

SCHOOLS FORUM

Wednesday 11 November 2020

Via Teams Online

**Attendees:**

Wendy Cording (WC)	Chair
Amanda Paddison (AP)	Education, Participation & Skills – Head of Business & Access
Louise Jenkins (LJ)	Education, Participation & Skills – Finance Officer
Helen Slater (HS)	Education, Participation & Skills – Finance
Sue Smith (SS)	Early Years and Childcare Manager
Julie Bevan (JB)	PLT representative & Vice Chair
Karen Lilley (KL)	Early Years representative
Annmarie Allchurch (AA)	CE Diocese representative
Karen Cook (KC)	RC Diocesan representative
Ciara Moran (CM)	PAPH representative
Heidi Price (HP)	PAPH representative
Stephen Martin (SM)	Maintained Nursery Schools
Lisa Hartley (LH)	CEO PLP
Anne Thorne (AT)	SHAP Governor representative
Matthew Bindon (MB)	Alternative Provision representative
Andrea Hemmens (ASH)	SHAP representative
Martyn Cox (MC)	PLT representative
Aaron Meredith (AM)	PAPH representative
Amanda White (AJW)	Clerk to Schools Forum

Apologies:

Judith Harwood (JAH)	Service Director, Education, Participation & Skills
Jo Siney (JS)	Education, Participation & Skills – Head of SEND
Lisa Boorman (LB)	Secondary representative
Justine Mason (JM)	PLT representative
Colin Randall (CR)	PAPH representative
Matthew Corrigan (MCO)	PLT representative

1.	WELCOME & APOLOGIES	Action																																			
	Noted.																																				
2.	MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING ON 10 JUNE 2020																																				
	Minutes agreed as accurate.																																				
3.	MATTERS ARISING																																				
	<p>SS to update Forum in June regarding sustainable business models for providers and the matter of additional charges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>This continues to be on hold due to the pandemic and SS is in close contact with providers regarding the current stresses and strains. SS has also been in talks with Jon Taylor and Judith Harwood regarding the current situation.</i> - <i>WC suggested that this is kept on the agenda as something to look at going forward.</i> <p>High Needs Block Update.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>BMG was held on 08/11/2020 and an update will be provided at today's meeting.</i> 	SS																																			
4.	2021/22 DSG FUNDING UPDATE (including disapplication request)																																				
	<p>Funding Allocation:</p> <p>The Department of Education (DfE) have released provisional funding allocations for 2021/22 for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Schools Block, High Needs Block and Central School Services Block.</p> <p>Information on the Early Years Block is yet to be received.</p> <p>2021/22 is the second year of a three year funding increase for primary and secondary education. School funding is set to increase by £4.8bn in 2021/22 and £7.1bn in 2022/23, compared to 2019/20 baselines, including additional funding for children with SEND.</p> <p>The table shows the impact of this additional funding on Plymouth's DSG allocation for 2021/22. Please note, these provisional allocations are based on old pupil numbers and will be updated in the autumn term.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="209 1469 1329 1832"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2020/21 Baseline £</th> <th>2020/21 Per Pupil £</th> <th>2021/22 Provisional £</th> <th>2021/22 Per Pupil £</th> <th>Increase/(Decrease) in Provisional Allocation £</th> <th>Increase/(Decrease) in Per Pupil Amount £</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Schools Block</td> <td>170,489,400*</td> <td>4,925</td> <td>176,695,650</td> <td>5,103</td> <td>6,206,250</td> <td>178.03</td> </tr> <tr> <td>High Needs Block</td> <td>34,026,015</td> <td>n/a</td> <td>37,796,919</td> <td>n/a</td> <td>3,770,904</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Central Schools Services Block</td> <td>3,209,801</td> <td>n/a</td> <td>2,845,140</td> <td>n/a</td> <td>(364,661)</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>207,725,216</td> <td></td> <td>217,337,709</td> <td></td> <td>9,612,493</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Schools Block:</p> <p>Plymouth's Schools block funding will increase by £6.206m in 2021/22, an increase of 3.6%. Additional funding for 2021/22 will be distributed through the Schools National Funding Formula (NFF):</p>		2020/21 Baseline £	2020/21 Per Pupil £	2021/22 Provisional £	2021/22 Per Pupil £	Increase/(Decrease) in Provisional Allocation £	Increase/(Decrease) in Per Pupil Amount £	Schools Block	170,489,400*	4,925	176,695,650	5,103	6,206,250	178.03	High Needs Block	34,026,015	n/a	37,796,919	n/a	3,770,904	-	Central Schools Services Block	3,209,801	n/a	2,845,140	n/a	(364,661)	-	Total	207,725,216		217,337,709		9,612,493		
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- All core factors of the formula will increase by 3%, compared against 2020/21 unit values.
- The minimum per pupil funding levels will increase to £4,180 per primary pupil and £5,415 per secondary pupil.
- The funding floor will provide schools with an increase of 2% per pupil for pupil led funding compared to 2020/21 baselines.
- The sparsity factor will increase from £26,000 to £45,000 for primary schools and from £67,600 to £70,000 for secondary schools. This factor does not apply to Plymouth schools.

Plymouth will see a 3.6% increase (£178.03) in per pupil funding, compared against the 2020/21 baseline (excludes growth funding).

The average per pupil increase nationally is 3.1% (Plymouth 3.6%), average increase per pupil is £157.96 (Plymouth £178.03), average per pupil funding for 2021/22 is £5,301 (Plymouth £5,103).

Teachers' pay grant and teachers' pension employers contribution grant:

The Teachers' Pay Grant (TPG) and Teachers' Pension Employer Contribution Grant (TPECG) will be incorporated into the NFF from 2021/22, a further £180 per primary pupil and £265 per secondary pupil will be added onto the basic entitlement factor (AWPU) to cover these grants. The minimum per pupil funding levels have also been increased by these amounts.

High Needs Block:

Nationally, High Needs funding will increase by a further £730m in 2021/22, compared to 2020/21 baselines.

Plymouth's High Needs Block funding will increase by £3.770m in 2021/22, an increase of 11%.

The funding floor factor will provide local authorities with an increase of 8% per head of population compared to 2020/21 baselines.

The limit on gains will be set at 12% per head of population compared to 2020/21 baselines.

The basic entitlement per pupil amount will increase from £4,000 to £4,660 for special schools. This factor has increased by £660 to incorporate the TPG and TPECG from 2021/22.

The average increase nationally is 11.18%, per pupil comparison is not available for High Needs Block.

Locally, Cornwall is getting an increase of £6.879m (13.52%), Devon is getting £9.099m (11.95%) and Torbay is getting £2.086m (10.90%).

The final High Needs Block will differ slightly from these figures as some elements of the formula will change before the final allocations are made.

Central Schools Services Block:

Funding for the Central Schools Services Block has decreased by £0.365m. Whilst funding for ongoing commitments has increased slightly (£0.056m), historic commitment funding has been decreased by £0.421m, due to unwinding of historic commitments. This is part of Central Government's aim to move funding from individual Local Authorities to increase the overall DSG which is allocated to schools, giving schools greater flexibility.

The £0.365m decrease in historic commitment funding is within the funding block previously allocated to the Excellence Cluster. Plymouth have already ceased funding the Excellence Cluster and in 2020/21 distributed £0.707m to mainstream schools to purchase their own support.

2020/21 Academic year – coronavirus catch up funding

Universal Catch Up Premium:

The DfE has announced £1 billion of funding to support pupils to 'catch up' after the impact of coronavirus on their education. Part of this is a one-off universal £650m Catch-Up Premium for the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

The catch up premium will be available to all state-funded mainstream, special and AP schools.

- Mainstream schools will receive £80 per pupil from reception to year 11. For Plymouth schools this would be approximately an additional £2.770m
- Special Schools and Alternative Provision will receive £240 per place, this will total approximately £0.220m for Plymouth schools.

This grant will be paid to schools in three payments, starting in autumn 2020 with the final payment will be made in summer term 2021.

It will be available for one year only and not added to baselines for future funding allocations.

Schools should use the funding to support pupils to catch up, but they have the flexibility to do this in whatever way they consider best for their school.

National Tutoring Programme:

Alongside the Catch Up Premium, central government has launched a £350m National Tutoring Programme.

This will consist of (at least): a 5-16 programme making tutoring available for 5-16 years from the second half of the autumn term 2020, and a 16-19 fund to provide small group tutoring for disadvantaged 16-19 year olds.

Schools will be able to use their catch up premium to cover the subsidised cost of the programme, which could involve buying in tuition from an approved list of partners or employing in-house academic mentors.

Disapplication Request:

LJ discussed the disapplication request with regards to an historic exceptional funding grant for an offsite sports facility for All Saints Academy.

Since 2013/14, All Saints Academy has received £257,000 per annum through the exceptional circumstance factor for rent of an offsite sports facility. The school received £192,750 in 2020/21, based on 9/12th of the annual contract value, as the contract came to an end in December 2020.

This allocation (£192,750) is currently included in the final 2020/21 MFG baselines, which means the school is due to receive an inappropriate level of protection in 2021/22 for a contract which no longer exist. As per the modelling spreadsheet attached, the school is due to receive £157,422 through the funding floor to protect the historic premises contract.

We wish to remove this factor (£192,750) from All Saint's final 2020/21 MFG baselines on the APT to avoid unfairly protecting historic funding levels for this one school.

	<p>The additional protection should be distributed to mainstream Plymouth schools on a fair and equitable basis under the NFF.</p> <p>This Disapplication request is agreed by School's Forum and will be actioned by Louise Jenkins.</p>	LJ
5.	SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOL CHANGES	
	<p>Central Government guidance states that if any changes are made to this document, Schools Forum should be informed.</p> <p>In addition to some housekeeping changes, amendments have been made to the following paragraphs;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.8.1 – The Maintained Schools three year budget forecasts may be used in support of the City Council's balance control mechanism • 2.15.1 – Two points added re the registering of business interests: details of any other educational establishments that they govern and any relationships between school staff and members of the governing body. • 4.5.4 – Planning for deficit budgets; Schools must submit a recovery plan to the City Council Finance Department when their revenue deficit rises above 5% at 31st March of any year. The 5% deficit threshold will apply when deficits are measured as at 31st March 2021. • 10 – Insurance Cover; Insurance budget delegated to each school. Schools then have the option of an insurance package offered via the City Council with a third party insurer or exercising their right to opt out and make their own arrangements. This could be the Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA). Evidence must be provided to the Head of Integrated Finance by no later than 1st April, i.e. in advance of the financial year that the opt-out will take effect, that appropriate insurance cover has been taken out with a third party insurer or the RPA. • The local authority may require the school to demonstrate that cover relevant to an authority's insurable interests, under a policy arranged by the governing body, is at least as good as the relevant minimum cover arranged by the authority if the authority makes such arrangements, either paid for from central funds or from contributions from schools' delegated budgets. The City Council will have regard to the actual risks which might reasonably be expected to arise at the school in question in operating such a requirement, rather than applying an arbitrary minimum level of cover for all schools <p>LJ explained that Julie Steer has sent all maintained schools information regarding an agreement with Zurich as an option for schools for insurance cover. Julie Steer will administer all claims. This will be available via Services4Schools as an option to purchase.</p> <p>It is expected that there will be further changes to this document and Schools Forum will be notified at relevant future meetings.</p>	
6.	2020/21 BUDGET MONITORING	
	<p>The Council receives funding for schools through the Dedicated Schools Grant. The grant funds expenditure either directly through the Individual Schools Budget (ISB) or incurred by the Council on behalf of schools. Any over or underspends on the DSG are carried forward. The distribution of the ISB element of the grant is in accordance with the schools funding formula and the overall DSG has to be approved by the Schools Forum.</p>	

The 2020/21 DSG allocation has been decreased due to the following:

- Reduction of £0.080m for the High Needs Block allocation, due to reduced deductions compared to budget setting and import/export adjustments notified.
- Reduction of £0.831m relating to 2019/20 Early Years block - £0.300m of this adjustment was accrued for at year end, the rest has been offset against in-year Early Years Block savings.

The current forecast DSG underspend is -£1.389m (initial forecast was an underspend of -£0.866m).

This is made up of the following:

- **Schools Block** – underspend of -£0.413m relating to negative funding adjustments for growing secondary schools due to reduced Autumn NOR.
- **High Needs Block** – underspend of -£0.787m and relates to the residual contingency budget, a result of the additional £3m HNB funding in 2020/21. £0.600m to be ring fenced for Alternative Provision proposals
- **Early Years** – underspend of -£0.189m relating to closure of settings and reduction in SEND packages in summer term due to Covid.

Papers A and B give more detail regarding budget monitoring.

DSG Balance:

Previous forecast year end DSG surplus was £0.664m (ring-fenced element not incl.)

Maintained Schools Health Check:

The financial stability of maintained schools is monitored using the budget monitoring returns. Two maintained schools and one maintained nursery school ended the financial year with a deficit.

Quarter 1 monitoring returns from schools show that five maintained schools and one maintained nursery school are projecting a deficit at year end. Any maintained schools forecasting a deficit position will be expected to enter into a licenced deficit agreement with the Local Authority where a 3 year plan will be produced to enable the school to eliminate their deficit within 3 years.

Short Term and Medium Term Risks and Issues:

Rating	Detail	Mitigation/Further Actions
Amber	<p>High Needs</p> <p>Funding for 2012/22 confirmed at an additional £3m. However, it is likely that beyond this funding will be, at best, static.</p> <p>Plymouth needs to consider the stability and sustainability of the High Needs Block over the longer term.</p>	<p>Continuing good governance</p> <p>Implementing recommendations from BMG and further BMG work, especially on proposals for invest to save projects</p> <p>Consider future sustainability of High Needs Block</p>

7. HIGH NEEDS BLOCK - UPDATE

The provisional 2021/22 High Needs Block allocation has been announced at £37.797m which is an increase of £3.770m against the latest 2020/21 allocation.

The table below shows the formula factors and funding that make up the high needs block allocation.

LA Name	Plymouth
Region	SOUTH WEST
LA code	879
(A) Basic entitlement factor (8%)	£3,178,120
(B) Historic spend factor (34%)	£12,706,156
(C) Population factor (25%)	£9,247,846
(D) FSM factor (6%)	£2,248,902
(E) IDACI factor (7%)	£2,492,420
(F) Bad health factor (4%)	£1,646,864
(G) Disability factor (5%)	£2,038,449
(H) KS2 low attainment factor (4%)	£1,458,511
(I) KS4 low attainment factor (4%)	£1,549,958
(J) Funding floor factor (0%)	£0
(K) AP factor (2%)	£911,694
NFF allocation before provisional import/export adjustment and additional funding for new and growing special free schools (100%)	£37,478,919
(L) Import/export adjustment (provisional) (0.8%)	£318,000
2021-22 high needs NFF provisional allocation before limit on gains	£37,796,919
2021-22 high needs NFF provisional allocation after calculation of gain on 2020-21 baseline up to 12% per head, including the import/export adjustment	£37,796,919

The Basic Entitlement and AP factors have been uplifted by £0.664m for Teachers Pay and Pensions Grants. The £12.7m Historic Entitlement Factor remains the same. We will receive an additional £1.395m through the population factor and £1.696m through the other main factors.

The Special School and Alternative Provision Teachers Pay and Pensions Grants have been rolled in to the High Needs Block from 2021/22, and this funding needs to be protected – so the real increase is £3.146m.

This confirms that the 10% increase to top-up bandings in 2020/21 is permanent and doesn't need to be reduced back down.

BMG will be looking at how to allocate the additional £3.146m in 2021/22. Consideration will be made of:

- Existing pressures and known increases in demand (e.g. Post 16)
- Potential further increases to top up funding
- Review of exceptional cohort funding, potential uplift
- Lack of special school and support centre places
- Alternative Provision and Inclusion proposals
- Sustainability for future static funding levels.

Budget Monitoring 2020/21:

Per the DSG monitoring report the High Needs Block is reporting an underspend of £0.787m in 2020/21, of which £0.600m has been ring-fenced for AEP proposals based on the BMG recommendation.

Current Pressures:

Due to the increased funding we are not seeing budget pressures in the same way that we did in previous years, however there are still some areas of concern, where spend has risen significantly higher than budgeted for.

Purchase of Special School Places:

We are currently purchasing 690.6 places with the Plymouth special schools, which costs £6.906m

In September 2020 this was 17.6 places more than we had budgeted for costing £0.170m. Additional top-up funding for each pupil which was approximately an additional £0.264m.

Whilst we have purchased some additional places in previous years this is by far the highest level.

Even with all these places there are still pupils coming to SMAP that are appropriate for special schools but we do not have sufficient space.

Pupils can then require high levels of additional funding to remain within mainstream, through Band 3+ packages.

Continuing Drift to Higher Banding:

In April 2016 we had more Band 6 pupils (234, 36%) in Special Schools than Band 7 (226, 35%) or Band 8 (163, 25%). Currently there are only 130 Band 6 pupils (19%) this has dropped by almost half as Band 8's have risen by 65% (now 251, 36%)

A 5% move from Band 6 to Band 7 and from Band 7 to Band 8 costs around £0.163m, so it is important to closely monitor the banding drift.

The numbers of Band 7s and Band 8+'s remain broadly static in recent years.

BMG Workplan:

The budget modelling group have had an initial meeting to identify the areas that be covered in this academic year, including discussions around the additional funding in the 2021/22 financial year.

Details of the workplan can be seen in paper 7.

8. SCHOOLS SPORTS PARTNERSHIP PROJECT 2019/20 - FEEDBACK

The Plymouth School Sports Partnership (PSSP) aims to create a sustainable physical education, school sport and physical activity system as part of the health and wellbeing provision for all children.

The Plymouth School Sports Partnership was established in 2011 by blending the best elements from the city's two School Sports Co-ordinator Partnerships to create a citywide organisation to meet the needs of children and young people aged 5-18 years old in the Plymouth travel to learn area who attend Partnership subscribing schools.

The Plymouth School Sports Partnership is currently funded by an allocation from Plymouth Schools Forum, subscriptions from member schools, payments for School Games Organiser and Bikeability work on behalf of Sir John Hunt Community Sports College and Plymstock School and additional project funding. In order to access the Core Offer schools must subscribe to the Partnership, this is currently £3,500 for schools with primary-age children and £4,000 for secondary schools; this cost has remained the same since September 2015.

WC noted that the Partnership Project had done a marvellous job.

9.	NEW VICE CHAIR	
	<p>WC stated that she will be stepping down as Chair for Schools Forum, with this being her last meeting.</p> <p>JB will be taking over the role of Chair and Forum will welcome nominations for a new Vice Chair.</p> <p>Please contact amanda.paddison@plymouth.gov.uk with suggestions.</p> <p>JB and Forum wished to note their thanks to WC for her role as Chair.</p>	
10.	DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 16 December 2020 – 2pm-4pm▪ 13 January 2021 – 2pm-4pm▪ 24 February 2021 – 2pm-4pm	