

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Cheshire West and Chester Schools Forum

Tuesday 4 July 2023
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 4 July 2023

1.	4.30	Introductions and apologies		
2.	4.35	Minutes and matters arising of last meeting 2.1 To agree the minutes held 13 February 2023 2.2 Matters arising		Page 4-9
3.	4.50	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2022-2023 Final Outturn	Natalie Cole	Page 10-11
4.	5.10	Maintained School Balances Financial Year 2022-2023 and Academy Balances 2021-2022	Natalie Cole	Page 12-15
5.	5.30	Updated guidance on the Scheme for Financing Schools for 2023-2024	Natalie Cole	Page 16-17
6.	5.50	Implementing the Direct National Funding Formula - Government consultation response April 2023	Natalie Cole	See separate document
7.	6.10	Annual review of the Cheshire West and Chester Schools Forum's membership, constitution, and terms of reference	Charlotte Fenn	Paper to follow
8.	6.20	Any Other Business		
9.	6.30	Next meeting: Tuesday 10 October 2023		
	Finish	Schedule of meetings 2023-2024		Page 18

**Cheshire West and Chester
Schools Forum
4 July 2023**

Agenda item 2

Minutes of Cheshire West and Chester Schools Forum, virtual meeting, on 13 February 2023

Members	Representing	Attendance
Schools and Academies		
Jan Diamond	Primary headteachers	Attended
Nicky Dowling	Primary headteachers	Attended
Ian Devereux-Roberts	Primary headteachers	Apologies
Kate Docherty	Primary headteachers	Attended
Kerry Forrester	Primary headteachers	Substitute
Beth Hacking	Primary headteachers	Apologies
Sharon Broughton	Primary governors	Absent
Duncan Haworth (Chair)	Primary governors	Attended
Lisa Rigby	Primary governors	Absent
David Nield	Primary governors	Attended
Nick Lacey	Primary governors	Attended
David Curry	Secondary headteachers	Attended
Martin Hill	Secondary headteachers	Apologies
David Rowlands	Secondary governors	Attended
Rob Williams	Secondary governors	Apologies
Neil Oxley	Special headteachers	Attended
Philip Hopwood	Special governors	Apologies
Andy Stewart	PRU	Apologies
Sian Thomas	PRU	Substitute
Deborah Beaumont	Academies - mainstream	Apologies
Simon Faircloth	Academies - mainstream	Attended
Darran Jones	Academies - mainstream	Apologies
Luci Jones	Academies - mainstream	Attended
Helen Studley	Academies - mainstream	Apologies
Cathryn McKeagney	Academies - mainstream	Attended
Emma Leach	Academies - special	Attended
Non Schools		
Cat Hirst	PVI early years providers	Absent
Vacancy	PVI early years providers	Vacancy
Kathryn Magiera	Diocese	Absent
Caroline Vile	Diocese	Apologies
Greg Foster	Unions	Absent
Geoff Wright	Unions	Absent
Rob Pullen	CWAPH	Attended
Vacancy	16-19 providers	Vacancy

Official Observers

Councillor Robert Cernik	Cabinet Member for Children and Families	Absent
Patrick Grant	Education Skills & Funding Agency	Attended

Officers in attendance

Natalie Cole	Finance Manager
Charlotte Fenn	Clerk
Debbie Edwards	Head of Education and Inclusion
Anna Jones	Head of Health & Wellbeing Finance
Christine Ridley Thomas	Senior Manager School Intervention Co-ordination & Schools Causing Concern

Observers

Councillor Razia Daniels	Shadow Cabinet Member for Children and Families
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1. Introductions and apologies

Apologies and substitutes were noted.

Duncan Haworth welcomed Patrick Grant to the meeting. Patrick introduced himself and explained that he was attending several Schools Forum meetings around the country, as an observer, as part of monitoring all schools' forums to assess how effectively they were operating.

2. Minutes and matters arising of last meeting

2.1 To agree the minutes from the meeting held 17 January 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on the 17 January 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

2.2 Matters arising

2.2.1 Item 8 Any Other Business - Fischer Family Trust (FFT)

Christine Ridley Thomas provided the following update.

Following on from the consultation with schools, it was noted that there were insufficient positive responses from primary schools to continue using FFT to make it value for money for the LA to purchase on behalf of primary schools. Primary schools had been notified of this decision and would need to purchase from FFT direct if wished to continuing using FFT.

17 of the 19 secondary schools had responded that they wished to continue with FFT making it viable for the LA to proceed with this option and recharge those secondary schools interested. Special schools had confirmed that they would purchase from FFT direct.

Rob Pullen reported that primary schools who wished to buy in were disappointed that others were opting not to, or did not respond, as they would have to purchase direct from FFT at a higher rate. It was understandable, with the current financial pressures,

that some schools did not want to continue with FFT, but Rob felt that it was a shame not to continue with the group buy in as once lost it would be difficult to reinstate.

3. Council Financial Position update

Anna Jones provided a PowerPoint presentation to update Forum on the Council's in year position for Children and Families, and outline the key headlines from the Council's draft Budget Report 2023-2024 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-2027.

Forum noted that, as at end of November 2022, Children & Families were forecasting a £7.2m overspend. This was mainly due to Children's Social Care forecasting an overspend of £6.8m, due to pressure on the budget for looked after children and a significant increase in high-cost residential placements. In addition, there was pressure against the staffing budget from employing agency Social Workers to fill vacant roles and Home to School transport budget also forecast to overspend due to an increase in the number of eligible pupils for SEN transport.

Anna reported that, for 2023-2027, the Council was forecasting a financial shortfall of £158.3m due to a reduction in government funding, budget pressures in Directorates and Council-wide inflationary pressures. Forum noted that the funding gap was to be partly bridged by an increase in council tax and business rates and existing savings proposals.

The key messages in the briefing were a two-year balanced budget package for 2023-2025, funding gap over 2025-2027 reduced to £29.1m after the assumed delivery of savings and raising of locally generated income. Forum noted that a number of factors could impact the budget gap in future years including actual level of Government funding, impact of the delayed Adult Social Care reforms, changes in demand for Council services and level of inflation experienced in relation to all Council costs.

The Council had a draft balanced budget for 2023 -2024 to be approved by Council on 16 February 2023.

David Nield asked if the council tax increase was the maximum it could be increased by. Anna confirmed that it was.

David Rowlands asked for clarification as to how efficiency savings were worked out and how efficient was the Council at achieving them. Anna responded that there were invest to save initiatives such as increasing in borough residential places to reduce expensive out of borough placements. The Council had a good record of delivering savings of around 80-90%.

David also asked, with the increase in SEN pupils, how the Council was managing to integrate SEN pupils into mainstream schools.

Debbie Edwards responded that, as part of the SEN review, an inclusion matters strategy was being taken to Council for approval. If approved there would be a number of working groups to take the strategy forward.

David acknowledged Debbie's response and commented that he hoped the Schools Forum High Needs subgroup would be getting updates. Debbie confirmed that Forum would receive six monthly updates.

Resolved that Schools Forum note the Council's Financial Position.

4. Early Years Funding for 2023-2024

Natalie Cole shared the report on screen and went through the report which detailed the proposed budget allocation for the early years block and funding of the two, three and four year old entitlements for 2023-2024.

Natalie reminded Forum that the report followed the principles agreed in the January 2023 Schools Forum meeting to remove the existing quality supplement and redistribute the funding to all providers through the universal base rate and put in place a new quality supplement to target the Teachers Pay and Pension Grant (TPPG) funding to eligible providers.

Natalie drew Forum members' attention to the table under paragraph 5 which reflected the increases in per child hour funding rates. Forum noted that the allocations would be updated in July 2023 from the headcounts taken at the January 2023 census.

Natalie took Forum members through the budget proposals (paragraphs 6 – 9) which included proposals on managing the significant demand and pressure on funding.

Forum noted that the new quality supplement for TPPG would be allocated to schools with maintained nursery units and academies, though an application process was being put in place to administer and target the supplement to other eligible providers. Reference was made to the proforma under appendix B.

Rob Pullen sought clarification as to what was being reviewed in respect to Education Health and Care Plans (paragraph 8). Natalie Cole responded that officers would be reviewing the contribution from the high needs block and what the drivers were that were contributing to the increase in early years children with EHCPs in mainstream settings.

Resolved that Schools Forum endorse the proposed allocation of the early years block allocation and the increase in base rate funding for 2023-2024.

5. Arrangements for funding from the High Needs Block 2023-2024

Natalie Cole shared the report on screen and took Forum members through the report which provided an update on proposed arrangements for allocations from the High Needs Block for 2023-2024 for commissioned services, places and top up funding. Reference was made to the budget proposals and allocations agreed at the January 2023 Schools Forum as set out in the table under paragraph 4.

Natalie drew Forum members' attention to the commissioned places in special schools and resourced provisions under paragraph 6 which reflected the current agreed places. Ongoing conversations with schools, about future commissioned places, were taking place following the SEND review.

Natalie drew Forum members' attention to the uplift in special school top up funding as outlined under paragraph 7.

Natalie reported that officers had meet with The Russet school last week, since the report had been published, and been working with them regarding commissioned places and their plans going forward. It had been agreed for a disapplication of funding to be submitted to the ESFA.

Natalie confirmed that officers were working on the process for approval through the SEN Finance Panel and the new arrangements would be shared with schools once finalised.

Natalie confirmed David Nield's comment that providing extra funding to special schools was more cost efficient than going out of borough.

David Rowlands sought clarification as to how well the service estimated the places in special schools.

Debbie Edwards provided reassurance of the efficiency of estimating places going forward, the process was more robust than in the past.

Resolved that Schools Forum

- i. endorse the proposals within the report on financial arrangements for high needs pupils in 2023-2024; and
- ii. support the disapplication submission to the ESFA for The Russet School.

6. Schools Financial Value Standard 2022-2023

Natalie Cole introduced the report which updated Schools Forum on the requirements of the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) submission for maintained schools.

Natalie reminded Forum members of the importance of holding a hard copy of their submission locally.

Natalie referred Forum members to the key audit findings in appendix A which sought to provide clarity over some common issues in particular to ongoing contract's accumulative commitment to a single provider taking the contract over procurement thresholds, and related party transactions.

Local guidance had also been sent out to schools regarding key points to be responded to in the submission.

Natalie also informed Forum that a training session was being held for governors, heads and business managers on Wednesday morning (15 February 2023) and places could be booked via the eCWIP website.

David Rowlands took the opportunity to thank Natalie for sending out the reminder guidance to schools.

Resolved that Schools Forum

- i. note the report; and

- ii. agreed for representatives of Local Authority maintained schools and Governing Bodies to share the update with their representative bodies.

7. Any Other Business

No items to report.

8. Next meeting

Next Schools Forum meeting Tuesday 4 July 2023.

Duncan anticipated that a High Needs subgroup meeting would take place in not to distance a future.

David Nield queried whether the 4 July meeting would be face to face or virtual. The group discussed the options, and it was generally acknowledged that virtual meetings were preferable but a face to face now and again would be welcomed. Natalie Cole reported that funding for Schools Forum venues would no longer be available for 2023-2024 so a free venue would need to be sought for any future face to face meetings.

Duncan confirmed that he would need to consider the options with officers and notify Forum members as to how the next meeting would take place in due course.

Agenda Item 3

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2022-2023 Final Outturn

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of the report is to report on the 2022-2023 final outturn position for the centrally held DSG budget and reserve.

Recommendations

2. The Forum is asked to note the final outturn on the 2022-2023 centrally held DSG and reserve and next steps.

Final Outturn

3. The outturn position against DSG funded budgets is a pressure of £0.744m. This is an improved position from the forecast reported at Third Review (November 2022) when a pressure of £1.060m was reported.
4. Within this overall position, there is a pressure of £1.041m on the high needs provision budgets for SEN pupils with mainstream and special school top up funding, independent school placements, alternative provision and tuition packages. There is a pressure of £0.061m from an increase in the number of permanent exclusions and top up funding at the pupil referral unit and a further £0.072m from allocations for early years inclusion support funding to nursery providers.
5. The outturn also builds in the pay award pressure reflecting the difference between the estimated 2% included in the 2022-2023 budget, and the actual pay awards for local government staff and teachers. This has been mitigated by vacancy savings and use of grant funding with a net underspend of £0.148m. A one off pressure on non-pay costs due to increased costs from the re-tender of the education management system has been fully mitigated by slippage in discretionary expenditure across the service.
6. The overall pressure is partially offset by underspends on contingencies for mainstream school growth funding (£0.154m), Independent school fees for non SEN pupils (£0.120m) and other small variances (£0.007m).
7. The main variances and changes from the position at Third Review are summarised in the table below.

DSG block	Budget	Forecast variance Third Review £000	Variance Final Outturn £000	Change £000
	Independent and non- maintained school fees	157	31	-126

High Needs	16-25 high needs	-95	8	103
	Inter Authority placements	-80	-308	-228
	SEN Personal budgets	21	4	-17
	Non SEN Independent schools	-120	-120	0
	Top up funding mainstream	857	1,046	189
	Top up funding Special schools	390	372	-18
	Funding for Alternative Provision	168	41	-127
	Additional learning needs	134	114	-20
	Investment in high needs	-100	-206	-106
Schools Block	Growth fund	-100	-154	-54
Early Years	Early years entitlements		72	72
All blocks	Pay forecast	-79	-148	-69
	Non pay budgets	107	-8	-115
	Mitigations	-200		200
	Total variance reported	1,060	744	-316

Position of the DSG Reserve

8. 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 2021-2022 and the cumulative overspend on the DSG reserve at the end of the year is £2.714m. The following tables summarise the cumulative position on the centrally held DSG deficit reserve including the current year variances and agreed use of the reserves in 2022-2023.

	£000
DSG deficit reserve brought forward	1,970
Planned allocation of reserves	
Ring-fenced De-delegation allocated to 2022-23	7
In year overspend	737
DSG deficit reserve carried forward	2,714

Next Steps

9. A SEND Implementation Board is now established and the service will move to implement the recommendations from the High Needs Strategic Review in 2023-2024. This will seek to balance the in-year DSG budget and recover the deficit by 2026-2027 although SEND demand will still represent a financial challenge for the Council as projections reflect a level of overspend for two to three years as the recommendations are implemented. A Council funded reserve was created to match the deficit reserve in 2021-2022 in the event that the statutory override to ringfence the DSG deficit reserve from Council funds ends before the deficit is fully recovered.

Agenda Item 4

Maintained School Balances Financial Year 2022-2023 and Academy Balances 2021-2022

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform Schools Forum of the final outturn position of maintained schools in the Borough for the 2022-2023 financial year. Also, as requested by Schools Forum, this report also includes academy balances for the latest reported position for the 2021-2022 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 the actions arising from the reinstating of the Balance Control Mechanism in to review schools with surplus balances in paragraphs 10-14.

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.

Draft Outturn Position 2022-2023 for maintained schools

4. The net surplus in maintained school balances for 2022-2023 reported in the draft notification to schools (12 May 2023) is £11.312m (5.1% 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. This position is draft and subject to some final accounting adjustments and audit.

School Balances draft outturn position 2022-2023

	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	Special Schools	Alternative Provision	All Schools
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Revised Budget	124,614	72,736	20,762	2,577	220,689
Net Expenditure	118,400	68,946	19,723	2,309	209,377
Net Surplus	(6,214)	(3,791)	(1,039)	(268)	(11,312)
% surplus to budget	(5.0%)	(5.2%)	(5.0%)	(10.4%)	(5.1%)

5. The net surplus is made up of £12.7m of surplus balances across 95 schools (compared to £15.7m across 99 schools in 2021-2022) and £1.4m of deficit balances (an increase of £0.4m from 2021-2022). There are 21 schools with deficit balances which is an increase from 17 in 2021-2022. 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	(7,079)	(4,397)	(1,039)	(268)	(12,782)
Total Deficit	865	606	0	0	1,470
Net Surplus	(6,214)	(3,791)	(1,039)	(268)	(11,312)

Number of schools with a surplus balance	78	7	8	2	95
Number of schools with a deficit balance	19	2	0	0	21
Total number of maintained schools	97	9	8	2	116

Movement in School Balances

6. The overall position shows a decrease in school balances of £3.4m since the end of 2021-2022 when the net surplus balance was £14.7m. 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)
2022-2023	(6,214)	(3,791)	(1,039)	(268)	(11,312)
Change	(1,479)	(1,458)	(521)	(14)	(3,471)
% change	-19%	-28%	-33%	-5%	-23%

7. Primary school balances have decreased by £1.479m. There are 4 schools who converted to academy during the year and account for £0.231m of the previous year's surplus balances being transferred. Of the maintained schools, deficit balances have increased to £0.865m from £0.503m with 19 primary schools ending the year with deficit balance, an increase from 15 the previous year. Balances range from a deficit of £102,856 to surplus of £472,548.
8. Secondary school balances have decreased by £1.438m. Two secondary schools have deficit balances as in 2021-2022 which increased by £0.1m. Balances range from a deficit of £412,480 to surplus of £1,007,779.
9. Balances for special and alternative provision schools have decreased by £0.535m with no schools ending the year in a deficit position. Balances range from the £17,112 to £224,892.

Balance Control Mechanism

10. In agreement with Schools Forum in July 2022, in order to facilitate a better level of understanding of the financial positions in maintained schools, the Local Authority reinstated two measures within the provisions of the Scheme for Financing Schools.

Review of excess balances

11. In autumn 2022 the Authority wrote to 15 schools where they had held surplus balances over the scheme threshold for more than 5 years (5% of the current year's budget share for Secondary Schools, 8% for Primary and Special Schools). These 15 schools accounted for £4.5m of the £15.7m of 2021-2022 surplus balances. Schools were asked to respond with an up to date current year forecast, 3 year forward plan tabled to the governing body and details of committed spend and timescales for known projects. The responses were reviewed on an individual basis with the majority of schools forecasting balances below the threshold by the end of 2022-2023 due to unfunded teachers and local government pay increases, energy price increases, falling pupil numbers and completion of large capital programmes delayed due to covid. There were 4 schools predicting excess uncommitted surplus balances for 2022-2023 but no further action was taken from this review.

Committed balances

12. In summer term 2023, the balance control mechanism has been reinstated for schools to be able to allocate committed funds for specific purposes. This has been aligned to the Consistent Financial Reporting submission and final budget setting timelines to ensure the most up to date position is available for outturn and approved budget plans.

In summary, the process in place is:

- 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
 - 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.
13. Once submitted and approved by the ESFA, the Consistent Financial Reporting return showing committed and uncommitted balances can be shared with Schools Forum. 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.

Clawback of surplus balances

14. Each school balance that has been consistently over threshold will be reviewed based on the level of uncommitted balances. Clawback of excess balances may be considered where some level of redistribution would support improved provision across a local area and schools at risk of clawback of funds held over the permitted threshold will be notified at the end of the academic year.

Maintained Schools with Deficit Balances

15. The number of schools ending the year with deficit balances has increased from 2021-2022 from 17 to 19. Most of these schools are set to recover those balances in the next financial year. There are currently 8 schools unable to set a balanced budget for 2023-2024 all of which either have recovery plans agreed and or are progressing with those plans. All schools setting an overall deficit budget for 2023-2024 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

16. 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 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 are included in appendix A with surplus balances of £11.191m reported at the end of the 2021-2022 academic year in Cheshire West and Chester academies.
17. 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

18. To publish maintained school balances on the Schools Forum internet site and to make available the Consistent Financial Reporting submission for all maintained schools once approved by the ESFA.

Agenda Item 5

Updated guidance on the Scheme for Financing Schools for 2023-2024

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Schools Forum on the changes in the latest guidance on Schemes for Financing Schools issued by the Department for Education (DfE) on 31 March 2023 and the amendments to be incorporated in the Cheshire West and Chester Scheme.

Recommendations

2. The Schools Forum (maintained schools only) is asked to approve the revisions to the scheme which will be reflected in the updated Scheme to be published July 2023.

Background

3. The DfE issues statutory guidance on local authority Schemes for Financing Schools which is updated as required. The guidance includes provisions which a local authority's scheme must, should or may include. Schools Forum approval must be obtained for changes made to the local published schemes.

Changes for issue 15 for 2023-2024

4. There are no directed revisions for issue 15 of the guidance although the DfE have made the following update:

Income from the sale of assets

Further guidance on retention of funds from the sale of land assets - Any retention of funds from the sale of land assets is subject to the consent of the Secretary of State, and any conditions the Secretary of State may attach to that consent relating to use of proceeds.

It is proposed that this updated guidance is added to the scheme at paragraph 9.4.4, replacing the current paragraph which is duplicated at 9.4.1

Local Updates to the Scheme

5. The following updates are proposed to ensure the Scheme reflects current practices in CW&C
 - a. Section 151 Officer – replaces references to Director of Corporate Services and Director of Finance.

- b. Director of Children’s Services – replaces references to Director of Education following restructure.
- c. Updated procurement thresholds reflecting changes to Local Authority Contract Procedure Rules for thresholds for obtaining quotations and tenders which is summarised in the table below.
 - i. The threshold for seeking three written quotations has been lowered from £10,000 to £5,000 however most schools will already operate a level below that in their Schemes of Delegation to ensure value for money for purchasing goods and services.
 - ii. The threshold for open tendering is now linked to the World Trade Organisation Government Procurement Agreement (WTO GPA) thresholds and there are different categories that will be applicable to schools.

Goods and services is £177,897 plus VAT
 Catering (light touch) is £552,950 plus VAT
 Works / construction is £4,447,477 plus VAT

These are the current values which are next due to be reviewed in January 2024.

Procuring goods and services	Scheme published July 2022	Scheme published July 2023
Threshold for seeking one quotation	Up to £10,000	Up to £5,000
Threshold for seeking 3 written quotations	£10,000 to £100,000	£5,000 to WTO GPA Threshold
Threshold for open tender	£100,000	WTO GPA Threshold

Next Steps

- 6. Officers to publish the revised Scheme for Financing Schools on the Council’s website in July 2023 to reflect the updated changes and a communication to schools to be included in the next School Bulletin. Schools Forum representatives are also responsible for communicating revisions to maintained schools.

**Cheshire West and Chester
Schools Forum
4 July 2023**

Agenda item 9

Schedule of meetings 2023-2024 – all meetings 4.30pm – 6.30pm

Date	Venue	Proposed agenda
Tuesday 10 October 2023	MS Teams tbc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Funding Arrangements 2024-2025 • Early Years Funding Formula Consultation and proposal for 2024-2025 • Final Allocation of the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2023-2024 • Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2023-2024 Forecast Outturn at First Review • Education – Basic Need Capital Programme 2023-2027
Tuesday 5 December 2023	MS Teams tbc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSG 2023-2024 Forecast Outturn at Mid-Year Review • Initial Planning for DSG Allocations for 2024-2025 and Budget Setting
Tuesday 16 January 2024	MS Teams tbc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicative Dedicated Schools Grant Allocations for 2024-2025 • Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budget setting 2024-2025 • Draft of 2024-2025 School Funding Formula for January Submission • De-delegation – Proposals for 2024-2025 • DSG 2023-2024 Forecast Outturn at Third Review
Monday 12 February 2024	MS Teams tbc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Years Funding for 2024-2025 • Arrangements for funding from the High Needs Block 2024-2025
Tuesday 2 July 2024	MS Teams tbc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSG 2023-2024 outturn • School balances at the end of 2023-2024 (with appendices for schools and academies) • Directed revisions to schemes for financing schools • Annual review of Schools Forum membership, constitution, and terms of reference

Schools Forum Finance sub-group

Date	Time	Venue
Tuesday 19 September 2023	2.00 – 4.00 pm	MS Teams
Tuesday 14 November 2023	2.00 – 4.00 pm	MS Teams
Tuesday 23 January 2024	2.00 – 4.00 pm	MS Teams
Tuesday 11 June 2024	2.00 – 4.00 pm	MS Teams

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