



## Schools Forum

**Thursday 16 November 2023 at 6.00 pm**

This will be undertaken as an online virtual meeting.

The press and public are welcome to attend this online virtual meeting with the link to attend and view the meeting available [HERE](#)

### Membership

### Representing

#### **SCHOOL MEMBERS**

##### **Nursery**

Nisha Lingam  
Angela Turner

Head  
Governor

##### **Primary**

Vacancy  
Michelle Ginty  
Melissa Loosemoore  
Raphael Moss  
Vacancy  
Michael Odumosu  
Geraldine Chadwick(Vice Chair)  
Ernest Toquie  
Cassie Lloyd Perrin

Head  
Head  
Head  
Head  
Governor  
Governor  
Governor  
Governor  
Governor

##### **Secondary**

Vacancy

Head (Maintained)

##### **Special Education Needs**

Nick Cooper

Head

##### **Pupil Referral Unit**

Ranjna Shiyani

Head

#### **ACADEMY MEMBERS**

##### **Primary**

Vacancy  
Jo Jhally

Head  
Governor

### **Secondary**

Andy Prindiville	Head
Jude Enright	Head
Gerard McKenna	Head
Vacancy	Governor
Martin Beard	Governor
Mike Heiser (Chair)	Governor

### **Special Education Needs**

Jayne Jardine	Head
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### **NON –SCHOOL MEMBERS**

#### **Early Years PVI**

Paul Russell  
Wioletta Bura

#### **Trade Union**

John Roche/Jennifer Cooper

#### **16-19 Provider Representative**

Vacancy

**For further information contact:** Natalie Connor, Governance Officer  
Email: natalie.connor@brent.gov.uk; Tel: 020 8937 1506

For electronic copies of minutes and agendas please visit:  
[Council meetings and decision making | Brent Council](#)

### **Notes for Members - Declarations of Interest:**

If a Member is aware they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest\* in an item of business, they must declare its existence and nature at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent and must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item.

If a Member is aware they have a Personal Interest\*\* in an item of business, they must declare its existence and nature at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent.

If the Personal Interest is also significant enough to affect your judgement of a public interest and either it affects a financial position or relates to a regulatory matter then after disclosing the interest to the meeting the Member must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item, except that they may first make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to the matter, provided that the public are allowed to attend the meeting for those purposes.

### **\*Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:**

- (a) **Employment, etc.** - Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit gain.
- (b) **Sponsorship** - Any payment or other financial benefit in respect of expenses in carrying out duties as a member, or of election; including from a trade union.
- (c) **Contracts** - Any current contract for goods, services or works, between the Councillors or their partner (or a body in which one has a beneficial interest) and the council.
- (d) **Land** - Any beneficial interest in land which is within the council's area.
- (e) **Licences**- Any licence to occupy land in the council's area for a month or longer.
- (f) **Corporate tenancies** - Any tenancy between the council and a body in which the Councillor or their partner have a beneficial interest.
- (g) **Securities** - Any beneficial interest in securities of a body which has a place of business or land in the council's area, if the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or of any one class of its issued share capital.

### **\*\*Personal Interests:**

The business relates to or affects:

- (a) Anybody of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management, and:
  - To which you are appointed by the council;
  - which exercises functions of a public nature;
  - which is directed is to charitable purposes;
  - whose principal purposes include the influence of public opinion or policy (including a political party or trade union).
- (b) The interests of a person from whom you have received gifts or hospitality of at least £50 as a member in the municipal year;

Or

A decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial position of:

- You yourself;
- a member of your family or your friend or any person with whom you have a close association or any person or body who is the subject of a registrable personal interest.

# Agenda

Introductions, if appropriate.

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<b>1 Apologies for Absence and Membership</b>	
<b>2 Declarations of Interest</b>	
<b>3 Deputations (if Any)</b>	
<b>4 Minutes of the previous meeting</b>	1 - 8
To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 20 June 2023 as a correct record.	
<b>5 Actions arising</b>	
To consider any actions arising from previous meetings.	
<b>6 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Budget Monitoring Report 2023/24</b>	9 - 16
This report provides the Schools Forum with an update on the forecast financial position for 2023/24.	
<b>7 Dedicated Schools Grant Provisional Funding Update 2024/25</b>	17 - 24
This report informs Schools Forum of the provisional DSG block funding allocations announced for 2024/25.	
<b>8 Dates of Future Meetings 2023 -24</b>	
To note the schedule of dates for future meetings during 2023/24 as follows:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tuesday 5 December 2023 (additional date if needed)</li><li>• Thursday 25 January 2024</li><li>• Tuesday 20 February 2024</li></ul>	
Unless otherwise notified all meetings to be held online starting at 6pm.	



## MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM

Held as an online virtual meeting on Tuesday 20 June 2023 at 6.00 pm

### Membership

### Representing

#### PRESENT (all in remote attendance):

#### Governors

Mike Heiser (Chair)  
Geraldine Chadwick (Vice Chair)  
Martin Beard  
Jo Jhally  
Michael Odumosu  
Ernest Toquie

#### Headteachers

Michelle Ginty  
Jayne Jardine  
Gerard McKenna  
Nick Cooper

#### Pupil Referral Unit

Ranjna Shiyani

#### Officers

Shirley Parks (Director, Safeguarding, Partnerships and Strategy)  
Sharon Buckby (Head of Inclusion & Virtual School)  
Olufunke Adediran (Head of Finance)  
Folake Olufeko (Senior Finance Analyst)  
Natalie Connor & James Kinsella (Governance Team)

#### Councillors

Councillor Grahl, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Schools.

#### 1. Apologies for Absence and Membership

Apologies for absence were received from Cassie Lloyd Perrin, Andy Prindiville, Melissa Loosemoore and Raphael Moss.

#### 2. Declarations of Interest

None.

#### 3. Deputations (if Any)

None.

#### 4. Minutes of the previous meeting

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 February 2023 as a correct record.

## 5. **Actions arising**

The Forum was advised that –

- **Action Points 84 and 85** were addressed under Item 6 of the agenda.
- **Action Point 86** was addressed under Item 8 of the agenda.
- **Action Point 87** - The Forum was advised that financial support had only be provided to schools that were in the Rapid Improvement Groups.
- **Action Point 88** was addressed under Item 9 of the agenda.

## 6. **Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Final Outturn 2022-23**

Olufunke Adediran, Head of Finance at Brent Council, introduced the report that set out the final Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) outturn against the budget set for 2022/23 and provided detail on the in-year 2022/23 surplus of £1.3m.

The Forum noted the following key points as part of the update provided:

- The DSG outturn was in its most advantageous position since the deficit started in 2019/20 with an in-year surplus of £1.3m in 2022/23.
- The in year surplus was mainly driven by a £1m underspend against the Early Years Block due to the Department of Education's (DfE) in-year adjustment and a £0.3m surplus against the High Needs Block (HNB).
- The cumulative DSG deficit carried forward from 2021/22 was £15.1m. This had reduced to £13.8m at the end of 22/23, however the Forum was advised that a risk remained that the EY Block surplus could be clawed back by the DfE in 23/24, dependant on the final allocations based on the January 2023 census data.
- The High Needs Block (HNB) forecast reported at Schools Forum in February 2023 had assumed an overspend position of £2.8m which was a prudent position based on trends as final pupil numbers were still outstanding. However, the actual outturn position reflected an improved position of a £0.3m surplus.
- The Forum's attention was drawn to Section 6.3, Table 2 of the report that detailed the variances against the HNB budget for 2022/23 and highlighted the areas of significance that had supported the improved budget position, this included £1.2m of recoupment income from other local authorities that had placed children in Brent schools.
- The successful bid for £1m of funding from the DfE programme – Delivering Better Value (DBV) in SEND was confirmed to be received over the next two financial years 23/34 and 24/25. The Forum was advised that the funding could not be used to address the historic deficit but was ringfenced for the delivery of the agreed SEND support strategies agreed as part of the programme which would over time support improved efficiencies and reduce costs in the long term.
- The final outturn for the Central Block indicated an underspend of £0.2m, that was mainly attributed to the reduced reliance on temporary school staff.
- The Forum's attention was drawn to Section 10, Table 3 that summarised School's balances over the past 3 years and highlighted that overall school balances had reduced by £1.9m with 19 maintained schools increasing their

reserves balances and 37 maintained schools showing a decrease in their balance.

- The decrease in balances was partly due to the impact of falling rolls, where some Primary schools had seen reduced funding.
- It was expected that the funding and expenditure pressures within Brent schools would continue in to 23/24, with the requirement that many schools would need to take further actions to balance their budgets.
- The Forum was reminded that the statutory override for the DSG budget had been extended by the DfE until 2025/26, there remained a risk that any deficit left after this period would need to be funded by the Council.

The Forum was then updated on the following Action points from previous meetings:

**Action Point 84:**

The Forum was advised in relation to the previous request to receive further information on the tracking of savings made through schools being able to draw down funds from the Local Authority's redundancy reserves, that in the last academic year three schools had made in year support requests for funding. Two of these requests were not approved as the school had surplus reserve balances. One school accessed the funding, this had resulted in a £133k saving for the school.

**Action Point 85:**

In relation to the previous request to receive further data on the distribution of additional funding awarded by the Early Years Panel, the Forum was advised that 70 settings were supported in the 22/23 academic year. 23 of these were School Nurseries and 47 of these were PVI's.

In concluding the discussion, the Chair asked the Forum if they had any questions or comments on the report with the following points discussed:

- The Forum thanked officers for responding to the previously identified Action points, however queried if there was a list of the schools that had received the Early Years additional support funding and whether the criteria that was used by the Early Years Panel in making their decision to award funding had been published. In response the Forum was advised that the Panel Decision making criteria would be circulated to Forum members as an action point.
- The Forum was advised that their contributions would be welcomed in the development of the revised Early Years Panel funding criteria, that was due for review over the next year.
- Clarification was provided that officers acknowledged the importance of ensuring that data was kept up to date for the Brent children placed in other Local Authorities' and the out of borough children placed in Brent schools so that budgets accurately reflected the expected income and expenditure to limit inaccuracies on budget forecasts.

The Chair thanked members and officers for their contributions to the discussion on the report and the Forum **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report and the following Action Point to be taken forward:

**Action Point 89:**

Details of the Early Years Panel funding decision making criteria to be shared with Forum members.

## 7. **Update on implementing the direct National Funding Formula (NFF)**

Olufunke Adediran, Head of Finance introduced the report which updated the Forum on the government consultation response on implementing the direct National Funding Formula (NFF) which was published in April 2023.

The Forum noted the following key points as part of the update provided:

- The Forum's attention was drawn to Section 4.1 of the report that outlined the changes that were likely to impact Brent schools. These included the Government allowing continued flexibility for Local Authority's to transfer funding to high needs budgets with an adjustment to mainstream schools' funding allocations, the introduction of a national approach to the calculation of individual schools indicative SEND budgets and the requirement for Local Authorities to use a standardised criteria in relation to changes in falling rolls and growth fund calculations.
- As previously discussed at Schools Forum the Government had confirmed plans to allocate split site funding nationally based on a formula factor made up of a "basic eligibility" element and 'distance' element from 2024/25.
- The Forum was advised that split site funding would be set at a maximum of 60% of the 2024/25 NFF. The maximum funding would impact all four Brent schools that were currently in receipt of split site funding as detailed in 4.1.5 Table 1 of the report.
- It was confirmed that any schools set to lose funding because of the policy changes through the transition to a direct NFF would see their funding protected through the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) for a limited time until the direct NFF was fully in place. This would continue to be closely monitored by officers to ensure schools financial preparedness for when the MFG ceased.

The Chair thanked officers for their report and asked the Forum if they had any questions in relation to the information provided. The Forum had one question in relation to when schools affected by the changes to split site funding would be able to meet with officers to discuss the wider implications of the reduced funding once the MFG period had ceased. Officers confirmed they had written to all schools affected and were happy to arrange a more detailed discussion with affected schools before the end of the Summer term.

As there was no further discussion on the item the Forum **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report and the implications of the proposed changes to the NFF from the 2024/25 financial year.

## 8. **Delivering Better Value in SEND Programme Update 27-32**

Sharon Buckby, Head of Inclusion and Brent Virtual Schools introduced the report from the Corporate Director of Children and Young People to update the Schools Forum on the Delivering Better Value (DBV) in SEND programme. The following key points were highlighted:



- The Forum was reminded of the background of the DBV Programme whereby Brent was among a number of other local authorities invited by the DfE to take part in the programme with the objective to identify local and national opportunities to improve the outcomes of children and young people with SEND.
- Brent had successfully submitted a bid for £1m of grant funding to support the reform of high needs systems in Brent with the aim of improving the delivery of SEND services for children and young people whilst achieving efficiencies going forward.
- The Forum was advised that the funding could not be used to support the deficit, however through improved efficiencies over time, it would support the return to an in year balanced budget through associated cost savings.
- The DBV programme had identified that a significant cohort of children could make good progress with targeted support without the need for an Education, Health Care Plan (EHCP). It was felt that with earlier identification of targeted support when children started mainstream school, less support would be needed over time.
- Where EHCP's were necessary, it was felt that more could be time limited, with children receiving targeted support and remaining in mainstream provision where appropriate.
- In response to the themes the DBV programme had identified, the grant in Brent would be spent on establishing an Inclusion Assurance Team for a year to review provision and provide guidance on improving outcomes through time limited plans and the closure of plans on the achievement of outcomes and the use of a provision based model instead of hours based support.
- The grant would also be used to support the engagement with an SEN commissioner and analyst to ensure effective use of resources across the system, including a review of the current EHCP banding system and the development of a test and learn intervention first model to improve early intervention for 0-7 year olds to improve their ability to thrive in mainstream schools without the need for an EHCP.
- The Forum's attention was drawn to the findings from the 1st Tranche of 20 LAs of which Brent was a part, as detailed in Section 6.1- 6.3 of the report. This had shown that the single highest impact objective to pursue in order to provide improved support for children and young people and reduce the demand for EHCP's or a special school placement, was increasing the ability of local systems to support children in a mainstream setting.

The Chair thanked Sharon Buckby for the update provided and invited The Forum to ask questions in relation to the information reported on the Delivering Better Value (DBV) in SEND programme, with the following queries raised by the Forum:

- The Forum felt it was a positive step to increase early intervention with targeted support to improve outcomes for children, however required further clarity on what "targeted support" looked like in practice. Officers advised that targeted support would respond to children's specific needs through a series of intervention programmes both offsite and in specifically identified school settings. This support may also include wrap around support from the Educational Psychology service, Speech and Language and Child Development specialists.
- The Forum queried how the funding methodology would work if it changed to basing costs on provision rather than allocated in hours. Officers advised that this was still in the early stages of development and would need to be thoroughly

consulted on with parents, schools, and health to ensure the best model of support was achieved. A working group would be convened to look at the evidence where this was model was already working well in practice in other parts of the country.

- In response to a query regarding additional support for secondary schools training costs, it was clarified that the DBV targeted group work was initially focused on the under 7's age group, however it remained a priority to explore how the 500k of funding for secondary school training could be used to support SEN support work to ensure that all children and young people in Brent were effectively supported.
- The Forum was advised that an update on the delivery of the DBV programme would be brought to the Schools Forum in January 2024.

As there were no further queries, the Forum **RESOLVED** to note the outcomes of the DBV Programme and the next steps in delivery of the programme.

**Action Point 90:**

Schools Forum to receive an update on the delivery of the DBV Programme in January 2024.

9. **Update on London Mayor's Free School Meals pledge for pupils in Key Stage 2 in 2023/24**

Shirley Parks, Operational Director, Safeguarding, Partnerships and Strategy introduced the report that provided an update on the Mayor's Free School Meals (FSM) pledge for primary aged children in Key Stage 2 for the academic year 2023/24. The following key points were highlighted:

- Brent's indicative grant allocation was £5m, based on an assumed 90% uptake for the number of children who were not eligible for the current Government's FSM grant. The indicative figure was based on October 2022 census and would be finalised once the May 2023 school census figures were published.
- Payments would be at a rate of £2.65 per meal. This was above the Government rate of £2.41 because it included funding to cover the administration and staffing costs associated with the delivery of the programme.
- Payments would be made to schools termly in advance to allow for upfront costs to be covered - 50% of the funding was due to be paid in July 2023, with a further 20% in December and a further 20% in March 2024. A balance of 10% would be held back for the final payment and adjusted accordingly based on October 2023 and January 2024 census data.
- A balancing payment or claw back determined by the difference would be made before the end of the summer term 2024.
- The Forum's attention was drawn to the grant conditions as laid out in section 4.0 of the accompanying report that highlighted how the funding should be used to deliver the programme.
- It was noted that in order to provide culturally appropriate options, some schools may need to request the difference in funding from parents/carers to cover the costs. The Forum was advised that this may be the case in schools with large Jewish or Islamic communities due to the increased cost of sourcing Kosher and Halal food.

- The Forum was cognizant of the additional complexities for schools in delivering the scheme successfully, given the attention required on staffing and infrastructure as well as the potentially negative impact the scheme could have on eligible families applying for Pupil Premium funding.
- The Forum noted the amendment to the policy whereby schools that were unable to provide additional hot meals to pupils could choose to provide a cold lunch service. If it was not feasible to provide either option, schools could seek agreement from the Mayor of London's office under exceptional circumstances to provide vouchers.

The Chair thanked Shirley Parks for the update provided and invited Forum members to ask any questions they had in relation to the information heard. The following points were discussed:

- The Forum required clarity on whether special schools would receive the additional funding. Officers advised that they would seek confirmation from the Mayor's Office and special schools would be contracted to confirm the arrangements.
- The Forum questioned whether any of the funding provided could be used for capital infrastructure changes to support the delivery of the programme in schools. In response officers advised that as stated in section 3.3 of the report the increased rate of funding at £2.65 per meal was considered adequate to cover the costs associated with delivering the programme, however, could not be used for capital infrastructure changes.

As there were no further questions the Forum **RESOLVED** to note the report and the following action points to take forward.

**Action Point 91:**

Clarification to be provided to special schools to advise whether they were eligible to receive the funding to support the delivery of the Mayor's Free School Meals scheme.

**Action Point 92:**

Schools Forum to receive an update on the delivery of the Mayor's Free School Meal scheme at the Schools Forum in January 2024.

10. **Any Other Urgent Business**

None.


11. **Dates of Future Meetings**

The Committee agreed to note the schedule of dates for future meetings during 2023/24 as follows:

- Thursday 12 October 2023 (NB: Subsequently changed to Thursday 16 November 23)
- Tuesday 5 December 2023 (additional date if needed)
- Thursday 25 January 2024
- Tuesday 20 February 2024

The meeting closed at 7:12 pm

M Heiser  
Chair

	<p align="center"><b>Schools Forum</b> 16 November 2023</p>
	<p align="center"><b>Report from the Corporate Director of Children and Young People</b></p>
<p><b>DSG Budget Monitoring Report 2023/24</b></p>	
<p><b>Wards Affected:</b></p>	All
<p><b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b></p>	N/A
<p><b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small></p>	N/A
<p><b>No. of Appendices:</b></p>	One - Appendix 1 – DSG Budget Monitoring Report
<p><b>Background Papers:</b></p>	None
<p><b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small></p>	<p>Olufunke Adediran Head of Finance – CYP 0208 937 1196 Email: <a href="mailto:Olufunke.adediran@brent.gov.uk">Olufunke.adediran@brent.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Folake Olufeko Senior Finance Analyst – CYP 0208 937 2491 Email: <a href="mailto:Folake.Olufeko@brent.gov.uk">Folake.Olufeko@brent.gov.uk</a></p>

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report provides Schools Forum with an update on the forecast financial position for 2023/24. The position is reported against the budget set in consultation with Schools Forum and submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) on the Section 251 budget return. For information, the budget is analysed by funding blocks in Appendix 1 of this report.

## 2. Recommendation

- 2.1. Schools Forum is asked to note the contents of this report.

## 3. Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities and Strategic Context

- 3.1 This report is linked to the Council's Borough Plan which aims to support babies, children and young people get the best start in life, by working in partnership with schools and other partners to make sure access to education is fair and equal. This report provides updates to Schools Forum is kept abreast of the Dedicated Schools Grant funding, the main source of school funding.

#### 4. Summary

- 4.1. The cumulative deficit at the end of the financial year 2022/23 was £13.8m. The increased demand for High Needs provision is forecast to lead to the overall DSG expenditure exceeding income by £0.8m in 2023/24, resulting in a forecast cumulative deficit of £14.6m by the end of this financial year. This is mainly due to the increasing number of children and young people with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).
- 4.2. The detailed financial monitor of the 'DSG Schools Budget' is presented in Appendix 1. The 'Actual to P6' column represents spend to date as of the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2023, and the forecasts provided are those prepared during October 2023.

#### 5. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

Table 1 - Funding Blocks	Overall DSG Funding 2023/24	Forecast Expenditure	Overspend/ (Underspend)
	£m	£m	£m
Schools Block	119.5	119.5	0
High Needs Block	74.7	75.5	0.8
Early Years Block	24.4	24.4	0
Central Block	2.1	2.1	0
<b>Total DSG</b>	<b>220.7</b>	<b>221.5</b>	<b>0.8</b>

- 5.1. The DSG forecast is reflecting a deficit of £0.8m, against grant funds of £220.7m for 2023/24, mainly due to pressures from the High Needs (HN) Block.
- 5.2. The overall DSG allocation has decreased by £0.2m, from the position approved by Schools Forum, due to an in-year adjustment by the Department for Education (DfE) in July 2023. The adjustment relates to an increase in the HN Block funding for Brent children attending schools in other local authorities and a decrease in the Early Years Block following the completion of the January 2023 census which saw a reduction in hours of childcare provision compared to the January 2022 census data.

#### 6. Schools Block

- 6.1. Of the total £261.7m Schools Block budget allocated by the DfE to Brent, £139.0m has been recouped and allocated directly to academies. £1.3m has been transferred to the HNB and £1.9m has been deducted for National Non-

Domestic Business Rates to be paid by the DfE directly to the billing authority, leaving £119.5m directly allocated to Brent maintained schools and to fund centrally retained items including the growth fund.

6.2. The Schools Block is currently forecast to breakeven.

## 7. High Needs Block

7.1. The HN budget, excluding the proportion allocated to academies, is £74.7m. This allocation includes a £1.3m transfer from the Schools Block.

7.2. Place funding of £8.8m (£8.6m in January 2023) for Academies has been recouped from the Block and allocated to Special Academy providers. There was a £0.3m in year adjustment by the DfE in July 2023 to increase the HN funding for Brent children attending schools in other local authorities.

7.3. Although the HN Block allocation increased by £6.9m in 2023/24, as in previous years, the number of children with EHCPs has continued to rise. As a result of this growing demand, there is continued pressure on the HN Block. Growth in EHCPs is a national and London trend with the number of children assessed as meeting the threshold for support continuing to increase. However, the HN funding has not increased in line with the growth in demand creating financial pressures. Between January 2023 and September 2023, there was a 5% increase in children and young people with an EHCP, with the number increasing from 3223 to 3390 over this period and this represents a 12% increase when compared to September 2022.

<b>Table 2 - DSG High Needs Block</b>	<b>2022/23 Outturn</b>	<b>2023/24 Budget</b>	<b>2023/24 Forecast</b>	<b>2023/24 Variance</b>
	<b>(£m)</b>	<b>(£m)</b>	<b>(£m)</b>	<b>(£m)</b>
Place funding in Brent Special Schools and ARPS	2.3	2.3	2.4	0.1
Top ups to mainstream settings in Brent	9.7	9.5	9.5	0.0
Top up funding in Brent Special Schools and ARPs	27.5	30.9	32.4	1.5
Recoupment Income	(3.6)	(2.4)	(3.3)	(0.9)
Residential and Independent settings	9.7	10.4	10.3	(0.1)
Out of Borough Top ups	7.5	8.9	8.2	(0.7)
Post 16 Top ups	3.8	4.3	5.4	1.1
Targeted Funding	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Early Years Inclusion Fund	1.0	1.1	1.1	0.0

SEN Support Services including Education Otherwise / Awaiting Placement	9.3	9.2	9.2	0.0
SEN Support	0.1	0.5	0.4	(0.1)
<b>Total Expenditure: High Needs Block</b>	<b>67.5</b>	<b>74.7</b>	<b>75.5</b>	<b>0.8</b>

- 7.4. The £0.8m deficit against the HN Block is mainly due to an increase in the expected costs of in-borough academies and special schools' top up funding, as well as the projected costs of post-16 provisions.
- 7.5. The forecast also includes another positive adjustment of £0.150m following confirmation of the import/export adjustment by the DfE in September 2023. This is the net impact of Brent children attending educational settings outside the borough and children from other local authorities attending Brent schools.
- 7.6. The forecast position is further detailed below:
- i. £1.5m forecast pressures against in-borough special schools' (including Academies) top up funding due to the increased number of pupils with special educational needs placed within the borough. This pressure is offset by a forecast decrease in spend of (£0.1m) against the cost of children placed in independent residential special schools and (£0.9m) additional income to be recouped from other local authorities that have children placed in Brent schools.
  - ii. £1.1m pressure against the cost of Post-16 provision. It is difficult at this point in time to accurately forecast the Post-16 costs due to a delay in various settings confirming their charges to the local authority. New pupils also join in the spring term which makes it difficult to predict pupil numbers and therefore the forecast. As such, the forecast pressure of £1.1m is subject to change later in the financial year.
  - iii. The above pressures are expected to be mitigated by a forecast underspends totalling (£0.7m) against the out-of-borough mainstream and academies budget due to a reduction in the number of pupils placed in these settings, and the impact of a positive in-year adjustment by the DfE following an import/export exercise by the DfE in July 2023 to capture the net impact of children attending schools in and out of the borough. There is also a forecast (£0.1m) underspend against the SEN support budget due to slippage against the training budget for the graduated approach.



7.7. The HNB Management Plan is regularly reported to Schools Forum, which includes longer-term actions to mitigate the deficit. A task group chaired by the Corporate Director of Children and Young People coordinates and monitors actions in the Plan, which focuses on cost avoidance through managing demand, improving sufficiency of places and financial management. The updated Plan will be presented at the January Schools Forum.

## **8. Early Years Block**

8.1 95% of this Block's income is passed onto providers, and the remaining 5%, forms the central expenditure budgets for Early Years services. The 95% allocated out should be broadly in balance with the Block grant income received.

8.2 The EY Block allocation reduced by £69k following the completion of the January 2023 census. The census has shown a reduction in take-up of the 3- and 4-year-old entitlement and an increase in take-up 2-year-old entitlements. There has also been a clawback of £22k from the initial supplementary funding allocation for maintained nursery schools. The local authority is not proposing to recover this from its Maintained Nurseries for this financial year.

8.3 At this stage, the forecast is for the Early Years Block income to break even. However, this position is likely to change over the next two quarters, as children move on from early years' settings and new take-up hours are confirmed from September 2023.

## **9 Central Block**

9.1 The Central Block of the DSG (£2.1m) funds central services for schools. This includes a set contribution towards pension strain costs for former school employees of £0.3m, which is a long-term annual commitment.

9.2 The Central Block is currently forecast to break even.

## **10 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement**

10.1 Cabinet Members are kept abreast of the DSG forecast deficit position as part of the quarterly finance reports submitted to Cabinet.

## **11 Financial Considerations**

11.1 The financial considerations are mentioned in the body of the report. However, there remains a risk that the number of children and young people with

Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) will continue to grow but the HN Block funding will not increase in line with continued growth. Over the years, this has created financial pressures with a majority of authorities holding deficit balances. In addition, the impact of the cost-of-living crisis could see providers requesting high inflationary price increases.

- 11.2 The government has announced that the regulations that are in place to carry forward a deficit balance against the DSG are due to end in 2025/26 and this poses a significant risk for the council as the expectation is that local authority's General Fund balances which are also under pressure, should cover any accumulated deficit at the end of that period.

## **12 Legal Considerations**

- 12.1 There are no legal implications for this report.

## **13 Equality Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations**

- 13.1 Not applicable.

## **14 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations**

- 14.1 Not applicable.

## **15 Communication Considerations**

- 15.1 All School Forum papers are published, and all schools will have access to them. Also, final 2024/25 allocations for each school will be published on Best Brent.

**Report sign off:**


***Nigel Chapman***

Corporate Director of Children and Young People

**Appendix 1 - DSG P6 Budget Monitor 2023-24**

			2023-24	2023-24	2023-24	2023-24
			Budget	YTD	Forecast	Outturn
			Approved Jan 2023	Actuals	as at Oct 2023	Variance
			A	B	C	D=(C-A)
			£	£	£	£
<b>Schools Block</b>						
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Individual Schools Budget</b>					
		Primary Schools	101,854,203	51,213,565	101,854,203	
		Secondary Schools	13,044,551	6,505,149	13,044,551	
<b>Total</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Individual Schools Budget</b>	<b>114,898,754</b>	<b>57,718,714</b>	<b>114,898,754</b>	
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>De-delegated Items - Schools</b>					
		Assessment of FSM eligibility	25,000	25,000	25,000	
		Contingencies	484,400	131,448	484,400	
		Maternity, Paternity and Facilities	280,000	30,610	280,000	
		Licences/Subscriptions [SB]	5,500	5,972	5,500	
<b>Total</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>De-delegated Items - Schools</b>	<b>794,900</b>	<b>193,030</b>	<b>794,900</b>	
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>De-delegated Items - Central Provision</b>					
		Contribution to combined budgets [SB]	610,000	610,000	610,000	
		Pupil Growth/Out of School places	3,196,597	931,579	3,196,597	
<b>Total</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>De-delegated Items - Central Provision</b>	<b>3,806,597</b>	<b>1,541,579</b>	<b>3,806,597</b>	
<b>Income</b>	<b>Dedicated Schools Grant - Schools Block</b>					
		Schools Block	(120,799,557)	(62,815,769)	(120,799,557)	
		0.5% transfer Schools Block to High Needs Block	1,299,306	1,299,306	1,299,306	
<b>Total</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Dedicated Schools Grant - Schools Block</b>	<b>(119,500,251)</b>	<b>(61,516,463)</b>	<b>(119,500,251)</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>Net</b>	<b>Schools Block</b>		<b>(2,063,140)</b>		
<b>High Needs Block</b>						
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Place funding</b>					
		IB Place Funding [Finance]	2,347,500	1,227,708	2,401,073	53,573
<b>Total</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Place funding</b>	<b>2,347,500</b>	<b>1,227,708</b>	<b>2,401,073</b>	<b>53,573</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Top-up and Targeted Funding</b>					
		IB Mainstream Top-ups [Finance]	9,527,503	4,664,263	9,472,880	(54,623)
		IB Mainstream Top-ups [Inclusion]	29,001,310	16,041,378	30,553,152	1,551,843
		IB PRUs and Special Schools: Supplementary Grant	1,850,960	1,664,050	1,850,960	
		Independent Day Special	9,331,000	6,395,562	9,189,025	(141,975)
		Independent Residential Special	1,043,000	151,882	1,070,718	27,718
		OB ARPs	229,000	(203,089)	229,000	
		OB Mainstream	2,994,999	(555,968)	3,012,372	17,373
		OB Recoupment Income	(2,400,000)	383,345	(3,323,021)	(923,021)
		OB Special	5,724,000	1,356,675	4,999,034	(724,966)
		Post 16	4,250,000	2,500,864	5,363,586	1,113,586
<b>Total</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Top-up and Targeted Funding</b>	<b>61,551,772</b>	<b>32,398,962</b>	<b>62,417,707</b>	<b>865,935</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>SEN Support Services</b>					
		Early Years Inclusion Fund	1,089,160	483,545	1,089,160	
		Education Otherwise / Awaiting Placement	1,000,000	1,124,811	2,173,885	1,173,885
		SEN Services	7,045,714	2,775,469	5,960,272	(1,085,442)
		SEN SUPPORT	500,000	52,168	407,787	(92,213)
		SEN Transport	139,000	(19,603)	187,049	48,049
		Support for Inclusion	1,000,480	278,898	895,294	(105,186)
<b>Total</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>SEN Support Services</b>	<b>10,774,354</b>	<b>4,695,288</b>	<b>10,713,446</b>	<b>(60,908)</b>
<b>Income</b>	<b>Dedicated Schools Grant - High Needs Block</b>					
		High Needs Block	(73,374,320)	(38,154,645)	(73,374,320)	
		0.5% transfer Schools Block to High Needs Block	(1,299,306)	(1,299,306)	(1,299,306)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Dedicated Schools Grant - High Needs Block</b>	<b>(74,673,626)</b>	<b>(39,453,951)</b>	<b>(74,673,626)</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>Net</b>	<b>High Needs Block</b>		<b>(1,131,994)</b>	<b>858,601</b>	<b>858,601</b>
<b>Early Years Block</b>						
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Early Years Entitlement</b>					
		2 Year old Nursery Education	3,485,606	2,096,296	3,485,606	
		3 and 4 Year old Nursery Education	18,346,224	10,260,972	18,346,224	
		Early Years Central Expenditure	1,184,202	398,696	1,162,057	(22,145)
		Early Years Panel Funding	558,235	558,235	558,235	

			2023-24	2023-24	2023-24	2023-24
			Budget	YTD	Forecast	Outturn
			Approved Jan 2023	Actuals	as at Oct 2023	Variance
			A	B	C	D=(C-A)
			£	£	£	£
		Early Years Pupil Premium	99,659	36,548	99,659	
<b>Total</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Early Years Entitlement</b>	<b>23,673,926</b>	<b>13,350,747</b>	<b>23,651,781</b>	<b>(22,145)</b>
	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Supplementary Funding</b>				
		Maintained Nursery Schools	755,866	464,873	778,011	22,145
<b>Total</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Supplementary Funding</b>	<b>755,866</b>	<b>464,873</b>	<b>778,011</b>	<b>22,145</b>
	<b>Income</b>	<b>Dedicated Schools Grant - Early Years Block</b>				
		Early Years Block	(24,429,792)	(12,703,491)	(24,429,792)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Dedicated Schools Grant - Early Years Block</b>	<b>(24,429,792)</b>	<b>(12,703,491)</b>	<b>(24,429,792)</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>Net</b>	<b>Early Years Block</b>		<b>1,112,130</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Central School Services Block</b>						
	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Central Provision</b>				
		Contribution to combined budgets [CSSB]	959,994	165,764	959,994	
		Termination of employment costs	329,555	264,000	329,555	
		Servicing of Schools Forum	10,000		10,000	
		Licences/Subscriptions [CSSB]	247,243	247,243	247,243	
		School Admissions	558,139	269,597	558,139	
<b>Total</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Central Provision</b>	<b>2,104,931</b>	<b>946,604</b>	<b>2,104,931</b>	
	<b>Income</b>	<b>Dedicated Schools Grant - Central School Services Block</b>				
		Central School Services Block	(2,104,931)	(1,094,567)	(2,104,931)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Dedicated Schools Grant - Central School Services Block</b>	<b>(2,104,931)</b>	<b>(1,094,567)</b>	<b>(2,104,931)</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>Net</b>	<b>Central School Services Block</b>		<b>(147,963)</b>		
<b>Other Expenditure</b>						
	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>6th Form Funding</b>				
		6th Form Schools	4,020,613	2,085,014	4,020,613	
<b>Total</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>6th Form Funding</b>	<b>4,020,613</b>	<b>2,085,014</b>	<b>4,020,613</b>	
	<b>Income</b>	<b>16-19 Funding Grant</b>				
		6th Form Funding	(4,020,613)	(2,050,321)	(4,020,613)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>16-19 Funding Grant</b>	<b>(4,020,613)</b>	<b>(2,050,321)</b>	<b>(4,020,613)</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>Net</b>	<b>Other Expenditure</b>		<b>34,692</b>		
<b>Outturn Summary</b>						
	<b>Net</b>	<b>Schools Block</b>		<b>(2,063,140)</b>		
	<b>Net</b>	<b>High Needs Block</b>		<b>(1,131,994)</b>	<b>858,601</b>	<b>858,601</b>
	<b>Net</b>	<b>Early Years Block</b>		<b>1,112,130</b>		
	<b>Net</b>	<b>Central School Services Block</b>		<b>(147,963)</b>		
	<b>Net</b>	<b>Other Expenditure</b>		<b>34,692</b>		
	<b>Net</b>	<b>Overspend / (Underspend)</b>		<b>(2,196,275)</b>	<b>858,601</b>	<b>858,601</b>
<b>DSG Reserves Balance</b>						
		2018-19 DSG Brought Forward (Surplus)	(2,445,741)			
		2019-20 DSG Final Outturn Deficit	7,362,361			
		2019-20 DSG Brought Forward Deficit	4,916,620			
		2020-21 DSG Final Outturn Deficit	5,609,457			
		2020-21 DSG Brought Forward Deficit	10,526,077			
		2021-22 DSG Final Outturn Deficit	4,654,519			
		2021-22 DSG Brought Forward Deficit	15,180,596			
		2022-23 DSG Final Outturn (Surplus)	(1,352,401)			
		2022-23 DSG Brought Forward Deficit	13,828,195			
		2023-24 DSG Forecast Deficit / (Surplus)	858,601			
		<b>2023-24 DSG Deficit Carry Forward</b>	<b>14,686,795</b>			

	<b>Schools Forum</b> 16 November 2023
	<b>Report from the Corporate Director          of Children and Young People</b>
<b>Dedicated Schools Grant Provisional Funding update          2024/25</b>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	N/A
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	N/A
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	None
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Olufunke Adediran, Head of Finance – CYP 0208 937 1196 Email: <a href="mailto:Olufunke.adediran@brent.gov.uk">Olufunke.adediran@brent.gov.uk</a>  Folake Olufeko Senior Finance Analyst – CYP 0208 937 2491 Email: <a href="mailto:Folake.Olufeko@brent.gov.uk">Folake.Olufeko@brent.gov.uk</a>

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report informs Schools Forum of the provisional DSG block funding allocations announced for 2024/25.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Schools Forum is asked to note the provisional 2024/25 allocations which will form the basis of further detailed work to allocate funding to individual schools and settings at the January and February 2024 meetings, once the final funding is confirmed.

## 3. Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities and Strategic Context

- 3.1 This report is linked to the Council’s Borough Plan which aims to support babies, children and young people get the best start in life, by working in partnership with schools and other partners to make sure access to education is fair and

equal. This report provides updates to Schools Forum is kept abreast of the Dedicated Schools Grant funding, the main source of school funding.

#### 4. Summary of Provisional DSG Funding allocation 2024/25

4.1 The Department for Education (DfE) initially published the schools National Funding Formula (NFF) 2024/25 in July 2023. Following the discovery of a technical error made by officials during the initial calculations, an update was made to the schools NFF in October 2023. The error was due to incorrect processing of pupil numbers in the initial calculations which underestimated the overall cost of the schools NFF, and incorrect factor values published as a result in July 2023.

4.2 The impact of the error for Brent was a reduction of £1.3m from the July provisional funding allocation. Schools have not yet received their 2024/25 funding; therefore, the correction of this error does not mean adjusting any funding that schools have already received or are expected to receive.

<b>Brent NFF Funding Allocation</b>	<b>*Schools Block (excl. Growth Factor)</b>	<b>High Needs Block</b>	<b>Central Services Block</b>	<b>Total</b>
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
2023/24	269,025	82,205	2,105	353,335
2024/25 (Provisional)	271,984	84,516	2,089	358,589
Increase/(Reduction)	<b>2,959</b>	<b>2,311</b>	<b>(16)</b>	<b>5,254</b>
% Change	<b>1.10%</b>	<b>2.81%</b>	<b>(0.76%)</b>	<b>1.5%</b>

Likewise, the error will not impact on the DSG that Brent expects to receive in December 2023 when final allocations are confirmed.

4.3 Brent's provisional funding for the core schools' budgets (which includes funding through the schools NFF, high needs NFF, and CSSB) in 2024/25 is £358.6m from the total national allocation of £59.6bn.

#### **Table 1: Provisional DSG Funding 2024/25**

*\*Schools Block 23/24 includes the mainstream schools' additional grant; however, the growth factor has been excluded to be comparable with DfE published data.*

#### 5. Schools Block

5.1 The funding through the schools NFF will increase by 1.9% per pupil in 2024/25, compared to 2023/24. For Brent the overall increase of £2.96m is estimated at 1.1%. The London average increase is 1.5% which is lower than the national average mainly because pupil numbers drive the allocation of funding and

regionally, London including Brent has had pupil numbers in the primary phase decline, resulting in lower DSG allocations.

5.2 The NFF will distribute this funding based on schools' and pupils' needs and characteristics. The main features in 2024/25 are:

5.2.1 A formulaic approach to allocating split sites funding has been introduced to ensure a consistent basis across the country. In September 2023, a meeting was held with Brent schools that will be impacted by the change.

5.2.2 The core factors in the NFF (such as basic per-pupil funding, and funding for additional needs such as deprivation) will increase by 1.4%.

5.2.3 The funding floor will ensure that every school is allocated at least 0.5% more pupil-led funding per pupil compared to the 2023/24 allocation.

5.2.4 Through the minimum per pupil funding levels, every primary school will receive at least £4,610 per pupil and every secondary school at least £5,995. These amounts are still lower than the Brent average under the Local Funding Formula (LFF) of £5,692 for primary and £7,240 for secondary.

5.2.5 The 2023/24 mainstream schools additional grant (MSAG) has been rolled into the schools NFF for 2024/25 therefore forming part of schools' core budgets.

5.2.6 For the first time, in 2024/25 the DfE will allocate funding to local authorities on the basis of falling rolls, as well as growth. Local authorities can use this funding to support schools which see a short-term fall in the number of pupils on roll. In December 2023, the DfE will allocate funding through the growth and falling rolls factors at LA Level, based on the observed differences between the primary and secondary number on roll between the October 2022 and October 2023 school censuses.

5.3 For the first time in 2024/25, local authorities will be required to provide growth funding where a school or academy has agreed with the local authority to provide an extra class to meet basic need in the area (either as a bulge class or as an ongoing commitment). Funding, either through the growth fund, or by adjusting pupil numbers in the APT, will need to be provided regardless of whether the additional class is within or outside of the PAN.

As a minimum local authorities will have to provide funding to a level which is compliant with the following formula:

**Primary growth factor value (£1,550) × number of pupils × Area Cost Adjustment (ACA)**

## **6 High Needs Block (HNB)**

- 6.1 The national increase for 2024/25 compared to 2023/24 will be 4.3% or £440m. The NFF will ensure that every local authority receives an increase of at least 3% per head of population, compared to 2023/24, and no more than 5%. Brent will receive the minimum 3% increase like other Outer London boroughs and the average increase for London is 3.3%.
- 6.2 The Management Plan assumption will need to be reviewed as it assumed a 3% increase plus a funding increase of £400m announced in the 2022 Autumn statement which equated to 5%. It was assumed that the additional funding will be for 2 financial years as per the announcement, but it appears that this was not the case for the HNB.
- 6.3 The additional £2.3m is significantly lower than the funding increase received in the past few years. Although it will be sufficient to cover the current 2023/24 forecasted imbalance between High Needs expenditure and income, it will not cover any further increases in demand for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) in 2024/25. The increase will also not be sufficient to cover the brought forward 2022/23 DSG deficit of £13.8m.
- 6.4 The High Needs Block received a transfer of 0.5% of the Schools Block income in 2023/24. Continuing this transfer in 2024/25 would enable potential pressures arising from the growth in EHCPs to be mitigated and would help towards mitigating the brought forward DSG deficit.
- 6.5 The DfE requires local authorities with an overall DSG deficit to have a management plan to recover the deficit over a number of financial years. Brent is also currently part of the DfE's Delivering Better Value (DBV) in SEND programme which provides dedicated support and funding to help local authorities reform their high needs systems. Brent was awarded a £1m grant over two financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25. The findings for Brent from the DBV programme's analytical phase identified a number of opportunities to tackle rising demand which included supporting the needs of some children through targeted support in place of an EHCP, ensuring EHCPs are of the right duration (i.e., more time limited EHCPs) and focusing on fewer support hours being put in place when children start school and building support over time as needs develop.
- 6.6 A Deficit Management Plan agreed by the Schools Forum is still in place with actions being taken to manage demand, improve the sufficiency of places and financial management to recover the deficit in the medium to long term. These include managing demand for EHCPs through a graduated approach in mainstream settings, establishing more SEND provision in the borough



including a new special school and developing new Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs). In addition, ensuring there is full cost recovery from other local authorities that place pupils in Brent special schools including administration and other specific costs; a review of the DSG funded SEN support services and continued central government lobbying.

## **7 Central Schools Services Block**

- 7.1 Nationally, funding in 2024/25 will increase by 1.57% for the ongoing responsibilities that local authorities continue to have for all schools, while funding for historic commitments within this block will decrease by a further 20% from 2024/25, for those local authorities in receipt of this funding.
- 7.2 For Brent although the overall change shows a 0.76% net reduction, the impact consists of a 1.58% increase in the per pupil rate of funding for ongoing responsibilities, which is an increase of £28k. However, the impact of the 20% reduction against the historic commitment is a (£66k) reduction.
- 7.3 The historic commitment currently relates to a pensions strain contribution to the corporate budgets. This will mean that the amount transferred corporately will be reduced.

## **8 Early Years Block (EYB)**

- 8.1 The DfE announced in July 2023, that nationally, the Early Years Block of the DSG will receive additional supplementary funding of £204m through a new early year's supplementary grant (EYSG). This will be used to increase the hourly amounts paid to early years childcare providers for delivering the entitlements for the period September 2023 to March 2024. LAs are expected to pass on the funding in full to providers. There will also be an additional £288m for 2024/25 but the hourly rate will be published as part of the normal funding announcement cycle in autumn 2023. The key principle of allocating the funding for the Early Years Block remains the same i.e., 95% of funding received is allocated directly to providers with the remaining 5% retained for central services.
- 8.2 In the Spring Budget in March 2023, the government announced a significant expansion of early years childcare entitlements to take effect between April 2024 and September 2026.

- 8.2.1 From April 2024, working parents of 2-year-olds can access 15 hours of free childcare per week (38 wk./y). Disadvantaged children, such as those with parents on low incomes or who have an EHCP, will still be eligible for 15 hours free early education.
- 8.2.2 From September 2024, the above will be extended to parents of 9-month to 3-year-olds.
- 8.2.3 From September 2025, working parents of 9-month to 3-year-olds will be able to access 30 free hours p/w (38 wk./y).
- 8.3 The government's proposals include an uplift in the hourly rate paid to providers to deliver existing free hours offers and childminder grants for new childminders. The government will also provide additional investment into setting up wraparound childcare for school-aged children with a pledge that families will be able to access childcare between 8am and 6pm during the school day. These reforms will see the government spending an additional £4.1bn 2027/28 on free hours and early education. Officers in the Early Help teams in Brent are working with the local sector to ensure that the objectives in the policy are met.
- 8.4 The 2024/25 Early Years' block funding allocations will be announced in December 2023, and the revised rates will set the basis of the EY budget allocations to be presented at the January 2024 Schools Forum.

## 9 Teachers' pay additional grant

- 9.1 In July 2023, the DfE announced £525m funding to support schools with the September 23 teachers' pay award, with a further £900m in 2024/25.
- 9.2 The funding will be in addition to the NFF for 2023/24 and 2024/25. The grant indicative allocation for Brent mainstream schools (excluding special schools) in 2023/24 is £2.56m and based on the criteria below. Schools do not need to spend the grant in year.

Primary including pupils in reception per pupil rate	£36
Key Stage 3 per pupil rate	£50
Key Stage 4 per pupil rate	£57
FSM Primary per eligible pupil	£31
FSM Secondary per eligible pupil	£45
Lump Sum	£1,345
<i>Funding will be adjusted by an area cost adjustment to reflect geographical variation in labour market costs.</i>	

- 9.3 The Special Schools will be funded by an additional £260 per place in line with the funding published in August 2023.

- 9.4 For 2024/25 financial year, the DfE will pay TPAG as a separate grant and for 2025/26, the DfE aims to incorporate the grant into the NFF core budget allocations.
- 9.5 The DfE will publish further details on funding allocations for eligible early years providers.

## **10 Schools Update**

- 10.1 Schools are feeling the impact of rising inflationary costs and increases in energy prices, alongside the 6.5% teachers' pay increase from September 2023, of which the DfE will be part funding 3%. The DfE expects schools to fund 3.5% of the increase within existing budgets and will only provide additional funding for costs above this. This funding will be allocated through the teachers' pay additional grant.
- 10.2 Quarter 1 of the current financial year saw 74% (67% in 2023/24) of Brent schools projecting an in-year deficit. 48% (23% in 2023/24) of these schools' plan to use over 50% of reserves to balance their budgets.
- 10.3 The DfE expects schools to manage these pressures within the allocated funding increase of 1.1% expected in 2024/25. A few Brent schools are also experiencing falling rolls and as a result will have significant reductions in funding. This is requiring schools to make strategic decisions to mitigate the impact of this, including the consideration of staffing restructures.
- 9.4 A new School Place Planning Strategy 2024-2028 was approved by Cabinet in October 2023. This sets out steps to support schools with falling rolls, including capping admission numbers, bringing schools together in federations and reducing capacity across the estate. In response to falling demand, the local authority is currently consulting on the closure of the Gwenneth Rickus site of Leopold Primary School that was opened as bulge accommodation when primary demand was high, as well as a reduction in PANs at other primary schools.

## **11 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement**

- 11.1 Cabinet Members will be kept abreast of the DSG Provisional Funding 2024/25 as part of the Council's Budget monitoring process for 2024/25.

## **12 Financial Considerations**

- 12.1 The financial implications have been detailed in the body of this paper and additional funding received could go towards mitigating cost pressures faced by schools.
- 12.2 The additional funding for the HNB is not sufficient to mitigate the cost of increases in the demand for EHCPs and recover the current deficit. The HNB Management Plan in place is regularly updated to evaluate mitigating actions put in place to reduce the deficit.
- 12.3 The statutory override that has been put in place to enable local authorities to hold deficit balances is due to end in the 2025/26 financial year after which the deficit could pose a significant risk to the Council's General Fund balances which are also currently under pressure.

### **13 Legal Considerations**

- 13.1 There are no legal considerations for this report.

### **14 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations**

- 14.1 Not applicable.

### **15 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations**

- 15.1 Not applicable.

### **16 Communication Considerations**

- 16.1 All School Forum papers are published, and all schools will have access to them. Also, final 2024/25 allocations for each school will be published on Best Brent.

**Report sign off:**

***Nigel Chapman***

Corporate Director of Children and Young People