representative advised that recommendation (ii) as worded could cause some budgetary management issues and suggested "per pupil funding" should not be included in the 80% AWPU transfer.

DECISION:

That the Forum supports:-

(a) the transfer of 100% of AWPU and per pupil funding (e.g. Pupil Premium) for pupils who were removed from a mainstream school roll, for reasons other than permanent exclusion, and were receiving education funded by the Local Authority (LA) other than at a school (EOTAS);

(b) the transfer of 80% of AWPU for each term that the pupil was in alternative provision funded by the LA, while remaining dual registered with the main school; and

(c) that the proposed changes take effect from the beginning of the 2023-24 academic year.

ACTION:

Director of Finance and Public Value (Adrian Fox).

109 Standing (and other) Groups

DISCUSSION:

The Forum received the following from its standing and other groups (excepting Schools' Finance Group (SFG) minutes, (considered under Finance Update minute above):-

(a) Standing Groups

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

(A) Minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2023; and

(B) In respect of note 4, In-Year Admissions Moving to Direction:-

DECISION:

That DEF supports the Local Authority proposal to move to direction for in year admission applications where a decision to admit has not been made within statutory timeframes - non determination.

Also available at

[School Organisation, Capital and Admissions Group \(SOCA\) – Education and Families \(devon.gov.uk\)](#)

(ii) High Needs Funding Sub Group

Minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2023.

ACTION: -

Agenda Item 2

10

DEVON EDUCATION FORUM

22/11/23

110 Correspondence

-

111 Dates of Future Meetings

Meetings at 10am. Please check venue/arrangements

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

Wednesday 24 January 2024 (revised date)

Wednesday 20 March 2024

2024/25 Calendar:-

Wednesday 19 June 2024

Wednesday 20 Nov 2024

Wednesday 22 Jan 2025

Wednesday 19 March 2025.

NOTES:

1. *Minutes should always be read in association with any Reports for a complete record.*
2. *If the meeting has been webcast, it will be available to view on the [webcasting site](#) for up to 12 months from the date of the meeting*

* **DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 12.30 pm

UPDATE ON DEVON'S SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS & DISABILITIES (SEND) TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

Report of the Director of Children & Young People's Futures

Recommendations:

- a) Note the update on Devon's SEND Transformation Programme.

1. Background

- 1.1. In September 2023, the Council and its partners agreed a new approach to delivering improvements through the SEND Transformation Programme which brings together post Ofsted/CQC improvement work and Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit management actions.

2. Update on SEND Transformation Programme

- 1.2. The focus over the Autumn term has been on re-establishing governance and accountability and laying the foundations through clear milestones, delivery plans and additional project management resources to drive forward the improvements and larger transformational work required.
- 1.3. Now that increased grip and control is in place, the local area partnership can move towards implementation at pace. In 2024, there are several delivery milestones which will be met which include launch of the Ordinarily Available Provision toolkit, improved systems and processes for statutory education health and care assessment and review processes; redesign of education support services and; increased sufficiency through new resource bases and special school places.
- 1.4. Progress since the previous update
- 1.5. *Review of Education Health and Care assessment process*
Process mapping completed and challenges identified, including non-value steps. Recommendations provided to DCC senior officers and an action plan in place to deliver improvements.
- 1.6. *New SEND Advisory Team*
4 x SEND Advisory Teachers working in localities to with SENCOs, leaders of teaching and learning and teaching staff to build knowledge, skill and confidence in developing and embedding high quality, whole school approaches to SEND and Inclusion. This team will support the roll out of the Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) toolkit.

Agenda Item 7

1.7. *Two new resource bases approved*

The Regional Director for the South West (DfE) has approved the establishment of two Resource Bases at Brixington Primary Academy - for up to 10 learners with social, emotional and mental health needs - and at Holsworthy Community College - for up to 10 learners with Communication and Interaction Needs. These are expected to be operating from September 2024.

1.8. *Educational Psychology Service resumes early support work for schools*

The educational psychology service has returned to early intervention work with 100 targeted schools and settings that have high inclusion needs. EP support will include a termly School Review Consultation (funded by DCC) to problem-solve key priorities and challenges linked to SEND. This will aim to be a multi-agency meeting with representatives from other SEN support and Inclusion services.

1.9. *Early Years Transitions*

Test and learn underway with 100 children and 39 schools with the aim of building a picture around OAP and developing skills and confidence in making adjustments to practice. Overall positive response in terms of the offer, recognition of the gap in support (e.g. expectations in relation to phonics)

3. **Update on reaching a Safety Valve agreement**

1.10. The Council submitted its DSG Deficit Management Plans to the Department for Education (DfE) on 15th December 2023. The DfE has reviewed the proposal and they are positive about the delivery plans, though recognise the high risk involved, much look other Safety Valve agreements nationally. The DfE did not require the Council to make any further amendments to its delivery plans for the final deadline of 12th January 2024.

1.11. Each agreement reached between the Council and the DfE has different dynamics and results in varying levels of support being made available. The Council will continue to work with the DfE on options to fund the cumulative deficit which will require a local contribution. The full extent of the contribution required by the Council will not be known until negotiations are concluded but if successful is likely to be significant and span many years.

1.12. The Council was also invited to bid for High Needs Block Capital funding to support the delivery of the DSG deficit management plan. A bid has been submitted which supports an expansion in mainstream further education places, the opening of the new special school In Ivybridge and specialist satellite provision in West Devon. The total cost of proposals is £10.2m - £8.7m bid and £1.5m Council matched funding.

1.13. The DSG deficit management plans form part of Devon's SEND Transformation Programme, which is a partnership approach. The Council alone cannot address the system wide issues - though it recognises its own weaknesses - but is keen to work with partners to deliver on these plans.

Partnership work with schools will be crucial in managing the current and future demand and reaching a financially sustainable position.

- 1.14. Some of challenges that schools and the Council need to focus on, by working in partnership, to deliver these plans include but are not limited to;
- Inconsistent approach to inclusive provision in schools which meets the needs of children and young people with SEND
 - Poor early support/intervention offer, forcing families and professionals down the route of an EHCNA
 - A focus on more funding rather than meeting needs and improving outcomes for children and young people.

Stuart Collins
Director of Children & Young People's Futures

Please ask for:
Kellie Knott
SEND Improvement Director
kellie.knott@devon.gov.uk

Schools Finance Group: Notes of meeting on Friday 12 January 2024

Key Points for DEF to Note:

Item 2 – Early Years Funding

DEF to note increase in hourly rate for early years and childcare providers, and that this increase remains insufficient to match increases in the cost of living and minimum wage.

Item 4 – Financial Planning 2024/25

SFG endorsed the amendment to Basic Entitlement (AWPU) funding in line with the principles agreed at November DEF.

Item 5 – Transfer of funding from Schools Block to High Needs Block (Proposal 4)

SFG members recognised the changed position from the November SFG meeting and confirmed that decision on the proposal to transfer 0.25% 9£1.3m) will be for to DEF representatives to vote.

ATTENDANCE

DCC

Mat Thorpe	Deputy Director of Finance and Public Value
Adrian Fox	Head Accountant (Education & Learning)
Ceri Morgan (part)	Head of Education & Learning
Kellie Knott	SEND Improvement Director
Heidi Watson-Jones	Safety Valve Project Officer

Devon Schools Leadership Services

Primary:

Jamie Stone	Denbury Primary
Paul Walker (part)	First Federation Trust
Penny Hammett	FORT Federation

Secondary:

Sammy Crook	Tiverton Federation
Alan Blackburn	Uffculme School
Rob Gammon	QE
Fay Bowler - apologies	Braunton Academy

Alternative Provision:

Rob Gasson - apologies	Wave Multi Academy Trust
-------------------------------	--------------------------

Special Schools

Keith Bennett	Marland School
Sarah Pickering	Mill Water School

DAG

Faith Butler	Special School Governors
Alex Walmsley	Secondary Governors
Adrian Hines	Primary Governors

Early Years Providers

Gemma Rolstone	Puffins Childcare
----------------	-------------------

Other DCC Officers

Karlien Bond	Senior Accountant (Schools)
Katrina Harverson	Principal Accountant – Education & Learning
Becky Hopkins (part)	Deputy Director, Children's Social Care

Agenda Item 8a

Schools Finance Group: Notes of meeting on Friday 12 January 2024

Lise Bird (part)

Samantha Chapman (part)

Marie Stone (part)

Head of Early Help and Partnerships

Service Lead (Early Years & Childcare)

Accountant (Early Years)

Schools Finance Group: Notes of meeting on Friday 12 January 2024

SCHOOLS FINANCE GROUP

1. Minutes and matters arising from meeting on 6 November 2023

- AWPU, Pupil Premium and FSM recovery signed off at November DEF. Ongoing correspondence with MAT.
- SEND Transformation Risk Register to be reviewed against corporate risks before sharing more widely.
- All other actions completed. Minutes agreed as an accurate record.

2. Early Years Funding

- Government have introduced an expansion to childcare entitlements.
- SFG noted increase in funding coming into the LA and the proposed increased hourly rates to be paid to providers.
- From September 2024, children aged from 9 months will be able access 15 hours of funded provision from the term after their 9th month. Service is supporting parents and providers.
- Renewed focus on inclusion funding to enable providers to provide better support to children with additional needs. Government will be considering SEN inclusion funding for early years.
- Noted arrangements for centrally retaining targeted deprivation funding.
- PVI provider representative wished SFG to note that the increase in provider funding remains insufficient to match increases in cost of living and minimum wage. Providers felt that it would be more appropriately identified as a subsidy, and noted that the national minimum wage increase will significantly impact the childcare sector.
- Noted proposed shift from 5% to 3% of total funds to be retained for central services to support providers. This is reflective of additional funding coming into the LA.
- SFG endorsed the proposals within the report.

3. DSG monitoring – month 8

- Month 8 outturn forecast currently projects an overspend of £40.6m
- DSG adjustment account (cumulative DSG deficit) is projected to rise to £165.1m
- **AF** to identify in next report, the impact of the level of refusals to assess on the overall EHCP numbers.
- SFG noted the continuing high demand for SEND services.
- £9.6m management actions have been achieved of the expected £20.2m identified to be delivered from the current Deficit Management Plan.
- An additional £2m management actions have been identified within the independent sector. Further actions are being developed to mitigate the areas which will not now be going ahead.
- Report noted

ACTION:

- **AF** to identify in next report, the impact of the level of refusals to assess on the overall EHCP numbers.

4. Financial Planning 2024/25

- DSG settlement was announced 19 December 2023 by ESFA. Early years funding notification will be received by 28 February 2024.
- Schools block allocation is £525.3m which includes £2.6m for Growth Fund and £17.1m Mainstream Schools Additional Grant, previously allocated separately.

Agenda Item 8a

Schools Finance Group:

Notes of meeting on Friday 12 January 2024

- National Non-Domestic Rates funding arrangement with District Councils will not be going ahead in Devon; schools will continue to pay this directly.
- Following the funding consultation DEF agreed process to allocate funding should the settlement be lower than had been modelled. SFG noted that modelling is still ongoing and finance colleagues are currently expecting to action a reduction in AWPU, as agreed.
- A disapplication has been submitted to the Secretary of State, to remove the 20% reduction in historic commitments to ensure that termination of employment costs remain funded.
- High Needs Block settlement was £116.9m, against a projected budget requirement of £155.4m
- SFG noted the planned management actions included in the SEND Transformation Programme and Safety Valve projects.
- Heads requested that the online budget calculator is amended to remove some previous options that are now discounted. Finance colleagues confirmed that a new school budget calculator will be prepared and shared online to provide schools with more accurate forecasting.
- Discussed complexities around minimum funding protections for individual school and the impact on the LA matching the expected national funding formula. Feel that these schools are now very close to the hard formula position. Currently a £1.7m shortfall exists, but this does now fall within the 2.5% variance that the DfE deems to be mirroring the NFF.
- The group considered how Devon continues to be a low-funded authority and recognised that DCC continues to experience a funding gap compared with other LAs.
- SFG thanked LA officers for the work involved in preparing the DSG Management Plan for the Safety Valve programme submission, and look forward to a positive outcome.
- The DfE reporting regime was discussed, and how SFG will be involved in the monitoring of the management action. Monitoring reporting to DfE will be intensive, however it is hoped that reporting to local bodies including the SEND Transformation Board and SFG will be simplified and communicated collaboratively and in a straightforward way to schools to support the achievement of the targets, and provide focus on particularly challenging areas e.g. EHCP requests.
- KK reassured SFG of the intensive preparation work on data projections within the safety valve submission, however it will be the successful delivery of the SEND Transformation programme projects through a whole-system response which will result in the achievement of the savings.
- SC raised concerns around the LA proposal to remove funding for Outreach provision through Resource Bases from April 2024. This will have implications for staffing, and felt that it may be in breach of the 2-year notice within the SLA. **KK** to look into this.
- PH raised the Inclusion SEMH partnership developments in schools, noting that the funding was a one-year only arrangement. Schools have been aware of this, however, concerns have been raised around the risk to ongoing staffing commitments for successful projects should further resource not be available. A committee, led by Simon Bissett, has been established to oversee and review the project outcomes. Partnership Funding agreements have been signed which clearly outline the project parameters. **KH** to raise at the next SEMH Partnership Bid Committee the need for clear communications to participating schools around funding timeframes.
- **SFG endorsed** the amendment to Basic Entitlement in line with principles agreed at November DEF.

Schools Finance Group: Notes of meeting on Friday 12 January 2024

ACTION:

- **KK** to look at the LA proposal to remove funding for Outreach provision through Resource Bases from April 2024.
- **KH** to raise at the next SEMH Partnership Bid Committee the need for clear communications to participating schools around funding timeframes.

5. Transfer to High Needs Block

- The group considered proposals previously submitted to develop a strengthened Early Help offer using £800k transferred from the schools block. These proposals have been discussed at SFG, DEF and with DSLs.
- LB presented an updated, holistic proposal which has been developed to better support schools and children and families who fall below the threshold for social worker involvement.
- Family Intervention Team will be funded to provide better support for schools using a Teachable Moments ethos to help children stay safely in schools and in learning, preventing suspensions and exclusions, escalation to social work or SEND provision and improve relationships, attendance and behaviour.
- Emotionally Based School Avoidance is an area of focus for Education Psychology team and the Inclusion team which sees a significant spend on AP Other provision to support this group of young people to access learning and school. Learning from a one-year project involving a dedicated team, will feed into the re-design of SEND and Inclusion services to Devon schools.
- SFG members confirmed that they were in support of the proposal for enhanced Early Help.
- Mindful that following the November DEF officers undertook to prepare costed proposals for a transfer of funding of up to 0.5% (£2.6m). KK reminded the group of the DfE expectations that Schools Forum are asked to approve a transfer as part of the Safety Valve, and that the proposals will be of benefit to all vulnerable children in Devon.
- KK confirmed that EBSA proposal would not be able to progress without the funding transfer.
- BH confirmed that the targeted Early Help offer will need to be developed as part of a corporate strategy, match funding secured through a funding transfer would secure this, however further options would need to be explored to fund the development differently should the funding transfer not be available.
- AF confirmed that a transfer of 0.25% (£1.3m) is being requested from the schools block at DEF.
- SFG members recognised the changed position from the November SFG meeting and confirmed that decision on the proposal will be left to DEF representatives.

6. Growth Fund

- SFG endorsed the proposal to update the growth fund rates.
- Noted that following month 9 monitoring calculations, based on the proposed revised rates, an underspend is projected based on pupil growth within the year.
- Growth fund allocation for 24/25 has been noted.

Agenda Item 8a

Schools Finance Group:

Notes of meeting on Friday 12 January 2024

7. Mutual Fund Board Monitoring

- SFG noted that the fund is moving closer to a balanced position at Month 8.
- SFG noted the following key points:
 - There has been a review of non-statutory functions within DCC, which includes the administration of the Mutual Fund. DCC proposes to include a charge to the MF to cover an administrative post, alternatively DCC may need to consider ceasing running the Mutual Fund.
 - Proposing a different approach for payments in relations to support staff which will see cover for all support staff in a single category.
 - SFG had previously requested a review of reimbursement rates in line with actual staffing costs. This has now been modelled.
- There was consideration of the commercial viability of the current Mutual Fund model in terms of both DCC's capacity to operate the Fund and the necessary increase in premiums to fully fund reimbursements at market rates. Noted that a commercial organisation would be factoring in profit and potentially adjusting the level of reimbursement payments made.
- The Mutual Fund Board discussed issues to consider around a responsible timeframe for closing down the Mutual Fund – for example in 6 months' time, to enable effective to communication to schools (explaining the situation which has emerged with commercial rates and the cost of administration to the Fund), enable schools to consider alternative cover options, and to allow time for existing claims to be settled and any outstanding issues to emerge.
- Legacy payments will need to be considered carefully, as it was felt that commercial organisations would not take on staff with existing claims.
- If the fund were to close, schools would receive a full reimbursement of outstanding premiums.
- It would be important that schools are aware of alternative options prior to removing a DCC-run Mutual Fund. It would be helpful to explore how other Local Authorities may have already explored solutions.
- **Mutual Fund Board proposed** to consider further how the Fund could be closed down in a responsible way, including timeframes for any new claims.
- **Mutual Fund Board agreed:**
- Mutual Fund Board agreed to continue to run the Fund for a further year, at the current rates.
- Schools to be notified of the proposed direction towards closure of the Fund as it is no longer fit for purpose due to the reasons discussed.
- Information could be provided to illustrate alternative options available for schools to subscribe to.
- DCC have time to consider unintended consequences of closure and transparency would be required to schools.
- Mutual Fund Board members agreed to an uplift in premiums to fund the staffing required to operate the Fund.
- Mutual Fund Board agreed to combining the support staff category into one and removing the 60% restriction.

- **Mutual Fund Board agreed:**
- Mutual Fund Board agreed to continue to run the Fund for a further year, at the current rates.
- Schools to be notified of the proposed direction towards closure of the Fund as it is no longer fit for purpose due to the reasons discussed.
- Information could be provided to illustrate alternative options available for schools to subscribe to.
- DCC have time to consider unintended consequences of closure and transparency would be required to schools.

Schools Finance Group: Notes of meeting on Friday 12 January 2024

- Mutual Fund Board members agreed to an uplift in premiums to fund the staffing required to operate the Fund.
- Mutual Fund Board agreed to combining the support staff category into one and removing the 60% restriction.

Future meeting dates:

- **Wednesday 6 March 2024** (09.15 – 12.30 – Teams)
- **Wednesday 5 June 2024** (09.15 – 12.30 – Teams)
- **Monday 8 July 2024** (14.00 – 17.00 face to face – venue TBC)
- **Monday 9 September 2024** (all day – face to face – venue TBC)
- **Wednesday 6 November 2024** (09.15 – 12.30 – Teams)
- **Friday 10 January 2025** (09.15 – 12.30 – Teams)
- **Wednesday 5 March 2025** (09.15 – 12.30 – Teams)

Notes of High Needs Funding Sub Group

8 January 2024 – 15.30 – 17.00

Present: Paul Walker (Chair), Kellie Knott, Zoe Heywood, Adrian Fox, Mat Thorpe, Adrian Hines, Rob Gammon, Jamie Stone, Rob Gasson, Alan Blackburn, Keith Bennett, Sarah Pickering, Penny Hammett, Gemma Rolstone, Christopher Tribble, Heidi Watson-Jones (notes)

Apologies: Alex Walmsley, Fay Bowler

		Actions:
1	<p>Finance Update - Month 8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £40.6m adjusted DSG overspend at year end, which is an in-year overspend of £13.4m, assuming £11.6m management action savings. • Noted ongoing increase in EHCP requests, however refusals rate at 6 and 16 weeks also increasing. • Month 8 position shows an increase of £660k from month 7, predominantly in independent special school settings. Savings are being identified around commissioning activity and ceasing independent placements where appropriate. • Allocations of plus packages are reducing. • Noted impact of delays in opening new resource bases in terms of savings but also unrealised management action savings. The programme is being driven forward for openings in Sept 2024. • Discussed the financial impact of the strategy to educate children with special needs within the maintained and academy special schools and mainstream where appropriate. Members felt that complexity of SEN need has increased significantly over time. • High Needs Block top out expected at £207m in 2026/27, moving back to a balanced position by 2027/28. • Members sought assurance on achieving the full amount of projected management savings. Noted that £6m has already been achieved, but understand there may be slippage towards the year end which will hopefully be offset by other actions elsewhere. • EHCP refusal rates are increasing as requests are not meeting the threshold, however the most significant impact is that incoming requests for assessment continue to increase. Noted that approximately one third of requests are directly from parents. • Would be helpful to consider how schools can impact on this trend. Discussed whether data was available to explore a correlation of refused EHC assessment and subsequent exclusion. • Appropriate early support services for schools are not currently in place at the right level, and it is hoped that this will be developed further in the coming year. • Discussed parents' and other professionals' perceptions that an EHCP will provide access to specific additional support and resource which is not always the case. The group considered how the EHCP application could outline more clearly how the EHCP can or cannot impact on the child's education. Further work to improve the quality and accessibility of information, advice and guidance for parents is currently being explored. • The group discussed the strength of the parent voice and the need to ensure education professionals' advice is also heard. <p>ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AF to include EHCP refusal rates in future reports, to include number of refusals are as a result of inappropriate requests from schools. 	AF
2	<p>Update on Safety Valve Submission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal submitted to the DfE on 15.12.2023 	

Agenda Item 8b

Notes of High Needs Funding Sub Group

8 January 2024 – 15.30 – 17.00

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deficit top out of £207m projected in 2026/27 with an in-year balance achieved from 27/28.• Exploring options for DCC to fund its contribution. Understand that DfE contribution will not exceed £80m.• LA is looking at addressing the deficit balance over a 10 year period.• Discussed reports of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) proposal that an 11% block funding transfer would be required to fund a DSG Deficit Management Plan through the Safety Valve Intervention Programme. DCC have been clear to the DfE that is not minded to follow this route, and is keen to maintain a strong relationship with schools.• Friday 12 January is deadline for final proposal; no further information around delivery plan has been requested by the DfE. Expecting further feedback by the end of January / Early February ahead of a formal announcement in March.	
3	0.5% Block funding transfer (Schools Funding Consultation) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• DEF decision on the 0.5% block funding transfer deferred to 24 January meeting.• Powerpoint presentation on the Early Help proposals was shared with DSLs and circulated to schools for them to indicate support for the proposal.• Finance colleagues confirmed the DfE expectations of an annual request within the Safety Valve proposal. Disapplication has been submitted to the Secretary of State, awaiting decision at DEF.• Members requested that DEF finance report provides clarity around the assumptions linked to the funding transfer request and the DfE expectations.• Schools requested earlier consideration of the proposals around an annual request for the funding transfer. The lack of this early preparation seems to lead to lengthy discussion and delayed decision, impacted in recent years on leadership changes and also in this year the development of a strong strategy later in the consultation process.• The group felt that the 3-5 year strategy proposed is a strong approach, which should be achievable in a collaborative environment.• Noted that the DfE expects that any transferred funds will be directly allocated to the High Needs deficit but DCC want to work with schools on using the money to drive improvement in the system	
4	Commissioning Alternative Provision <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The LA is currently exploring opportunities to work more strategically with schools to more effectively commission AP provision.• A strong commissioning framework is required to ensure appropriate spend on good quality resource and support, reducing reliance on the use of unregistered provision.• Need to understand what schools and the LA need to commission, and what unregistered AP is actually being used, to achieve effective outcomes for each child.• A joint commissioning strategy will outline a shared understanding of need for the most vulnerable children, achieved through a collective and strategic education community-wide approach.• ZH was clear that an early intervention approach is required, to prevent children reaching the crisis point at which AP intervention is required.	

Notes of High Needs Funding Sub Group

8 January 2024 – 15.30 – 17.00

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSLS requested information on AP use by schools. 155 returns indicated that over 200 children are being supported by a range of unregistered providers which are charging a range of rates to different schools. • Investment of this identified spend in better quality, planned provision is the aim. ZH to establish a task group to progress this strategy, which all phase associations were keen to support. <p>ACTION – for next meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update report to be brought to the next meeting on the AP strategy (ZH) • Report requested on the EHCP Process review and data findings (KK) 	ZH KK
5	<p>MP Briefing for F40 House of Commons Debate on SEND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F40 has secured a debate at the House of Commons Debate on SEND. Schools have been invited to contribute any issues for local MPs to raise: • Appropriate levels of funding for SEND coming into Devon, including through Safety Valve. • Prioritise the publication of a new SEND Code of Practice. • Any further comments please to kellie.knott@devon.gov.uk by close of play 9th Jan 2024. 	ALL

Future meetings:

Monday 12 February – 15.30 – 1700 (Teams)

Monday 20 May – 15.30 – 17.00 (Teams)

Monday 24 June – 15.30 – 17.00 (Teams)

FINANCE UPDATE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & PUBLIC VALUE AND DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S FUTURES

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that DEF:

- a) Note month 8 DSG monitoring position as set out in this report.
- b) Note current Safety Valve / DSG management plan position as set out in the report.

All to Note

Budget Monitoring Report – Month 8 (2023/24) – Dedicated Schools Grant

Executive Summary

- The Month 8 outturn forecast for 2023/24 sees a significant overspend in the overall Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) of £40.6 million which is associated with the continued demand on High Needs of £39.6 million after taking into account management actions and £1 million overspend to the Growth Fund.
- The DSG Adjustment Account, which shows the cumulative DSG Deficit as per government guidance, is projected to rise to £165.1 million by the end of 2023/24.
- £9.6 million has been achieved of the expected £20.2 million management actions to be delivered from the current DSG Deficit Management Plan.
- An additional £2 million savings within the independent sector have been identified from 3-5 year placements ending and Adult Social Care contribution.
- The SEN team are continuing to see a high level of requests for EHCP referrals, 2,055 requests have been received for the period January 2023 to November 2023 compared to 1,865 for the same period in 2022, however the number of requests being refused at 6 weeks and 16 weeks has increased since 2022 for the same period. Support from schools is required to take action to mitigate the growing demand
- The increasing DSG deficit could have a considerable impact on future education budgets within the DSG as well as impacting on the financial sustainability for Devon County Council

1. Schools

1.1. In July the revised DSG settlement allocation stands at £310.5 million (after recoupment for academies and direct funded places) based upon pupil numbers as at the October 2022 Schools census and January 2023 Early Years census.

Table 1: Summary of Month 8 forecast position and significant variations

Budget projections as at Month 8	Revised Budget for year £'000	Underlying outturn forecast £'000	Management Action pending		Net Forecast Outturn £'000	Forecast outturn variance £'000	Transfer to/(from) deficit reserve £'000	Forecast Adjusted variance £'000	Analysis of outturn variance		Change from Month 7 Forecast Outturn Variance £'000	Change from Month 6 Forecast outturn variance £'000
			In-year Management Action o/s £'000	Savings Plans o/s £'000					Total Forecast Savings Plans £'000	Underlying Forecast Outturn Variance £'000		
Education and Inclusion Services												
Core Services	12,087	14,306	0	0	14,306	2,219	0	2,219	(646)	2,865	0	(267)
School Transport	45,137	45,476	(174)	0	45,302	165	0	165	(2,771)	2,936	165	408
Graded Services	33	111	0	0	111	78	0	78	0	78	(10)	41
Reserves	729	729	0	0	729	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total General Fund	57,986	60,623	(174)	0	60,449	2,463	0	2,463	(3,417)	5,880	155	182
DSG Funding	(136,815)	(135,887)	0	0	(135,887)	928	(928)	0		0	0	0
De-delegated budgets	5,625	5,669	0	0	5,669	44	(44)	0	0	0	0	0
Central School Services Block	4,365	4,316	0	0	4,316	(49)	0	(49)	0	(49)	28	29
Early Years & Childcare Services	45,228	45,228	0	0	45,228	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total DSG central budgets	55,218	55,213	0	0	55,213	(5)	(44)	(49)	0	(49)	28	29
High Needs Budget	135,279	154,115	0	(5,397)	148,718	13,439	(13,439)	0	0	0	0	0
DSG High Needs 22/23 deficit budget prep	(26,227)	0	0	0	0	26,227	(26,227)	0	0	0	0	0
Total High Needs budget	109,052	154,115	0	(5,397)	148,718	39,666	(39,666)	0	0	0	0	0
Total Dedicated Schools Grant	27,455	73,441	0	(5,397)	68,044	40,589	(40,638)	(49)	0	(49)	28	29
Total Education and Inclusion Services	85,441	134,064	(174)	(5,397)	128,493	43,052	(40,638)	2,414	(3,417)	5,831	183	211
Total										2,414		

Page 88 of 88

- 1.2. The working budget includes other school grants of £62.5 million.
- 1.3. The growth fund is forecasting an overspend of £1 million which will be carry forward into 2024/25 as a deficit balance. The overspend is in relation to supporting the Schools Block due to the funding rates not being affordable for Schools due to underlying factors.

2. DSG Deficit Management Plan

Table 2: DSG Adjustment Account

	£'000
DSG Adjustment Account	125,437
DSG High Needs 22/23 deficit	39,666
Total DSG Deficit Reserve	165,103

- 2.1. The DSG Adjustment Account, which shows the cumulative DSG Deficit as per government guidance, is projected to rise to £165.1 million by the end of 2023/24. This is due to the funding pressure identified of £39.6 million and after management actions of £11.6 million.
- 2.2. The Authority submitted its initial Deficit Management Plan in December 2023 to the DfE as part of the 4th tranche of the Safety Valve Intervention Programme and are in discussions to progress the decision forward. A decision is expected in February 2024.
- 2.3. A breakdown of the budgeted management actions and current revisions are shown in Appendix B

3. High Needs

Table 3: Summary of High Needs budgets and forecast position as at Month 6

	Budget £'000	Mth 8 Forecast £'000	Variance £'000	Ring fenced C/fwd £'000	Deficit / (Surplus) Balance £'000	Movement Previous Mth £'000
Alternative Provision	5,458	7,455	1,997	(1,997)	0	(52)
Children in Care and Exclusions	1,725	1,725	0	0	0	0
Improved Outcomes Disadvantaged Children	1,794	1,719	(75)	75	0	(2)
Inclusion	150	150	0	0	0	0
Safeguarding Every Learner	343	341	(2)	2	0	8
SEN Mainstream	22,121	26,897	4,776	(4,776)	0	31
FE Colleges	4,129	4,445	316	(316)	0	134
SEN Services	2,719	2,719	0	0	0	0
SEN 100 Project	923	923	0	0	0	0
Maintained & Academy Special Schools	40,954	43,689	2,735	(2,735)	0	(303)
Hospital Education Services	837	837	0	0	0	0
Recoupment	1,749	1,749	0	0	0	0
Other Special School Fees	50,138	54,559	4,421	(4,421)	0	837
Support Centre Funding	2,239	1,510	(729)	729	0	14
Total High Needs Funding	135,279	148,718	13,439	(13,439)	0	667
DSG High Needs 23/24 deficit budget prep	(26,227)	0	0	(26,227)	0	0
Total High Needs budget	109,052	148,718	13,439	(39,666)	0	667

- 3.1. Cost and volume variances are shown in Appendix A

Agenda Item 8c

Alternative Provision

- 3.2. Alternative Provision (AP) is currently forecasting an overspend of £2 million and relates to AP Other (forecasting £1.9m overspend) where the number of children being excluded or who are requiring support due to not being able to attend School is rising. This is creating budget pressures across several High Needs Block budgets but predominantly within Alternative Provision. 18 Locality SEMH partnerships have recently been agreed across Devon to provide school based inclusion solutions and support children with SEMH and reducing the demand on regulated and unregulated AP Providers.
- 3.3. The main AP WAVE contract is forecasting to overspend by £248,000 which relates to additional special commissioning places being 13 higher than budgeted and costing £548,000, 3.4% additional High Needs Block grant funding that had to be paid to AP Schools, this is in line with High Needs Block operational guidance and totalled £128,000. This was a late change in the guidance and therefore did not form part of the 2023/24 budget setting. The overspend has been offset the average cost being lower than budgeted for both AP Medical and main contract totalling £300,000. Forecast includes £314,000 AWPU clawback from mainstream schools for AP Medical pupils to help mitigate some of the current pressure.

SEN Mainstream

- 3.4. This covers personalised education packages and EHCPs as well as the central SLAs which support them.
- 3.5. Mainstream EHCPs (pre-16) are reporting an overspend of £3.3 million and predominantly relates to non-delivery of Management Action savings (of which £2.1 million has been built into forecast as no longer being achieved). The forecast does assume that £2 million will be achieved in this financial year. Overall EHCP numbers are above the budgeted average 3,384 (vs 2,604 budgeted – after management action), resulting in a pressure of £440,000.
- 3.6. £719,000 forecast overspend for interim payments where an EHCP has not been issued within 20 weeks.
- 3.7. SEN additional resources is reporting an overspend of £58,000; this is in relation to increase Occupational Health contract and additional resource from September 2023 which will support new ordering of provision in EHCPs which is currently not being delivered.
- 3.8. Children Educated Other than at School are reporting an overspend of £1.2 million for Tutoring Specialist provision due to the average cost being £4,571 above the budgeted level and an increase of 42 pupils. Personalised Budgets are forecasting an overspend of £228,000 due to the average cost being £4,731 above the budgeted level offset slightly by a reduction of eight pupils (74 (vs 82 budgeted)).

Maintained and Academy Special Schools

- 3.9. The average numbers on roll including Plus Packages and Exceeded places are forecast at 1,764 (vs 1,769 budgeted). Plus Packages are six above budget and we are currently funding 21 guaranteed placements which is resulting in an overspend of £426,000, however this has been offset by a reduction in top up of 32 places and a saving of £640,000.
- 3.10. Place funding has been reduced by a net 14 due to capacity limitations at Orchard Manor, The Promise Tiverton and Southbrook resulting in net savings of £146,000.

- 3.11. 3.4% additional High Needs Block lump sum funding paid to schools as per the operational guidance costing £1.3 million and not included within the budget due to late notification from this DfE of this new requirement for 2023/2024.
- 3.12. Reduction in joint funding due to two pupils leaving who are no longer in care and prior year adjustments total £123,000.
- 3.13. Forecast assumes £2.3 million management action savings will be achieved in this financial year with £1.4 million forecast as no longer be achieved in this financial year.

Other Special Schools Fees

- 3.14. The Other Special Schools budget includes Safety Valve Management Action of £12.4 million of which £7.1 million has been identified as not being delivered in this financial year, however an additional £1 million funding from Adult Social Care and £1 million for 3-5 year savings have been identified, resulting in a forecast Management Action savings for 23-24 of £7.3 million of which £5.1 million have been achieved to date.
- 3.15. The current placements forecast to March 2024 is 1,298 (after Management Action) which is 34 above budgeted for the year, resulting in an adverse volume variance of £874,000, this has been partially offset by a favourable price variance of £619,000 and £1.4 million income from Social Care. Forecast includes planned growth for the remainder of the financial year as agreed with the 0-25 team.
- 3.16. Miscellaneous costs and grant funding totalling £496,000 forecast to be paid to Independent settings.
- 3.17. The commissioning group that has been set up with officers from across the authority to review the independent special school fees have now started to meet with the top 20 schools who Devon commission with to start discussions around ensuring we are receiving value for money and that fees are in line with the EHCP of the young person placed at the school.
- 3.18. All spend is currently being reviewed within Other Special Schools to mitigate the growing demand in this sector.

Support Centres

- 3.19. Support centres are forecasting to underspend by £729,000 which is due to the additional centres planned to be open not opening in this financial year and three of the newest centres not delivering outreach.

4. Investment

Table 4: Safety Valve staffing investment

Workstream Team	No of Staff	23/24 Staffing	Appointments	Further Planned	23/24	Current RAG rating
		Investment	to date	Appointments	forecast	
		£'000			£'000	
Prevention of more Complex Support						
Education Key Workers	9	284	9	0	216	●
SEN Caseworkers	4	259	4	0	259	●
Ordinarily Available Provision	4	350	4	0	158	●
Transition to Adulthood						
Transition to Adulthood	3	224	3	0	185	●
		20	1,117	20	0	818

- 4.1. Forecasting to spend £818,000 of the £1.1 million allocated from the Safety Valve reserve.

Agenda Item 8c

- 4.2. Education Key Workers posts have been approved with funding identified, final appointment was made in October bringing the team up to full capacity.
- 4.3. The four external agency staff employed supporting the 0-25 team casework contracts end December 2023. The team have increased capacity for SEN caseworkers of which all staff have now been appointed too.
- 4.4. Four Advisory Teachers were originally appointed for the Team Around but have now been redirected into the Ordinary Available Provision and Early Years projects.

5. Workstream Savings

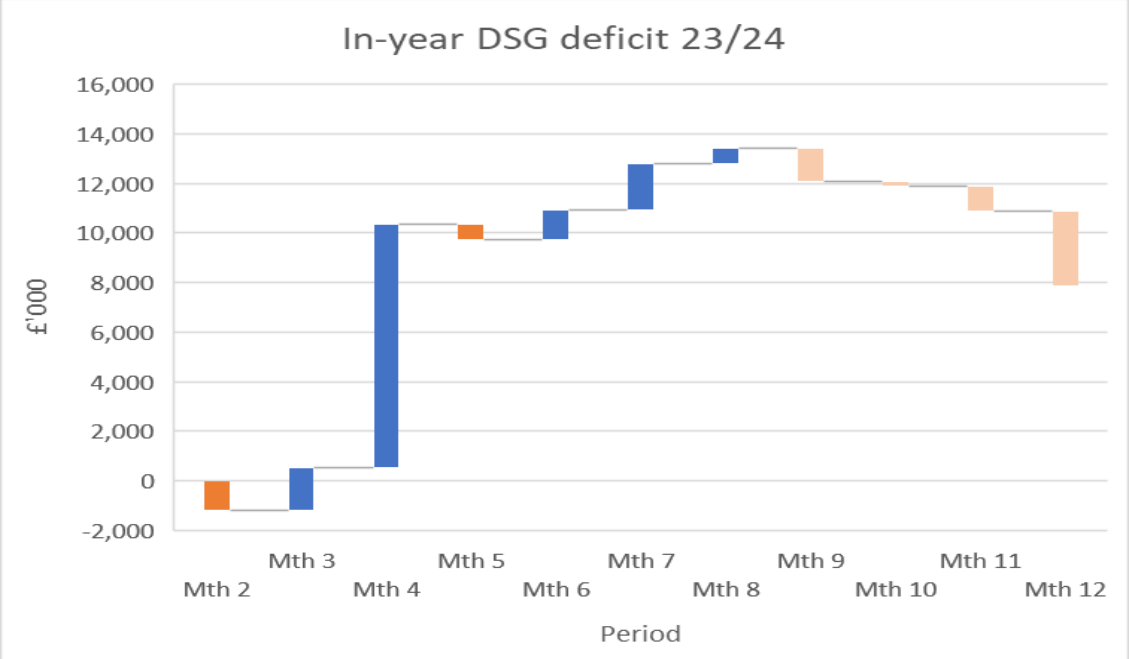
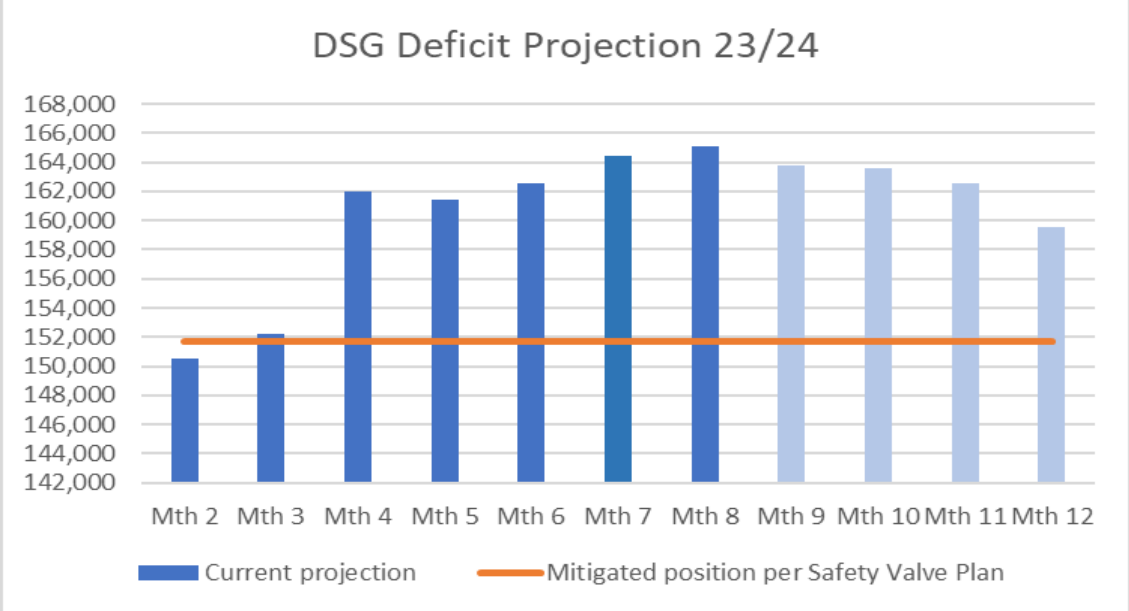
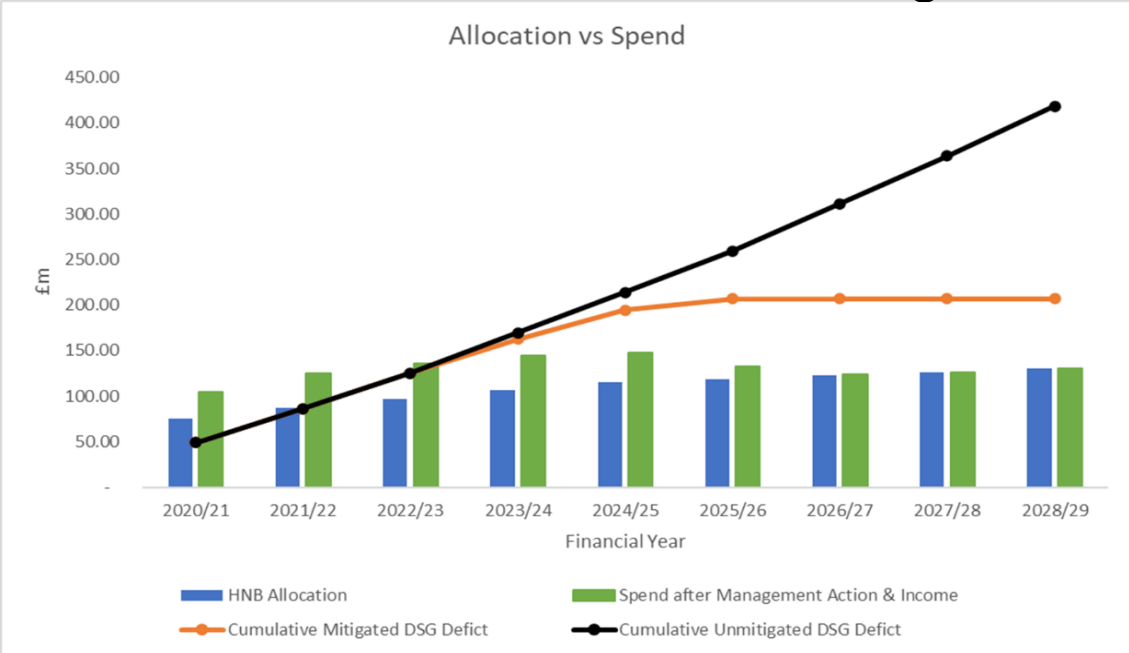
Table 5: Management savings / Cost reductions

DSG Management Plan savings / Cost reductions Workstream / Management Action	profile of savings						23/24 Targeted Savings	23/24 Forecast Non Deliverable amount	23/24 Forecast Deliverable amount	Actual savings Achieved	Previous Delivery	Current Delivery
	Summer term Planned	Summer term Actuals	Autumn Term Planned	Autumn Term Actuals	Spring Term Planned	Spring term Actuals	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	RAG	RAG
New Specialist Provision	(1,755)	(714)	(1,331)	(981)	0	0	(3,085)	948	(2,138)	(1,695)	●	●
Support Centre Expansion	(1,360)	0	0	0	0	0	(1,360)	1,360	0	0	●	●
SEN 100 Project	(2,789)	(118)	0	(391)	(796)	0	(3,585)	1,571	(2,014)	(509)	●	●
Independent Sector	(672)	(1,646)	0	0	0	0	(672)	(974)	(1,646)	(1,646)	●	●
Prevention of more Complex Support requirements	(6,014)	(598)	(128)	(71)	(1,387)	0	(7,529)	4,609	(2,920)	(669)	●	●
Transition to Adulthood	0	0	(3,954)	(498)	0	0	(3,954)	2,147	(1,807)	(498)	●	●
Other	(1,000)	(1,000)	(50)	0	0	0	(50)	(1,000)	(1,050)	(1,000)	●	●
Total Management Plan Savings	(13,590)	(4,076)	(5,463)	(1,941)	(2,183)	0	(20,235)	8,661	(11,575)	(6,017)		

- 5.1. Pupil data has been provided by workstream leads to evidence those who have been supported either during the summer term or taken up a placement within the expanded Maintained and Academy special school places, this has achieved to date, £6 million of savings.
- 5.2. The Management Action of £20.2 million reflects the budgeted savings expected to be delivered in 2023/24 as per the February 2022 Safety Valve Intervention submission. As at month 8 £10.6 million is identified at risk of not being delivered due to delays in projects commencing or no longer happening and built into forecast, however we have seen additional savings within the independent sector due to additional £1 million savings for 3-5 year placements ending and £1 million Adult Social Care contribution. Revised Management Action savings forecast to be achieved is £11.6 million. (Appendix B).
- 5.3. Programme Management support has been identified within the authority to help both support and deliver the DSG Deficit Management Plan and the SEND Transformation Programme along with a new Governance reporting structure being set up. Weekly meetings are currently being held with the Senior Responsible Officers (SRO), Programme Management support and finance to ensure the Safety Valve Intervention Programme timelines will be met.

6. Impact of cost reduction on overall Deficit

- 6.1. The revised deficit is now forecasting to be at £165.1 million by 2024/25 which is £25.3 million over that previously stated in the Safety Valve Intervention submission in February 2022.
- 6.2. The third Chart shows a waterfall chart of the in-year deficit. (5th column – Month 8 shows the removal of the unachievable management actions identified)



Agenda Item 8c

7. Capital Investment

7.1. Total investment requirement is £23.5 million with £17 million being funded by the DfE and the remaining contributions being funded by LA contribution and High Needs Provision Capital Allocation. This will create additional 404 places over 3 years and is expected to see £6.7 million saving to the High Needs Block based on the current safety valve plan.

7.2. The forecast spend for 2023/24 is £5.2 million.

SEN Capital Programme	No of additional places	Investment £'000	23/24 Actual Spend £'000	23/24 Forecast spend £'000
Ace Tiverton Special School	30	810	1	99
Lampard School	60	4,200	977	977
Marland Day	40	1,700	243	356
Okehampton Special School	100	11,400	200	351
Orchard Manor Special School, expansion	54	3,100	81	65
South West Devon Special School	120	2,300	18	3,362
	404	23,510	1,520	5,210

7.3. The Authority has been invited to apply for further capital funding as part of the Safety Valve submission. This bid was submitted at the beginning of January 2024.

8. Risks

- 8.1. Continued growth of EHCPs and unexpected high cost with no facility to reduce external demand will make it difficult to contain costs within the allocated budget.
- 8.2. The SEN Placement continue to cause increase in the demand on the High Needs Block. Support from schools to take action to mitigate the growing demand and reduce the call on independent placements is necessary.
- 8.3. Rising demand being seen in Section 19 requests for those children not attending school which is creating additional pressure to the High Needs Block.
- 8.4. Changes in Senior Leadership both within the Service and wider authority could see delays, advances or change in direction to current plans identified.
- 8.5. Staff recruitment and retention both operational and project resources is a continued problem for Education Services which will impact on the deliverability of the plans.
- 8.6. Unexpected demand as new high-cost children and young people move into the area.
- 8.7. Mitigation of the above risks can be achieved through the implementation of the SEND Transformation Programme support from schools and other providers to take action on the growing demand and reduce the call on independent placements.
- 8.8. The Safety Valve savings identified for 2023/24 as part of the previous plan could see significant slippage due to senior staff changes and delays in revisiting projects. Realignment to of the plan with the SEND Transformation Programme.

9. Recommendation

It is recommended that DEF:

- a) Note month 8 DSG monitoring position as set out in this report.
- b) Note current Safety Valve / DSG management plan position as set out in the report.

All to Note

ANGIE SINCLAIR
Director of Finance & Public Value

STUART COLLINS
Director of Children and Young People's Futures

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

High Needs EHCP Analysis	No of FYE Pupils				Budget 23/24	Forecast outturn	Variation		Budgeted Unit cost	Forecast Unit cost	Variation	Month 8			Month 7		Change to Mth 7		Month 7 No of FTE Pupils	Change to Mth 7 Pupils
	Budgeted 23/24	Month 8	Variation	%			£'000	£'000				£'000	%	£	£	£	Price Var £'000	Vol Var £'000		
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%	£	£	£	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Top ups	150	138	(12)	(8.7%)	1,978	1,756	(222)	(11.2%)	13,187	12,725	(462)	(64)	(158)	(222)	(63)	(105)	(1)	(53)	142	(4)
Medical Planned Places	90	90	0	0.0%	1,600	1,600	0	0.0%	17,778	17,778	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	90	0
Medical Planned Additional	39	38	(1)	(2.6%)	762	683	(79)	(10.4%)	19,538	17,974	(1,565)	(59)	(20)	(79)	(99)	20	39	(39)	40	(2)
AP WAVE Special Commission	13	26	13	50.0%	75	622	547	729.3%	5,761	23,923	18,162	472	75	547	425	75	47	0	26	0
AP Other [Non-WAVE]	286	176	(110)	(62.5%)	725	2,830	2,105	290.3%	3,255	16,080	12,824	2,257	(358)	1,899	2,260	(361)	(3)	3	175	1
Alternative Provision	578	468	(110)	(23.5%)	5,140	7,491	2,351	45.7%	59,519	88,479	28,960	2,606	(461)	2,145	2,525	(372)	82	(89)	473	(5)
Personalised Packages	82	74	(8)	(10.8%)	1,334	1,562	228	17.1%	16,268	21,108	4,840	358	(130)	228	498	(163)	(140)	33	72	2
Home Tutoring	132	174	42	24.1%	1,119	2,270	1,151	102.9%	8,477	13,046	4,569	795	356	1,151	1,350	263	(555)	93	163	11
Educated Other than at School	214	248	34	13.7%	2,453	3,832	1,379	56.2%	24,746	34,154	9,409	1,153	226	1,379	1,848	100	(695)	126	235	13
Mainstream Provision (pre 16)	1,788	2,405	617	25.7%	6,681	8,396	1,715	25.7%	3,737	3,491	(246)	(590)	2,305	1,715	(601)	2,294	11	11	2,402	3
Mainstream Provision (pre 16) Plus Packages	816	979	163	16.6%	9,506	10,403	897	9.4%	11,650	10,626	(1,023)	(1,002)	1,899	897	(1,002)	1,899	0	0	979	0
Mainstream	2,604	3,384	780	23.0%	16,187	18,799	2,612	16.1%	15,386	14,117	(1,269)	(1,592)	4,204	2,612	(1,603)	4,193	11	11	3,381	3
Further Education	879	930	51	5.5%	4,129	4,445	316	7.7%	4,697	4,780	82	76	240	316	60	122	17	117	905	25
Top Ups	1,731	1,698	(33)	(1.9%)	23,150	22,510	(640)	(2.8%)	13,372	13,255	(117)	(199)	(440)	(639)	(188)	(429)	(11)	(11)	1,699	(1)
Top Ups Guaranteed	0	21	21	100.0%	0	376	376	0.0%	17,556	17,556	0	0	376	376	0	347	0	29	20	2
Exceeded Places	0	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0	100.0%	10,000	0	(10,000)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Plus Packages	38	44	6	13.3%	528	578	50	9.4%	13,895	13,177	(718)	(31)	81	50	(19)	63	(13)	19	43	1
Maintained & Academy Special Schools	1,769	1,764	(6)	(0.3%)	23,678	23,464	(214)	(0.9%)	54,823	43,988	(10,835)	(230)	17	(214)	(207)	(20)	(24)	37	1,761	2
Sole Funded	1,240	1,276	36	2.8%	60,411	60,519	108	0.2%	49,078	48,715	(363)	(463)	1,758	1,295	(585)	2,127	122	(368)	1,283	(8)
Joint Funded	19	11	(8)	(74.5%)	1,853	1,054	(799)	(43.1%)	112,280	97,603	(14,677)	(160)	(911)	(1,070)	(160)	(911)	0	0	11	0
Adults	5	5	0	4.8%	433	469	36	8.3%	86,502	87,227	725	4	22	25	(82)	(18)	86	39	5	0
Independent Special Schools	1,264	1,292	28	2.2%	62,697	62,042	(655)	(5.9%)	247,860	233,545	(14,315)	(619)	869	250	(827)	1,198	208	(329)	1,299	(7)
Resource Bases (Topup)	92	88	(4)	(5.0%)	816	813	(3)	(0.4%)	8,870	9,281	411	36	(39)	(3)	36	(53)	(0)	14	86	2
Reported Forecast Outturn 2023/24	7,308	8,085	777	9.6%	114,284	120,073	5,789	5.1%				1,394	5,095	6,489	1,795	5,221			8,054	31

Appendix B

23/24 DSG Management Plan savings / Cost reductions Workstream / Management Action		23/24 Targeted Savings		23/24 revised Savings
		£'000	Workstream lead	£'000
New Specialist Provision				
	The Promise , Okehampton Opening Sept 2022	(800)	Simon Niles / Gill Loman	(640)
	Glendinning, expanding Sept 2022	(250)		(250)
	Ace Academy, expanding Sept 2022	(225)		(225)
	Lampard additional Opening Jan 2023	(480)		(160)
	Marland East-the-Water additional Opening Sept 2023	(467)		(467)
	Orchard Manor additional Opening Sept 2023	(397)		(397)
	South/West Devon school Opening Sept 2023	(467)		0
		(3,085)		(2,138)
Support Centre Expansion				
	Support Centre Expansion	(1,360)	Gill Loman	0
	Support Centre Expansion total	(1,360)		0
SEN 100 Project				
	Outreach support in special schools - supporting 250 schools across the year (Year 1: supporting 80 children (25 successful); Year 2-5 supporting 160 children (50 successful)	(1,958)	Robyn Emmerson	(1,305)
	SEN Support Service - (Supporting children from to stay in Mainstream Yr1 - Sept 22 - 24 children, Yr 2 - Apr 23 - 48 Children & Sept 23 - 72 Children; Yr 3 forwards Sept intake 72 children	(918)		0
	Outreach support to reduce need for EHCPs (Year 1-2 : Supporting 80 children; Year 3 supporting 120 children)	(709)	Vacant	(709)
	SEN 100 Project total	(3,585)		(2,014)
Independent Sector				
	Independent Schools: Ceasing 3-5 yr placements at the end of the summer term	(672)	Sam Plumb	(1,646)
	Independent Sector Total	(672)		(1,646)
Prevention of more Complex Support requirements				
	Prevention of more complex support requirements 5-10 age group and enhanced capacity of 0-25 Team	(2,252)	Vacant	(478)
	Team around the School	(2,105)		0
	Special Teachers Curriculum	(2,188)	Paul Lamana	(1,458)
	Education Key Workers	(984)	Matthew Gould	(984)
	Prevention of more Complex Support Total	(7,529)		(2,920)
Transition to Adulthood				
	Pre-16 transition NCY10 & 11	(1,990)	Sam Plumb	(1,300)
	Post-16 placement	(1,964)		(1,300)
	Transition phase total	(3,954)		(1,850)
Other				
	20 placements - Children's Social Care Funding - Education only costs would see savings for DSG (transfer of costs to LA and Health)	0		(1,000)
	Mainstream Schools: Claim AWPU back from mainstream schools if child receiving education other than at a mainstream school (as Exclusions)	(50)	Matthew Gould	(50)
	Other total	(50)		(1,050)
Total Management Plan Savings		(20,235)		(11,573)

Page 37

Appendix Item 8c

Dedicated Schools Grant 2024/25: Budget planning

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that DEF:

- a) Specifically approve the amendment to Basic Entitlement in line with the principles agreed at Schools Forum (22 November 2023)
All to Vote (Schools, Academies and PVI)

- b) To note the changes to Dedicated Schools Grant funding for 2024/25
All to Note

For information

This report will cover

1. DSG Settlement 2024/25
2. Schools Block
3. Central School Services Block
4. High Needs Block
5. Early Years Block
6. Other Schools Grants
7. DSG Deficit & Management Plan

1. DSG Settlement 2024/25

- 1.1. On the 19 December 2024 the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) announced the Dedicated Schools Grant allocations for 2024/25

- 1.2. Note that the final allocations will be adjusted through the year for recoupment academies and the updated Early Years census. Individual maintained school budget allocations will be confirmed by 28th February 2022 following ratification by the ESFA; Academies will receive their notifications directly from the ESFA.

2. Schools Block

- 2.1. The Schools Block allocation for 2024/25 is £525.3 million, which includes £2.6 million for Growth Fund and the rolling in of the £17.1 million for Mainstream Schools Additional Grant which was allocated separately in the 2022 Autumn Statement.

- 2.2. The National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) at present will continue to be paid by Schools rather than direct arrangement with the DfE as a couple of the Districts do not want to put procedures in place for April 2024. Guidance states that in 2 tier local authorities all billing authorities need to agree to implement the changes. If mutual consent is not reached it will not be possible for any billing authority to adopt the revised payment process.

- 2.3. The NNDR funding we receive is equivalent to the previous year's actual NNDR payments (along with adjustments relating to the year before that). Because the funding is lagged, any increases in NNDR costs compared to the previous year has to be managed within the overall allocation and less funding is available to distribute to individual schools. In 2023/24 the shortfall was £511,000.

Agenda Item 8d

- 2.4. As part of the consultation, it was agreed that schools would see funding per the National Funding Formula (NFF) levels for 2024/25 Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) for 2024/25 is set at 0%
- 2.5. Within the consultation we also sought direction that if the funding received in the final settlement was lower than expected that we would
 - i. Reduce Basic Entitlement (AWPU) by up to the allowed maximum of 2.5%.
 - ii. Reduce all other factors by up to the allowed maximum of 2.5%
- 2.6. However, the funding settlement received is £1.7 million below a fully funded model of the NFF and to ensure that the block remains within its funding envelop the following actions need to take place.
- 2.7. The Basic Entitlement (AWPU) factor has been reduced by 0.61%. This ensures that the authority remains mirroring the NFF.

3. Central School Services Block

- 3.1. The Central Schools Service Block recognises the Ongoing Responsibilities of Education Services Grant (ESG), Admissions, Copyrights and Schools Forum along with Historic Commitments for Termination of Employment Costs.
- 3.2. In 2024/25 the DfE have reduced the Historic Commitments by 20%, however as with the previous two years Devon has applied for a disapplication to remove this reduction to ensure that the Termination of Employment costs remain funded for the coming year of £873,000. This will be confirmed in the March DSG.

4. High Needs Block

- 4.1. The High Needs Block settlement is £116.9 million for 2024/25. High needs though continues to be under considerable budgetary pressure even after receiving this additional funding.
- 4.2. The budget required to meet current HNB demand and agreed future growth with the service is £155.4 million after management actions of £15.3 million.
- 4.3. The 3 main areas of funding within the block after management actions are:
 - Independent Special Schools (£51.5 million)
 - Maintained & Academy Special Schools (£49 million)
 - SEN Mainstream (including FE) (£36.4 million)
- 4.4. **Independent special schools.**
The budget has been set on 1,315 sole funded placements at an average cost of £50,110 (including 3% inflationary uplift) allowing for in year movement and built into this as part of the overall management plan are actions of £11.3 million.
- 4.5. **Maintained & Academy Special Schools.**
Part of the management plan is to invest in our maintained special schools to increase our own capacity to meet growing demand for placements in this type of provision. Overall, the budgeted places have increased from 1,731 to 1,787 in 2024/25, with an average cost of £24,464 (including inflationary increase).
- 4.6. **SEN Mainstream (including FE)**
Pre-16 Mainstream has seen an increase in the number of EHCPs from 2,448 to 2,453 for 2024/25 with Plus Packages increasing from 1,103 to 1,250 resulting in a £6.3 million increase overall. Whilst, FE Mainstream has seen an increase in the number of EHCPs

from 879 to 1,033 for 2024/25 resulting in a £1.6 million increase. These have been offset by management actions of £3.4 million.

5. Early Years Block

- 5.1. The Early Years Block allocation is £68.3 million for 2024/25.
- 5.2. This is an additional £25 million due the introduction of funding for children aged 9 months up to (and including) 2 year olds to assist new working parent entitlements. This also recognises increases to reflect teachers' pay and pensions and the National Living Wage (NLW).
- 5.3. From April 2024 the Authority will be funded at £5.47 per hour for 3- and 4-year olds (national average £5.98) and £7.43 for 2-year-olds (national average £8.48). For the new funding for 9 months to 2-year-olds (under 2's) the authority will receive an hourly rate of £10.09 (national average £11.55)
- 5.4. Of this funding the authority can retain up to 5% of the funding for central costs. For 2024/25 15p per hour will be retained from 3- and 4-year-olds and 2- year-olds, whilst 31p per hour will be retained from the under 2's.
- 5.5. The reason for retaining a higher amount of under 2's funding is because development work is required to ensure we have sufficient childcare places available for under 2's to meet our statutory duty.
- 5.6. Funding is also retained for the Individual Inclusion Funding (IIF) and Targeted Deprivation Funding (TDF) for 2-year-olds and under 2's at a rate of 18p per hour.
- 5.7. The rates to providers will be £5.22 for 3- and 4-year-olds; £7.10 for 2 -year-olds and £9.60 for the under 2's.

6. Other Schools Grants

- 6.1. **Mainstream Schools Additional Grant**
In 2024/25 the £17 million Mainstream Schools Additional Grant (MSAG) funding for Devon schools has been rolled into the baseline.
- 6.2. **Pupil Premium**
For 2024/25 the budget is £29.9 million and reflects the increase to the funding rates for Pupil Premium in the settlement.
- 6.3. **Other Grants**
Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM), PE & Sports Premium and Teachers Pay and Pensions Grants are based on the latest available data for 2023/24 and we will be notified of further details by the ESFA in the new year.

7. DSG Deficit & Management Plan

- 7.1. As part of budget preparation, we are projecting to see the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit increase by a further £37 million. The main reasons are the increasing volume of requests still being seen from schools and the continued demand being put on the service for SEN placements.
- 7.2. Within the budget for 2024/25 are management actions totalling £15.3 million.
- 7.3. The Authority is very concerned over the ability to reduce this pressure and bring this back to a balance budget over the coming years. This could have a considerable impact on

Agenda Item 8d

future education budgets within the DSG as well as impacting on the financial stability for Devon County Council.

- 7.4. Increasing demands and expenditure within SEND will be mitigated by the SEND Transformation Programme Deficit Management Plan, which has been developed with support from the Department for Education. These pressures will be managed across four key strategic areas, Inclusion and early help; Preparation for Adulthood; Sufficiency; and Financial Management and placement value. The overarching aim to ensure that the children and young people of Devon are supported according to their level of need within the funding envelope available.
- 7.5. The Authority submitted its initial Deficit Management Plan in December 2023 to the DfE as part of the 4th tranche of the Safety Valve Intervention Programme and are in discussions to progress the decision forward. A decision is expected in February 2024.

8. Recommendations

It is recommended that DEF:

- a) Specifically approve the amendment to Basic Entitlement in line with the principles agreed at Schools Forum (22 November 2023)

All to Vote

- b) To note the changes to Dedicated Schools Grant funding for 2024/25

All to Note

ANGIE SINCLAIR
Director of Finance & Public Value

STUART COLLINS
Director of Children and Young People's Futures

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

SCHOOLS FUNDING CONSULTATION: PROPOSAL 4 (TRANSFER OF 0.5% SCHOOLS BLOCK TO HIGH NEEDS BLOCK)

Report of the Director of Finance and Public Value and the Director of Children & Young People's Futures

Recommendation

- a) That DEF agree to transfer 0.25% (£1.3 million) between blocks for 2024-25, to support the Safety Valve plans to manage the high needs funding sustainably and meet the needs of children and young people earlier
All to Vote (Schools, Academies and PVI)

1. Background

- 1.1. Devon Education Forum discussed proposal 4 of the schools funding consultation at its meeting on 22 November 2023. Further information was required on what the funding would be used for, therefore the decision was deferred until the January 2024 meeting. Members agreed that a further consultation with schools would be conducted.
- 1.2. Schools Funding Group raised concerns about the original request for a 0.5% transfer, given the response to the schools funding consultation. They asked that the Council consider whether a lesser amount would still support plans.

2. Schools Funding Consultation Proposal 4 - Movements into Another Block

- 2.1. A core element of Devon's Safety Valve plans is to improve the inclusion of children and young people with SEND and those who are disadvantaged by meeting needs earlier and in the right place and to ensure demand is managed appropriately.
- 2.2. The current Early Help offer in Devon doesn't meet the current challenges and demand seen locally and schools can't access the support they need which, in turn, meets the needs of children, young people and families. This is backed up by evidence, for example demand for statutory services, attendance and exclusion data.
- 2.3. Investing in strengthening family intervention work and the reach into schools to support a reduction in exclusions as well as a targeted response to those young people experiencing Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) will be part of a wider and developing Early Help offer in Devon. The slide deck setting out what the funding will be used for is provided alongside this paper.
- 2.4. The Council has revised its initial proposal to transfer 0.5% (£2.6 million) and is now requesting a 0.25% (£1.3 million) transfer, which will pump prime this early help work. Schools can be assured that the impact of this funding will be managed as part of safety valve monitoring via the DfE.
- 2.5. It should be noted that as part of Safety Valve negotiations there is an expectation that the Council pursue all potential funding streams. Therefore, should the decision be made to reject a transfer, the Council is expected to request disapplication to obtain the transfer.

Agenda Item 8e

- 2.6. The Council is clear that unlike other authorities, it will not seek to apply the funds transferred in 2024/25 to the 'bottom line' to address the deficit but will reinvest in support for schools to improve the system. It will also not be seeking a significant schools block transfer which may be proposed in other areas.

Angie Sinclair,
Director of Finance & Public Value

Stuart Collins,
Director of Children & Young People's Futures

Please ask for:

Matthew Thorpe
Deputy Director, Finance & Public Value
Matthew.thorpe@devon.gov.uk

Becky Hopkins
Deputy Director, Children's Social Care
Becky.hopkins@devon.gov.uk

24 January 2024

Devon Schools Leadership Services (DSLS) CIO
Summary Survey Responses to: 2024-25 Schools Funding Arrangements
Proposal 4 - Movements into Another Block to support Expanding the Early Help Offer in Devon

Recommendation: That DEF note the responses to the DSLS survey which will assist to inform the voting decisions of individual headteacher members representing their respective phase and LA school or academy sectors.

1. 2024-25 Schools Funding Arrangements

1.1. At the meeting of Devon Education Forum (DEF) on 22/11/23 (Item 107), details of responses to the 2024-25 Schools Funding Arrangements Consultation were shared with DEF members as follows:

[DEF 23-14 - 2024-25 Devon Consultation Responses.pdf](#)

1.2. In summary, a total of 117 out of 352 individual schools (33% of all schools) submitted responses to the DCC consultation, representing just over 34,600 pupils.

1.3. Specifically the responses to Proposal 4 - Movements into Another Block revealed the following responses to the proposal: Do you agree to transfer funding of 0.5%, for one year only, from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block to develop an Early Help (Education) Offer for schools as part of the Safety Valve agreement?

	Academy Primary	Academy Secondary	Total Academy	Maintained Primary	Maintained Secondary	Total Maintained	Total Schools
Individual Schools:							
Agree	14	6	20	17	1	18	38
Disagree	22	13	35	36	0	36	71
Neither Agree or Disagree	0	0	0	8	0	8	8
Total	36	19	55	61	1	62	117
NOR:							
Agree	12%	5%	17%	15%	1%	15%	32%
Disagree	19%	11%	30%	31%	0%	31%	61%
Neither Agree or Disagree	0%	0%	0%	7%	0%	7%	7%
Total	31%	16%	47%	52%	1%	53%	100%

1.4. It was minuted (107) that "Officers advised that in respect of Report recommendation (a)(ii)(a), proposal 4, regarding the transfer between blocks (section 4(c) of the Report), the Forum was not currently being asked to take a decision on Proposal 4 itself due to outstanding information still awaited, but to agree in principle on how funding would be distributed, in relation to the consideration of Proposal 4 at the Forum's meeting in January 2024. Should the Forum not agree to Proposal 4 at its January 2024 meeting, this would not form any part of the allocation should the County Council receive additional funds from Government in December 2023."

1.5. Furthermore, (107) "(e) that it be noted that further information relating to (a)(ii)(A) above would be forwarded to Forum Members as soon as possible this academic term, to enable them to discuss with their respective school colleagues (where appropriate) in advance of its consideration at the 24 January 2023 DEF meeting."

2. Proposal: Expanding the Early Help Offer in Devon

2.1. A slide presentation detailing proposals for Expanding the Early Help Offer in Devon were received by DSLS on 4/12/23 and duly shared with all Primary and Secondary schools in Devon by way of a short survey [Important - School Funding Arrangements](#).

2.2. Schools were advised that the survey was not a formal or additional consultation and that DSLS was seeking the views of school leader colleagues to assist elected DEF members to make an informed decision on behalf of the phase and school type (academy or maintained) which they are representing when the proposal was presented for a decision at the next meeting.

2.3. The single question being asked of school leaders was:

Having considered this proposal (Expanding Early Help Offer in Devon), would you be happy to support the transfer of up to 0.5% transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block for one year only, to develop an Early Help (Education) Offer for schools within the management plan as part of the Safety Valve negotiations with the DfE?

2.4. The survey opened on 5 December 2023 and closed on 5 January 2024.

2.5. A total of 126 out of 352 individual schools (36% of all schools) submitted responses to the survey, representing 40,676 pupils as per NOR included within the 2024/25 DSG allocation data presented at Schools' Finance Group on 12/1/24.

2.6. This is a breakdown of responses by individual schools within each phase/sector (table 2.7) and also by % number of overall pupil numbers from responding schools (table 2.8), to enable comparison with the table in 1.3 above:

2.7. Individual Schools:

	Academy Primary	Academy Secondary	All Through*	Total Academy	Maintained Primary	Maintained Secondary	Total Maintained	Total Schools
Agree	32	3	0	35	16	1	17	52
Disagree	34	14	1	49	24	1	25	74
Total	66	17	1	84	40	2	42	126
% Number of schools within each school phase/sector								
Agree	48.5%	17.6%	0%	41.7%	40.0%	50.0%	40.5%	41.3%
Disagree	51.5%	82.4%	100%	58.3%	60.0%	50.0%	59.5%	58.7%

2.8. Pupil Numbers:

	Academy Primary	Academy Secondary	All Through*	Total Academy	Maintained Primary	Maintained Secondary	Total Maintained	Total Schools
Agree	4,500	2,710	0	7,210	2,965	756	3,721	10,931
Disagree	6,180	15,756	876	22,812	5,619	1,314	6,933	29,745
Total	10,680	18,466	876	30,022	8,584	2,070	10,654	40,676
% Number of overall pupils from responding schools								
Agree	11.1%	6.7%	0%	17.7%	7.3%	1.8%	9.1%	26.9%
Disagree	15.2%	38.7%	2.2%	56.1%	13.8%	3.2%	17.0%	73.1%
Total	26.3%	45.4%	2.2%	73.8%	21.1%	5.0%	26.2%	100.0%

2.9. Having considered the outcome of the survey, individual headteacher members of Devon Education Forum who are representing their respective phase and sector, will use the results of the survey to inform their respective vote on Proposal 4 - Movements into Another Block to support Expanding the Early Help Offer in Devon.

Schools Executive Committee
Devon Schools Leadership Services (DSLS) CIO

Schools Organisation, Capital and Admissions Group: Notes of meeting on Tuesday 5 December 2023

Key Issues for DEF to Note:

Item 3: School Term Times / School Day

Concerns had been raised that LA published term dates may be misleading to parents assuming those dates refer to all Devon schools. The LA proposes to change the way that this information is shared, with the intention that this will encourage parents to refer to individual school websites to confirm their local term time arrangements.

Item 4: Flexi-Schooling

A Flexi-Schooling Protocol has been introduced for schools to outline circumstances where parental requests should be considered. Noted that flexi-schooling at secondary is difficult to manage due to timetabling constraints. Heads are encouraged to consider the safeguarding impact of flexi-schooling requests, for the hours the child is not at school. Information to be requested from schools on flexi-schooling arrangements.

Item 5: Early Years

Noted that as additional childcare entitlement hours become available, parents of children already at an EY setting in a community or VC school will be prioritised ahead of parents of children on a waiting list. It is proposed that this will improve consistency of access to a childcare setting. Recruitment campaigns ongoing to increase staff in Early Years and childcare settings, and childminders. SOCA noted the LA concerns around sufficiency of childcare places for under 2s from September 2025 and were concerned that schools will be under pressure to help to resource an increase in this provision.

Item 6: School Organisation:

Noted current proposals to create Resource Bases at Brixington and Holsworthy Community college to be considered by Regional Schools Board on 13/12. DCC aims to increase resourced provision in mainstream schools by 200 places over the next 3 years.

Item 7: SW Norse Update

SOCA noted that tenders for new Service Term Contracts are due w/b 11 December. Noted concerns around contractor performance in specific areas are being addressed by SW Norse and DCC colleagues.

Item 8: Capital Programme:

2024/25 Schools capital maintenance schedule currently being prepared, this will include several emergency schemes putting pressure on budget availability. Awaiting outcomes of 11 RAAC surveys (involving asbestos or need to access areas at height).

Attendance

DCC

Katherine Crompton (chair)

Simon Niles - **Apologies**

Shona Meek

Andrew Brent

Fran Butler

Heidi Watson-Jones (notes)

Capital Programme Manager, Built Environments

Strategy, Schools Planning and Admissions

Senior School Organisation Officer

Senior Policy Officer

Early Years and Childcare Sufficiency Lead

Service Support Officer (E&L)

Agenda Item 9

Schools Organisation, Capital and Admissions Group: Notes of meeting on Tuesday 5 December 2023

Devon Schools Leadership Services

Primary

Penny Hammett
David Perkins

FORT Federation
Littletown Academy

Secondary

Graham Hill

Pilton Community College

Special School Heads

Stuart Allman

Pathfield School

DAG

Ian Rogers

Diocesan Representatives

Vacancy
Christina Mabin - part
Richard Power - part

Diocese of Plymouth
Exeter Anglican Diocese (Admissions)
Exeter Anglican Diocese (Capital)

Union Representative

Nigel Williams

Corporate Forum (Education) NASUWT

In Attendance

Nick Cook - *part*

South West Norse

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 26 September 2023

Outstanding actions:

- Use of vacant capacity in school – Simon Niles following up with RD office.
- Teachers JCNC to consider issues around making up lost school days.
- **AB** to look at how smaller schools are notified of in-year online admissions applications.
- Other actions completed or in hand.
- Minutes agreed as an accurate record.

2. Admissions: LA Admissions Annual Report

- LA provides annual statutory report to Office of Schools' Adjudicator.
- SOCA recommended the specific concerns raised by the Local Authority to the OSA.
- Report to OSA is submitted annually at end of October – schools may raise any issues for inclusion in the report to andrew.brent@devon.gov.uk

3. Admissions: School Term Times / School Day

- Concerns had been raised that LA published term dates may be misleading to parents assuming those dates refer to all Devon schools. The LA consults on an annual timetable of 197 days, from which schools allocate non-pupil days.
- The LA proposes to change the way that this information is shared, principally making this available only to LA and schools. It is intended that this will encourage parents to refer to individual school websites to confirm their local term time arrangements.
- LA is reviewing the information that is provided online by schools and multi academy trusts to enable clear and consistent information for staff and

Schools Organisation, Capital and Admissions Group: Notes of meeting on Tuesday 5 December 2023

families about the timings of the school day and determined school term times.

- Noted the school week should be 32.5 hours which refers to the total length of the school week of including lunchtimes, breaks, and directed teaching hours. SOCA were reminded that EY entitlements include lunchtimes.
- Noted that alongside an ongoing priority to extend out of school childcare provision, there may be less clarity around the length of the school day.
- Noted that there have been instances where schools have changed school term times during the academic year, e.g. to enable a school joining a MAT to fall in line with wider MAT arrangements. This can cause issues where families and staff had already confirmed holiday arrangements.
- **AB** to discuss the presentation of the online school term timetable with Education Systems Team.
- Schools with their own Early Years provision there should also provide clarity on their website around the nursery admission arrangements, and how/when families can access their full entitlement.
- Noted need to consider communications to parents who were accustomed to finding information on the LA webpages.
-

ACTION:

- **AB** to discuss the presentation of the online school term timetable with Education Systems Team.

4. Admissions: Flexi-Schooling

- Noted previous DfE and LA position to discourage flexi-schooling arrangements, however, it is recognised that this may be appropriate under specific circumstances, e.g. phased return from medical absence.
- A Flexi-Schooling Protocol has been introduced for schools to outline circumstances where parental requests should be considered. This guidance will be updated where DfE guidance highlights a change in approach.
- Noted that some schools are offering a flexi-schooling arrangements where parents are requesting this as a lifestyle choice.
- SOCA discussed the impact on secondary education where a child has been flexi-schooled throughout primary. It was felt this situation is similar to a child being educated out of year; the secondary headteacher would be required to decide their approach from year 7. There were concerns around transitions preparations in these instances, which could be on a phased basis. To support this approach, it was acknowledged that some flexi-schooled learners may not be able to access a full GCSE programme.
- Noted that flexi-schooling at secondary is difficult to manage due to timetabling constraints.
- AB confirmed that a child should be authorised as absent when not at school if on a flexi-schooling arrangement.
- Heads need to consider the safeguarding impact of flexi-schooling requests, for the hours the child is not at school. Schools are not responsible for setting learning for the time the child is not attending school.
- Concerns were shared about the accountability for child's attainment or academic progress.
- SOCA agreed that it would be helpful to request information from schools: which schools have agreed flexi-school arrangements, reasons for granting requests, number of requests being received for flexi-schooling. Will be useful to compare this data to requests for EHE, and arrangements to address poor attendance or behaviour management.

Agenda Item 9

Schools Organisation, Capital and Admissions Group: Notes of meeting on Tuesday 5 December 2023

- AB confirmed that flexi-schooling arrangements should be notified to the local authority. **AB** to check this is included in the guidance.

ACTIONS:

- **AB** to re-share the Flexi-Schooling protocol, with a request for feedback on any areas which may require further clarification. **Post meeting note:** please see link: [Flexi-schooling](#)
- **AB** to check requiring schools to notify the LA of flexi-schooling arrangements is included in the guidance.
- **AB** to outline information to be requested from schools.
- **DSLS** to share survey to request flexi-schooling feedback from schools

5. Early Years Update

- Noted proposed changes in reporting of childcare sufficiency information linked to incoming changes to funding of childcare entitlements.
- DCC Nursery Admissions over-subscription criteria now separately published for under 2s, 2year olds and 3&4 year olds – will lead to schools being encouraged to familiarise themselves with the new criteria and consider establishment of a Nursery Admissions panel to consider admissions.
- Noted that as additional hours become available to parents, this will now prioritise parents of children already at that EY setting, ahead of parents of children on a waiting list. It is proposed that this will improve consistency of access to a childcare setting.
- Noted ongoing campaigns to promote recruitment of staff in Early Years and childcare settings, and childminders. This will be crucial to the development of an 8-6 wraparound childcare provision which primary schools will be expected to be offered by September 2026.
- Noted the Provider Self Update portal for Early Years and Childcare providers will be available from January 2024. This will automatically update information available to parents and carers, and enhance sufficiency and capacity data available to the LA.
- Noted LA concerns around sufficiency of childcare places for under 2s from September 2025. Schools will be under pressure to help to resource this provision, and noted knock-on impact on the physical capacity on school sites that is fit for purpose, particularly for all-year round provision, which could restrict access to school sites for invasive capital works.
- Noted term-time nursery provision successfully operates on secondary school site where there is adequate demand from education staff.
- Mindful of the current pressure on schools, particularly where there are significant challenges being managed by school leaders. Alternative options could include increasing childminder availability, particularly in rural areas.
- Felt it would be useful to learn from schools that are already successfully operating a full-year early years provision.

6. School Organisation Update

- Noted current proposals to create Resource Bases at Brixington and Holsworthy Community college to be considered by Regional Schools Board on 13/12. The overall aim is to increase resourced provision by 200 places over the next 3 years. Noted Union support for the development of this provision.
- Consultation on proposal to lower the age range of Langtree Primary has led to concerns being raised by parents around the impact of caring for younger children on Reception aged children in the Foundation Stage Unit.

Schools Organisation, Capital and Admissions Group: Notes of meeting on Tuesday 5 December 2023

Further information has now been provided to Cabinet so a decision can be made as to whether to continue with the statutory process.

- Noted clarity around Axminster decision delay has been requested of Regional Director.
- Trinity School – noted school converted to Academy on 1 Dec, however TUPE meetings have not yet taken place; Devon HR and Union keen to take part in these meetings – **SM** to flag this to schools during Academisation process
- Interviews for academy sponsor of Cranbrook special school taking place currently, potentially opening September 2026.
- New Cranbrook primary school - Understand S106 is close to being finalised, with potential opening 2026 or 2027.
- Noted schools joining or changing academy trusts.
- Noted that no children were currently on roll at the Clyst Vale Hearing Support resource base which has consulted on closure. The school feel that the school and staffing are well resourced to meet learners' needs within the mainstream classroom environment. Noted concerns around capital adaptations to ensure learners are adequately considered – Shona and Katherine to discuss.

ACTION:

- **SM** to flag to schools the need for HR and Union representation at school TUPE meetings during Academisation process
- **SM and KC** to discuss concerns around capital adaptations required to ensure HI learners are adequately considered in a mainstream environment.

7. SW Norse Update

- DMP and VA Promise cost models to be reconsidered ahead of contract changes. Cost model for DMP is likely to remain on basis of pupil numbers on roll. Noted VA Promise is also on a cost per pupil update.
- Noted tenders for new Service Term Contracts are due w/b 11 December.
- Nick Cook and Richard Power to consider future arrangements for VA Promise
- Noted specific concerns around timescale for the tendering of for lift maintenance contract.
- NC discussing operation of the current DAMA model with multi academy trusts. Expecting to propose that service term contracts will no longer be included beyond 31 March 24, as MATs are not consistently using DCC service term contracts or the Connect 2 system to track compliance. This can have significant knock-on implications for the LA ensuring that critical maintenance and checks have been completed e.g. following a fire.
- Noted difficulties with service provider for automatic door maintenance and Legionella / Thermostatic mixing controls; working with DCC procurement to manage this for the remainder of the current contract.
- Lightning protection – understand work has been completed however due to administrative issues, the Connect 2 database has not been updated.
- Noted communications have been shared with schools around facilitated access to school sites during school hours. Contractors will be asked to feedback where access is an issue to meeting compliance expectations, to enable follow up with individual schools, particularly where there are health and safety concerns with compliance being out of tolerance.

ACTION:

- **NC** to meet with Richard Power to discuss future VA Promise arrangements

Agenda Item 9

Schools Organisation, Capital and Admissions Group: Notes of meeting on Tuesday 5 December 2023

8. Capital Programme Update

- Team is currently preparing schools capital maintenance programme, this will include several emergency schemes putting pressure on budget availability. Planned work does not currently include adaptations requests.
- Basic need projects are going well, with expansion of secondary provision at Cranbrook Education Campus.
- Looking to seek approval for funding to self-deliver Cranbrook Special School project.
- Still awaiting DfE methodology for special school net capacity reviews.
- 3 maintained community school developments ongoing.
- RAAC Update: KC seeking confirmation that Devon VC or community schools have no RAAC; awaiting outcomes of 11 surveys (involving asbestos or at height). **KC** to keep FB aware of any issues concerning schools with nursery provision.
- RP confirmed that one CofE faith academy inspection is outstanding due to presence of asbestos.

ACTION:

- **KC** to liaise with Simon Niles to confirm list of any academy schools with RAAC detected.
- **KC** to keep Fran Butler aware of any issues concerning schools with nursery provision.

9. AOB

- Noted circulation of briefing from Sam Chapman on use of the term statutory / compulsory school age. Any queries to be directed to sam.chapman@devon.gov.uk

Future meeting dates:

- **Tuesday 5 March 2024** (9.30 – 11.30)
- **Tuesday 14 May 2024** (9.30 – 11.30)
- **Tuesday 24 September 2024** (9.30 – 11.30)
- **Tuesday 3 December 2024** (9.30 – 11.30)
- **Tuesday 4 March 2025** (9.30 – 11.30)