

17<sup>th</sup> October 2019

Headteachers and  
Chairs of Governors of  
Maintained  
and Academy Schools

Accountancy  
Finance & Procurement  
County Hall  
Bythesea Road  
Trowbridge  
Wiltshire  
BA14 8JN

Your ref: 002  
Our ref: HNB

Dear Colleague

## **Re: Annual consultation on Schools Funding 20/21 for ALL SCHOOLS**

The DfE have confirmed their intention to move to a single “hard” national formula to determine every schools budget. For the 20/21 financial year however, the “soft” funding rules will apply which allow more local flexibility. Each year, Schools Forum set the annual budget for Schools in January. Under the “soft” funding rules, this includes certain decisions which can be made locally. Schools Forum are interested in collecting your input into the difficult decisions to be made around financing of the High Needs Block in the 20/21 financial year.

### **Background**

Nationally there is significant pressure on the High Needs Block. Demand is outstripping the national funding available and Wiltshire, like the majority of other Local Authorities is facing a significant and increasing level of overspend for the 19/20 Financial Year. Wiltshire has seized every opportunity to take part in lobbying and research and surveys to be presented to the Government. The Government have acknowledged this funding shortfall with a pledge for additional funding of £700m nationally in 2020/21 which although welcome news, will not resolve our local pressures.

An external review was commissioned and paid for by the local authority. The ISOS Partnership have worked with schools, the local authority, the WPCC, young people, and other partners to capture experiences and pressure in the current system. They attended Schools Forum on the 10<sup>th</sup> October and presented their findings and recommendations. For those of you who are interested in the final or summary presentation of the report – it can be accessed here:

[Agenda for Schools Forum on Thursday 10 October 2019, 1.30 pm | Wiltshire Council](#)

As a result, there is much work to be done which can be separated out into short and longer-term actions. Those longer-term actions involve changing practices and behaviours and will require a great deal of trust between all stakeholders.

## Action Planning & Developments

With effect from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2019, SEN education services will move to Skills & Learning under Helean Hughes who is the Council's Director for Education and lead for SEN. This means closer alignment with School Effectiveness. Recruitment is currently underway for a new post, the Head of Service Inclusion & SEN.

*Other short-term actions include:*

- £0.2m FACT (transformation programme) local authority budget identified to fund external review and consultant headteacher time
- Local Authority contribution of £1.3m into the High Needs budget 2018/19
- Appointment of Matt Sambrook (Headteacher and Multi-Academy Trust CEO) leading on developing a joined-up approach to inclusion across Wiltshire- FACT
- Review of SEND panel- consistent charring, application of banding etc
- Developing communication- Heads' briefings and SENCo briefings
- SEMH pathway
- Transitions framework- clear outcomes
- Alternative Provision review- primary and secondary
- Targeted review of ISS placements and EHE

*The longer-term developments will be co-produced:*

- Review of ELP in Secondary schools - redefine the model and align with resource bases
- Refining the banding framework
- Providing targeted support without an EHCP- pathway being defined- enhancing SENs
- In-reach and out-reach- new schools in the north and the south
- Dyslexia specialism- primary and secondary
- Inclusion aligned to regional working

In November 2019, Cabinet will discuss the "System of Excellence" – a significant investment for Wiltshire with an estimated cost of £32m, offering Special School provision and outreach in the North of the County. This is funded by borrowing the capital as the council does not have this funding available. The annual revenue cost to the council is estimated at £1.6m for the next 50 years – this is not funded from Schools Budget (DSG.) In January 2018, the local authority was successful in bidding for a 150 place £12m Special Free School in the South of the County which is scheduled to open in September 2022. This school is DfE capital grant funded. The Inclusion & SEN Strategy is currently in development, aiming for publication in February 2020.

On Friday 11<sup>th</sup> October, the DfE released the 20/21 provisional schools budget allocations. Wiltshire has been allocated £4.441million for high needs block. Although most welcome, this in itself will not be sufficient to cover the increasing needs of children and young people identified by schools. Link to allocations below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-funding-formula-tables-for-schools-and-high-needs-2020-to-2021>

## **Current Year (19/20) Budget Setting**

In setting the 19/20 Schools Budget, Schools Forum agreed a schools budget to reduce funding across the whole of the mainstream population than further reduce funding to Wiltshire's most vulnerable in Special Schools Resource Bases and Enhanced Learning Provision settings etc. This meant a lower reduction in per pupil funding and impact. In 2019/20, the Secretary of State approved the Schools Forum decision to transfer up to **1%** of Schools block funding to support pupils with EHCPs.

Schools Forum are keen to hear your views but appreciate it is a very complex area. Both the Chair (Neil Baker) and vice-chair (Lisa Percy) have committed to making themselves available to discuss any aspect with you.

**Neil Baker – Headteacher, Christ Church Primary School** 01225 863444

**Lisa Percy – Headteacher, Hardenhuish School** 01249 650693

Please respond by 30<sup>th</sup> November 2019

Yours sincerely



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## **COPY of SNAP SURVEY QUESTIONS 2020/21 Budget Setting**

There is no doubt that High Needs Block spend must be reduced across the authority and that Schools, Schools Forum, the Local Authority, health colleagues, the WPCC, Parents and Carers and Young People will need to work collaboratively on the difficult decisions which need to be made around the suite of proposals and resolutions.

**Qu 1 – Please enter your DfE Number here:**

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For the first time in 19/20, the DfE provided their own calculation of the Growth Fund for local authorities at £2.2m. Schools Forum agreed for 19/20 that this was at a higher level than local need dictated and that £1.2million could be removed from the Growth Fund to support High Needs Pupils.

**Qu 2 – Do you support Schools Forum in setting the Growth Fund at the locally required level for 20/21 financial year and transfer the surplus to support the High Needs Block?**

YES / NO

Assuming Schools Forum vote to use the surplus Growth Fund in this way, there will be a lower amount required which will impact mainstream funding – see Qu 3 below:

**Qu 3 – Which of the following options do you think will be most appropriate to fund the gap which, if requests for EHCPs and increased funding per child do not reduce will continue to rise at the current rate of 15 EHCPs per month and at an estimated spend above available current funding of £6.8m per annum? (Please refer to the table in the covering letter for more detail.)**

<b>Amount</b>	<b>% Reduction impact on your School Budget assuming £1.2m trf from Growth Fund</b>	<b>% Reduction impact on your School Budget assuming £1.2m trf from Growth Fund</b>	
£1.0m	None	0.36%	Schools Forum can approve up to a 0.5% Budget Transfer
£1.5m	£4.73 per pupil on roll	0.545%	
£2.0m	£11.03 per pupil on roll	0.72%	
£2.5m	£20.49 per pupil on roll	0.901%	

£3.0m	£28.37 per pupil on roll	1.091%	Transfers above 0.5% need Approval from the Secretary of State
£3.5m	£36.26 per pupil on roll	1.272%	
£4.0m	£44.13 per pupil on roll	1.454%	
£4.5m	£52.02 per pupil on roll	1.636%	

Although the local authority's preference is to reduce funding for individual children & young people in our most inclusive schools, a third option is to reduce the value of amounts devolved to schools to support vulnerable pupils with EHCPs. This might be by reducing the value of NPAs or top ups.

The DfE have stated they want young people to have access to a world-class education system which will give them the best possible opportunities, whatever direction they wish to take and that HNB funding will have a positive impact for those pupils identified as SEND (which includes those with disabilities), by improving their ability to access the right educational provision and thereby addressing educational inequalities for children with SEND.

**Qu 4 – Do you believe that children with EHCPs can be supported with lower value NPAs or Top ups?**

YES / NO

**Qu 5 – We would be very interested to hear your views on any alternative modelling Schools Forum could consider which might reduce the pressure on the High Needs Block?**

Finally, there is much work to do combining our mutual strengths and capacities to work with each other on an equal basis for positive and sustainable change;

**Qu 6 – Would you be willing to be part of a working group and key decision maker in a SEN WORKING GROUP?**

YES / NO

Contact details can be provide here

Or, emailed to [marie.taylor@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:marie.taylor@wiltshire.gov.uk)

Please respond by **30<sup>th</sup> November 2019**