

# AGENDA



## SCHOOLS FORUM

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Date: Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2021  
Time: 4.30pm  
Place: Microsoft Teams

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### Distribution

#### Members of the Committee

Sarah Lovell (Chair)	Dave Baker (Vice Chair)
Richard Aquilina	Kirby Littlewood
Susan Brobyn	Steve Moir
Nicky Edwards	Pippa Osborne
Stuart Evans	Diane Owen
Mark Freeman	Lisa Parker
Kim Garland	Linda Porter
Clare Haughton	Will Roberts
David Jenkins	Fr. Malcolm Strange
Nicola Jones	Bernice Webber
Carl Lander	David Williams
Louise Leader	Louisa Wilson
	Julia Anwar (Sub)

#### **Appropriate Officers attending:**

Mustafa Salih  
Hilary Smith  
Caroline Warren  
Alison Davies

#### **Councillors attending:**

Erica Williams  
Trevor Jones

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# AGENDA

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- 2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Sarah Lovell)
- 3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Sarah Lovell)
- 4 SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP (Ali Davies)
- 5 ANY OTHER ITEMS THE CHAIR DECIDES ARE URGENT  
(Sarah Lovell)
- 6 MINUTES FROM 25 MARCH 2021 (Sarah Lovell)
- 7 UPDATE ON SEND CLUSTERS (Hilary Smith)
- 8 HNWG UPDATE & FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (Susie  
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- 9 Q3 UPDATE (Caroline Warren/Mustafa Salih)
- 10 SCHOOLS FORUM FORWARD PLAN
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**South Gloucestershire Schools Forum  
Minutes of Meeting held on  
Thursday 25 March 2021  
Microsoft Teams**

**PRESENT:**

Sarah Lovell (Chair)	Finance Director, Cabot Learning Federation
Dave Baker (Vice Chair)	CEO, Olympus Academy Trust
Richard Aquilina	Governor, Bailey's Court Primary School
Nicky Edwards	Natural Choice Nurseries
Stuart Evans	South Gloucestershire and Stroud College
Mark Freeman	Headteacher, St Michael's Primary School
Clare Haughton	Page Park Pre-School
David Jenkins	Governor, Crossways Schools
Nicola Jones	Representative Special Academies
Carl Lander	Hanham Primary Federation (HPF)
Kirby Littlewood	Headteacher, Stanbridge Primary School
Pippa Osborne	Headteacher Christ Church Junior School
Diane Owen	Chair, King's Oak Academy
Lisa Parker	Headteacher, Warmley Park School
Linda Porter	Governor, Watermore School
Terry Redfern (rep Kim Garland)	Brimsham Green School
Fr. Malcolm Strange	Diocese Representative
Susie Weaver	<b>Executive Principal   Cabot Learning Federation</b>
David Williams	Diocese of Gloucester
Louisa Wilson	Headteacher, St. Stephens C of E Junior School

**Officers:**

Mustafa Salih, Head of Financial Management and Business Support  
 Hilary Smith, Head of Education, Learning and Skills  
 Caroline Warren, Finance Business Partner  
 Alison Davies, Business Support Manager  
 Michelle Palmer, Senior Finance Officer (Observer)  
 Maxine Winter, Governor Development Consultant (Observer)

**Others:**

Tamsin Moreton, Enable Trust Representative

**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Attendees were welcomed by the Chair.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Trevor Jones, Chris Sivers, Kim Garland, Louise Leader, Steve Moir, Bernice Webber

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - None****3. ANY OTHER ITEMS THE CHAIR DECIDES ARE URGENT**

None

#### 4. MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING – 21 JANUARY 2021

##### **Schools Budget Consultation – Options**

MS has drafted a joint letter from Mustafa and Sarah Lovell as Chair of the Schools Forum and will forward tomorrow after getting final agreement.

One correction: Page 6 1<sup>st</sup> sentence should read: The consultation could not be issued to the Early Years Working Group ahead of the launch due to time constraints.

Remainder of the Minutes recorded as accurate.

Action carried forward – Letter to schools to be issued before next forum meeting

#### 5. HIGH NEEDS WORKING GROUP (HNWG) UPDATE

Susie Weaver gave an update on the HNWG regarding the purpose of the group, how impact will be measured

Update for this forum includes:

- the transfer of £2.2 million of funding
- the Deficit Recovery Programme
- additional documents including the Recovery Plan.

##### **Governance structure and communication**

Need to be very clear about governance and getting the role of the HNWG as part of the broader strategy in terms of inclusion across the LA to come together after a period of 12 months. We are trying to communicate to all Headteachers that we have a clear vision of the governance and decision making to be understood by all.

We have also spent time on the Deficit Recovery Plan and Mustafa Salih is leading on that. The HNWG will challenge and give a critical eye. Detailed overview in terms of the different themes about building capacity, top-ups, improved identification, commissioning independent placements and effective planning of special schools and resource bases. To prepare a draft programme to get all those themes together.

SL – Good to see those different themes to focus on as a Forum.

MF – Given that the HNWG has been in existence for a number of years, at what point are we going to see an impact on the deficit and to see effective challenge on the workings of SGlos as whole to address the deficit?

SW – It has taken a little longer to work through the staffing structure at the LA end, co-ordination of the different parts of how the LA work together and the staffing to get on with the work. The group is working with LA officers and things are in place and

improving in terms of co-ordination around the broader strategy. We will work on the SEND clusters to bring the deficit down and create clarity of the financial sub-group who will focus on the Ready Reckoner and other key expenditure items.

MS – I think although we haven't made an impact on the numbers yet, we have done a lot of foundation work to make that happen a lot quicker than in the past. It is fair to recognise that part of the capacity challenge was due to vacancies. These positions have now been filled.

We have looked at how we might see the actual numbers changing through the Recovery Plan tool and it will take a number of years as it will get worse before it gets better. We had worked with the DfE on that Recovery Plan but have not heard from them because of COVID. Before that they were content with the Plan and we have recently strengthened the Plan to show how all the pieces of work across the council, schools and various sectors fits together and really capture all those activities taking place.

DO – Welcome the greater clarity the report has given us which is helpful and a positive step. The challenge is how we measure the impact as there is a lot of reference to governance which makes me feel maybe there should be governance representation as part of the working group and that may be a benefit suggestion to consider.

SW – Happy to consider governance and have a follow up discussion. .

EW –Funding. We have always been at the lowest point with regards to our High Needs Block and SEND and I had a discussion with Luke Hall about the SEND review being delayed. Why the funding is so low is based on deprivation so he has asked me to build a good case to give to him and take this forward. The areas of deprivation are masked by our overall figures and need to pull those figures out and make a good case to obtain more funding.

Working on the Food Cell Board with other Cabinet Members, there is a link between food nutrition within our schools that we could combine with deprivation figures within public health as well as educational settings and how they portray themselves and get a better picture to carry forward to Luke Hall. Does Forum agree with that approach?

SL – We are happy to support applications for funding where appropriate.

NE – Emphasised the importance of theme 3 in the HNWG cohort. COVID has severely impacted on young children with some unable to speak and lack of professional support. 2 years from now when they start to go into schools these children will require additional support.

SW – Agreed, longer strategy is required.

CL – How much have we spent out of school budgets, where are the barriers and why are we not saving money today?

MS – We have done lots of work over the last 2-3 years but since then it has been a high priority. The deficit is a lot smaller than otherwise would have been and we will see that a number of LAs have had large parts of their deficits wiped out. We weren't on the list as we think our deficit wasn't high enough. We have increased local places for SEND, cluster funds into those areas, changed the top-up system etc. and it has had a big impact. The funding didn't follow that and every LA has struggled with this position and it is inevitable every LA has a deficit because of the SEND situation. We have done a lot and need to do a lot more lobbying of the DfE and central Government.

SW – We recognise some work has been completed YTD.

SL – Recognise some steps have been taken and not to detract from the group by looking backwards but look to the future. Forum to support the work of the group to push forward this message.

MS – The proportion of Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) still cause significant problems and we will be targeting that latest data of 2019/20 which showed the proportion for SG grew at a larger rate than other LAs but because of some of the work through the clusters, it is again an improvement.

SL – Going forward, Forum request progress against the themes on how they are progressing, what the impact is and what are the outcomes of the group.

Action – SW to consider governance as part of HNWG.

Action – Future HNWG reports to include progress on the themes.

## 6. SCHOOLS BUDGET AND EARLY YEARS FUNDING FORMULA (EYSFF)

MS – Schools Budget. The proposal to transfer £2.2m supported by the Schools Forum was approved by the Secretary of State for Education which allows us to continue to invest in the cluster funds. This is a positive outcome. Every school should be aware of their budgets for the following year.

Notification of the Early Years Funding Formula rates have gone out to colleagues about underfunding because of the date of the census. The Forum had agreed an application to the council's COVID grant to cover the shortfall. This was approved by Cabinet.

NE – Questioned the notification sent out as nothing has been received by the sector.

### Action:

**MS - To ensure a communication has gone out to the Early Years settings confirming the shortfall in places would be funded.**

## 7. DfE's HIGH NEEDS BLOCK CONSULTATION

MS – Shared slides on the Consultation which has just closed. This consultation was to do with the High Needs National Funding Formula and to make the Forum aware of this consultation.

SL – Helpful presentation and what are the timeframes?

MS – Unfortunately closed on 24<sup>th</sup> March but it did go out to all schools.

SL – Is there a timeframe to hear anything back on the implementation in 2022-23?  
It is important to share with the Forum and across all schools and is specifically a challenge around the DSG.

MS – If those changes happen and it resulted in more funding, we would look to gain an extra £1m to £2m so it was worth responding. Timescales are unknown.

## 8. DEFICIT RECOVERY PLAN

MS – We received information through the media, that discussions were taking place between the DfE and 5 Local Authorities providing financial supporting for their DSG deficit. 5 LAs have signed agreements to have significant deficits written off by the DfE.

The council is trying to get information from the 5 LAs. SGC quickly got something out to the Deputy Director of Finance at the DfE to make sure SGC is on that list and included a sample agreement signed with Hammersmith and Fulham.

It's a shame we were not aware but they are saying it was the size of the deficit. Will keep the Forum updated and if we get to meet with the DfE it might be helpful if we had a representative from the Schools Forum and would ask the Chair to join us.

The rest of the paper details aspect of the Recovery Plan just to make the Forum aware that below that level we have used the DfE template in more detail capturing the structure and contents to make sure that high level working starts to drive out the numbers that we need to start seeing.

There is continued growth in SEND spend/demand. Tried to work out if we start moving these factors from where we are now rather than at the national level of top-ups and to be more like the national average and start to reduce that spend. We will start to see the deficit reducing in 2023-24 and we would need to demonstrate to the DfE to balancing in year. Happy to share a detailed template with anyone that wants to see it. The template is 90% complete with some numbers around pupil data still required.

SL – Helpful to see the forecast and recognition that numbers are increasing.

**HS, DB, SL, MS and AD reviewed the detailed papers in the planning meeting and recognised the main figure which shows the deficit getting worse before better. Chair and Vice Chair agreed a summarised version of the spreadsheet should be shared with Forum based on the level of content and role of the Forum.**

MS –Apologies were given that the spreadsheet had only gone out today.

Regular updates and actions welcomed by the Schools Forum.



MS – DfE has started looking at the formula and the major SEND review happening as well which should have another positive impact on funding. Still need to continue with the work we are doing as there is going to be ongoing pressure in the system for change and improvement. We need to carry on the path we are on to improve our value for money.

NE – Theme 3 – more of our effort on the positive and not the negative and the £2.2m from Schools Block to the High Needs Block could that go back to schools?

SL – Government will publish responses.

DB – Shared a link to the article regarding the funding bailouts

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/councils-receive-conditional-send-special-needs-school-funding-bailouts/>

DB – Signpost to the documents – are we are on the list?

MS – I don't know – we didn't know the list existed until the list came out but we may be on the list for the 2<sup>nd</sup> tranche.

HS – Still continue to invest and focus on those key areas for improvement, e.g. around early years and building capacity through the SEN clusters.

SL – With the size of the deficit growing, what is SGlos Cabinet's position in relation to carrying that level of deficit?

MS – Cabinet recognises that deficit and the impact it has on the council's balance sheet and that level of deficit can be held by the council over that time period.

Action – To bring to the next meeting a bit more information on the deficit recovery plan and what the impact of the HNWG will have on that deficit.

## 9. FORWARD PLAN

Proposed dates for 2020/2021 shared, as below.

Academic Year 2021-22 (All Thursday)	
Sept	23rd
Oct	21st
Nov	18th
Jan	20th
March	24th
May	12th
July	7th

## 10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

RA – Due to the impact of COVID and children’s development delays, is there an impact on available school places in 2022?

HS – We are seeing a small increase in requests for a delayed start to formal schooling which has not been a problem but will be kept under review. If it became an issue then there would be conversations with the Headteachers and it would be flagged to the Schools Forum.

**Meeting closed**

# South Gloucestershire Council

## SCHOOLS FORUM

13<sup>th</sup> May 2021

### Update on SEND Clusters

#### Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to:

(i) provide Schools Forum with details on the current position on the SEND Clusters  
(ii) provide Schools Forum with confirmation that underspent 2020/2021 SEND Cluster funds can be carried forward into 2021/2022 budgets, upon written confirmation that associated projects were planned and initiated during 2020/2021

(iii) informing Schools Forum of the strategic priorities for the SEND Clusters between April and September 2021:

- to compile and analyse evaluations of cluster activity from the financial year 2020 / 2021 and present the findings to Schools Forum in July 2021
- for each cluster to develop and approve detailed plans for the commissioning and evaluation of evidence-based assessment and intervention to meet the needs of children at SEND Support, and children presenting with behaviour that challenges, for the financial year 2021 / 2022
- to further define the roles and remits of educational psychologists and senior EHCP case co-ordinators in SEND Clusters
- to scope the commissioning and implementation of a South Gloucestershire-wide tool to universally assess and support speech, language and communications needs within schools at all key stages, and a cross-cluster speech and language therapy offer
- to update the 2020 'SEND in a Nutshell' needs analysis with 2021 School Census data
- to develop a SEND and Inclusion Data Dashboard for monthly monitoring of key performance indicators across the SEND graduated response, including key cluster outcomes
- to further refine alignment of policy, process, and funding for SEND Clusters and High-Risk Group to improve strategic and operational response for children and young people at risk of school exclusion

(iv) request that Schools Forum members continue to encourage full participation in the Cluster initiative

#### Background

2. As previously reported to Schools Forum in March and November 2020, the SEND Cluster project was originally based upon the 2017 SEND Written Statement of Action

(WSOA) and 2018 SEND Strategy. These documents included the intention to develop a school-led response to building capacity across the education system for children with special education needs, to improve educational outcomes and reduce exclusions.

3. Schools Forum approved full participation in SEND Clusters to achieve three key outcomes:

- better identification of SEND prior to the need for Education Health Care plans
- better outcomes for children at SEND Support
- better management of behaviour that challenges schools leading to a reduction in the number and days lost to exclusions

4. The SEND Cluster project was delivered in two phases. The first two clusters were established in November 2018 and became operational from April 2019. In July 2019, Schools Forum agreed that the project should be rolled out as a second phase across the local authority area, still operating as a pilot but including all schools organised into five clusters. Annex A provides a map of the SEND Cluster boundaries. All five clusters were ready to commence delivery by the agreed phase two target date of 1 April 2020 but, due to Covid19, they did not become fully operational until September 2020.

5. The Covid19 pandemic and resulting changes to educational access impacted significantly upon planned SEND Cluster activity from April 2020 to September 2020. Where appropriate, planned interventions were rolled forward to the start of the 2020 / 2021 academic year. This has made measuring the impact of the project challenging, which will be further considered throughout the report.

#### **Governance** (please see Annex B)

6. The SEND Clusters are now a key element of the Accelerated Progress Plan. This document is the successor of the 2017 Written Statement of Action, and response to the 2019 SEND Revisit by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission. It charts the actions required to meet the remaining two areas of significant weakness identified in the 2017 SEND Inspection;

- to improve the quality of EHCPs
- to deliver improved education outcomes at all key stages for children and young people with special educational needs.

South Gloucestershire's progress towards delivering the Accelerated Progress Plan is monitored externally by the DfE and NHS England on a six-monthly basis. The next visit is in July 2021, where evidence on the impact of the SEND Clusters during 2020 / 2021 will be presented.

7. Within South Gloucestershire, progress of the SEND Clusters is now monitored by the 'Best Start for Children with Complex Needs and SEND' pillar, which has subsumed responsibility for SEND governance from the previous SEND Partnership Board. This pillar supports and challenges the initiative, ensuring focus is maintained on this key element of the overall SEND strategy and Accelerated Progress Plan.

8. The overarching SEND Clusters Project Board now includes the five cluster lead head teachers, a lead SENCo representative and local authority officers. This supports the evolution of a consistent and efficient approach across all clusters. The Board also includes representation from health (Bristol, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group), public health and parent/carers, providing opportunity for multi-agency co-production. Membership is now being extended to include educational

psychology, the EHCP team, social care and officers leading on the Early Help Strategy and finance.

9. Under the overarching SEND Clusters Project Board, each cluster has established its own SEND Cluster Board, chaired by the cluster lead head teacher and supported by the cluster lead SENCo. Membership now includes representation from the cluster's link educational psychologist and senior casework officer from the EHCP team. In addition, some clusters have also established a triage meeting, where requests for funding from schools within the cluster are discussed and approved.

10. Each cluster has established a supportive SENCo Group, which is chaired by the lead SENCo. In addition, lead SENCos are meeting together on a termly basis to provide peer support and share best practice. Initial verbal feedback from all clusters indicates that a key impact of the SEND Clusters is improved support for SENCos, which is leading to improvements in confidence and wellbeing. This feedback requires further evaluative analysis.

11. Two strategic posts, established to maintain efficient delivery and facilitate future development of the SEND Clusters, are now filled. The Cluster Administrator commenced in December 2020, the Partnership and Planning Officer in late February 2021. Both staff attend the overarching SEND Cluster Project Board, each of the five Cluster Boards and the lead SENCo group. In addition, a SEND Research and Evaluation Officer started in March 2021 to support all developments across the graduated response.

## Finance

12. Schools Forum previously agreed that each of the five SEND Clusters would receive a share of £854,623 per annum. Allocation of funds is based upon the size and demography of each cluster. The tables below provide the overall budget for each cluster, and the breakdown for each cluster, for the financial year 2020/2021:

Spend Plans	Cluster 1		Cluster 2		Cluster 3		Cluster 4/5		Cluster 6		Total Plans
	£91,830		£186,959		£208,919		£216,378		£150,537		£854,623
Strategic Priority Areas	Cluster 1		Cluster 2		Cluster 3		Cluster 4/5		Cluster 6		
	%	£	%	£	%	£	%	£	%	£	
Workforce Development and Training Services (inc Therapies other than Alternative Provision (SLT/Mental Health))	30%	£27,549	25%	£46,740	30%	£62,675.70	25%	£54,095	42%	£63,226	
Individual CYP Support	22%	£20,202.60	47%	£87,871	21%	£43,872.99	20%	£43,276	26%	£39,139.62	
Alternative Provision	27%	£24,794.10	8%	£14,957	41%	£85,656.79	30%	£64,913	24%	£36,128.88	
Enabling Functions ) eg admin/commissioning/data)	17%	£15,611.10	12%	£22,435	2%	£4,178.38	10%	£21,638	0%		
Totals	4%	£3,673.20	8%	£14,957	6%	£12,535.14	15%	£32,457	8%	£12,042.96	
	100%	£91,830	100%	£186,959	100%	£208,919.00	100%	£216,378	100%	£150,537	

*Data provided by the council's finance team*

13. Each Cluster Board plans how their allocated funding will be used to improve identification of SEND, to better meet need and improve outcomes at SEND Support, and to better manage behaviour that challenges to reduce school exclusions. To ensure that this investment is effective, its impact must be continuously evaluated.

14. Due to Covid19 delaying operationalisation of all clusters until September 2020, most planned activity was rolled forward from April 2020 to the 2020 / 2021 academic year.

Understandably, by the end of the financial year 2020 / 2021, many had not been completed. In March 2021, SEND Cluster leads were notified that underspent 2020 / 2021 funds could be carried forward into 2021 / 2022 budgets, upon provision of written evidence that associated projects were planned and initiated during 2020 / 2021.

### **Cluster Decision Making**

15. As previously noted, Cluster Boards plan the commissioning of interventions and projects to achieve the three key cluster outcomes. Boards can only be effective with access to appropriate data to identify priority areas of commissioning in their communities and to monitor outcomes. As the cluster initiative commenced it was recognised that it required all schools to share data with Cluster Boards, and so steps were taken to secure data sharing agreements.

16. The data set, 'SEND in a Nutshell', has provided SEND Clusters with analysis of the annual school census data at an individual school, cluster, and local authority level. This was very well received by head teachers and governors during 2020 / 2021. Feedback suggests that this data is already being used to focus commissioning on specific needs and delivery of the three outcomes areas. In addition, there is potential to further embed data-driven decision making in all cluster planning and evaluation. Evidencing data-driven decision making in cluster planning for 2021 / 2022 will be prioritised during Terms 5 and 6. In addition, an annual refresh of the SEND in a Nutshell data is being planned, supported by the Research and Evaluation Officer.

17. The development of the South Gloucestershire SEND Data Dashboard is now well underway, with dedicated project management time committed until May 2021. The Research and Evaluation Officer will work alongside this SEND Data Dashboard Project Manager during Term 5 to ensure that the developing Dashboard includes the key performance indicators required to measure impact across the graduated response, including SEND Clusters. Once complete, the Dashboard will be reviewed at each SEND Cluster Project Board and will inform reports to Schools Forum and the 'Best Start for Children with Complex Needs and SEND' Pillar.

18. In addition to data, the decision-making of SEND Cluster Boards needs to be informed by an understanding of its areas of good practice, and its areas for improvement. Nationally, Whole School Send (WSS) Reviews provide a framework that enables individual school leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of current SEND provision through a structured self-evaluation and peer review with another school. The SEND Review Guide and peer-review process helps schools identify areas for improvement within their SEND provision and equips them to create and review improvement plans. At the start of the Cluster Pilot Project, arrangements were made for WSS Reviews of individual schools to be embedded within cluster infrastructure. This included the appointment of a local WSS Review coordinator and the training of 35 education staff (head teachers and SENCOs) as peer-reviewers. The learning from WSS Reviews is collated at a cluster level and shared with Cluster Boards, to inform and support evidence-based planning and evaluation.

19. Due to the Covid19 pandemic, the implementation of WSS Reviews across South Gloucestershire's schools was paused. These are now actively underway again across all clusters. As with data-driven decision making, as the WSS Review cycle progresses there is potential to further embed thematic analysis of their findings into cluster planning and evaluation, and this will be considered during Terms 5.

## 2020 / 2021 Activity

20. Since September 2020, clusters have been working at pace to deliver their 2020 / 2021 activity planned. Cluster activity falls broadly into two categories;

- commissioned evidence-based interventions
- pilots of new ways of working

Clusters are now commissioning a wide range of interventions across the SEND spectrum, and from a variety of public, private, and voluntary sector providers. These commissions vary in their theoretical approach. They also vary in their focus, spanning individual interventions for children with specific needs to whole school training. Examples include one-to-one mentoring, family support, Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs), the Thrive Approach, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy and autism training.

A range of pilot / project work is also underway, sitting alongside evidence-based commissioned services to create each cluster's complete offer for children and young people at SEND Support. Examples of this pilot work include transition projects between early years, primary and secondary phases, and exclusions projects.

21. In addition to activity planned and implemented by clusters themselves, some clusters are participating in strategic, pilot initiatives commissioned by the local authority's education and / or public health teams, and / or the NHS. During 2020 / 2021 these have primarily focussed upon the council priority of supporting the social, emotional, and mental health needs of children and young people through improved access to earlier specialist support. This is in response to both the recognised impact of the Covid 19 pandemic upon children and young people, and the profile of SEND highlighted in South Gloucestershire's 2019 / 2020 school census data (four of the five SEND Clusters have more children with social, emotional, and mental health needs than the national average). The impact of these initiatives will be considered within the context of the wider evaluation of the Cluster Pilot Project, with interim findings shared with Schools Forum in July 2021:

- NHS England are funding and overseeing the phased implementation of Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) in four areas of South Gloucestershire, covering a population of 8000 children and young people. The programme involves the following secondary schools and their feeder primaries:
  - Hanham Woods
  - King's Oak
  - Sir Bernard Lovell
  - John Cabot

MHSTs will be integrated within the school settings and workforce, providing strategic support to enable earlier identification and management of low to moderate mental health needs in children that do not need a referral to CAMHS. However, the teams will be provided through a partnership of Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Trust (AWP, the NHS provider of CAMHS in South Gloucestershire) and Off the Record (a voluntary sector provider of mental health support in South Gloucestershire). This will facilitate the streamlining of care across the continuum of mental health needs and support onward referral process for those children who need them. The involvement of primary schools in this project is anticipated to have a significant impact because most existing commissions for low to moderate mental health needs in children (Off the Record and Kooth) are for young people over the age of 11. The MHST programme is now scheduled to commence in May 2021 in Hanham Woods and extend to King's Oak from September.

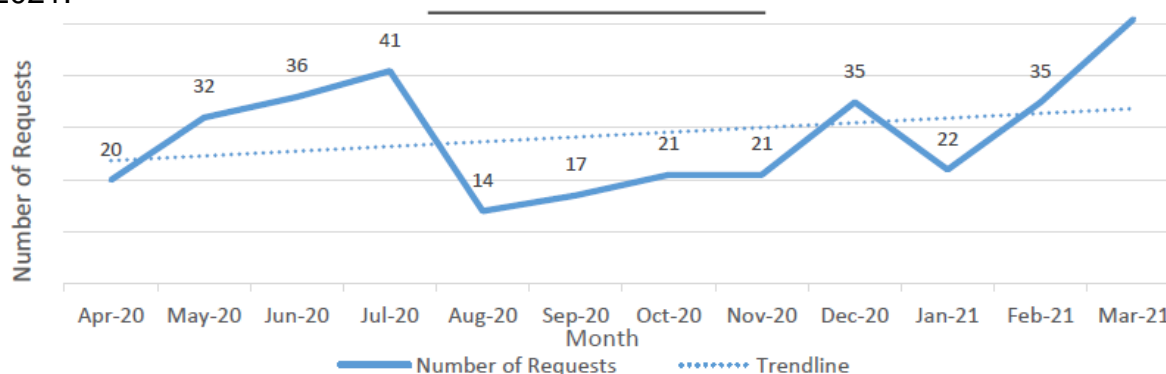
- In addition to MHSTs, Off the Record are supporting two further mental health pilots in secondary schools; one in Cluster 2 (Patchway School) and one in Cluster 3 (Winterbourne School), which has been funded by High-Risk Group. These pilots aim to reduce exclusions following transition to secondary school for young people presenting with SEND, mental health needs and behaviour that challenges, and who are at risk of permanent exclusion. Despite Covid associated delays, these projects are now well underway, within implementation and impact overseen by a multi-agency Steering Group. They will continue to support the current Year 7 children throughout this academic year.
- The council's education team has funded a dedicated social, emotional, and mental health needs pilot for Cluster 1, provided by AWP. The pilot, which will now commence in Term 5 and progress throughout 2021 / 2022, will assess the impact of access to a dedicated Primary Mental Health Specialist within one geographical care. A multi-agency Steering Group to oversee this pilot is in development, together with an evaluation framework

### 2020 / 2021 Evidence of Impact

22. As stated previously, measuring the impact of cluster activity, and delivery of the three agreed outcomes for SEND Clusters, has been challenging during 2020 / 2021. This is due to Covid19 delaying operationalisation of all clusters until September 2020, and most planned interventions being rolled forward from April 2020 to the 2020/2021 academic year. By the end of the 2020 / 2021 financial year many had not been completed.

23. Despite these delays, cluster lead SENCos have gathered a wide range of evaluation information on their 2020 / 2021 commissioned services and pilot projects. This was submitted to the Planning and Partnerships Officer during April 2021 and, with the support of the educational psychology service, will be analysed during May and June. The findings will be presented to both Schools Forum and the Accelerated Progress Plan monitoring meeting in July.

24. As shown below, despite month-on-month variation, the number of EHC needs assessment requests across South Gloucestershire rose between April 2020 and March 2021.



The relationship between this data and the cluster evaluation information will be considered during the May and June analysis. However, as previously noted, many planned interventions had not been completed by the end of the 2020 / 2021 financial year, so the correlation of this outcome with cluster activity may not be appropriate until the 2021 / 2022 academic year.



25. Data feeds from schools into Capita are currently switched off in response to the March 2021 Ransomware attack in South Gloucestershire. As such, it is currently not possible to provide Schools Forum with data on school attendance, exclusion, and elective home education. Provided data feeds are re-established, this data will be provided in July 2021.

### **2021 / 2022 Planning**

26. Each Cluster Board is currently engaged in planning how their allocated 2021 / 2022 funding will be used to commission interventions to deliver the agreed strategic objectives. Plans will be developed on a template which is consistent to all five clusters and structured to evidence the links between SEND needs analysis data, thematic analysis of WSS Reviews and cluster commissioning decisions. Standardising the planning framework across all clusters should also contribute to standardisation in the 2021 / 2022 evaluation framework, which will be developed in Term 6. Each cluster's plans will be approved by its Cluster Board during Term 5.

27. SEND needs analysis data demonstrates some high areas of need across all clusters, and there is recognition of these areas of commonality among cluster leads. Consideration has been given to how cross-cluster commissioning could be used during 2021 / 2022 to achieve improved quality and consistency of offer, greater value for money, increased provider resilience and reduced administration. Once each cluster has prepared its draft 2021 / 2022 plan, opportunities for cross-cluster commissioning will be scoped by the Planning and Partnerships Officer, and with the council's commissioning team, before the final approval of Cluster Boards.

28. There is recognition by cluster leaders of potential under-identification of speech, language, and communication needs, and resulting missed opportunities to provide appropriate early support and intervention. Unrecognised and unsupported SLCN may therefore be presenting as more complex learning and behaviour needs in later childhood, leading to poorer outcomes and the need for a wider range of higher cost interventions. This may be contributing to South Gloucestershire's SEND data profile of lower than national average SLCN, and higher than national average SEMH. It also correlates with findings from Sirona's speech and language therapy service, who report that 70% of young people accessing South Gloucestershire's youth offending team have an unidentified SLCN on entry. As such, 2021 / 2022 cluster-wide planning will consider the commissioning of evidence-based approaches to bring the identification of SLCN in line with national average and enable consistent access to earlier support that is integrated with educational provision. There is evidence from around the country that these measures have resulted in improved outcomes and reduced costs. Specific activity includes:

- scoping the commissioning and implementation of a South Gloucestershire-wide tool to universally assess and support speech, language and communications needs within schools at all key stages
- developing a cross-cluster specification for the commissioning of a speech and language therapy offer that aligns with, and enhances, the NHS core offer commissioned by the CCG and provided by Sirona to all schools
- enabling access to SLCN screening for all children and young people at risk of exclusion

29. SEND Cluster leaders have also expressed challenges in understanding some of the core offers made available to individual schools, which specific offers described as overly complex, unsuccessfully communicated, and poorly implemented. This has implications for

how well individual schools can achieve early identification and support for children at SEND Support, and how well clusters are able to commission offers that effectively align with cores into a streamlined, graduated response. Even with some clearly articulated and well implemented core offers, examples of the negative unintended consequences of misaligned core and cluster offers have been highlighted by cluster leaders and support services. Cluster leaders has shared their feedback on health core offers with South Gloucestershire's NHS SEND commissioner, with a view to co-producing improvements in those identified as most problematic. Consideration is also being given to the 2021 / 2022 development of:

- a map of 'Ordinarily Available' provision to clarify all core offers available to schools (this work has been successfully undertaken in some local authorities across England and recently by Bristol City Council)
- a map of potential providers for clusters, supporting them to consider a wider range of SEND services and offers in their planning

### **High Risk Group**

30. As described, SEND Clusters are the vehicle for a multiplicity of complementary initiatives that are already underway across the local authority, designed to improve the identification of SEND and to ensure that the outcomes for pupils at SEND Support are improved. These initiatives include WSS Reviews, 'SEND in a Nutshell' data and the South Glos Way Toolkit, together with a wide range of commissioning and project activity undertaken by individual clusters.

31. Sitting alongside these cluster initiatives is High Risk Group (HRG), a multi-agency forum with the objective of considering school referrals for children and young people at high risk of exclusion and agreeing targeted, preventative support. £150,000 funding is allocated to HRG to enable better management of behaviour that challenges schools, supporting delivery of the SEND Cluster's objective of reducing the number of days lost to exclusions.

32. Considerable work has already been undertaken to redesign HRG, including new process flowcharts and standardised templates to guide referrals and decision-making. This information is available for schools within the South Glos Way Toolkit. Feedback indicates that these redesigned processes are having a positive impact for many primary schools accessing HRG. However, some secondary schools have observed that the new processes can present a barrier to them receiving timely, preventative support from HRG at the earliest opportunity. In addition, cluster leaders representing both primary and secondary schools have highlighted a lack of alignment between the processes for accessing support and funding through HRG and SEND Clusters, which is resulting in confusion. As such, a project group will be established to further refine and align the HRG processes in response to this feedback, and in preparation for September 2021.

### **Summary**

33. As described, Covid 19 delayed full operationalisation of the SEND Clusters until September 2020, with most planned activity being rolled forward from April 2020 to the 2020 / 2021 academic year. By the end of the 2020 / 2021 financial year many interventions had not been completed, which has impacted upon both spend and the measurement of impact and outcomes. Cluster leads have been notified that funding for activity initiated in 2020 / 2021 can be accrued for 2021 / 2022. Analysis of the impact 2020 / 2021 activity will be presented to Schools Forum in July.

34. The work of the SEND Clusters is now progressing at pace, and is supported by a dedicated administrator, and Planning and Partnership Officer. Cluster governance has evolved to align with new partnership arrangements for SEND governance and delivery of the Accelerated Progress Plan. The SEND Cluster strategic priorities for April to September 2021 are included within the narrative.

### **Recommendations**

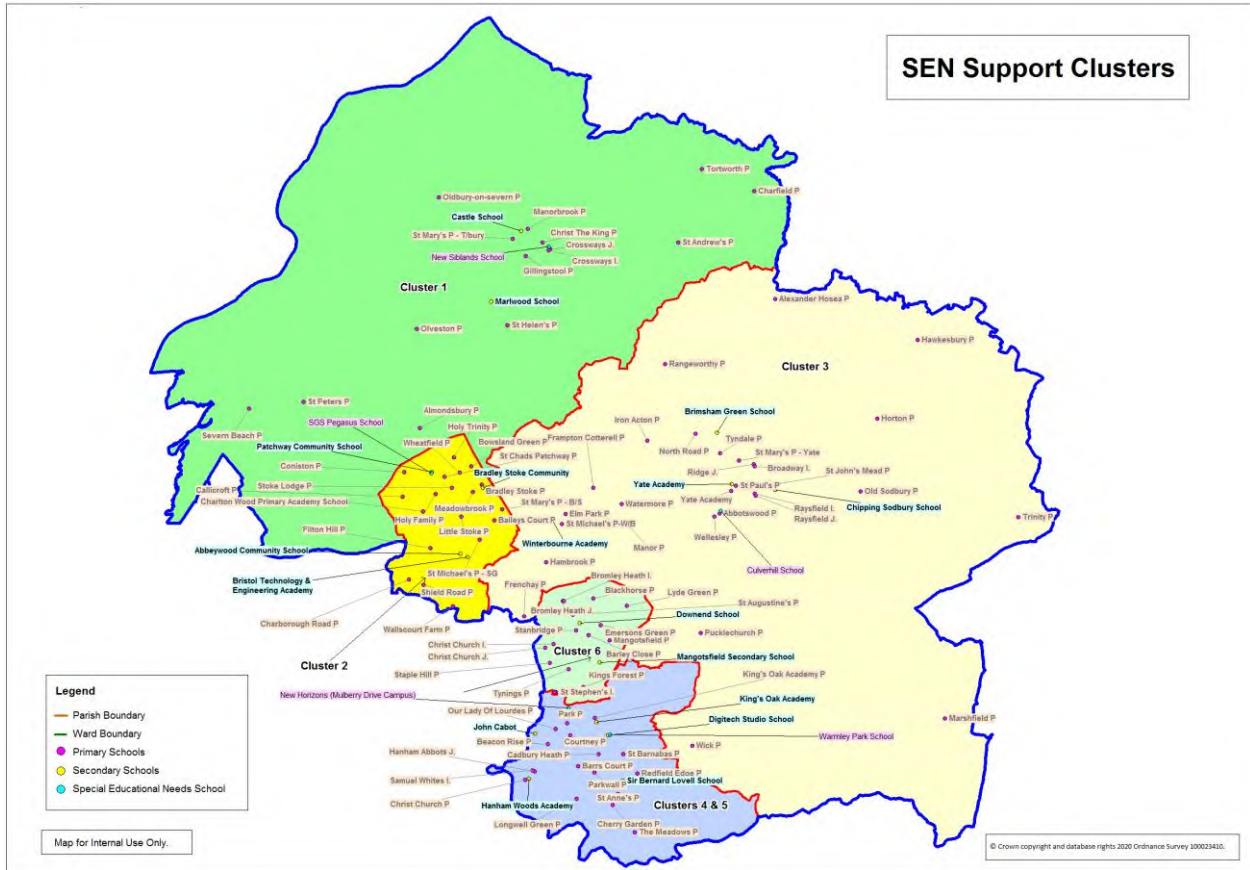
35. It is recommended that Schools Forum:

- (i) note the current position of the SEND Clusters
- (ii) note that underspent 2020/2021 SEND and Inclusion Cluster funds have been carried forward into 2021/2022 budgets, upon written confirmation that associated projects were planned and initiated during 2020/2021
- (iii) note the strategic priorities for SEND Clusters between April and September 2021:
  - to compile and analyse evaluations of cluster activity from the financial year 2020/2021 and present the findings to Schools Forum in July 2021
  - for each cluster to develop and approve detailed plans for the commissioning and evaluation of evidence-based assessment and intervention to meet the needs of children at SEND Support, and children presenting with behaviour that challenges, for the financial year 2021 / 2022
  - to further define the roles and remits of educational psychologists and senior EHCP case co-ordinators in SEND Clusters
  - to scope the commissioning and implementation of a South Gloucestershire-wide tool to universally assess and support speech, language and communications needs within schools at all key stages, and a cross-cluster speech and language therapy offer
  - to update the 2020 'SEND in a Nutshell' needs analysis with 2021 School Census data
  - to develop a SEND and Inclusion Data Dashboard for monthly monitoring of key performance indicators across the SEND graduated response, including key cluster outcomes
  - to further refine alignment of policy, process, and funding for SEND Clusters and High-Risk Group to improve strategic and operational response for children and young people at risk of school exclusion
- (iv) seek a detailed evaluation report of the SEND Clusters for 2020 / 2021 at the July 2021 meeting of Schools Forum
- (v) continue to encourage full participation of all schools in the Cluster initiative

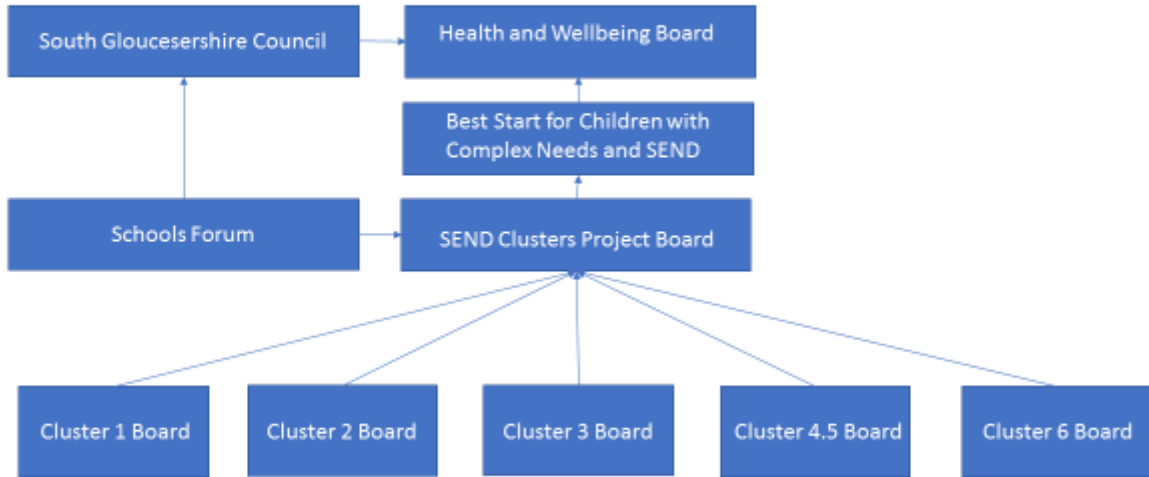
**Authors: Alison Ford, SEND and Inclusion Partnerships and Planning Officer  
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South Gloucestershire SEND Clusters Governance



May 2021

# South Gloucestershire council

## SCHOOLS FORUM

13<sup>th</sup> April 2021

### High Needs Working Group (HNWG) Update

#### Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the work of the HNWG.

#### Background

##### 2.1

The Schools Forum has agreed to transfer £2.2 million of funding from the School Block to the High Needs Block to support investment which will enable improvements to be achieved and which involve more efficient use of resources. It is essential that accelerated progress in addressing the deficit can be demonstrated.

##### 2.2

A deficit recovery programme of work has been formulated with an agreed governance and reporting structure. There are five priority areas of focus (themes) which will provide the opportunity to improve efficiency and reduce expenditure. These themes will feed into the overall DfE deficit recovery plan underpinning the programme.

##### 2.3

The themes have been selected after determining the main causes of the deficit using a cause and effect diagram and extensive data analysis on both nationally and locally available data.

#### Programme governance structure and communication

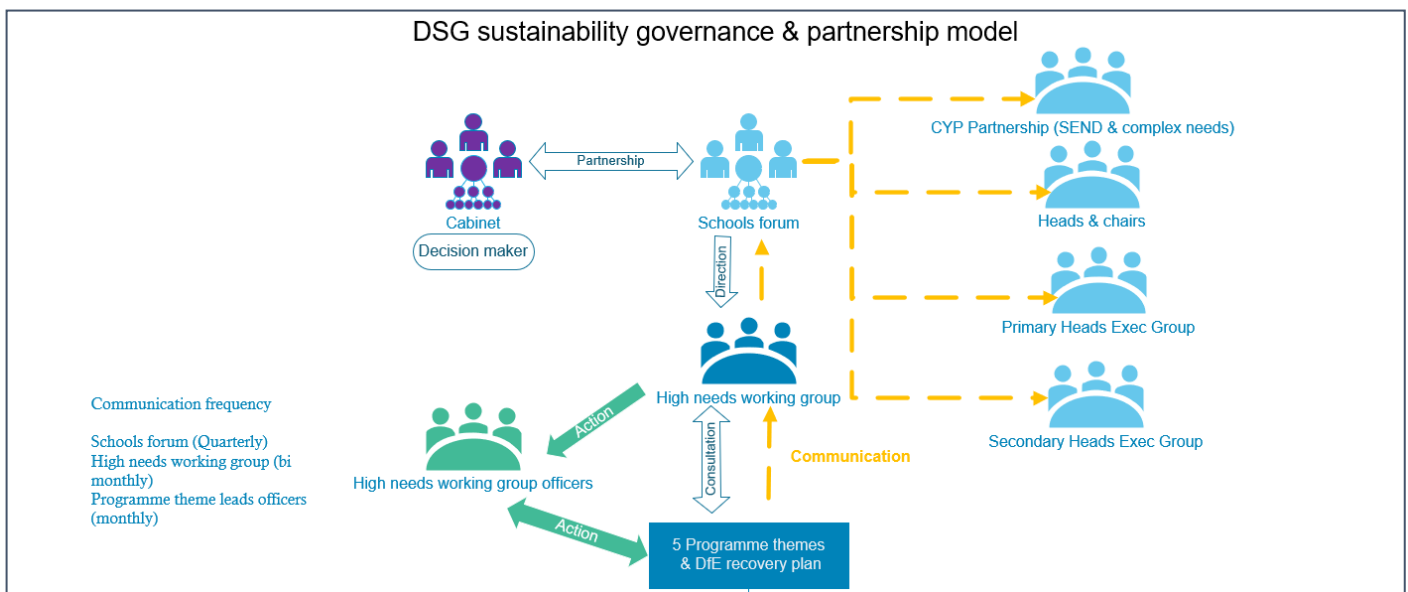
##### 3.1

The governance structure is illustrated in Figure 1. The High needs working group, taking their direction from the Schools Forum, provides consultation, direction and challenge to the High needs working group officers where the programme themes are managed and the work carried out. The role of the HNWG is clear, and the group will consider the further link with the governance structures at the next HNWG meeting as this was raised at Schools Forum.

## 3.2

Communication flows between the groups are at an agreed frequency. Messages to external stakeholders such as the CYP Partnership (SEND & complex needs) will follow each Schools Forum meeting. The planned developments have now been shared with key stakeholder groups and the HNWG are moving to a position of a regular communications pattern as outlined in Fig 1.

Figure 1



## 4. DSG deficit recovery programme plan

## 4.1

A draft programme plan is illustrated in Figure 2 below. This was shared in the previous report to Schools Forum. The five themes each have a lead officer. The key objective of the theme is stated under the name. The smaller circles highlight interdependent work. Work has taken place over the past few months to create capacity and direction to the specific work flow area. The progress on the elements of this plan will be considered in the HNWG on 6<sup>th</sup> May.

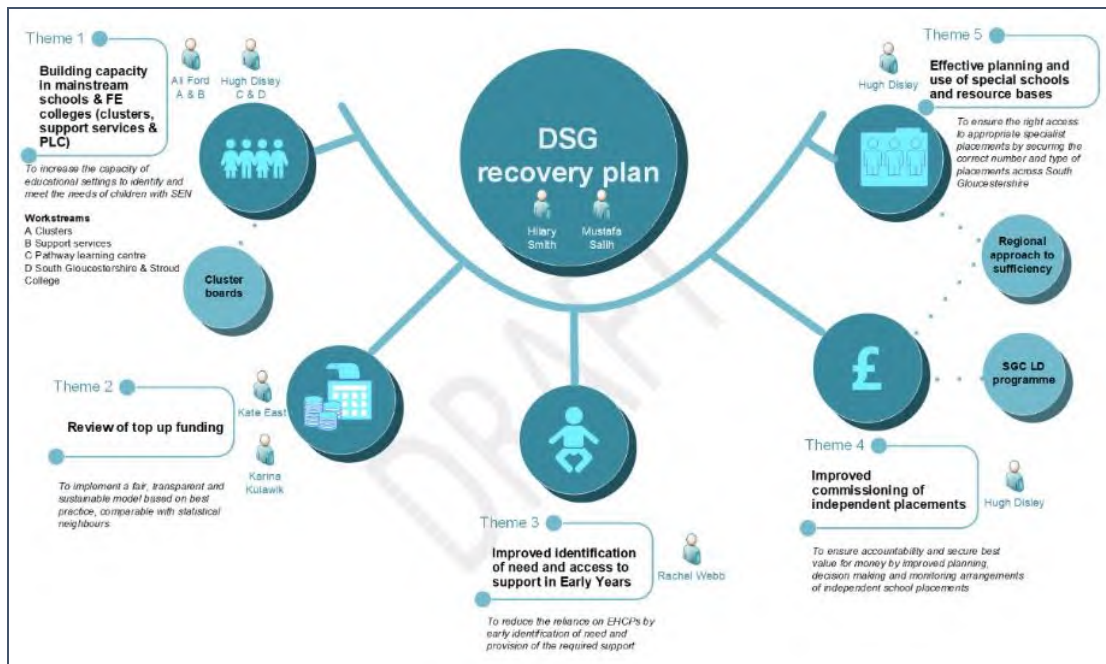
## 4.2

The governance structures are now in place in key areas and the work streams are taking shape. A focus on careful consideration of the links within and between the difference strands is now an area for discussion.

## 4.3

Theme 2 – Review of top up funding, a new project is developing well with a core group working with LA officers and consultants to review different types of funding models. Focus groups have taken place, including sessions with parents/carers and representation on the sub-group. Proposed banding structures will be shared with all stakeholders and a draft decision-making process will be signed off by the HNWG on 6<sup>th</sup> May.

Figure 2



## 5. Next steps

5.1 For HNWG to review the **draft programme project initiation document (PID)** and convene all theme project teams ensuring appropriate membership.

5.2. For HNWG to consider all draft project briefs including scope, objectives, deliverables, potential savings, risks and issues for each of the themes and gain sign off.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Consider HNWG summary from the meeting scheduled for 6.5.21 to be shared at Schools Forum, including an update on item 5.

### Report Author

Susie Weaver/HNWG



# South Gloucestershire Council

## SCHOOLS FORUM

### Dedicated Schools Grant 2020/21 Quarter 3

#### Purpose of Report

1. To update the School Forum on the Dedicated Schools Grant 2020/21 Quarter 3 position.

#### Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Funded budgets

2. The net current DSG budget, excluding academies and High Needs recoupment, is £139,669k. The DSG is forecasting an outturn overspend position of £24,669k. This arises from an in-year forecast outturn overspend of £8,322k compared to £8,118k at Quarter 2 and a brought forward deficit balance of £16,347k. Details of the key pressure areas are included in the block summaries below.

3. It should be noted that when the budgets for 2020/21 were prepared, a funding shortfall of £7,754k was identified before applying the DSG recovery savings target of £2,813k. The forecast overspend makes an assumption that the in-year DSG savings target is unlikely to be achieved. This is due to the impact of Covid-19 as well as delays in implementing new working practices and alternative methods for delivering high needs services.

<b>DSG Budget</b>	<b>Net £'000</b>
Original Budget Allocation (December 2019)	<b>219,189</b>
Adjustments and Recoupment	
• High Needs Block Direct Funding By EFA	-5,178
• Academy Recoupment	-74,944
• High Needs Block Adjustment for place change return	-147
DSG Announcements (July 2020)	
• Early Years Block January 2020 census	327
• High Needs Block import/export and free schools funding	197
<b>Total Revised DSG (July 2020)</b>	<b>139,444</b>
DSG Announcements (November 2020)	
• Import/export adjustment	<b>225</b>
<b>Total Revised DSG (November 2020)</b>	<b>139,669</b>

4. The overspend position by funding block is provided in the table below

Funding by Blocks	Gross Budget	EFA / Other Income Budget	Budget Reserve (Approved Q1)	Net Budget (DSG)	Gross Exp	EFA / Other Income	Revised Forecast Outturn Reserve as at Q3	Net Exp	Over / (Under)
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
<b>Schools Block:</b>									
<b>Total Schools Block - Primary &amp; Secondary Schools (excluding Academies)</b>	<b>96,305</b>	<b>-9,911</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>86,776</b>	<b>97,016</b>	<b>-10,887</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>86,776</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Central Schools Services Block:</b>									
<b>Total Central Schools Services Block</b>	<b>3,701</b>	<b>-111</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3,598</b>	<b>3,663</b>	<b>-117</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>3,598</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>High Needs Block:</b>									
Schools & Independent Providers (including Academies)	37,628	-160	-7,706	29,762	38,071	-412	-7,897	29,762	0
Central Items	2,709	-167	0	2,542	3,142	-338	-262	2,542	0
<b>Total High Needs Block</b>	<b>40,337</b>	<b>-327</b>	<b>-7,706</b>	<b>32,304</b>	<b>41,213</b>	<b>-750</b>	<b>-8,159</b>	<b>32,304</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Early Years Block:</b>									
Private, Voluntary & Independent Providers	16,966	0	-802	16,164	17,028	0	-862	16,166	2
Central Items	857	-30	0	827	842	-17	0	825	-2
<b>Total Early Years Block</b>	<b>17,823</b>	<b>-30</b>	<b>-802</b>	<b>16,991</b>	<b>17,870</b>	<b>-17</b>	<b>-862</b>	<b>16,991</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total In-Year DSG &amp; EFA Funding</b>	<b>158,166</b>	<b>-10,379</b>	<b>-8,118</b>	<b>139,669</b>	<b>159,762</b>	<b>-11,771</b>	<b>-8,322</b>	<b>139,669</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total DSG In Year Overspend</b>									<b>8,322</b>
<b>DSG Deficit Reserve B/F</b>									<b>16,347</b>
<b>Total DSG Deficit Reserve</b>									<b>24,669</b>
<b>DSG Reserve:</b>									<b>£'000s</b>
DSG Deficit Reserve B/F from previous years (Appendix 7)									<b>-16,347</b>
Approved Budget 2020/21									<b>-4,941</b>
Approved Increase draw on DSG Reserve at Quarter 1 (£3,313k)									<b>-3,313</b>
Approved Reduce draw on DSG Reserve at Quarter 2 (£136k)									<b>136</b>
Request Increase draw on DSG Reserve Q3 (£204k)									<b>-204</b>
<b>Total DSG Deficit Reserve (Appendix 7)</b>									<b>-24,669</b>

## Funding Transfer between Blocks

- The DSG is funded from four blocks: The Schools Block, the Central Schools Services Block, the High Needs Block and the Early Years Block.
- There was a funding transfer of £2,200k approved by the Secretary of State from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block to support demand led pressures. This funding has targeted Special Schools, Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools and Post 16 Placements.

## Schools Block

7. The Schools Block is forecasting an outturn underspend of £647k, an increased underspend of £265k since Quarter 2. This is mostly due to the growth funding provisions between September to March for schools not being fully required in 2020/21. Growth funding is held within the Schools Block and supports permanent and temporary pupil growth within South Gloucestershire schools.

## Central Schools Services Block

8. The Central Schools Services Block is forecasting an outturn underspend of £52k, an increased underspend of £19k since Quarter 2. This is due to staffing vacancies and a reduction on school pensions costs.

## High Needs Block

9. The High Needs Block is forecasting an outturn overspend of £8,159k before applying the approved reserve transfer, an increase of £654k since Quarter 2. The overspend includes the assumption that the in-year DSG deficit recovery plan savings target (£2,813k) will not be achieved. The main pressures within high needs areas are provided below.

## Independent and Non-Maintained Special School Placements

10. Independent and Non-Maintained Special School Placements is forecasting an outturn overspend of £1,172k, a reduced overspend position of £187k since Quarter 2. This is due to 5 new placements resulting in a net increase of £14k after offsetting the contingency provision held for new placements, 8 leavers saving £192k and 31 cost of provision changes / adhoc payments resulting in a net cost reduction of £9k. The budget requirement for 2020/21 was £7,604k based on 132 placements at an average weekly cost of £1,516, however based on the funding available the budget provided was £5,840k resulting in an average weekly cost of £1,164. The forecast outturn is based on 110 current learners and a provision for 8 new placements from December to March 2021 (4 planned placements £160k and 4 unplanned £58k) at an average weekly cost of £1,564.

## Statemented Support (including Other Local Authority (OLA))

11. Statemented Support is forecasting an outturn overspend of £3,380k, an increased overspend of £130k since Quarter 2. This is due to 62 new provisions resulting in a net increase of £277k after offsetting the contingency for new plans. The transfer of young people from matrix to the Ready Reckoner through the Key Stage transfer process and changes to a young person's provision via the annual review process has cost an additional £99k, a reduction from service leavers during August saving £196k and a reduction from young people moving in and out of the Local Authority totalling £50k.

12. The budget required for 2020/21 was £7,131k based on 811 placements at an average weekly cost of £231, however based on the funding available the budget allocated was £4,635k resulting in an average weekly cost of £150. The forecast outturn is based on 823 current learners and a provision for 57 new placements from December to March 2021. The average weekly cost based on 880 placements is £241.

### Special Schools and Resource Bases - OLA

13. Special Schools and Resource Bases - OLA is forecasting an outturn overspend of £476k, an increased overspend position of £38k since Quarter 2. This is due to 5 new placements costing £61k, 1 leaver saving £26k and a review of the contingency for new placements November to March resulting in an increase of £3k. The budget required for 2020/21 was £1,399k based on 68 placements at an average weekly cost of £541, however based on the funding available the budget allocated was £865k resulting in an average weekly cost of £335. The forecast outturn is based on 74 placements made up of 68 current placements and a provision for 7 new placements November to March 2021 at an average weekly cost of £477.

### Post 16 Placements

14. Post 16 Placements is forecasting an outturn overspend of £537k, an increased overspend position of £437k since Quarter 2. This is due to 6 new placements in Alternative Provision (£95k), 2 new placements in Independent FE Colleges (£101k), a provision for element 2 funding at South Gloucestershire and Stroud (SGS) college based on 50 breach placements (£175k), 27 new placements at SGS college compared to the predicted number (£99k), an increase in the average cost of other FE College Placements from September 2020 (£163k), 2 new placements at St. Brendans FE College (£32k), cost of provision reductions (£3k) and additional high needs block funding announced for import/export adjustments (£225k). It should be noted that some learners in SGS college have returned for an additional year due to Covid-19 as they were unable to complete their final year.

15. The import/export adjustment relates to element 2 funding where other local authority pupils are placed in South Gloucestershire schools or FE colleges. Originally the Education and Skills Funding Agency reduced the high needs block funding for the council by £111k based on data they received from educational establishments. The finance team challenged this data and provided evidence confirming the council is an importer and not an exporter. This resulted in an additional £225k being allocated to the council.

16. The budget required for 2020/21 was £3,247k based on 271 placements at an average weekly cost of £315, based on the funding available as at Q3 the budget allocated is £3,253k resulting in an average weekly cost of £316. The forecast outturn is based on 335 current learners and a provision for 6 new placements in an Independent Specialist setting for November to March 2021 resulting in an average weekly cost of £292.

### Special Schools South Gloucestershire

17. Special Schools is forecasting an outturn overspend of £954k, a reduced overspend position of £38k since Quarter 2. This is due to 16 new starters resulting in a cost of £81k after offsetting against the contingency held for new placements, 21 leavers saving £154k and breach payments / changes to cost of provision resulting in a net increase of £35k.

18. The budget required for 2020/21 was £9,477k based on 513 placements at an average weekly cost of £486, however based on the funding available the budget allocated was £8,575k resulting in an average weekly cost of £440. The forecast outturn is based on

481 current learners plus a contingency for 19 new starters giving a total of 500 learners at an average cost of £501 per week.

### Resource Bases South Gloucestershire

19. Resource Bases are forecasting an outturn overspend of £349k, reduction of £24k since Quarter 2. This is due to 8 new starters and 12 leavers resulting in a net reduction of £15k and a reduction for breach payments / changes to cost of provision (£9k).

20. The budget required for 2020/21 was £2,632k based on 132 placements at an average weekly cost of £525, however based on the funding available the budget allocated was £2,423k resulting in an average weekly cost of £483. The forecast outturn is based on 134 current learners plus contingency for 5 new starters giving a total of 139 learners at an average cost of £524 per week.

### Pathways Learning Centre

21. Pathways Learning Centre (PLC) is forecasting an outturn overspend of £1,644k, no change since Quarter 2. The budget required for 2020/21 was £2,720k based on 218 placements at an average weekly cost of £328, however based on the funding available the budget allocated was £1,848k resulting in an average weekly cost of £223. The forecast outturn is based on actual payments up to the end of September 2020 and a forecast for November to March 2021 based on a new funding agreement between the Head of Education Learning and Skills and Pathways Learning Centre. From September 2020 funding for PLC is based on a fixed number of placements per annum and top up funding rates based on previous years averages. It should be noted that PLC is supporting a number of young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (typically 30-40) whose needs are not currently being met in South Gloucestershire Mainstream, Special Schools, and Resource Bases and in some cases other OLA Special Schools due to the complexity of these young people. It is reasonable to assume that many or all of these young people may have been placed in a high-cost Independent Specialist provision, if PLC were not available.

### Other High Needs Areas

22. Other high needs areas are forecasting an outturn underspend of £353k, a reduced underspend position of £73k since Quarter 2. This is mostly due to new support packages for young people currently not in an educational setting.

23. The table below shows the outturn spend position for the High Needs budget areas that are currently under pressure.

High Needs Budget Pressure Areas Only	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	
	Outturn £'000	Outturn £'000	Outturn £'000	Outturn £'000	Outturn £'000	Outturn £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000	Number placed March 2021 Est.
Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools - Placements	3,904	4,264	5,463	5,419	5,976	6,737	7,012	118*
Stated Support (including High Incidence Payments)	4,781	5,368	6,121	6,376	6,897	6,570	8,066	880**
Post 16 High Needs Placements (Gross of ESFA direct funding)	1,949	2,422	3,157	4,549	4,464	4,276	5,343	341***
South Gloucestershire Special Schools (Gross of ESFA recoupment for Academies and Post 16)	8,949	7,793	8,468	9,186	10,077	11,539	12,665	500****
South Gloucestershire Resource Bases (Gross of ESFA recoupment for Academies and Post 16)	3,022	3,323	3,467	3,670	3,037	3,216	3,409	139****
PLC	2,050	1,925	2,080	2,597	2,977	3,649	3,492	150
Total	24,655	25,095	28,756	31,797	33,428	35,987	39,987	2,128
Annual % Change		1.78%	14.59%	10.58%	5.13%	7.66%	11.12%	

\* Includes Funding for Non-Maintained Special Schools 2014/15 and 2015/16, from 2016/17 directly funded by the ESFA

\*\* Transfer of £1,000k from Stated Support in 2020/21 for the SEND Cluster Funding Initiative

\*\*\* Post 16 recoupment for FE colleges included from 2017/18, prior to 2017/18 directly funded via ESFA

\*\*\*\* Academy and Post 16 Recoupment included for all years and establishments

24. Pressure on the above demand driven High Needs areas has increased mostly due to a delay in the implementation of the SEND Cluster Fund and the opening of Pegasus Special Free School and the impact of Covid-19.

25. The SEND Cluster Fund was originally planned to be ready for full implementation across the local authority by April 2019. Due to the innovative nature of this project, which requires significant partnership working between schools and the local authority, it took longer than anticipated to establish the original two pilots and roll out to all schools. The 6 clusters are now fully established and operational.

26. This will have a positive impact on the number of pupil exclusions referred to Pathways Learning centre (PLC) and the escalation of needs for pupils at SEND Support level during 2020/2021.

27. The opening of Pegasus Special Free School was delayed by a year due to problems incurred during the building process which was led and funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. This impacted on the department's plans to place young people locally and reduce the number of young people being placed out of area. When a new school opens, pupils are phased in over several years to ensure the correct skill sets and facilities are fully embedded to meet future demand. In 2019/20 the school was supporting pupils with very complex needs and the number it could admit was limited and also a year behind the department's original plan. The place capacity will increase over the coming years which will ensure the school grows at a pace that can adequately support the predicted growing pupil numbers with complex need. In September 2020 the schools capacity increased by 27 places.

28. Covid-19 has impacted the work of the High Needs Officers Working Group as they were unable to meet for several months due to other work-related demands linked to Covid-19. This has delayed finalising of the SEND improvement plan resulting in an ongoing increase demand on the High Needs budget.

## Early Years Block

29. The Early Years Block is reporting a forecast outturn overspend of £862k, an increased overspend position of £60k since Quarter 2. The increase is due to the latest forecast position which has been based on funding being received using January 2020 census data and forecast spend based on the previous Autumn and Spring Terms.

30. The overspend position is due to a shortfall in funding for 2018/19 and 2019/20 academic years. Local Authorities are funded for 38 weeks a year based on the number of entitlement hours submitted on the annual census return. However, Nursery settings and providers are permitted to stretch their entitlement hours over more than 38 weeks should they wish. An investigation has taken place and found that nursery providers have been able to allocate the entitled 15 hours per week over 48 weeks resulting in the census hours being submitted as 11.88 hours instead of 15 hours. The local authority has therefore been funded on 11.88 hours over 38 weeks instead of 15 hours over 38 weeks. A working group was set up and actions put in place to ensure the census data collected for January 2021 was not based on stretched hours. Additional checks within the council departments involved with collecting and submitting the census data were put in place, the number of weeks in the Early Years Portal system is now pre-completed based on 38 weeks and guidance notes for Early Years settings have been reviewed and updated.

31. On 20<sup>th</sup> October Schools Forum were presented with the latest position on the Early Years Block and asked to support the following recommendations which were approved.

32. Firstly the local authority can top slice 5% of the Early Years Block to support central services for Early Years. The Department is proposing to offset any financial increase in the 5% retained in future years to repay this deficit. This is likely to take in excess of 10 years due to the size of the deficit and was approved by Schools Forum.

33. Secondly it is likely that not all of the initial growth funding commitments for 2020/2021 will be required. Schools forum were asked to consider any underspend in the schools block be used to offset the in-year deficit in the Early Years Block. Schools Forum approved this proposal. The current forecast for this area is an underspend position of £647k (paragraph 7).

### Author

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## FORWARD PLAN

July	8th			
			Update on SEND clusters	Hilary Smith
			Update on Schools in Financial Difficulty Fund	Mustafa Salih
			HNWG Update & Financial Implications	Susie Weaver
			Q4 Update	Mustafa Salih
			Schools Forum Constitution/composition	Ali Davies

All future meetings will be held on Microsoft Teams until further notification from the Forum Chair.

### Dates for 2021/22:

Academic Year 2021-2022 (All Thursday)	
July	8th
Sept	23rd
Oct	21st
Nov	18th
Jan	20th
March	24th
May	12th
July	7th



## ANY OTHER BUSINESS