

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Cheshire West and Chester Schools Forum

Tuesday 5 July 2022
4.30pm – 6.30 pm

Virtual Meeting

Schools Forum Clerk
Children and Families
Cheshire West and Chester Council
Telephone 07584 206913

Notes for members of the public

Cheshire West and Chester Schools Forum

The Council welcomes and encourages you to be at its meetings and Committees.

You are requested to remain quiet whilst the meeting is taking place.

The agenda is sometimes divided into two parts. You are allowed to stay for the first part. When the Forum is ready to deal with the second part you will need to leave the meeting because the business will be of a confidential nature, for example, dealing with individual people, contracts and financial affairs of other parties.

Members of the public wishing to attend Schools Forum meetings should contact the Schools Forum Clerk:

Email: school.relationshipteam@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Telephone: 07584 206913

Agenda for Cheshire West and Chester Schools Forum 5 July 2022

1.	4.30	Introductions and apologies		
2.	4.35	Minutes and matters arising of last meeting 2.1 To agree the minutes held 8 February 2022 2.2 Matters arising		Page 4-8
3.	4.45	Apprenticeship Levy	Rosemary Hodgson	Presentation
4.	5.00	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2021-2022 Final Outturn	Natalie Cole	Page 9-11
5.	5.20	Maintained School Balances Financial Year 2021-2022 and Academy Balances 2020-2021	Natalie Cole	Page 12-15
6.	5.40	Directed revisions to schemes for financing schools	Natalie Cole	Verbal report
7.	5.50	Government Consultation on Implementing the direct national funding formula	Natalie Cole	Page 16-24
8.	6.10	Annual review of the Cheshire West and Chester Schools Forum's membership, constitution, and terms of reference	Charlotte Fenn	Page 25-39
9.	6.20	Any Other Business		
10.	6.30	Next meeting: Tuesday 11 October 2022		
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**Cheshire West and Chester
Schools Forum
5 July 2022**

Agenda item 2

Minutes of Cheshire West and Chester Schools Forum, virtual meeting, on 8 February 2022

Members	Representing	Attendance
Schools and Academies		
Alan Brown	Primary headteachers	Attended
Julie Chambers	Primary headteachers	Absent
Sarah Curtis	Primary headteachers	Attended
Ian Devereux Roberts	Primary headteachers	Attended
Kate Docherty	Primary headteachers	Attended
Sharon Broughton	Primary governors	Attended
Duncan Haworth (Chair)	Primary governors	Attended
Lisa Rigby	Primary governors	Attended
David Nield	Primary governors	Attended
Nick Lacey	Primary governors	Absent
David Curry	Secondary headteachers	Attended
Mike Holland	Secondary headteachers	Attended
David Rowlands	Secondary governors	Attended
Rob Williams	Secondary governors	Absent
Mike McCann	Special headteachers	Attended
Philip Hopwood	Special governors	Attended
Andy Stewart	PRU	Attended
Deborah Beaumont	Academies - mainstream	Attended
Sarah Connolly	Academies - mainstream	Absent
Darran Jones	Academies - mainstream	Apologies
Steve Ellis	Academies - mainstream	Substitute
Luci Jones	Academies - mainstream	Attended
Jason Lowe	Academies - mainstream	Attended
Helen Studley	Academies - mainstream	Attended
Marie Allen	Academies - special	Attended
Non Schools		
Sue Anderson	PVI early years providers	Attended
Angela Thornton	PVI early years providers	Attended
Kathryn Magiera	Diocese	Absent
Caroline Vile	Diocese	Attended
Greg Foster	Unions	Attended
Geoff Wright	Unions	Absent
Rob Pullen	CWAPH	Attended
Vacancy	16-19 providers	Vacancy
Official Observers		
Councillor Robert Cernik	Cabinet Member for Children and Families	Attended
Officers in attendance		
Amera Choudhary	Commissioning Officer	
Natalie Cole	Finance Manager	
Charlotte Fenn	Clerk	
Emma Meekin	Commissioning Manager	
Debbie Murphy	Acting Head of Education and Inclusion	

Observer

Councillor Razia Daniels

Shadow Cabinet Member for Children and Families

1. Introductions and apologies

Apologies were noted.

2. Minutes and matters arising of last meeting**2.1 To agree the minutes from the meeting held 18 January 2022**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 18 January 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

2.2 Matters arising**2.2.1 Item 3 School Information Management System (SIMS) Update and Options**

Forum members asked if there was a further update regarding SIMS. Natalie Cole reported that they had no further information.

Some Forum members commented they were aware of schools receiving their contracts with the six-month break clause option, should they sign up by 20 February 2022; some schools, as part of due diligence, were looking at other systems.

3. Arrangements for funding from the High Needs Block 2022-2023

Natalie Cole went through the key points in the report to update Schools Forum on proposed arrangements for allocations from the High Needs Block for commissioned services, places and top up funding.

Forum members' attention was drawn to the table in paragraph 5 which outlined the allocation to budgets to fund current expenditure and further growth and investment. Forum's attention was also drawn to the table in paragraph 7 which showed the demand for high needs places and gaps in provision for September 2022. It was noted that the proposals to address the gaps would be considered through a combination of increased place numbers and new provisions to be finalised by the Local Authority Priority Working Group.

It was noted that the supplementary funding was being treated as additional high needs funding and not as an amount per school. £300k supplementary funding had been earmarked for exceptional inflationary cost pressures for providers who could demonstrate that additional national insurance and energy costs could not be afforded from the planned use of reserves.

Forum's attention was also drawn to Appendix A and existing exceptional funding arrangements.

Natalie sought Forum's view on the proposals.

David Rowlands commented that they would find it difficult to better these proposals. Mike McCann was appreciative of the conversation officers had with special school colleagues regarding realigning commissioned place numbers and reviewing top up funding rates.

Resolved that Schools Forum endorse the: -

- i. proposed approach to allocating funding for further investment; and
- ii. proposals for high needs funding arrangements for schools.

4. Improving Children's Speech, Language and Communication in Schools

Emma Meekin introduced the item and took Forum members through the report circulated, separately, prior to the meeting.

The report provided information and data on the needs of children and young people in relation to speech, language and communication, service demand and service delivery and proposals to improve service provision.

Emma sought Forums view on the proposals.

David Nield asked which was seen as the highest priority. Emma responded that they worked together as identification support and would be difficult to separate; however, officers could have a look at a mix of proposals.

David Rowlands supported the proposals and felt the two functions should be developed together, i.e., the need to diagnose early and spread the skills within the schools but leave the more complex cases to the professionals.

Questions were raised as to the cost of the proposals. Natalie Cole responded there was a £200k investment from September, the options in the paper reflected the full year cost and the full year commitment would need to be factored into next year. It was noted that the spend might increase incrementally whilst appointing staff.

In response to a question as to whether there was going to be availability of funding going forward beyond 2022-2023, Natalie confirmed that if the project continued it would be the first commitment on funds in future years.

Forum members liked the online option for Infant Language Link.

Questions were asked as to the percentage of appointments missed and the reasons. Emma responded that often families struggled and did not engage with taking children to appointments, services did not have the capacity to follow up missed appointments.

It was noted that Forum would like to take forward all the proposals, but Forum acknowledged that this might not be affordable and felt it best to focus on and develop the areas which would have the greatest effect and best value.

5. Early Years Funding for 2022-2023

Natalie Cole introduced the report which detailed the proposed budget allocation for the early years block and funding of the two, three and four year old entitlements through the Early Years Funding Formula (EYFF) and Early Years Inclusion Support Fund (EYISF).

Natalie took Forum through the proposed budget allocations outlined in the paper and drew Forum members' attention to appendix A which outlined the proposed Cheshire West and Chester 2022-2023 Early Years Single Funding Formula.

It was noted that appendix B entitled Early Years Inclusion Support Funding was for information as the current assessment framework remained unchanged.

Natalie sought comments from Forum.

Sue Anderson felt that despite the implied investment in early years funding, the Early Years sector was not in a good situation with a slight increase this year followed by a decrease in funding and the impact of the reduced Quality supplement.

Natalie sought to clarify Sue's comment regarding decreasing funding; Natalie was not aware of a proposed decrease in funding; however, the birth rate was declining which would impact on funding.

Natalie provided clarified regarding the impact of the reduced quality supplement. Providers with staff members holding an appropriate Qualified Teacher Status would have a 12p reduction on the quality supplement from 25p to 13p but once these funds were redistributed, they would get 10p back through the increased base rate. £70,000 was being redistributed.

Angela Thornton commented that it was an issue of equality, spending was high on funding speech and language therapy in school, if got speech and language right in early years they might need to spend less later. Also, funding was not considering the cost-of-living increase.

Sue Anderson acknowledged that Officers could not do anything else and accepted they were working within the funds available but felt it was going to be a difficult year for early years providers.

Natalie appreciated and acknowledged the comments made by Forum.

Resolved that the Schools Forum endorse the increase in base rate funding for 2022-2023.

6. Schools Financial Value Standard 2021-2022

Natalie Cole introduced the report which provided an update to Schools Forum on the requirements of the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) submission for maintained schools for 2021-2022 which was due to be submitted to the Local Authority by 31 March 2022.

It was noted that the report was for information and representatives of maintained schools and Governing Bodies were asked to share the update with their representative bodies.

Natalie reported that a training session had been done that morning which had been attended by approximately 40 schools. Further guidance had been sent out on slides as part of the training and Natalie was happy to pick up any questions from schools.

Natalie also requested that schools access the most recent guidance as there were several new questions. Forum members' attention was drawn to appendix A which summarised the changes to checklist questions.

It was noted that schools no longer need to complete the data for the dashboard review; the dashboard for each school was publicly available. The DfE was also providing further analysis through the View My Financial Insights (VFMI) tool.

Forum members sought clarification regarding the new requirement for recording related party transactions and whether a nil return was required.

Philip Hopwood confirmed that schools were only required to put information on their website if schools had staff paid more than £100k.

7. Any Other Business

None to report.

8. Next meeting

Next Schools Forum meeting Tuesday 5 July 2022.

Agenda Item 4

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2021-2022 Final Outturn

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of the report is to report on the 2021-2022 final outturn position for the centrally held DSG budget and reserve.

Recommendations

2. The Forum is asked to note the final outturn on the 2021-2022 centrally held DSG and reserve and next steps.

Final Outturn

3. The final reported outturn for the centrally held DSG for 2021-2022 is an overspend of £0.801m. This is a decrease of £0.087m from the position reported at Third Review (November 2021) when a forecast overspend of £0.888m was reported.
4. In summary, the overspend largely relates to the budget for SEND placements in independent schools (£1.061m overspend), due to an increasing number of integrated care placements and tribunal judgements finding in favour of independent specialist provision. The pressure also reflects an increasing number of SEND pupils with additional support in mainstream schools and also those accessing in borough special schools, the pupil referral unit and other authority schools (£0.487m overspend).

These pressures have been partially offset by underspends due to lower levels of support in other high needs provision budgets (£0.162m), in year schools block funding adjustments (£0.094m), the prioritisation of other grant funding to deliver service priorities (£0.218m), lower take up of Early Years entitlements (£0.063m) and vacancy savings across the service (£0.210m).

5. Further explanation of the variances is as follows:
 - In the Schools Block, there were underspends against centrally held schools related budgets (£0.094m), mainly for reduced need and eligibility for growth funding for expanding schools (£0.048m), rates relief for schools converting to academy in year (£0.017m) and an underspend on the de-delegated school budgets for contingencies (£0.029m).
 - The overspend on High Needs provision is as has been previously reported, mainly due to an increasing number of placements in independent specialist provision (£1.061m overspend). The numbers of pupils accessing additional support for education in mainstream provision through top up funding also overspent by £0.783m and increasing pupil numbers in in borough alternative provision overspent by £0.073m.

- The cost pressures in high needs were partially offset by underspends against budgeted costs for targeted education for exclusions and medical needs pupils (£0.102m), inter authority high needs placements (£0.026m), post 16 support in further and specialist provision (£0.113m) and budgeted costs for places/top up funding for special school over numbers (£0.174m). The budget for the outreach provision service offer underspent by £0.079m as this was not active in summer term and not entered into by all special schools. Demand for other support for additional learning needs and personal budgets underspent by £0.015m and there was an underspend on the contract charges for Speech and Language Therapy (£0.027m).
- In the early years block, there was a net underspend of £0.063m across the 2, 3 and 4 year old entitlements from the actual take up during 2021-22. The take up of 2 year old funding overspent against the government allocation by £0.098m and there was a significant increase in the number of children accessing early years inclusion funding which overspent by £0.304m. These pressures have been accommodated in year by lower take up of 3 and 4 year old placements (£0.422m) and disability access funding (£0.043m).
- Other key variances in central spend relate to an underspend on staff vacancies and non pay budgets across the central services (£0.204m) and prioritising the use of other grant funding to support School Improvement activities which released £0.218m to offset other pressures.

6. The main variances and changes from the position at Third Review are summarised in the table below.

Funding block	Budget	Third review (Nov 2021)	Third review (Nov 2021) Total Block	Final outturn	Final outturn Total Block
		£000	£000	£000	£000
Schools block	Rates	-12	-60	-17	-94
	Growth funding	-48		-48	
	De-delegated budgets	0		-29	
High needs	16-25 top up payments	-78	1288	-113	1,381
	Top up payments	188		609	
	Independent and non maintained special schools	1,138		1,061	
	Inter authority placements	66		-26	
	Outreach service	0		-79	
	Other high needs	-66		-15	
	Alternative provision	61		-29	
	SALT contract	-21		-27	
Early Years	Early years entitlements	0	0	-63	-63
Central Services	School Improvement	-219	-219	-218	-218
Cross service	Staffing vacancies	-118		-200	

	Non pay	-3	-121	-5	-205
Total			888		801

Position of the DSG Reserve

7. As a consequence of the overspent in year position and use of reserves, this has resulted in an increase in the existing deficit on the DSG reserve brought forward from 2020-21 and the cumulative overspend on the DSG reserve at the end of the year is £1.970m. The following tables summarise the cumulative position on the centrally held DSG reserve including the current year variances and agreed use of reserves in 2021-2022.

	£000
DSG reserve brought forward	1,032
Planned allocation of reserves	
Ring-fenced De-delegation allocated to 2021-22	137
In year overspend	801
DSG reserve carried forward	1,970

8. A plan to address the ongoing pressures from SEND provision is being developed for 2022-23, however, local authorities are expected to be able to cover deficits from available reserves from 2023-24 and a Council funded DSG reserve will be established to match the reported year end deficit position against the grant.

Next Steps

9. Following the outcome of the SEND review in July, officers will be taking forward further development of a DSG recovery plan over summer term for 2023-2024. This will take into account the DfE funding announcement for the next financial year, operational guidance and updated demand and cost information for high needs in consultation with Schools Forum.

Agenda Item 5

Maintained School Balances Financial Year 2021-2022 and Academy Balances 2020-2021

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform Schools Forum of the final outturn position of maintained schools in the Borough for the 2021-2022 financial year. Also, as requested by Schools Forum, this report also includes academy balances for the latest reported position for the 2020-2021 academic and financial year accounts.

Recommendations

2. For Schools Forum to note the outturn position and movement in balances for both schools and academies and to endorse the actions to review schools with surplus balances in paragraph 12.

Background

3. Under the Scheme for Financing Schools, schools can carry forward from one financial year to the next any surplus or deficit relative to the school's budget share. Following the closure of accounts for the financial year, a cumulative surplus or deficit is determined for each school to be transferred to the school in the following financial year. This balance represents the funds available to an individual school at a determined point in time at the end of the financial year.

Outturn Position 2021-2022 for maintained schools

4. The net surplus in maintained school balances for 2021-2022 is £14.783m (6.9% of gross expenditure budgets). A summary of the balances by sector is shown in the table below with individual school balances included as an annex to this report.

School Balances outturn position 2021-2022 (subject to audit)

	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	Special Schools	Alternative Provision	All Schools
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Revised Budget	123,063	68,215	20,208	2,375	213,861
Net Expenditure	115,370	62,966	18,648	2,094	199,078
Net Surplus	(7,693)	(5,248)	(1,560)	(281)	(14,783)
% surplus to budget	(6.3%)	(7.7%)	(7.7%)	(11.8%)	(6.9%)

5. The net surplus is made up of £15.7m of surplus balances across 99 schools (compared to £16.4m across 109 schools in 2020-2021) and £1m of deficit balances (the same as in 2020-2021). There are 17 schools with deficit balances which is an

increase from 13 in 2020-2021. A breakdown by sector and the number of schools with surplus and deficit balances is shown in the table below.

	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	Special Schools	Alternative Provision	All Schools
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Total Surplus	(8,196)	(5,722)	(1,560)	(281)	(15,760)
Total Deficit	503	474	0	0	977
Net Surplus	(7,693)	(5,248)	(1,560)	(281)	(14,783)

Number of schools with a surplus balance	82	7	8	2	99
Number of schools with a deficit balance	15	2	0	0	17
Total number of maintained schools	97	9	8	2	116

Movement in School Balances

6. The overall position shows a slight decrease in school balances of £0.6m since the end of 2020-2021 when the net surplus balance was £15.4m. The movement in balances held by sector is included in the table below.

Financial Year	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	Special Schools	Alternative Provision	All Schools
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
2021-2022	(7,693)	(5,248)	(1,560)	(281)	(14,783)
2020-2021	(9,109)	(4,133)	(1,867)	(335)	(15,445)
Change	1,416	(1,115)	307	54	662
% change	-16%	27%	-16%	-16%	4%

7. Primary school balances have decreased by £1.4m. There are 2 schools who converted to academy during the year and account for £0.088m of the previous year's surplus balances. Conversely, the closure of St Mary's Nursery School in 2021-2022 accounts for £0.185m of the previous year's deficit balances such that the net change in maintained schools accounts for £0.097m of the reduction in overall balances from the previous year. Of the maintained schools, deficit balances have increased to £0.503m from £0.435m with 15 primary schools ending the year with deficit balance, an increase from 11 the previous year. Balances range from a deficit of £94,905 to surplus of £461,387.
8. Secondary school balances have increased by £1.115m. Two secondary schools have deficit balances as in 2020-2021 although they have reduced by £0.1m. Balances range from a deficit of £297,298 to surplus of £1,272,820.
9. Balances for special and alternative provision schools have decreased by £0.361m with no schools ending the year in a deficit position. Balances range from the £37,150 to £345,095.

Balance Control Mechanism

10. In agreement with Schools Forum in 2015, the Balance Control Mechanism (BCM) and requirement for schools to submit plans for unspent balances was not operated in the 2021-2022 financial year. This was largely a decision based on equity with academies that are not subject to caps on balances or clawback. In view of the excessive surplus balances held by some schools, Schools Forum requested that more strategic challenge and questioning should take place between head teacher colleagues through the heads associations. Feedback from the heads associations is that there is some concern with regards to the level of surplus balances in schools but that there is a lack of context behind the outturn positions as they are presented.
11. Schools Forum are reminded that the financial positions for all maintained schools are published by the Department for Education on the schools benchmarking website and are publicly accessible. There is no facility for schools to add context to their financial position or to submit future plans and schools should ensure that sufficient challenge and discussion is undertaken by the Governing Body and included in the minutes and actions arising.
12. In order to facilitate a better level of understanding of the financial positions in maintained schools, the Local Authority is proposing two actions to take forward in 2022-2023. These are within the provisions in the current Scheme for Financing Schools and do not require consultation on changes to the scheme.
 - a) In 2022-2023 the authority will review these balances where they have been over the scheme threshold for 3 or more years (5% of the current year's budget share for Secondary Schools, 8% for Primary and Special Schools). Each school balance consistently over threshold will be reviewed on an individual basis to determine the level of uncommitted balances and future spending plans. Clawback of excess balances may be considered where some level of redistribution would support improved provision across a local area but in the first instance the schools will be requested to put in place spending plans to commit funding required to meet the needs of the current cohort.
 - b) To facilitate a better understanding of the level of committed/uncommitted funds in schools, the Local Authority will partially reinstate the balance control mechanism, for schools to be able to allocate committed funds for specific purposes. Committed balances for example, capital projects, will be accounted for on a separate cost centre (a new one will be created for each school). The balance will still form part of the school's outturn but will be recorded for Consistent Financial Reporting purposes as a committed balance. Committed balances will be approved on application to the Schools Finance Team, with evidence of the scheme/commitment provided by the school and timelines for completion which will be monitored so that balances are committed as intended or redeployed when spending plans slip. This process will be in place for the Autumn term 2022.

Maintained Schools with Deficit Balances

13. The number of schools ending the year with deficit balances has increased from 2020-2021 from 13 to 17. Most of these schools are set to recover those balances in the next financial year. There are currently 4 schools unable to set a balanced budget for 2022-2023 all of which either have recovery plans agreed and or are progressing with those plans. All schools setting an overall deficit budget for 2022-2023 are having their budgets approved individually where they need to demonstrate that setting a balanced budget would be detrimental to the operation of the school. Schools with approved deficit budgets are being issued with a Notice of Concern which is an internal control on the agreed budget plan. These school budgets will be monitored regularly and deviations approved by the Local Authority.

Academy Balances

14. At the meeting in July 2017, Forum requested that the balances for academies in the Borough as reported in their audited accounts be presented on an annual basis along with those of maintained schools. In order to present a comparable balance to that of maintained schools, the balances reported are only for the general unrestricted and restricted funds and exclude pension and fixed asset funds. The balances for 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 are included in appendix A with surplus balances of £10.6m reported at the end of the 2020-2021 academic year in Cheshire West and Chester academies.
15. Forum members should note that in the same way as the balances for maintained schools, these are balances held at a defined point in time (i.e. at the end of the academic and financial year). They do not represent the financial viability of the academy and in the absence of further context, do not explain the way the academy is operating or represent future spending plans or pressures.

Next Steps

16. To publish maintained school balances on the Schools Forum internet site and to implement the two actions in paragraph 12 for the Autumn term 2022.

Agenda Item 7

Government Consultation on Implementing the direct national funding formula

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Schools Forum of the consultation by the Department for Education (DfE) on Implementing the Direct National Funding Formula issued on 7 June 2022. The consultation closes on 9 September 2022 and was briefly discussed at the Schools Forum Finance Sub Group on 14 June. A brief outline of the consultation proposals and draft response are included in this report. The full consultation document is available at the following link.

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/funding-policy-unit/implementing-the-direct-national-funding-formula/>

Recommendations

2. The School Forum is asked to review the initial responses to the consultation and propose alternative or additional wording to represent the views of Schools Forum for this submission.

Background

3. In 2021, the DfE held the first-stage consultation on the direct national funding formula (NFF) for schools: Fair school funding for all: completing our reforms to the National Funding Formula. Following the feedback to that consultation, in March 2022 the Government published its response, which confirmed the commitment to introduce the direct NFF from the 2023-24 funding year. This current consultation focuses further on the detail of the implementation of the direct NFF.

Key points of the consultation

4. An important part of implementation of the direct NFF is the interaction between the direct NFF and funding for high needs. In this consultation, the DfE set out proposals for the continuation of two current elements of funding for special educational needs (SEN), and for alternative provision, but consider how these would need to change in operation in moving to the direct NFF: first, continuing to have some flexibility within the funding system to move funding to local authorities' high needs allocations (and correspondingly adjust mainstream schools' NFF allocations); and second, the determination of notional budgets for mainstream schools' SEN and disability support, within their direct NFF allocations.
5. The consultation also sets out proposals for how funding for schools experiencing significant growth in pupil numbers, or falling rolls, could operate under a direct NFF. In response to the feedback to that the first consultation, the DfE propose a system which retains some local flexibility to determine how this funding is allocated, while aligning with the principles set out above to achieve greater fairness, simplicity and predictability.

In doing so, the DfE are aiming to ensure consistency with the ongoing role of local authorities as set out in the schools white paper, Opportunity for all, ensuring that local authorities are supported to carry out their role as champions of the child and in place planning.

6. The first stage consultation set out the ambition that all of mainstream schools' core funding allocations would be determined by a single national funding formula – including both “school-led” elements (which are allocated on the basis on the circumstances of the school) and pupil-led elements (allocated on the number and characteristics of pupils). Allocating some of these “school-led” elements directly to individual schools through the NFF would mean moving away from relying on historic local authority spending decisions as we do currently in this consultation there are more details on how this will operate in the direct NFF.
7. In moving to the direct NFF, the minimum funding guarantee which protects schools against excessive year-on-year changes in their per-pupil funding will continue to operate. In the current system, the “funding floor” in the NFF mirrors the operation of the minimum funding guarantee in the local formulae. When the direct NFF is introduced, the minimum funding guarantee and the NFF funding floor will effectively merge into one single funding protection mechanism – the minimum funding guarantee. This consultation sets out how this will operate.
8. Finally, the consultation set out proposals on how the funding cycle should operate in the direct NFF – that is, the regular timescales for gathering data to calculate funding allocations, and then confirming these allocations to schools. A key consideration here is how to support schools' budget planning by giving early indication of future funding levels.
9. The consultation does not set a definitive final end date at which the direct NFF will be implemented and it will be important to continue to be guided by the impact of the initial transition towards the direct NFF, before deciding on the further pace of change. However, to give a sense of the likely timescales to inform schools' and local authorities' planning, the DfE are setting out that they expect to have moved to the direct NFF within the next five years – that is, by the 2027-28 funding year if not sooner.
10. Further consultations are planned on related funding issues and these are set out in the forward timeline. Following the consultation on the SEND and alternative provision green paper, the DfE will conduct a further consultation on consequent reforms to high needs funding arrangements. The DfE also plan to consult on the funding for local authority services through the central school services block (CSSB) in light of the future role for local authorities as set out in the Schools White Paper, Opportunity for all.

Views of the Schools Forum Finance Sub Group

11. In view of its recent publication, the consultation was included as an agenda item for discussion at the Sub Group meeting on 14 June 2022. Officers and Forum representatives agreed that a draft response, aimed at ensuring continuing local flexibility and support for local school circumstances, be tabled at the Schools Forum meeting for consideration. The consultation questionnaire with a brief outline of the background to each question is attached. The Local Authority response will be finalised

over summer holidays but initial views from officers are included on the attachment for consideration. Forum members are requested to review the relevant sections of the consultation document to agree the final response.

Next Steps

12. Further work will be undertaken by officers to finalise Local Authority and Schools Forum responses to the consultation to meet the closing date.

Implementing the direct national funding formula consultation – draft response

Interaction between the direct NFF and funding for high needs (1)

An important part of implementation of the direct NFF is the interaction between the direct NFF and funding for high needs, which many highlighted in their responses to last year's consultation. The Government response to that consultation included a commitment to continue some form of flexibility to transfer funding to local authorities' high needs budgets, by adjusting mainstream schools funding, so we are not consulting on the principle of such transfers at this stage. Pages [10-13] of the consultation document proposes how such flexibility could work under the direct NFF. Please read that section before answering the question below and giving your comments on the operation of this flexibility.

Q1 Do you agree that local authorities' applications for transfers from mainstream schools to local education budgets should identify their preferred form of adjustment to NFF allocations, from a standard short menu of options?

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Unsure**

If you have any comments on this question or on other aspects of the operation of transfers of funding from mainstream schools to local authorities' high needs budgets, please give these below.

Comments: A short menu of options to adjust the schools block for approved transfers should be provided to achieve the aims of a fair and transparent NFF. The mechanism should be made clear to schools and academies with their direct NFF allocation.

Interaction between the direct NFF and funding for high needs (2)

The SEND and alternative provision green paper sets out proposals for an inclusive system, starting with improved mainstream provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Those proposals include the development of national standards for SEND provision, and that there should be a national expectation on how mainstream schools support their pupils with SEND and contribute to the costs from their formula funding. Proposals on the threshold of this contribution (currently up to £6,000 per pupil) will follow at a later stage, following the green paper consultation. At this stage we are seeking views on replacing the notional SEN budget, currently calculated by local authorities using appropriate factors in their local funding formula, with a national indicative SEND budget for each mainstream school, calculated under the direct NFF. Our reasons for proposing this, rather than alternative approaches, are set out in pages [13-15] of the consultation document. Please read this section before answering the question below.

Q2. Do you agree that the direct NFF should include an indicative SEND budget, set nationally rather than locally?

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Unsure**

Comments: Given the range in local notional SEN calculations, the further use of notional SEN budgets in determining or facilitating the use of funding should be set through the NFF. In addition, guidance on SEN costs associated with the Notional SEN budget should be defined nationally rather than locally.

Growth and falling rolls funding

We propose a system which retains some local flexibility to determine how this funding is allocated, while aligning with the principles set out above to achieve much greater fairness, simplicity and predictability. In doing so, we are aiming to ensure consistency with the ongoing role of local authorities as set out in the schools white paper, ensuring that local authorities are supported to carry out their role as champions of the child and in place planning. We set out more detail on our proposals for how this will operate in the direct NFF in pages [17-29]. Please read this section before answering the questions below.

Q3. Do you have any comments on the proposals to place further requirements on how local authorities can operate their growth and falling rolls funding?

Comments: This proposal needs to ensure sufficient balance in the restrictions under a national system and local circumstances for growing/falling roll schools. Also ensuring that a standard growth criteria targets funding promptly where it is required and relative to other available funding and that Local Authorities can ensure the criteria can be managed within the ringfenced allocation.

Q4. Do you believe that the restriction that falling rolls funding can only be provided to schools judged “Good” or “Outstanding” by Ofsted should be removed?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Q5. Do you have any comments on how we propose to allocate growth and falling rolls funding to local authorities?

Comments: In principle we are supportive of reviewing growth fund allocations to local authorities to determine allocations that better represent funding required based on more recent spend levels and taking into account both growth and declines in pupil numbers. We would expect future proposals to demonstrate that revised allocations are sufficient to meet local circumstances under a national criteria.

Q6. Do you agree that we should explicitly expand the use of growth and falling rolls funding to supporting local authorities in repurposing and removing space?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Q7. Do you agree that the Government should favour a local, flexible approach over the national, standardised system for allocating growth and falling rolls funding; and that we should implement the changes for 2024-25?

- **Yes**
- No
- Unsure

Q8. Do you have any comments on the proposed approach to popular growth?

Comments: The removal of the inequity between funding of academies and maintained schools is welcomed in this proposal. The application process for popular growth funding and evidence of improvement in schools performance data should also be consistent across schools and academies.

Premises funding

The first stage consultation set out our ambition that all of mainstream schools' core funding allocations would be determined by a single national funding formula – including both “school-led” elements (which are allocated on the basis on the circumstances of the school) and pupil-led elements (allocated on the number and characteristics of pupils). We acknowledged that allocating some of these “school-led” elements directly to individual schools through the NFF would mean we had to move away from relying on historic local authority spending decisions as we do currently, and that that would be a complex set of reforms. In pages [30-39] of this consultation, we set out more detail on our proposals for how this will operate in the direct NFF. Please read this section before answering the questions below.

Q9. Do you agree we should allocate split site funding on the basis of both a schools' 'basic eligibility' and 'distance eligibility'?

- **Yes**
- No
- Unsure

Q10. Do you agree with our proposed criteria for split site 'basic eligibility'?

- **Yes**
- No
- Unsure

Q11. Do you agree with our proposed split site distance criterion of 500m?

- The distance criteria should be shorter
- That is about the right distance
- The distance criteria should be longer
- **Unsure**

Q12. Do you agree with total available split sites funding being 60% of the NFF lump sum factor?

- The funding should be higher
- That is about the right amount of funding
- **The funding should be lower**
- Unsure

Q13. Do you agree that distance eligibility should be funded at twice the rate of basic eligibility?

- The distance eligibility should be given a higher weighting
- That is about the right weighting
- **The basic eligibility should be given a higher weighting**
- Unsure

Q14. Do you agree with our proposed approach to data collection on split sites?

- **Yes**
- No
- Unsure

Q15. Do you have any comments on our proposed approach to split sites funding?

Comments: Based on our local understanding of additional costs for split site schools, there are a limited number of items that necessitate additional and exceptional funding over single site schools. In our local authority area, additional costs at the last review accounted for approximately 30% of the lump sum and were largely fixed costs, rather than based on distance. We are therefore unsure on what basis the proposed amounts of 60%, 500m and weightings for basic entitlement and distance have been derived. We would support a proposal that demonstrates how split site funding would support and not under/over fund schools that meet the eligibility criteria.

Q16. Do you agree with our proposed approach to the exceptional circumstances factor?

- Yes
- No
- **Unsure**

Q17. Do you have any comments on the proposed approach to exceptional circumstances?

Comments: We agree that a review of exceptional circumstances is required in the move to a direct NFF and to reassess local circumstances under a national criteria. In our view, the review should aim to establish exceptional circumstances where delegated funding is inequitable with schools without such arrangements in place. As such we would disagree with an increase to exceptional circumstances greater than 2.5% of budget if this disadvantaged some schools against their comparators under a direct NFF.

The minimum funding guarantee (MFG) under the direct NFF

As we move to the direct NFF, the minimum funding guarantee – which protects schools against excessive year-on-year changes in their per-pupil funding – will continue to operate. In the current system, the "funding floor" in the NFF mirrors the operation of the minimum funding guarantee in the local formulae. When the direct NFF is introduced, the minimum funding guarantee and the NFF funding floor will effectively merge into one single funding protection mechanism – which we will continue to refer to as the minimum funding guarantee. In pages [40-42] of the consultation we set out a proposal on how this will operate. Please read this section before answering the questions below.

Q18. Do you agree that we should use local formulae baselines (actual GAG allocations, for academies) for the minimum funding guarantee (MFG) in the year that we transition to the direct NFF?

- Yes
- No
- **Unsure**

Q19. Do you agree that we should move to using a simplified pupil-led funding protection for the MFG under the direct NFF?

- **Yes**
- No
- Unsure

Q20. Do you have any comments on our proposals for the operation of the minimum funding guarantee under the direct NFF?

Comments: We would like to further understand the implications of the different options being considered and the extent to which they afford protection across LA areas and in the difference between NFF and local formulae baselines. Financial modelling of the different approaches should be provided to allow responses to be fully informed.

The annual funding cycle

We set out proposals on how the funding cycle should operate in the direct NFF in pages [43-49] of the consultation– that is, the regular timescales for gathering data to calculate funding allocations, and then confirming these allocations to schools. A key consideration here is how we can support schools' budget planning, by giving them early indication of future funding levels. Please read this section before answering the questions below.

Q21. What do you think would be most useful for schools to plan their budgets before they receive confirmation of their final allocations: (i) notional allocations, or (ii) a calculator tool?

- Notional allocations
- **Calculator tool**
- Unsure

Q22. Do you have any comments on our proposals for the funding cycle in the direct NFF, including how we could provide early information to schools to help their budget planning?

Comments: The provision of notional allocations has created confusion amongst schools under the soft approach to determining schools block funding formulae. A calculator tool, prepopulated with the most recently available data for schools would be most beneficial in aiding school budget planning however the exclusions from this tool (e.g. transfers, de-delegation, exceptional circumstances, growth/falling rolls funding) should be made clear and timeframes for final allocations communicated to schools.

We would have envisaged a direct NFF being able to deliver final allocations earlier than under the current system of local decision making and ESFA ratification. This should be an aim from the proposals for the funding cycle, not for current timeframes for schools to be maintained.

Q23. Do you have any comments on the two options presented for data collections in regards to school reorganisations and pupil numbers? When would this information be available to local authorities to submit to DfE?

Comments: Officers will consider the 2 options and the admissions timeline to respond to this question. This data collection should not affect schools directly but needs to capture decisions on school organisation and pupil planning.

Q24. Regarding de-delegation, would you prefer the Department to undertake one single data collection in March covering all local authorities, or several smaller bespoke data collections for mid-year converters?

- **One single data collection**
- Several smaller bespoke data collections
- Unsure

Q25. Do you have any other comments on our proposals regarding the timing and nature of data collections to be carried out under a direct NFF?

Comments: October deadlines will restrict the extent to which local authorities can consult with schools and Schools Forum in the autumn term. To facilitate this a deadline in the second half of term into November would be more achievable.

Agenda item 8

Annual review of the Cheshire West and Chester Schools Forum's membership, constitution, and terms of reference

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to review the Schools Forum's membership, constitution and terms of reference and ensure that the composition of the Schools Forum is compliant with the regulations.

Appendix 1: Constitution and terms of reference

Appendix 2: Schools Forum Membership

Appendix 3: Finance subgroup terms of reference and membership

Appendix 4: High Needs subgroup terms of reference and membership

Appendix 5: Early Years Reference group terms of reference and membership

Recommendations

2. The Schools Forum is asked to note
 - i. that Officers have determined that the pupil ration does not warrant a revision in the Schools Forum membership at this time; and
 - ii. there are no changes to the constitution and terms of reference.

Background

3. The Schools Forum's constitution requires that the membership, constitution and terms of reference be reviewed annually.
4. Officers have reviewed the pupil numbers based on the current make up of schools and academies to ensure that the composition of the Schools Forum is compliant with the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012 which states that 'primary schools, secondary schools and academies must be broadly proportionately represented on the forum, having regard to the total number of pupils registered at them'.
5. Officers have determined that the pupil ration does not warrant a revision in the Schools Forum membership at this time.
6. No formal revisions to the schools forum regulations have been issued by the DfE, therefore no amendments to the current constitution and terms of reference are proposed.

The regulations can be accessed at:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/2261/contents>

Appendix 1

Cheshire West and Chester Schools Forum

Constitution and Terms of Reference (revised July 2021)

Definitions

The Forum is the Schools Forum for the area covered by Cheshire West and Chester Council. The Constitution complies with The Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012, and in its procedures and terms of reference takes account of advice issued by the Department for Education (DFE).

The Council is Cheshire West and Chester Council in its role as Local Authority.

Membership

1. The Cheshire West and Chester Schools Forum (the Forum) will consist of 32 Members made up of 24 school members and academies members and eight non-school members made up as follows: -

School Members (17)

- 10 primary representatives (five headteachers, five governors)
- four secondary representatives (two headteachers, two governors)
- two special school representatives (one headteacher, one governor)
- one Pupil referral unit representative

Academy (including free schools) Members (seven)

- six primary/secondary representatives
- one special representative

The proportion of school members and academy members will always be at least two thirds of the membership of the forum.

Non School Members (eight)

- one Roman Catholic Diocese representative
- one Church of England Diocese representative
- two Private, voluntary or independent sector provider representatives
- one 16-19 provider representative

two Trades Union representative

one Chair of the Association of Primary Headteachers (if not a serving headteacher)

In addition, the following are entitled to attend and speak at meetings of the School Forum, but are not members and have no voting rights:

Observers

- The Education and Children Portfolio Holder of the Council
 - The Resources Portfolio Holder of the Council
 - Director of Children's Services of the Council or their nominated representative
 - Chief Finance Officer of the Council or their nominated representative
 - Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) representative
2. The term of office for Forum Members will be four years from the date of appointment/election at which time elections will take place for school and academy members and nominations will be sought for the non-school members. Should a resignation be tendered from the Forum, an election (or nominations where appropriate) will be held for the vacancy which will ensure that the representational balance is maintained or improved. Each representative group (Headteachers and Governors by phase) will be responsible for the method by which they elect and nominate school and academy member representatives.
 3. The Academy members represent the governing bodies of the Academies situated in the authority's area, so do not necessarily have to be a Principal or a governor. It is for the governing bodies of the Academies concerned to elect their members; if there is only one Academy in the authority's area, its governing body will select the member.
 4. The Council will maintain a written record of the composition of the Schools Forum including the method by which representatives are elected or nominated. The Council will inform all schools of the membership of the Forum and will provide details of any non-school Member appointed to the Forum within one month of appointment. This will be carried out when constituting the Forum and after the appointment of any new or replacement Member.
 5. Elected Members who hold an executive role within the Council and officers who have a role in strategic resource management of the authority are unable to be members of the Forum (these restrictions do not apply to officers employed as teachers or who work for, and those who directly manage, a service which provides education to individual children and/or advice to schools on learning and behavioural matters).
 6. The Education and Children Portfolio Holder of the Council and a representative of the Education Funding Agency will be invited to attend meetings of the Forum as observers.

Meetings and proceedings of the Schools Forum

7. There will be a minimum of four meetings per school year.

8. Schools forums meetings may take place by remote means. This includes (but is not limited to) telephone conferencing, video conferencing, live webcast, and live interactive streaming.¹
9. Where a schools' forum decides to hold a public meeting by remote means only, the forum should provide support or make alternative arrangements so that any interested parties who do not have telephone or online access can attend virtual meetings.
10. The meetings of the Forum will be open to the public. Exceptionally, the Chair of the Forum may determine that a meeting or part of a meeting will be held in private. Prior to making any such determination, the Chair must take legal advice and the determination must be in accordance with this legal advice. The reasons for this determination must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
11. Participation by local authority members and officers will be limited to a Lead Member for education and children's services, a Lead Member for resources, Director of Children's Services (or their representative), Chief Finance Officer (or their representative) or officers who are providing specific financial or technical advice to Schools Forum. Other individuals (including Council officers) will be able to participate where they are presenting a report, but their participation must be limited to their specific agenda item.
12. The meetings are quorate if at least 40% of the total membership (excluding vacancies) is present at the meeting. In the event of a meeting not being quorate, members present may by majority vote decide to continue the meeting and thus be able to offer advice to the Council and/or respond to any consultation, but will be unable to exercise any of the decision making powers of the Forum.
13. The Council will consult the Forum annually on arrangements for substitutes.
14. Each group of Schools Members will agree two named substitutes and provide this information to the clerk. Agendas and papers for meetings will be sent to named substitutes as a matter of course. It is up to individual members of the Forum to contact a substitute if they are unable to attend meetings.
15. In exceptional circumstances Headteachers' substitutes can be drawn from senior members of staff (a deputy headteacher, bursar or other person responsible for the financial management of the school).
16. Members of the Forum are required to make declarations of interest on appointment and when, for example, the Forum is considering matters relating to contracts.
17. Meetings of the Forum will be called allowing at least two weeks notice. Supporting papers will be sent out at least five working days before the meeting.

¹The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2021 amended The Schools Forums (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 to make permanent provisions to enable schools forums meetings to be held remotely.

18. The Council shall appoint a Clerk for the Schools' Forum who shall be in attendance at each meeting of the Forum and will take minutes. Meetings may be recorded for the purposes of the accuracy of the minutes only.
19. Minutes of meetings will be placed on the Council's website and all schools and associated groups will be informed when new minutes are available. All schools and associated groups will be informed of action taken by the Council on Forum advice.
20. Claiming of expenses for Forum Members will be in accordance with the Forum expenses policy document and claims will be made on the specific claim forms and duly authorised. In case of dispute, the official record of attendance signed at the meeting will be used to determine attendance, and mapping tools used to determine mileage claimed.
21. An appropriate budget will be available for each financial year for costs associated with the operation of the Forum e.g. hiring a venue, refreshments and other expenses and clerking costs. This will be a charge against the Council's Schools Budget within the centrally retained budgets. The level of the budget will be reviewed annually by the Council in consultation with the Forum.
22. The Schools Forum may convene various task and finish sub groups to look at specific topics for discussion and consultation and to report back with outcomes and recommendations. The membership of any sub group to be agreed by Schools Forum.

Items for Forum Discussion

23. The Forum will discuss and be consulted upon the following matters:-

Consultation on School Funding Formula

- a) The Council shall consult the Forum on any proposed changes in relation to the factors and criteria that were taken into account, or the methods, principles and rules that have been adopted, in their formula made in accordance with regulations made under section 47 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, and the financial effect of any such change.
- b) Consultation shall take place in sufficient time to allow the views expressed to be taken into account in the determination of the Council's formula and in the initial determination of schools' budget shares before the beginning of the financial year.

Consultation on Contracts

24. The Council shall, at least one month prior to the issue of invitations to tender, consult the Forum on the terms of any proposed contract for supplies or services being a contract paid or to be paid out of the Council's schools budget where the estimated value of the proposed contract is not less than the threshold which applies to the authority for that proposed contract pursuant to regulation 8 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006.

Consultation on Financial Issues

25. The Council shall consult the Forum annually in respect of its functions relating to the schools' budget, in connection with the following:

Financial issues relating to:

- arrangements for pupils with special educational needs, in particular the places to be commissioned by the LA and schools and the arrangements for paying top-up funding;
- arrangements for use of pupil referral units and the education of children otherwise than at school, in particular the places to be commissioned by the LA and schools and the arrangements for paying top-up funding;
- arrangements for early years provision;
- administration arrangements for the allocation of central government grants

Consultation on other matters

26. The Council may consult the Forum on such other matters concerning the funding of schools as they see fit.

27. The Forum shall also have the following powers:

a) De-delegation for mainstream primary/secondary schools for:

- contingencies
- administration of free school meals
- insurance
- licences/subscriptions
- staff costs – supply cover
- support for minority ethnic
- pupils/underachieving groups
- behaviour support services
- library and museum services
- School improvement

b) in exceptional circumstances only:

to recommend changes to the Council's funding formula subject to approval by the Education and Skills Funding Agency

28. Should a judgment be necessary on whether a matter falls within the remit of the Forum, for example whether an item has financial implications, the Council's Chief Finance Officer and The Director of Education and the Chair of the Forum shall jointly make the necessary determination.

29. For decision-making purposes each Forum member will be entitled to 1 vote on all matters put to the vote other than matters relating to the funding formula in which case only schools members (which includes mainstream schools, Academies, special schools and PRUs) and representatives of the Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) sector will be able to vote. In the case of an equal number of votes for and against a proposal, the Chair shall have a second or casting vote.

30. Where an urgent proposal needs to be considered in advance of a meeting, the Forum may be consulted via post or e-mail.

31. The Constitution, Terms of Reference and Membership of the Forum will be reviewed annually.
32. A Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected by the Forum from its voting membership every two years, or at the first meeting following any resignation. A voting Member who is also an elected Member or officer of the Council may not be elected Chair or Vice-Chair. At any meeting where both the Chair and Vice-Chair are absent, the Forum shall elect, from those voting Members present, a person to take the Chair for that meeting only.

Appendix 2

Cheshire West and Chester Schools Forum Membership (April 2022)

Chair: Duncan Haworth **Vice chair:** David Rowlands

The Cheshire West and Chester model comprises 32 members in total, representing both schools and non-schools sectors and is constituted as follows:

School members (17)

		Term of office ends
Primary heads (five)		
Alan Brown	Oldfield Primary School	March 2023
Julie Chambers	Willaston Church of England Primary School	July 2023
Sarah Curtis	Meadow Primary	November 2024
Ian Devereux Roberts	Frodsham Manor House Primary	September 2025
Kate Docherty	Rivacre Valley Primary	September 2023

Substitutes

Kerry Forrester Tarporley Church of England Primary
Vacancy

Primary governors (five)

Sharon Broughton	Overleigh St Marys C of E Primary School	November 2024
Duncan Haworth	Woodfall Primary	December 2024
Nick Lacey	Whitby Heath Primary	December 2024
David Nield	Lostock Gralam CE Primary School	June 2023
Lisa Rigby	Antrobus St Mark's Church of England Primary	October 2025

Substitutes

Heather Lewis Meadow Primary
Vacancy

Secondary heads (two)

David Curry	Bishop Heber High	November 2025
Mike Holland	Hartford CE High	January 2023

Substitute

Vacancy

Secondary governors (two)

David Rowlands	Upton High School	January 2026
Rob Williams	Blacon High	January 2025

Substitute

Vacancy

Special school head and governor (two)

Mike McCann	Greenbank School	August 2022
Philip Hopwood	Greenbank School	November 2024

Substitute

Alison Ashley	Hebden Green School Head	
Peter Gaskell	Hebden Green School Governor	

Pupil referral units

Andy Stewart	(one) The Bridge Short Stay School	July 2025
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Substitute

Sian Thomas	Ancora House School	
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Academies (including Free Schools) members (seven)**Primary/Secondary (six)**

Darran Jones	The Learning Trust	April 2024
Sarah Connolly	Concordia Multi-Academy Trust	April 2024
Luci Jones	Cheshire Academies Trust	September 2023
Helen Studley	The Samara Trust	December 2023
Deborah Beaumont	The Fallibroome Trust	October 2025

Vacancy

Substitutes

Steven Ellis	Cheshire Academies Trust	
Chris Priddey	Create Learning Trust	

Special (one)

Marie Allen	The Russett School	June 2021
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Substitute

Vacancy

Non-schools members (eight)**Chair of Primary Headteachers Association (one)**

Rob Pullen	CWAPH	August 2022
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Diocesan authorities (two)

Kathryn Magiera	Witton Church Walk CE School	October 2023
Caroline Vile	Ellesmere Port Catholic High School	April 2024

Private, voluntary and independent early years' providers (two)

Cat Hirst	Guilden Sutton Day Nursery	October 2024
Vacancy		

Substitute

Angela Thornton	Dandelions	
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Trade unions (two)

Greg Foster
Geoff Wright

Joint Consultative Negotiating Panel
Joint Consultative Negotiating Panel

December 2024
May 2021

Substitute

Bevanie Robinson

16-19 providers (one)

Vacancy

Total: 32

Non-voting observers

Councillor Robert Cernik Cabinet Member for Children and Families
Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) representative

Clerk Charlotte Fenn Schools Monitoring Officer

Appendix 3

Schools Forum Finance Subgroup Revised January 2022

Terms of Reference: -

1. To keep under review the formula and allocation of the DSG.
2. To act as a point of scrutiny and interrogation regarding policy options in the DSG, Government consultations and policy.
3. To provide detailed examination of issues identified by the Schools Forum.
4. To make recommendations to the Schools Forum.

Membership:

Chair of Schools Forum	Duncan Haworth
Primary Headteacher	Kate Docherty
Secondary Headteacher	tbc
Special Headteacher	Mike McCann
Two Governors	David Nield David Rowlands
Trade Union Representative	Geoff Wright

If not included in any of the above, an academy representative and a maintained school representative.

Local Authority officers as appropriate.

Observers:

Chairs of the Headteacher and Governor Associations, if members of the Schools Forum.

Appendix 4

Schools Forum High Needs sub-group revised January 2022

Terms of Reference:

1. To find alternative proposals to address the high needs block overspend
2. To provide detailed examination of issues identified by the Schools Forum
3. To make recommendations to the Schools Forum

Membership

Secondary Headteacher	Mike Holland
Secondary Headteacher	tbc
Primary Headteacher	Sarah Curtis
Primary Headteacher	Kate Docherty
CWASSH Chair	Mike McCann or Alison Ashley (vice chair)
Secondary Governor	David Rowlands
Primary Governor	Duncan Haworth
PRU	Andrew Stewart

Observers:

Rob Pullen	CWAPH Chair
Rachel Hudson	Blacon HS

Local Authority Officers as appropriate	
Debbie Freeman	Senior Manager SEN

Appendix 5

Cheshire West and Chester Council Early Years Reference Group - Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

The Early Years Reference Group (EYRG) was brought together in 2007 as a sub-group of the Cheshire West and Chester Schools' Forum in response to the Governments plans for Nursery Education Funding reform.

Key to successful delivery of the free entitlement is for local authorities to achieve a balance in their priorities; securing sufficiency, quality and accessibility in free provision. Critical to achieving this is a strong partnership between LAs and providers in all sectors; private, voluntary, independent, maintained and childminders, to enable them to assess and meet demand according to local circumstances and market.

2. Purpose

The purpose for the EYRG is to offer advice, experience, information and recommendations to the Local Authority and the Cheshire West and Chester Schools' Forum to ensure early years and childcare funding follow national and local requirements and priorities to secure the best possible outcomes for children by delivering an entitlement which is high quality, flexible and accessible, and gives parents choice about what is best for their children.

The group will:

- Promote sustainability and preservation of a mixed market, as well as encouraging clear terms of engagement with parents as key delivery partners;
- Act as the principal channel by which those involved in ownership and management of early years settings may convey their views;
- Monitor the impact of the single formula including undertaking ongoing costing analyses of the free early years entitlement as necessary, and reviewing its operation for future funding periods, including impact assessment;
- Provide a view on the arrangements for the administration of central government grants for early years and childcare administered locally.

The group will meet termly and cover matters relating to:

- The Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF)
- compliance with the Early Years Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities
- the Early Education Funding Provider Agreement.
- Early Education Funded places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds.
- Communication methods.

The group will report to Schools Forum (incl. Finance Sub Group) as required and invite relevant guest speakers/attendees as required to attend the group

3. Membership

The membership of the EYRG should be representative of the different types of early years education providers across the county who are eligible and registered to offer free entitlement nursery education. The table below details membership for 2021-2022.

Required number of EY provider representatives	Representatives 2021-2022
4 Private sector nursery providers	Cat Hirst Guilden Sutton Day Nursery
	David James S4YC
	Claire Taylor Jigsaw Curzon Park/Jigsaw Ashtree Farm
	Nicki Conway Busy Bees
2 Preschools	Estelle Hooper Huntington under 5's
	Helen Walters Weaverham Academy Preschool
1 Childminder	Sarah Nejaz Sarah's Jungle Tots
4 LA primary schools with nursery units	Kelsey Morte Tilston Primary
	Sue Mills Cuddington Primary
	Jane Bramhan Woodfall Primary and Nursery School
	Kate Docherty Rivacre Valley Primary School
Council Officer – Education	Bo White – Early Years Commissioner (Chair) Sarah Lister - Early Years Team Manager/ Dan Spry – Early Years Consultant
Council Officer – Finance	Natalie Cole – Finance Manager Childrens Services
Council Officer – Early Years Specialist Services	Cath Shaw – SEN Manager Fiona Lunnon – Lead Teacher Early Years Specialist Teaching Service

Members will be selected by inviting expressions of interest from all nursery education providers and selected by the LA in consultation with the chair of the Schools' Forum with a view to maintaining a spread of provider types across the Early Years sector.

Membership is refreshed annually in line with representation on the Schools Forum (who make decisions on early years funding guided by recommendations from the reference group).

The group will be supported by officers of Cheshire West and Chester Council as determined by the Director for Education.

The council will provide the services of a clerk to the EYRG.

4. Conduct

It is important that Reference Group members take a strategic view of the issues they are considering when contributing to the Group's business by focussing on the needs of the children and young people of Cheshire West and Chester generally (0-19).

Members of the group must confirm or send their apologies if they are unable able to attend a meeting.

If a member does not attend two consecutive meetings they will lose their right to be a member of the Early Years Reference group.

Members are permitted to send a representative on their behalf, as long as they are from the same setting, fully briefed and the appropriate person to attend the meeting.

Agenda items will be set prior to the meeting, either by email request and/or set at previous meeting.

Meetings will include budget information, presentations (where applicable) and group discussions.

Members of the group shall ensure that all matters discussed during the time duration of meetings remain confidential and information is only shared with other colleagues where necessary and appropriate.

All members of the group must be aware that a conflict of interest may arise from time to time in respect of their personal position or in respect of their organisation. Such conflicts of interest may arise, for example, where a member has an existing or recent financial, business, personal or family involvement with an early years setting. Group members should disclose any such conflict of interest with the chair when/where relevant.

Non-members will be invited to attend the group if deemed necessary by the members. Information and resources will be shared via email or during the meetings.

All members of the group must adhere to equal opportunity and human rights principles in accordance with the policies and procedures set out from time to time by the LA and will adopt and maintain anti-discriminatory practices in the furtherance of the aims.

5. Approval

The above proposals were endorsed by the Early Years Reference Group. Schools Forum adopted these Terms of Reference as set out above.

**Cheshire West and Chester
Schools Forum
5 July 2022**

Agenda item 10

Schedule of meetings 2022-2023

Schools Forum – all meetings 4.30pm – 6.30pm

Date	Venue	Proposed agenda
Tuesday 11 October 2022	tbc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Funding Arrangements 2023-2024 • Early Years Funding Formula Consultation and proposal for 2023-2024 • Final Allocation of the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2022-2023 • Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2022-2023 Forecast Outturn at First Review • Strategic review of the SEND high needs review • Education – Basic Need Capital Programme 2021-2025
Tuesday 6 December 2022	tbc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSG 2022-2023 Forecast Outturn at Mid-Year Review • Initial Planning for DSG Allocations for 2023-2024 and Budget Setting
Tuesday 17 January 2023	tbc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budget setting 2023-2024 • Draft of 2023-2024 School Funding Formula for January submission • Combined Budgets and Miscellaneous Expenditure • De-delegation – Proposals for 2023-2024 • DSG 2023-2024 Forecast Outturn at Third Review
Monday 13 February 2023	tbc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Years Funding for 2023-2024 • Arrangements for funding from the High Needs Block 2023-2024 • Central Spend budgets 2023-2024
Tuesday 4 July 2023	tbc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School funding arrangements for 2024-2025 • DSG 2022-2023 outturn including schools' balances • Directed revisions to schemes for financing schools • Education – Basic Need Capital Programme 2021-2025 • Annual review of Schools Forum membership, constitution, and terms of reference

Schools Forum Finance sub-group

Date	Time	Venue
Tuesday 20 September 2022	2.00 – 4.00 pm	MS Teams
Tuesday 15 November 2022	2.00 – 4.00 pm	MS Teams

Tuesday 24 January 2023	2.00 – 4.00 pm	MS Teams
Tuesday 13 June 2023	2.00 – 4.00 pm	MS Teams

Schools Forum High Needs sub-group - dates to be confirmed