

THURROCK SCHOOLS' FORUM

17th June 2021 at 10:00 – 12:00
Virtual Meeting – Microsoft Teams

AGENDA

Multi Academy Trusts

Catalyst Academies Trust
Harris Federation
Ormiston Park
ORTU Federation
Osborne Co-operative Academy Trust
REAch2 Academy Trust
South West Essex Community Education Trust
The Gateway Learning Community Trust (GLC)
Vine Schools Trust
Christus Catholic Trust

Name

Mr T Parfett
Mrs N Graham
To be advised
Dr Sophina Asong
Mr Griffiths
Mr E Samuel
Mr S Munday
Mr K Sadler
Mrs E Wigmore
Mrs N Cashell

Secondary Voluntary Aided School

Grays Convent

Name

Mrs M Miller

Standalone Academy Trusts

Woodside Academy
Giffards Primary

Name

Mr E Caines
Mrs N Haslam-Davis

Infrastructure Groups

TASS
TPHA

Name

Mrs P Johnson
Mrs J Sawtell-Haines

Alternative Provision

Olive AP

Name

Mr M Vickers

Special Schools

Treetops Academy
Beacon Hill Academy

Name

Mr J Brewer
Mrs Sue Hewitt

Non-school members

Diocese of Chelmsford
Diocese of Brentwood
0-5 EYFS Representative
0-11 Representative
11-19 Representative

Name

Miss S Jones
Mrs M Shepherd
Mr A Melbourne
Ms Alison Jones
Dr J Revell

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Introductory Items		
Item	Item	Time Guide
1.	Welcome from Chair	2 mins
2.	Apologies for Absence	2 mins
3.	Agreement of agenda, time-guide and notification of 'Any Other Business'	2 min
Items for Decision		
4.	Dedicated Schools Grant 2020/21 and 2021/22 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented by David May 	20 mins
5.	Union Facility Time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented by Andrea Winstone 	10 mins
6.	Meeting format and dates for academic year 2021-2022 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented by Sarah Williams 	5 mins
Items for Discussion		
7.	DSG Management Plan 2020/21 to 2024/25 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented by David May 	20 mins
8.	Education, Health & Care Plans Deep Dive Data Analysis Summary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented by Andrea Winstone 	20 mins

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9.	DSG High Needs Specialist Placements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented by Gwen Trapp 	20 mins
10.	Schools' Forum Forward Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented by Sarah Williams 	5 mins
Closing Items		
11.	Minutes of the previous meeting held on 18th March 2021	5 mins
12.	Matters Arising	3 mins
13.	Any Other Business	5 mins
	Date of next meeting To be agreed	

THURROCK SCHOOLS FORUM REPORT

DATE: 17 June 2021
SUBJECT: Dedicated Schools Grant 2020/21 and 2021/22
REPORT OF: David May
THE REPORT IS: For Decision

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The DSG reserve outturn position is a provisional deficit of £1.883m. This is an overall improvement of £0.095m achieved through an improved in year position.
- 1.2 The significant areas of financial risk are
- Continued increase in demand for EHCP;
 - Additional costs of out of borough placements; and
 - Costs incurred in providing education for pupils not in school.
- 1.3 Early years providers during 2020/21 were provided with a guaranteed level of funding based on known take up and a minimum funding guarantee. Based on census data an overspend of £0.140m was anticipated. However, the full census data has not been uploaded to the ESFA, this has a financial implication of £0.450m. Discussions are ongoing with the ESFA to understand what options are available.
- 1.4 During the summer term Officers are to review budgets and projections for 2021/22 based on the outturn position for 2020/21. This is to understand what is a one-off or permanent change. An updated position will be presented to the next meeting of the Schools Forum.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 The Schools Forum is recommended to:
- a) Note the contents of the report and offer support and challenge.
 - b) Agree the financial position for 2020/21 that will be included in returns to be made to the ESFA.
 - c) Agree to receive regular updates on the 2021/22 projected outturn position.

3. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 To inform members of the Schools Forum of the provisional outturn position in relation to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2020/21 and impact on 2021/22 budget, in accordance with the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012.

4. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT 2020/21

- 4.1 The final provisional outturn position is underspend of £0.095m as set out below:

DSG 2020/21	Funding Settlement	Academy Recoupment	Funding Block Transfer	Early Years Adjust	Final DSG	Outturn	Variance
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Schools	127.474	(119.841)	(0.635)		6.998	6.194	(0.804)
Central Services	1.850	0.000			1.850	1.675	(0.175)
High Needs	25.410	(5.376)	0.635		20.669	20.963	0.294
Early Years	12.699	0.000		(0.565)	12.134	12.724	0.590
Total	167.433	(125.217)	0.000	(0.565)	41.651	41.556	(0.095)

- 4.2 The provisional outturn position reflects the following in year pressures that have been reported throughout the year:

- Schools Block – Pupil Growth, in line with projections, has an underspend of £0.804m.
- Central Services Block – Staffing underspends and maximisation of external funding.
- High Needs Block – An overspend of £0.294m. This is less than the projected outturn previously reported by £1.800m. This is a significant change and the variance can be explained within the following 3 areas:
 - EHCP – The impact of Covid on school attendance and the delay in the start date of new commissioned placements has seen a reduction in forecast to outturn of £0.600m.
 - Post 16 – Discussions with Colleges and neighbouring Authorities has resulted in the place funding element not being paid by Thurrock, resulting in a reduction of £1m for that previously forecasted. Officers will continue to monitor and consider the impact on the import export adjustment applied to the HNB funding allocation.
 - External Residential – As part of maximisation of external funding some forecasted costs have been eligible for Covid funding that has resulted in a saving of £0.2m

Officers will consider the impact of the outturn position as part of monitoring 2021/22 expenditure to identify if any invoices, relating to 2020/21 have been received late as a result of Covid 19 and any impact on DSG funding.

The overspend reflects increased demand for EHCP and specialist places.

- Early Year Block – The amount of funding distributed to providers is calculated to exceed the original funding allocation from the ESFA. This reflects protection that has been paid to Providers and incomplete census data uploaded to the ESFA.

As part of finalising the accounts £0.590m has been included as the gap between funding paid and income expected from the ESFA. Discussions are ongoing with the ESFA to determine if this error in the data can be rectified to reduce the overspend to £0.140m, which will benefit the DSG deficit.

Appendix A provides further detail in the key areas of expenditure.

5. DSG Reserve

- 5.1 The DSG has a provisional carried forward deficit of £1.978m into 2021/22. The movement in 2020/21 is reflect in the table below:

DSG Deficit - Summary	£m	Deficit % of DSG
Historic Deficit 2018/19	(2.656)	
DSG 2019/20	0.678	
Historic Deficit 2019/20	(1.978)	1.26%
DSG 2020/21	0.095	
Projected Deficit @ 31/03/21	(1.883)	1.12%
> Requirement to complete DSG Management Plan > Need to deliver a balance budget position > Continued annual increase in EHCP's > Ongoing discussions with the ESFA		

- 5.2 As a result of having a DSG deficit, a DSG management plan is required to be submitted to the ESFA that outlines the reason the deficit has occurred and actions to be taken to contain expenditure within the funding envelope provided.
- 5.3 The 2020/21 provisional outturn position demonstrates that expenditure has been contained within the resource available, although each funding block has its own storey to tell. The ongoing problem is how to recover the deficit position whilst continuing to meet increased demand and cost within the High Needs Block.
- 5.4 The position in Thurrock reflects that being experienced by a significant number of Local Authorities. Information gathered by the Local Government Association found that in 2019/20 97% of Local Authorities expected there HNB to be in deficit.
- 5.5 A meeting is scheduled with the ESFA in July to discuss the DSG management plan and HNB position within Thurrock. Elsewhere on today's agenda are a number of papers and a presentation that will form part of these discussions.

6. Dedicated Schools Grant Note to the Accounts 2020/21

- 6.1 As part of the Statement of Accounts the Local Authority is required to include a note within its accounts, which sets out how the DSG has been deployed in accordance with the regulations. The note sets out the position included in this report and will be included in returns to be made to ESFA on the use of the DSG and use of reserves.

7. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT 2021/22

- 7.1 Appendix A shows the 2020/21 provisional outturn position alongside the 2021/22 budget. The key area remains the High Needs Block.
- 7.2 Officers will consider the outturn position alongside 2021/22 budget and spend to date. An update will be provided at the next meeting.

8. REFERENCES TO OTHER KEY DOCUMENTS / PREVIOUS REPORTS

- School Forum meeting March 2021 – Dedicated Schools Grant 2020/21 and 2021/22

9. CONTACT DETAILS OF LEAD OFFICER / AUTHOR

If you have any queries or comments in advance of the Schools Forum meeting about this report, please contact

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Appendix A

<u>Dedicated Schools Grant</u>	<u>2020/21</u>	<u>2020/21</u>	<u>2020/21</u>	<u>2021/22</u>
	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Variance</u>	<u>Budget</u>
	<u>£m</u>	<u>£m</u>	<u>£m</u>	<u>£m</u>
Schools Block	126.289	125.484	(0.804)	140.263
Central Services Block	1.850	1.675	(0.175)	1.583
High Needs Block	25.991	26.285	0.294	29.139
Early Years Block	12.134	12.724	0.590	12.877
Funding Settlement	166.263	166.168	(0.095)	183.862
Less Academy Recoupment	(124.612)	(124.612)	0.000	(140.941)
Dedicated Schools Grant	41.651	41.556	(0.095)	42.921
Maintained Schools Budgets	5.392	5.392	(0.000)	3.787
Business Rates	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
School Licences	0.126	0.126	(0.000)	0.131
Growth Fund	1.480	0.676	(0.804)	1.082
Deficit Recovery	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Statutory and Regulatory duties - Education	0.379	0.336	(0.043)	0.379
Statutory and Regulatory duties - Finance	0.140	0.122	(0.018)	0.130
School Place planning	0.029	0.029	0.000	0.029
Admissions	0.260	0.206	(0.055)	0.280
Schools Forum	0.010	0.006	(0.004)	0.010
SACRE	0.010	0.007	(0.003)	0.010
Contribution to Combined budgets	1.022	0.970	(0.052)	0.745
Place Funding	0.343	0.054	(0.289)	0.000
Top Up Funding - Thurrock Academies	2.803	2.864	0.061	2.846
Top Up Funding - Thurrock Resource Provisions	2.593	2.650	0.057	3.143
Top Up Funding - Thurrock Special Schools	4.156	4.103	(0.053)	5.457
Top Up Funding - Thurrock Alternative Provision	1.445	1.529	0.084	1.503
Top Up Funding - Other Local Authorities (4-16)	1.043	1.072	0.029	1.150
Top Up Funding - Post 16	1.787	1.212	(0.575)	2.175
Pupils not in School	0.161	0.504	0.343	0.300
Residential - Non Maintained and Independent	1.100	1.305	0.205	2.040
Non Residential - Non Maintained and Independent	1.100	1.540	0.440	1.288
Commissioned Services	1.149	1.149	(0.000)	1.129
Additional High Needs Targeted	0.200	0.205	0.005	0.100
Home Hospital Education Services	0.000	0.009	0.009	0.000
Travellers Team	0.052	0.042	(0.010)	0.055
Home to School Transport	1.787	1.787	0.000	1.600
High Needs Central Team	0.950	0.940	(0.010)	0.675
3&4 Year old	9.961	10.694	0.733	10.542
2 year olds	1.656	1.525	(0.131)	1.787
Early Years Central Team	0.517	0.505	(0.013)	0.548
Dedicated Schools Grant	41.651	41.556	(0.095)	42.921

THURROCK SCHOOLS FORUM REPORT

DATE: 17th June 2021
SUBJECT: Union Facility Time
REPORT OF: Sue Lamkin
THE REPORT IS: For Decision

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an annual update to the Forum on the administration of Union Facility Time. The Forum requested for the administration of this service to be reviewed on an annual basis so that a decision could be made by members on whether they wished Thurrock Council to continue with the administration.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Forum decides on how it wishes to proceed with the administration of this scheme.

That the Forum decides on the contribution rate for schools for 2021/20200.

3.0 Introduction

Thurrock Council administrates the Union Facility Time budget on behalf of all schools in Thurrock. The administration duties cover:

- design and management of claim forms along with guidance notes,
- managing and monitoring of the budget,
- reviewing claims for legitimacy,
- recording and raising debtors requests to charge all schools that have signed up to facility time,
- recording and raising creditor payments for claims received,
- reviewing and monitoring any changes to ACAS code of practice in relation to facility time
- updating documentation if and when required
- providing a reconciliation of the account to the Forum on an annual basis.

We propose that the Council annual service charge for 2021/2022 is set at £500.

4.0 Union Facility Time Cost to Schools

A charge of 10p per pupil was agreed for the 2018/2019 academic year. There is a complete buy in from all schools within the borough.

It was agreed by Schools Forum no charge would be made to schools for the year 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 as the balance was sufficient to cover claims.

During the year 2020/2021 six claims have been received, processed and subsequently been reimbursed. The total amount claimed in financial year ending March 2021 was £2112.96. Two further claims have been paid in April 2021 totalling £1758.33. As at the close of business on the 3rd June 2021 the Union Facility time balance is £16652.67.

There has been a slight increase in the number of claims made in 2020/2021 and we expect this to continue. Based on the current surplus, the Forum may wish to consider that no contributions are required for 2021/2022.

FINANCIAL / RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

This scheme is self-financing from the schools income and is reliant on all schools buying back into the scheme and the amount of contribution set for the following academic year.

5.0 CONTACT DETAILS OF LEAD OFFICER / AUTHOR

If you have any queries or comments in advance of the Schools Forum meeting about this report, please contact

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THURROCK SCHOOLS FORUM REPORT

DATE:	17 th June 2021
SUBJECT:	Meeting format and dates for academic year 2021-2022
REPORT OF:	Sarah Williams
THE REPORT IS:	For Decision

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Forum agrees the new proposed meetings dates/times for the next academic year 2021-2022. That forum also agrees future meetings continue to be held virtually going forward at the time of 10:00.

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Future meeting dates

Proposed future meeting dates for the academic year have been identified and are provided below. All meetings are proposed to take place 10:00 to 12:00 on a Thursday.

1. Thursday 16th September 2021
2. Thursday 18th November 2021
3. Thursday 13th January 2022
4. Thursday 17th March 2022
5. Thursday 23rd June 2022

Future format of meetings

On 28th May 2020 the Department for Education updated the operational and good practice guide, which allowed schools forums to meet remotely until 31 March 2021 due to coronavirus (COVID-19). Further updated guidance was provided on 22nd March 2021 to make permanent provisions to enable schools forum meetings to be held remotely.

At the last schools forum meeting in March 2021 following a discussion the majority of members agreed that they would be happy for meetings to take place at 10:00 and in a virtual environment.

FINANCIAL / RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There will be a cost saving realised if members agree to continue meeting in a virtual format as there will be no room hire charges.

4.0 CONTACT DETAILS OF LEAD OFFICER / AUTHOR

If you have any queries or comments in advance of the Schools Forum meeting about this report, please contact

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THURROCK SCHOOLS FORUM REPORT

DATE: 17th June 2021
SUBJECT: DSG Management Plan 2020/21 to 2024/25
REPORT OF: Michele Lucas / David May
THE REPORT IS: For Discussion

1. The DSG conditions of grant 2020/21 requires that any LA with an overall deficit on its DSG account at the end of the financial year, or whose DSG surplus has substantially reduced during the year, must be able to present a plan to the Department for Education (DfE) for managing their future DSG spend.
2. In order to support LA's, the ESFA have released a DSG management plan.
3. The DSG management plan will assist:
 - compliance with the DSG conditions of grant
 - monitor how DSG funding is being spent
 - compare data on high needs spend between LAs
 - highlight areas where LAs may wish to review spending
 - form evidence-based and strategic future plans for the provision of children and young people with SEND
 - present complex funding information simply to schools forums and other external stakeholders
 - provide a consistent reporting format to help LAs share best practice and initiatives
4. Thurrock is scheduled to meet with the ESFA to discuss its plan in July 2021.
5. As part of today's agenda, to inform discussions, are reports on:
 - Education, Health & Care Plans Deep Dive Data Analysis
 - DSG High Needs Specialist Placements
6. At the schools forum meeting a presentation will made to highlight data, future trends and the financial impact. This will support discussions on future actions required to deliver improved outcomes for children and young people and manage demand within the funding available.
7. References to previous reports
 - Schools Forum 18 March 2021 – DSG Management Plan
 - Schools Forum 17 September 2020 – High Needs Block 2020/21

THURROCK SCHOOLS FORUM REPORT

DATE:	17 th June 2021
SUBJECT:	Education, Health & Care Plans Deep Dive Data Analysis Summary
REPORT OF:	Andrea Winstone
THE REPORT IS:	For Discussion

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of the findings following a deep dive into Education, Health and Care Plans.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The SEND Deep Dive Report was commissioned by Teresa Salami –Oru - Assistant Director Public Health and Michele Lucas - Assistant Director Education and Skills.

The report was authored by Tinu Williamson-Taylor – Public Health Consultant.

The aim of commissioning the deep dive report was to gain a better understanding and identification of this subset of population and for local strategic partners to use them to develop robust local commissioning plans that will drive the narrowing of health inequalities within the population of Thurrock.

The deep dive analysis will inform the joint commissioning decisions made for children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans which will in turn be reflected in the services commissioned and set out in the Local Offer.

It was anticipated that the report would better inform our:

- Understanding of the health and wellbeing needs of children with SEND and/or disability;
- Understanding of the current demand for services and project future need where possible;
- Provide an evidence base to inform service planning, commissioning processes and be a source of information for the SEND team and the wider partnership;

Make recommendations to identify the current gaps in provision.

2.1 Definitions and Scope of the deep dive analysis

The report presents findings of an extensive desk top exercise and data analysis supporting our understanding of the needs of children with special educational needs or disability, specifically those with Education, Health and Care Plans. It then considers what support is currently available and what can be commissioned in Thurrock to address their needs. This deep dive assesses the current and future educational, health, social care and well-being needs of children and young people from birth to age 25 in Thurrock. The report also provides clarity on the actual scale of EHCP needs locally with evidence of the most significant areas of assessment and diagnosis being seen in children and young people in Thurrock.

2.2 Key Highlights

- Thurrock is an inclusive borough but there is still more to do
- More SEMH, Speech and Language and ASD provision will be required to meet increasing demands
- Reducing health inequalities will have an impact in the long term on the need for SEND provision

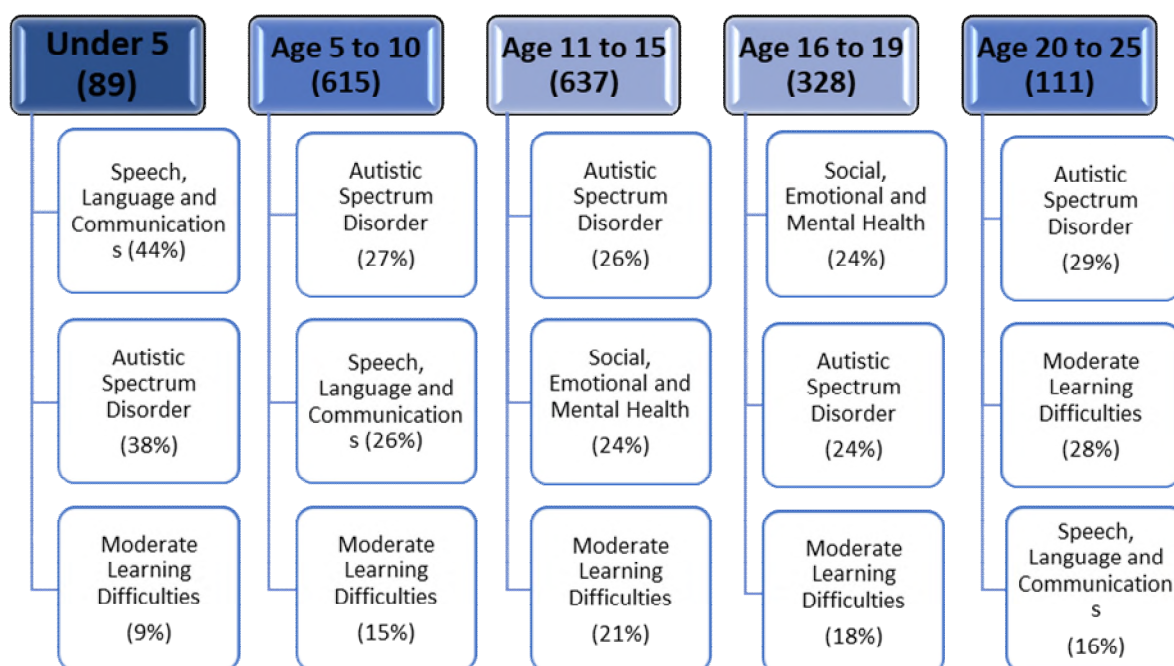
2.3 How the Schools' Form Can Help

- Continue to encourage schools to be fully inclusive and to admit children with EHCPs by making reasonable adjustments.
- Ensure that schools use their notional SEND budget when making provision for children identified as having SEND before making requests for additional funding.
- Ensuring the graduated Assess-plan-do- review processes are undertaken and the Provision Guidance (Publish date Sep 21) is used to inform next steps before requests for EHCPs take place
- Continue to encourage schools to be mindful of the high number of requests for EHCPs and the impact this has on Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs Block budget.
- Ensure schools access the AET Hub training and other free training provided by Thurrock/ Nasen/ Whole School SEND and others providers to ensure staff are aware of and trained in different aspects of SEND.
- Ensure that all SENCO attend the SENCO forums where new processes and approaches will be introduced.
- Consider how schools might support the need for additional provision within the borough.

2.4 Brief overview of findings

- Thurrock LA is ranked 1st highest amongst its statistical neighbours for pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (Jan 2020 school census).
- Seven in ten pupils with EHCP and attending Thurrock schools are educated within state funded mainstream settings; this is better than the national average. This has further demonstrated the strong partnership with our schools around an effective inclusive strategy that affords children with SEND with similar educational experiences with their peers.
- There has been a steady but slow increase in the number of children and young people identified as having a special educational need and or disability (SEND) in Thurrock. The numbers have increased significantly by 20%, indicating additional 742 in the last five years.
- Thurrock has robust policy in place to ensure early identification of SEND needs for young children as early as possible and before children start school. The number of under-5s has more than tripled on the 2016 figures to 72 but their proportionate share is comparable to that of benchmark groups.

Main primary needs of CYP with EHCPs by age groups:



- One in two children and young people with EHCP maintained by Thurrock and educated out of the area are of school age (5 to 15). Six in ten of those with Social, Emotional and Mental needs are of school age. This has led us to consider the range of local opportunities for this group of children/young people and we are looking at strengthening our local offer. However, considering that this is one of the fastest growing groups; there is a need for increased capacity for nurturing, emotional and well-being support. There is also general concern nationally about the long term impact of Covid-19 on the well-being of children, young people and their families further emphasising the need for this type of provision including capacity of the local Children Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS).
- Children aged 5 to 10 account for 20% of the population with EHCP educated out of the borough. The number and need of this age group gives an indication of future provision for SEND needs. It also means that provision of early intervention for some less complex needs may facilitate inclusion and education of more children in mainstream settings whilst reducing the need for placements in specialist settings.
- Eighty children aged 11 to 15 are educated out of the area. The majority of them have Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (35%), Autistic Spectrum Disorder (24%) followed by those with Moderate Learning Needs (19%). As with the younger age group, this cohort is an indication of future needs and provision demands, (local synergy data, Dec 2020)
- A third of the 11 to 15 year olds are placed in special independent schools and seven in ten of them have SEMH.
- Young adults aged 16 to 19 are the second largest group of those educated out of the borough. Seven in ten are in Post-16 further education colleges of which 26% have Special Emotional and Mental Health needs. Only seven people are placed in special independent settings.
- The majority (29%) of this age group people also have Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs followed by those with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (23%) and Speech Language and Communication needs (22%).
- Thurrock Council, like many other Councils, is not alone in dealing with the pressure of commissioning additional targeted provisions to meet increasing demands for particular need types such as speech and language therapies, specialist autism services and nurturing centres to provide specialist early intervention for emotional and mental health needs. Early procurement is required to reduce and prevent the escalation of severity of need and reduce the negative impacts of these needs on life chances.

- The top three primary needs for children and young people with EHCPs are Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Speech, Language and Communication Needs and Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs.
- The deep dive analysis suggests the need for increased local provisions for the three fastest growing needs and the associated long term benefits.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the deep dive analysis, we identified a number of gaps between the services already commissioned and what is required to respond to current and potential future needs. This has been linked into the work of our commissioning team as they prepare our new sufficiency strategy. Primarily, there is the need to **reduce health inequalities** in the area by investing in early intervention and prevention services.

3.1 Overarching

recommendation	action	lead	impact
To continue to improve the integration on processes, pathways and governance between health, education and social care for the benefit of all.	Regular meetings between DCO, Social Care Strategic Leads and Managers on processes and pathways. There is strong governance through the SEND Improvement Board	DCO, Strategic Lead Specialist Provision and PEP, Strategic Lead Employability and Skills, Strategic Lead School Effectiveness & SEND	
The service needs to reduce the number of pupils' year on year particularly those whose educational placements are met out of the borough.	Where possible looking to provide post 16 provision in Thurrock working with TACC and other providers.	Specialist Provision Manager, Strategic Lead Specialist Provision & PEP, Post 16 Manager Commissioning Team	
Ensure regular annual reviews of plans will ensure that plans are still needed and appropriate to meeting child's needs	There is a clear plan to ensure all annual reviews are undertaken and completed within statutory timeframes	Strategic Lead School Effectiveness & SEND	

3.2 Operational Data Quality

Joining up of finance data to individual cases will inform our understanding of cost drivers and impacts	There is a working party looking at how to use Synergy to record financial information. Panel members are informed of placement costs and high costs decisions made by Strategic Lead	Strategic Lead Specialist Provision & PEP,	
Addressing data quality gaps is also relevant to schools with regards to school exclusions to reasons.	Senior Access & Inclusion Manager is aware of all reasons for exclusions and works well with schools to reduce the number of FT and Perm exclusions for CYP with SEND	Senior Access & Inclusion Manager	
There is also the need to align EHCP caseloads with social care to minimise inaccuracies and support planning of specialist services for those with multiple complex needs	Work is underway to ensure that Social Care colleagues are informed about EHCP annual reviews, Needs assessments etc.	Children's Service Manager, CWD Strategic Lead School Effectiveness & SEND	

There is a slight discrepancy between the proportion of pupils with SEND and those with EHCP making Thurrock an outlier when compared with other similar local authorities. This may imply that historically Thurrock issued a plan too quickly partly as a result of pressure from both parents and educational institutions. However, this appears to be changing with better threshold management and reduced proportion of assessments leading to EHCP as a result of more management oversight and the development of new processes. It will take some time for the effect of this change to be reflected within the system.

3.3 Operational meeting needs

Strengthening the local mediation process will prevent escalation to the tribunal ensure better outcome for all concerned.	The performance and Tribunals Officer is working closely with SENDIASS and the mediation service to provide early intervention to reduce the need for mediation and escalation	Performance and Tribunals Officer	
Having in place effective professional development framework for staff (within the local authority and schools) to ensure they have the right level of skills to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.	There is a comprehensive training programme in place for council staff delivered by Health, Social Care and Strategic Leads. AET training in place for all schools, SEN Conference planned for June 2021. A timetable of training is being developed for the new academic year. Early Career Framework will also address some of these issues	SEND Monitoring & Support Officer Area SENCO DCO Strategic Lead School Effectiveness & SEND	
There is the attached cost of carrying out assessment on all initial requests received. This calls for a whole system approach to improve effectiveness, manage school and parents expectations and address consistency of decision making.	This is being addressed through Schools Forum, PATT SENDIASS the newly developed parent/carer group –Thurrock SEND Family Forum, SENCO Forums, Headteacher Briefings and Bulletins	Strategic Lead School Effectiveness & SEND, Strategic Lead Specialist Provision, Strategic Lead Employability & Skills Assistant Director	

3.4 Operational EHCP quality

Assessment of needs, identification and service planning should be designed in collaboration with children, their families and service providers. Improved communication and engagement with children and young people with SEND and their families will ensure their voices are heard and are at the heart of every decision.	Improved Person Centred Planning and Family Partnership work is being rolled out after a pilot with parents and schools. Thurrock SEND Family Forum has now been established and will provide a voice for the families and CYP with SEND. Engagement activities have been undertaken by AD and Engagement Officer.	SEND Monitor and Support Officer Participation & Engagement Officer Assistant Director	
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<p>Review the effectiveness of the EHCP assessment process through the development of robust and multi-agency quality assurance processes. All statutory partners have a role in quality assuring plans that meet individual's needs.</p>	<p>A robust quality assurance process is in place and will continue to be evaluated and improved by the new QA Manager</p>	<p>QA Manager Strategic Lead School Effectiveness & SEND DCO</p>	
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3.5 Integrated Social Care

<p>Thurrock Children's Social Care specialist disability team will continue to work with children with disabilities including those with learning needs, sensory impairment or mental health needs ensuring they are protection from harm or abuse. It is imperative that the service continues to work with Adult Services to ensure seamless transition to adulthood</p>			
<p>Pathway planning at an earlier stage to is vital to prevent escalation to statutory services and to support independence. Without this ongoing and early planning of support, there is a real risk that although young people are still vulnerable, they may not meet the criteria for referral to Adult Social Care.</p>	<p>PfA from earliest opportunity will be the focus of EHCPs going forward. Training for this is underway with schools and settings/ parents and council staff.</p>		

3.6 Commissioning meeting needs

Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group commissions a range of services for children and young people with SEND including; Community Nursing Team, Speech and Language Therapy, Educational Psychology, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Audiology, School Nursing for Children with Continuing Care needs, acute inpatient and outpatient services and specialist mental health services (CAMHS).

<p>Commissioners need to look to the future and the impact of specific growth needs and demand for services. There is the need to arrange for 18+ services in the coming years in order to ensure independence and choice of young people.</p>			
<p>A tangible number of children and young people with EHCP were identified as having Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. Early and timely access to CAMHS treatment for children experiencing serious risks to their emotional and psychological wellbeing is a priority in Thurrock. This include community services such as counselling and nurturing services delivered by appropriately qualified practitioners</p>	<p>Meeting with the commissioning team is schedules to re-commission provision for children too anxious/high SEMH needs and unable to attend school. New provision in place for 2021-22 academic year which will include Positive Pathways from Health and tuition from mainstream schools in the borough with improved subject and curriculum knowledge than current providers</p>	<p>DCO Strategic Lead Specialist Provision Strategic Lead Employability & Skills Strategic Lead School Effectiveness & SEND Assistant Director Strategic Lead Children's Commissioning</p>	
<p>To expand local provision for children and young people with Speech, Language and Communication needs as well as those with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Where this is not possible in the short term, working with neighbouring boroughs may be an option to balance the offer of services</p>	<p>Thurrock is now an AET Hub and will be rolling out the modules over the next 3 years to support mainstream schools with improving provision for ASD. Early Years Team are rolling out Elklan SAL training for all early years providers.</p>	<p>Monitoring & Support Officer Educational Psychiatrist 0-3 Learning & Development Officer CCG</p>	

Educational Psychology Service plays key role in the early identification of needs in young children. As part of the LA continued commitment around staffing capacity we have recently recruited two additional EP's. They support the assessment process and work with schools providing advice and support on the implementation of individual plans.

3.7 Public health

Obesity has long been linked with poor health outcomes, disability in adulthood and increased risks of early death. Thurrock is ranked highest for level of child obesity in East England and important that this area of need is a focus for public health in the local area. Obesity is also a WHO public health challenge and a growing concern in developed societies with significant gaps between the haves and have nots with regards to nutrition and diet.

<p>To enable the reduction in the prevalence of obesity and subsequent prevalence of SEND, this report recommends that this area of inequality be prioritised in Thurrock. The strong relationship between socioeconomic factors and disability further consolidates the importance to have effective strategic plans in place to reduce the prevalence of long term poor health including SEND.</p>	<p>Thurrock Whole Systems Obesity Strategy is due a refresh, the leads are meeting re the impact of Covid and the relevance of the current plan. Goal A, Goal B looks at childhood obesity – this work has been disrupted by school closure. HAF looks to increase physical activity, education about healthy lifestyles and food.</p>		
<p>Addressing the low coverage level of childhood immunisation in Thurrock is a public health challenge and integral to reducing the prevalence of SEND. It is imperative that targeted immunisation programmes are introduced to educate the public and understand barriers to vaccination within the community.</p>			

There is a Whole Systems Obesity Strategy tackling obesity in Thurrock with a specific set of goals around childhood obesity. It is important that emphases are placed on tackling obesity in children with SEND. The responsibility for this falls within the wider community health providers, health and midwifery service, educational setting and families. Targeting of health education campaigns on children starting primary schools will help to reduce the number of those identified as obese by the end of their primary school experience.

Infectious diseases such as measles can kill or cause long term disabilities in children. There is poor uptake of immunisation against measles, mumps and rubella in Thurrock, leaving more children exposed to the contagious virus and potential negative effects.

It is imperative that targeted immunisation programmes are introduced to educate the public and understand barriers to vaccination within the community. There was a Childhood Immunisation Strategy in place as part of the Better Care Fund that can be expanded to target areas of low uptake. This is a join up responsibility between health, midwifery and social care services sharing knowledge about families in need. This will help to improve vaccination coverage and to meet the minimum WHO target of 95% for MMR.

General Practice, community health visitors and other health professionals have a key role in early recognition of developmental problems in the young children through the Healthy Child Programme.

3.8 Improved outcomes

Having appropriate EHC plan for CYP with SEMH will ensure schools to put in place the right support systems to better manage some behavioural problems that will prevent exclusions.	SWS and PH Wellbeing service are working with schools to ensure they are mentally healthy spaces Mental health ambassadors in place	Strategic Lead Specialist Provision and PEP, SWS Lead PH Wellbeing Team	
Commissioning of post-16 services including opportunities for education, employment or training that will reduce the number of those NEET.	Post 16 team are working with local and national providers to improve the opportunities for education and employment.	Strategic Lead Employability & Skills	
Increase capacity for specialist provision in mainstream schools particularly for those with SEMH and reducing the need to be educated out of the borough.	SWS and PH Wellbeing service are working with schools to ensure they are mentally healthy spaces Mental health ambassadors in place	Strategic Lead Specialist Provision and PEP, SWS Lead PH Wellbeing Team	

Work with further education providers to increase the range of local provision and reduce the need for young people to access colleges away from home.	Post 16 team are working with local and national providers to improve the opportunities for education and employment.	Strategic Lead Employability & Skills	
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Analysis showed that a third of those with SEMH do not have a plan. However, more children with SEMH were excluded from schools in 2019.

4.0 FINANCIAL / RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The data analysis has informed the financial position included within the DSG Management Plan.

The increased demand for EHCP and specialist provision continues to place significant financial pressures on the High Needs block to contain expenditure within the funding allocation provided.

The position in Thurrock reflects that being experienced by a significant number of Local Authorities. Information gathered by the Local Government Association found that in 2019/20 97% of Local Authorities expected there HNB to be in deficit.

A meeting is scheduled with the ESFA in July 2021 to discuss the DSG management plan and HNB position within Thurrock. Elsewhere on today's agenda are a number of papers and a presentation that will form part of these discussions.

CONTACT DETAILS OF LEAD OFFICER / AUTHOR

If you have any queries or comments in advance of the Schools Forum meeting about this report, please contact

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THURROCK SCHOOLS FORUM REPORT

DATE: 17th June 2021
SUBJECT: High Needs Specialist Placements
REPORT OF: Gwen Trapp
THE REPORT IS: For Discussion

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 There are four budgets associated with the cost of Out of Borough placements, for which I am the named budget holder.

These are:

- AH010 – Top Up Funding for Other Local Authority Maintained Schools
- AH011 – Top Up Funding for Other Local Authority Academies
- AH014 – Residential Non Maintained and Independent Schools
- AH016 – Non-residential Non-Maintained and Special Schools

1.2 There is also a Post 16 budget that funds placements for young people over 16 years of age.

1.3 All of the children and young people considered in this report have an Education, Health and Care Plan and are in specialist placements outside Thurrock Local Authority.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Schools Forum is invited to discuss and offer comment on the report.

3.0 Introduction

3.1 The purpose of this report is to inform members of the School Forum of the current position relating to Out of Borough specialist provisions and will identify the following:

- The number of children and young people currently placed outside Thurrock in a specialist placement, as of 4 June 2021
- The cost of these different types of specialist placements to Thurrock Council
- A summary of the primary special educational needs the children and young people have who are placed outside Thurrock Local Authority
- Consideration be given to likely future demand.

4.0 FINANCIAL / RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Other Local Authorities Maintained Schools and Academies

- 4.1** There are **43 children and young people** in Other Local Authority Special Schools in Essex, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham and Waltham Forest Local Authority Maintained Schools and Academies.
- 4.2** The current cost commitment for the **37 children**, aged 4-16 years for the financial year 2021-2022 is **£527,498.00**, from budgets AH010 and AH011.
- 4.3** The current cost commitment for the **5 young people** over the age of 16 for the financial year 2021-2022 is **£86 030.49**
- 4.4** A total cost commitment of **£613,528.49** for the financial year 2021-2022

Residential Non Maintained and Independent Specialist Placements

- 4.5** There are currently **22 children and young people** in Residential Non-Maintained and Independent Schools outside Thurrock Local Authority.
- 4.6** There are **14 children under the age of 16** in 52 week residential specialist placements. These children have complex special educational needs that cannot be met in other settings. The current cost commitment by Education from the budget AH014 for this financial year is **£1,307,546.91**. Some of these children will jointly funded by Social Care.
- 4.7** There are a further **5 children** under the age of 16 in 39 week residential school placement. The current commitment for these children for this financial year is **£435, 088**
- 4.8** The total commitment from budget AH014 is **£1,742,634.91**
- 4.9** A further **3 young people over the age of 16** are in residential placements, costing **£196,302** for the financial year 2021-2022.
- 4.10** It is therefore anticipated that in total Thurrock Council will be paying **£1,938,936.91** this financial year for residential placements outside Thurrock.

Non Residential Non Maintained and Independent Specialist Placements

4.11 There are and **35 children and young people** in day placements in non-maintained and independent schools outside Thurrock Local Authority.

4.12 The commitment for this financial year for the placements for the **30 children (4-16 years)** is **£1,542,201.46**

4.13 The cost for the financial year for the **5 Post 16 placements** for the **young people over 16 years old** is **£263,871**

4.14 The total commitment this financial year for specialist out of borough placements is **£1,806,072.46**

4:15 A total of **100 children and young people** with an Education and Health Plan are in specialist placements outside Thurrock.

5.0 Categories of Primary Special Educational Need for Children and Young People in School placements outside Thurrock

	ASD	HI	MLD	SLCN	SLD	SpLD	SEMH	PD	PMLD	VI	Other
Day placement	21		14	4	1	1	27	2	2	2	2
Residential placement	4	2	1				13		1	2	1

ASD – Autistic Spectrum Disorder; HI – Hearing Impairment; MLD- Moderate Learning Difficulties; SLCN – Speech, Language and Communication Needs; SpLD- Specific Learning Difficulties; SEMH – Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs; PD = Physical Difficulties; PMLD- Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties; VI – Visual Impairment

6.0 Future Demand

6.1 There are a number of factors that can influence future demand, including the increasing number of Education, Health and Care Plans and the movement of families in to and out of the Thurrock. The opening of Treetops Free School will help to stop the growth of the need for external day placements for children and young people, for example with Moderate Learning Difficulties and Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Requests for Out of Borough placements are monitored very carefully by managers in the service and the budget is reviewed at least monthly to take into account any changes in information pertaining to school placements as they occur.

7.0 CONTACT DETAILS OF LEAD OFFICER / AUTHOR

If you have any queries or comments in advance of the Schools Forum meeting about this report, please contact:

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Thurrock School Forum Forward Plan for 2021 - 2022

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item / Focus
September 2021	Thurrock Code of Practice for delivery of early education for 2, 3&4 year olds - Standing
	Dedicated Schools Grant 2021/22
	High Needs Block 2021/22 and DSG Management Plan
	Free Schools Update
	Forum Membership Review and Election of Chair and Vice Chair
November 2021	Dedicated Schools Grant 2021/22
	High Needs Block 2021/22 – Commissioned Places
	Dedicated Schools Grant 2022/23
	Childcare Sufficiency - Standing
	Free Schools Update - Standing
January 2022	Dedicated Schools Grant 2021/22 – Projected Outturn
	Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan 2021/22
	Dedicated Schools Grant 2022/23
	High Needs Block
	Growth Fund
March 2022	Thurrock Budget – Children’s Services
	Dedicated Schools Grant 2021/22 – Projected Outturn
	Pupil Place Planning Review
	Free Schools Update - Standing
June 2022	Dedicated Schools Grant 2021/22 - Outturn
	Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan 2021/22
	Union Facility Time Annual Review - Standing
	Review of Forward Plan 2022/23
	Free Schools Update - Standing

Schools Forum

**Minutes of Meeting held 18th March 2021 at 10.00a.m
Virtual Meeting – Microsoft Teams**

In Attendance:

Multi Academy Trusts

Catalyst Academies Trust
ORTU Federation
Osborne Co-operative Academy Trust
The Gateway Learning Community Trust (GLC)
Reach2 Academy Trust
South West Essex Community Education Trust
Vine Schools Trust
Christus Catholic Trust

Name

Mr T Parfett (Vice Chair)
Dr Sophina Asong
Mr P Griffiths (The Chair)
Mr K Sadler
Mr E Samuel
Ms C Pumfrey
Mrs D McManus
Mrs N Cashall

Secondary Voluntary Aided School

Grays Convent

Name

Mrs M Miller

Standalone Academy Trusts

Woodside Academy
Giffards Primary

Name

Mr E Caines
Mrs N Haslam

Infrastructure Groups

TASS
TPHA

Name

Mrs P Johnson
Mrs J Sawtell-Haines

Alternative Provision

Olive AP

Name

Ms J Gillman

Special Schools

Treetops Academy
Beacon Hill Academy

Name

Mr J Brewer
Mrs Sue Hewitt

Non-school members

Diocese of Chelmsford
11-19 Representative

Name

Miss C Jones
Dr J Revell

Also in Attendance

Mr Malcolm Taylor
Ms Michelle Lucas
Mr David May
Ms Sarah Williams

Andrea Winstone

Miss Teresa Lydon

Strategic Lead – Specialist Provision/PEP
Assistant Director, Education Skills
Strategic Lead – DSG and Schools
Service Manager, Education Support
Service
Strategic Lead for School Effectiveness and
SEND | Children’s Services
Clerk

1. Welcome from the Chair

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. The Chair asked all members to click the mute button until they wanted to speak. This was to address the feedback that can take place on Microsoft Teams. He also advised that this meeting was not being recorded.

2. Apologies for Absence:

Apologies received from Mr S Munday, Mr M Vickers, Mrs M Shepherd, Mrs A Melbourne and Mrs Alison. Ms C Pumfrey attending meeting on Mr S Munday's behalf. Ms J Gillman attended on behalf of Mr M Vickers.

3. Agreement of Agenda, Time-Guide and Notification of Any Other Business

- i) The Forum agreed the agenda and time guide.
- ii) Any Other Business – no items were put forward before the meeting

4. Dedicated School Grant (DSG) 2020-21 and 2021/22

Mr D May summarised the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2020-21 report

The current projected outturn for 2020/21 is an overspend of £1.074m. This is an improved position of £0.543m from that previously reported of £1.617m

Schools Block - Mr D May advised that based on current commitments and historic level of spend it is currently forecast an underspend of £0.899m. There are no changes to what was previously reported.

Central Services Block – Mr D May advised that there was a projected underspend of £0.058m an improvement of £0.012m.

High Needs Block – Mr D May advised this is the significant area of financial risk broken down into four areas.

- The continued increase in the number of EHCP. Additional costs of £0.519m are forecasted in maintaining pupils within Thurrock schools or other Local Authority mainstream schools and academies. This is a decrease of £0.215m. He advised that the impact of schools re-opening on the 8th March will need to be closely monitored and considered in finalising the outturn position.
- Post 16 – Increased pupil numbers are forecasted with additional cost of £0.400m.
- Residential and Non-Residential Non-Maintained and Independent placements forecast an overspend of £0.838m, a decrease of £0.290m. At the time of writing the last report a number of joint funding packages were not agreed and therefore at that stage full cost was assumed to the DSG. All packages and funding arrangements have now been reviewed and agreed for 2020/21.
- Increase in supplying tuition packages for pupils not in School, costing an additional £0.290m.

He advised that they continue to review the local offer and commissioned places available in Thurrock.

Early years – Mr D May advised there is a current surplus of £217,000. He also commented that the January 2021 census would impact on the 2021-22 funding allocation. The initial census has been used to project the implication for the summer term.

Mr D May talked through Dedicated Schools Grant 2021/22 allocation.

Schools Block – Mr D May advised that the ESFA confirmed on the 10th February that Thurrock's local funding formula and submitted APT met all of the compliance checks and no further action is required.

High Needs Block – Mr D May advised that as part of the establishment of Treetops Free School a review of the initial funding agreement has been undertaken to inform a meeting to be held with the DfE on 9th March. He discussed the Band Values to be applied in table 6.8.

Specialist Equipment – Mr D May advised that the proposal is to increase the equipment threshold for schools and academies to purchase equipment to £2,000 from the current value of £500. This change would reflect the increase in funding being received by schools, reflected in increased Notional SEN budgets and the time lapse since the last review.

In 2019/20, 97 requests for specialist equipment were received at a cost of £117,895. The values paid ranged from £40 to £4,620. This increase in threshold would support a reduction in HNB funding in 2021/22. It is expected that an annual saving of £52,000 would be realised.

The Chair asked the Forum members if they had any questions.

Mrs J Sawtell-Haines asked if the threshold is at £500 why would they pay £40. Mr D May explained that if the equipment cost was £540 then they would pay the £40.

AGREED

- a) All Forum members agree the financial position for 2020/21
- b) All Forum members agree to receive a final report on the 2020/21 projected outturn position at the next meeting.
- c) All Forum members agree the Band Values for Treetops Free School as shown in 6.8 below from September 2021
- d) All Forum members agree to the increase in thresholds for specialist equipment to £2,000.

5. High Needs Block 2022-2023 Consultation

Mr D May advised members that the DfE have published a consultation on proposed changes to the High Needs National Funding Formula in 2022/23. This consultation runs until 24th March 2021.

The DfE will implement decisions from this consultation in 2022/23. This is a consultation on the historic spend and attainment factors in the High Needs National Funding Formula (NFF). He advised that at this stage it is about changing the distribution with no mention of additional funds being allocated to High Needs. The full formula is still due for review, but the DfE have delayed this until after the main SEND review report has been published (due in 'Spring 2021'), even though further changes won't be implemented until 2023/24.

Mr D May advised that the historic spend factor value is based on the baselines for each local authority that were published in August 2017 and was adjusted as he outlined in the report given to all members. A weighting of 50% was applied to this adjusted figure to give the final figure for the formula. This amount is maintained at a cash-flat level.

With the significant increases in High Needs funding through the formula since 2018/19, the overall proportion of funding allocated through this factor has reduced considerably, down by 10 % from 44% of funding in 2018/19 to 34% in the 2021/22 formula.

The proposal is to increase the percentage of the 2017/18 actual expenditure amounts, from 50% to, say, 60%. This would increase the significance of this factor in the 2022/23 formula, reflecting a more gradual pace of change in the pattern of spending that it would be reasonable to expect from local authorities. ESFA would welcome views on the option of increasing the percentage of actual expenditure in 2017/18 included in the funding formula calculation.

Mr D May went through the consultation questions with proposed combined responses from Thurrock Council and Thurrock Schools Forum.

No 1 - Historic spend factor - propose replacing the current lump sum included in the formula calculation with an amount calculated on the basis of actual expenditure in 2017-18, as reported by each local authority.

Proposed response - to agree to the change and use of 2017/18 actual expenditure, if this is the only way to reflect local circumstances. However we have concerns that 2017/18 data is being used which is 3 years out of date.

In the consultation it is unclear how this will be funded and if this is simply redistributing the same level of funds. It also does not explain the impact on any additional funding on the gains and caps in operation.

The fundamental problem with High Needs is insufficient funds to meet demand. If the proposal is not linked to any additional funding, then this is simply shuffling the same funds around and creating winners and losers

No 2 - Historic spend factor - Do you think that we should increase the percentage of actual expenditure in 2017-18 included in the funding formula calculation, or leave it at 50%?

Proposed response -- The use of the 2017/18 actual expenditure is 3 years out of date but we acknowledge from the information presented that this allows some local factor to be recognised within the formula.

50% seems appropriate as this is historic and fixed and we need to continue to allow other more up to date factors to influence the formula.

No 3 - Historic spend factor - To what extent do you agree that the funding formula should include factors that reflect historical local demand for and supply of SEND and AP provision?

Proposed response -- An instant change should be that the basic entitlement factor should provide £10,660 per pupil for special schools, to match the place-led funding LAs have to pay. In 2021/22 it is only £4,660 (uplifted from £4k for pay/pensions grants) and LAs have to rely on the rest of the NFF factors, which are inadequate, to cover the rest of the £10k plus top-up costs.

Equally with AP provisions a place costs £27,000, however the recoupment values from schools and academies is no more than £7,000. This creates an instant £20,000 pressure on the High Needs Block. A more responsive system is required to match funding received to costs incurred.

No 4 – Low attainment factor - Do you agree with our proposal to update the low attainment factors using data from 2016, and to substitute the most recent 2019 data in place of the missing 2020 attainment data?

Proposed response - For the 2022/23 the High Needs National funding formula, the DfE proposes to update the attainment data series for KS2 and KS4 by rolling it forward a year. This would use five years' data from 2016, but given the situation with SATs and GCSEs, they would have to substitute the most recent 2019 data in place of the missing 2020 attainment data. This sounds reasonable in the circumstances; the document explains it may have to be extended again for 2023/24.

No 5 – SEND and AP proxies - If you wish to offer ideas on factors that could be added to the current formula, or that could replace the current proxies, please provide further details in the comments box below

Proposed response - Proxy factors should carry much more weight for a more responsive National Funding Formula, but they should have more relevance to SEND. It would be worth exploring indicators such as low birth weight and pre-term births. Has data from Health been fully explored, for example where there is a medical diagnosis? Even a time lag would be better than no specific recognition of some conditions.

In relation to existing indicators, Ever6 should be used for FSM instead of the single census FSM indicator, and there should be a post-16 element to Disability Living Allowance.

The Chair commented that we need to make sure we receive the highest amount of money which would mean agreeing the above answers to the consultation.

Mrs S Hewitt commented that she cannot see how this consultation is going to change anything as there will be winners and losers across the country. The Chair commented in Thurrock we need to vote to make sure we get the most money for our area.

Mr M Taylor commented that there are local decisions within LAs which will impact on the situation. The feedback they have received from central government shows that they are being listened to and seem to understand the need for a larger level of funding.

Mr D May advised that we are now for EHCPs up to the age of 25 but there is no funding factor for Post 16.

The Chair commented there are more and more children in the area of Post 16 and cannot understand why they have not included this in the consultation.

The Chair asked how we now compare to other LAs. Mr D May commented that they have had no correspondence this year to try and compare. The funding gap nationally seem to be reflective of Thurrock. Mr D May commented that the DfE have assurances that Thurrock LA understand what they are doing. We need a long term solution.

Mr M Taylor spoke about Post 16. Some authorities moved to cease all their plans Post 16. Thurrock have continued with the plans for Post 16 and post 19. He advised that they are aware that families move into the area because of the services offered which in turn increases the impact on the High Needs budget. SEMH are now coming through the SEN services from mainstream schools and has had significant funding implications and has increased the pressure in the LA.

The Chair advised that the LA have to respond to this consultation. The school forum members represent all schools in Thurrock.

AGREED

- a) All Forum members discussed and offered comment on the report and the consultation
- b) All Forum members agreed the responses to the consultation outlined in Section 6 of the report.

6. Permanent Exclusions 2021-22

Mrs M Lucas spoke about the proposed funding arrangements for permanent exclusions outlined in the report sent to all forum members.

The report provides an update relating to the contribution to the education of permanently excluded children which was agreed by Schools Forum in March 2019. She commented that they wish to continue on the principal that funding follows the child or young person.

Mrs M Lucas advised that during the pandemic they have seen a reduction in the number of permanent exclusions as outlined in table 1 of the report.

Mrs M Lucas commented that currently Thurrock introduced a charge from September 2019 of £3,500 for Primary and £4,800 for secondary as well as the pupil base funding and pupil premium on a pro-rated basis depending on the term in which the child was permanently excluded. This was agreed by the schools forum in March 2019. We recognise that a small number of our schools were not represented at the schools forum when this decision was made. To address this we have reviewed the membership of schools forum and the new membership includes representation from all early year, schools and colleges across Thurrock.

Mrs M Lucas proposes that for excluded pupils, the charges will be as per the Schools and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations. This means that when a pupil is permanently excluded, the authority will re-determine the excluding school's budget share. The excluding school's budget share will be reduced by the minimum per pupil rate at individual school level calculated using the post MFG budget, as shown in appendix 2, and any pupil premium attributable to the child. This will be pro-rated based on the weeks remaining in the funding period.

Because of the lower level of permanent exclusions this has offered some support to the High Needs Block, but the continued pressure on the high needs expenditure remains unsustainable.

Mrs M Lucas commented that this will remain under constant review.

Mr K Sadler thanked Mrs M Lucas for her report and advised that this was immensely sensible.

AGREED

- a) All forum members agreed changes to the mechanism to calculate exclusion charges/allocations for all mainstream schools and use this mechanism to form an agreement with all academies
- b) Majority of forum members accepts the following changes to be applied from September 2021 for the changing/allocation mechanism for permanent school exclusions: One member abstained.

7. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Management Plan 2021/22

Mr D May talked through a presentation he shared on Teams to all forum members present.

Mr D May advised that The DSG conditions of grant 2020/21 requires that any LA with an overall deficit on its DSG account at the end of the 2019/20 financial year, or whose DSG surplus has substantially reduced during the year, must be able to present a plan to the Department for Education (DfE) for managing their future DSG spend. The ESFA released a DSG management plan to support the LA's.

He advised that the DSG Management plan would assist in the follow:

- compliance with the DSG: conditions of grant 2020/21
- monitor how DSG funding is being spent
- compare data on high needs spend between LAs
- highlight areas where LAs may wish to review spending
- form evidence-based and strategic future plans for the provision of children and young people with SEND
- present complex funding information simply to schools forums and other external stakeholders
- provide a consistent reporting format to help LAs share best practice and initiatives

Mr D May advised that the key area was the £2m overspend in the High Needs Block. There is a projected deficit of around £3m at year end.

There was an identified risk of £1.9m when setting the HNB budget for 2021/22.

There are 5 key areas that have been identified:

- **EHCPs** - Thurrock continues to experience significant demand for EHCP's that in comparison with all benchmarking data is higher. Thurrock needs to understand why demand is greater than statistical neighbours. Mr D May advised that a report has been commissioned to be reported back to School Forum meeting in June-21. Mr D May broke down the number of EHCPs by placement type, age group, and primary need.
- **Out of Borough Placements** – There are currently 53 places commissioned at a cost of over £3m. The long term solution is to develop a local offer. Mr D May advised that they would share information at the next meeting to develop understanding of number, cost of placement and reason why out of borough.
- **Funding Formula** – There is a national problem with insufficient funds. Mr D May advised they are awaiting outcome of House of Commons Review of SEN to inform future consultation outcome to be implemented 2023/24
- **Training and Development** – Training and Development continues with the SEND Team and school SENCO's to support the person centred planning approach.
- **Data** – Need to consider how Thurrock looks at future projections to inform local provision both in the short and medium term. Latest data and projection to be brought to the next meeting in June 2021.

Mr D May commented that the next steps were:

- to finalise Outturn position from 2020/21
- to present at the next School Forum meeting:
 - ❖ EHCP Commissioned deep dive report
 - ❖ Discuss number, cost and reason why Out of Borough placements are made
 - ❖ Discuss future demand projections and implications for both short, medium and long term planning and the local offer

The Chair asked if there were any questions. The Chair also asked Mr D May to include the Vice Chair in the invite to the EFSA meeting in the summer. The Chair commented that it might be useful to send this presentation to all Head teachers. Mr D May advised he will share this presentation at the next Head teachers briefing.

Mr E Caines spoke about children with very complex needs being placed in a mainstream school. He wants to know why there are some children at special schools which he feels would benefit from being in mainstream and why children with more complex needs are in mainstream schools. Ms A Winstone commented on a particular child with severe needs who was placed in a mainstream school starting in September 2021. She advised that the parent wanted a main stream school and this is the parent's decision. Mr M Taylor commented that it is the parents' right to choose mainstream schools and these parents have to be supported by the Local Authority. He also commented that it is the LAs duty to discuss with the main steam school how they can support the child's needs in the school. The Chair commented the case study needs to be taken outside this meeting. Mrs S Hewitt commented that she supports families that would prefer them in a mainstream school as this helps them immensely with social interactions and feels that some children who have complex needs also have higher attainment.

Mr M Taylor commented that he would want to make sure we recognise in the meeting, the excellent support that Mr E Caines has offered for children with complex needs with a very inclusive offer in his school.

Mr J Brewer commented that the admissions criteria for special schools is very strict and has a large input from the SENCOs. Some students may be able to go back and access the curriculum in a mainstream school but at the moment this is not the case in his school.

AGREED

- a) All forum members noted the contents of the report.

8. Pupil Plan Planning View

Miss S Williams talked through a presentation she shared on Teams giving an overview of the Pupil Place Plan.

The Chair thanked her for the presentation and asked if there were any questions.

All members were happy with the content of the presentation.

AGREED

- a) All forum members noted the contents of the report.

9. Outcome for disadvantaged and unrepresented student and young people in Thurrock

Ms M Lucas advised that as discussed previously in schools forum a small sub group was formed to review current datasets around educational outcomes for disadvantaged children/young people. The working party identified some of the key metrics pertaining to this and have begun to draw this together. In conjunction with this, the LA are refreshing our Brighter Futures Strategy which is overseen by our Brighter Futures Children's Partnership. The work of the small sub group of schools forum will support this refresh. The sub group are keen to ensure we consider outcomes and how schools forum can start to consider how funding for these groups is allocated going forward. The aim is to bring this work back to schools forum in June for a more in-depth discussion and to look to identify ways in which this work can be moved forward.

Dr S Asong went through what they have covered in their meetings.

They went through **Chapter 1 of the Brighter Futures Position Paper** and agreed with the thrust and spirit of the paper. The following 5 areas will make the work more long lasting and resilient to funding/political threats:

- a. Adding Schools Forum (which is statutory) to the key partner list. Also adding SELEP on the partnership list (source of funding). This will mean that there is a reliable locus of funding and accountability underpinning the work.
- b. In the section where it cite key reference documents, add reference to the NAO Disparity Audit 2019 (it came out in 2020).
- c. In the Rationale section, list explicitly who your client list is so that the scope is not fluid (Travellers, Young Carers, YOS, Exclusions, White Working Class Boys, Teen Mums, BAME, Young People Leaving Care, LAC, Obesity and Young People Struggling with metal Health Issues). Do we want to add SEND? I think they are doing quite alright at the moment and do not need to be championed in quite the same way.
- d. Need to state clearly in the paper that accountability for reviewing and acting on the disparity of outcome data sits in the Schools Forum as per the decision of last week's Forum meeting.
- e. Glad that the first set of data will be looked at in the Forum's June meeting. This will give us a steer as to the scope of our work.

Dr S Asong also advised that they talked about the upcoming SEND meeting and the need for schools to support Grangewaters. She will be liaising with colleagues to move these on.

Action: Miss S Williams to add Outcome for disadvantaged and unrepresented student and young people in Thurrock to the forward plan for the June meeting

AGREED

- a) All forum members noted the contents of the report.

10. School's Forum Forward Plan

All forum members were happy with the School's Forum forward plan. Miss S Williams advised that the next meeting will be held on Teams.

Action: SW to find out about future meetings and where they will be held

11. Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 19th January 2021

All governors were happy with the content.

Mrs N Haslam commented that she had attended the last meeting but was not listed as an attendee.

Action: Clerk to add Mrs N Haslam to the list of attendees

12. Matters Arising

Actions outstanding

Ms A Winstone will send around the figures for the number of EHCPs at each schools.

Mrs M Lucas (Jan-21) to get a breakdown on figures within the traveller community and discuss this further as part of the sub-committee for Outcomes for disadvantaged and unrepresented student and young people in Thurrock

13. Any Other Business

Miss S Williams advised that a decision is awaiting from the DfE on approval to extend virtual meetings. She asked how members feel about virtual meetings and the timeslot.

The Chair commented that virtual meetings save money. Mrs J Sawtell-Haines advised she does not like the virtual meetings as it is hard to have discussions. She feels that in depth discussions are easier to have face to face.

Miss S Williams advised that in the Microsoft Teams chat most school forum members were happy with virtual meetings and a 10am start but a suggestion was made to have a mix of both. The Chair commented safety first and COVID complaint.

Action: SW to add to June agenda an item to discuss future meetings

14. Date of next meeting

Date of next meeting is 17th June 2021