

CAMBRIDGESHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM



Friday, 12 January 2024

Democratic and Members' Services
Emma Duncan
Service Director: Legal and Governance

10:00

New Shire Hall
Alconbury Weald
Huntingdon
PE28 4YE

Virtual meeting
[Venue Address]

AGENDA

Open to Public and Press

1. **Apologies for absence and declarations of interest**
Guidance on declaring interests is available at
<http://tinyurl.com/ccc-conduct-code>
2. **Schools Forum Minutes - 13 December 2023 and Action Log** **3 - 10**
3. **Schools Budget Setting 2024-25 (Appendices B, C & D to follow)** **11 - 36**
4. **Early Years Funding Formula 2024-25** **37 - 42**
5. **Union Facilities Time (to follow)**
6. **Proposed Future Schools Forum Dates 2024-25** **43 - 44**
7. **Schools Forum Agenda Plan** **45 - 46**

Meetings of the Schools Forum will be held virtually for Committee members and for members of the public who wish to participate. These meetings will held via Zoom and Microsoft Teams (for confidential or exempt items). For more information please contact the clerk for the meeting (details provided above).

Clerk Name:	Tamar Oviatt-Ham
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Cambridgeshire Schools Forum - Minutes

Date: Wednesday 13 December 2023

Time: 10.00am – 11.30am

Venue: Via zoom

Present:

Maintained Primary - Nicki Brown and Sasha Howard

Maintained Special Schools - Joanne Hardwick

Maintained Nursery - Karen Scott

Hospital Education - Nadine Gooding-Hebert

Early Years Reference Group - Kate Spencer Allen

Trade Unions - Helen Brook

Diocese of Ely - Sarah Conant

Academy Sector Appointments - Susannah Connell, Jon Culpin (Chair), Richard Spencer (Vice Chair), Adrian Ball, Christopher Bennett, Ryan Kelsall, Richard Scott, Peter Law, Mark Vickers, Karin Taylor, Duncan Ramsey and Lesley Birch

Cambridgeshire County Council - Councillors Michael Atkins, Claire Daunton (virtual), and Simone Taylor (virtual)

Officers - Jonathan Lewis: Service Director Education, Martin Wade: Strategic Finance Officer and Tamar Oviatt-Ham: Democratic Services Officer.

58. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies received from Clare Clarke

Jon Culpin, Suzanne Connell, Richard Scott, Adrian Ball, Lesley Birch, Christopher Bennett and Richard Spencer declared an interest in item 3 as their trusts had schools that received growth funding.

59. Schools Forum Minutes – 3 November 2023

It was resolved unanimously:

to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2023 as a correct record.

60. Schools Budget Setting 2024-25 - December 2023

The Schools Forum received a [presentation](#) that provided information to support the 2024-25 Schools budget setting process and covered the following areas:

- 2024-25 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Funding Arrangements
- Retained Funding and De-Delegations (Maintained Primary only)
- Pupil Numbers – Appendix 2 provides a comparison of pupil numbers between the October 2022 and October 2023 census points.
- Growth and Falling Rolls Funding - Appendix 3 is the draft Growth Fund policy to be applied in 2024-25, and Appendix 4 provides analysis of the proposed funding route for growth.
- Next Steps

Individual members raised the following points in relation to the 2024/25 DSG Funding Arrangements – Autumn Statement and the Retained Funding and De-Delegations:

- queried if there would be investment into a new admissions system for schools and if this was included in the de-delegation. Officers explained that the authority was currently going through a tender process for a new admissions system which would be funded through the retained schools budget.
- highlighted that the volume of casework for the unions had risen year on year and that there had been no increase on the price per pupil to reflect this. Officers stated that there had been conversations with the unions as part of the review of the facilities agreement and that any changes would impact the maintained schools and any academies that bought into the agreement. Officers explained that a report looking at the demands and pressures on the facilities agreement and a forward look at the potential for any changes in future years would be brought to the next meeting of forum. **ACTION**

Individual members raised the following points in relation to pupil numbers, Growth Funding / Falling Rolls / New Schools and the Exceptional Premises Factor:

- asked if the authority had further data on the projected number of special schools. Officers explained that they were working with place planning colleagues on that data for this to feed into the safety valve work and explained that there was no growth funding for special schools as this was covered by the safety valve funding.
- queried how the growth and falling rolls funding was derived. Officers explained that they were based on the unvalidated October census data and on demographic projections across the area, total number of pupils, housing developments and an estimate of future demand, which

all formed part of the local plan of the authority, with similar work produced for early years settings, and highlighted that this was not an easy calculation. Officers stated that the data did not take into consideration parental preference. Officers had contacted the ESFA to ask them whether there was scope to consider the use of more local data and were speaking to other local authorities to see if the SCAP 23 data was also causing them similar issues.

- suggested that in section 1.3 of the revised growth funding policy, it was highlighted that this did not cover post 16 education, for the sake of clarity. **ACTION**

It was resolved unanimously to:

a) approve (Maintained Primary representatives only):

- i. The continued retention of £10 per pupil from maintained schools for services specifically provided to maintained schools.
- ii. The continuation of the de-delegation in respect of Contingency.
- iii. The continuation of the de-delegation in respect of Free School Meals Eligibility.
- iv. The continuation of the de-delegation in respect of Maternity and Paternity Cover.
- v. The continuation of the de-delegation in respect of Trade Union Facilities Time.

b) comment on the proposed approach for Growth and Falling rolls funding.

c) approve the proposed Growth Funding policy (Appendix 3) and the retained Growth Fund budget of £2m to apply to 2024/25 only.

d) note the proposed variations to pupil numbers.

e) vote on the continuation of the historic exceptional premises factor arrangements.

61. SEND Update

The Schools Forum received a [presentation](#) that gave an update on Special Educational Needs in Cambridgeshire (SEND)

Individual members raised the following points in relation to the presentation;

- queried if the Department for Education had recognised the impact the delay in their projects had on the safety valve model. Officers clarified

that they had been part of the conversations with the authority to revise the model going forwards.

- questioned if officers had considered writing to parents and carers whose children had been affected by the delays in providing special school places. Officers explained that they had written to parents and carers whose children attended mainstream schools to update them on progress to date. Officers stated that more special school places had been created but demand had increased even further, and this needed to be considered against the delay in building the school at Gamlingay. Officers agreed that they would also write to maintained school staff with an update. **ACTION**
- sought assurances that needs would be met through the banding process. Officers explained that the banding process defined the types of provision required and this would be overlayed with a costing model and that the challenge would be to best fit funding against the cost and would be an iterative model but would be fair and more consistent.
- asked if there was a timetable for the completion of the school in Gamlingay and the Samuel Pepys School. Officers stated that they would update the forum on timelines but that the Samuel Pepys School was due to open in November 2024. **ACTION** Officers stated that they welcomed the support that schools had been giving whilst waiting for the special schools to open.
- highlighted that some schools were disproportionately picking up EHCPs out of catchment and encouraged more honest and robust challenge in this as it would become unsustainable for some schools. Officers explained that they had already spoken to Primary Heads about this and would pick up with Secondary Heads as it was causing issues.
- queried what work had been done to manage parents/carers expectations with what schools could provide and support. Officers explained that this would be included in the SEND and AP improvement planning around managing choice and setting expectations.
- discussed creating a more joined up process between primary and secondary and queried what the nature of the conversation with OFSTED in relation to the county's current position in relation to SEND and special school places. Officers stated that there was a good dialogue with OFSTED and officers had shared the pressures with them. Officers had taken part in an annual contact meeting with other inspectors and were doing all they could to represent the position.
- queried whether the safety valve model was deliverable given the increase in costs and demand and the current issues identified with the

model as it stood. Officers explained that they were testing deliverability now in relation to 2026-27 and the reforms coming through the national improvement plan. Officers stated there was no clear picture on future funding and that the chancellors announcement in March 2024 might give some respite and would outline the implications of resetting the model at the March meeting of forum.

ACTION

note and comment on the position around the high needs block and safety valve position in light of the ongoing challenges of SEND demand.

62. Agenda Plan

Officers outlined that there would be reports on the following at the January meeting of forum:

- Early years funding
- Special schools funding
- Paper on Unions Facilities time

A member queried the date of the reserve meeting in February as it was half term. Officers to review. **ACTION**

The Chair thanked Duncan Ramsey for his service on the forum as it was his last meeting before stepping down.

The agenda plan was noted.

Schools Forum Minutes Action Log

The Action Log was updated following the December 2023 Forum meeting and captures the actions from meetings of the Cambridgeshire Schools Forum requiring a response / or the response undertaken and completed since the last Action Log update.

Minutes 13 December 2023

	Agenda Item	Officer	Action	Response	Status
60.a	Schools Budget Setting 2024-25 - December 2023	Jon Lewis	Officers explained that a report looking at the demands and pressures on the facilities agreement and a forward look at the potential for any changes in future years would be brought to the next meeting of forum.	Report on next forum agenda.	Closed
60.b	Schools Budget Setting 2024-25 - December 2023	Martin Wade	Suggested that in section 1.3 of the revised growth funding policy, it was highlighted that this did not cover post 16 education, for the sake of clarity.	Policy updated accordingly	Closed
61.a	SEND Update	Jon Lewis	Questioned if officers had considered writing to parents and carers whose children had been affected by the delays in providing special school places. Officers explained that they had written to parents and carers whose children attended mainstream schools to update them on progress to date. Officers stated that more special school places had been created but demand had increased even further, and this needed to be considered against the delay in building the school at Gamlingay. Officers agreed that they would also write to maintained school staff with an update.		

61.b	SEND Update	Jon Lewis	Asked if there was a timetable for the completion of the school in Gamlingay and the Samuel Pepys School. Officers stated that they would update the forum on timelines but that the Samuel Pepys School was due to open in November 2024.		
61.c	SEND Update	Jon Lewis	Officers stated there was no clear picture on future funding and that the chancellor's announcement in March 2024 might give some respite and would outline the implications of resetting the model at the March meeting of forum.	Report added to the forward plan for the March 2024 meeting.	Closed
62.	Agenda Plan	Tamar Oviatt-Ham	A member queried the date of the reserve meeting in February as it was half term. Officers to review.	Have checked the date which is 16 February and this is the last day before half term	Closed

Schools Budget Setting 2024-25

To: Schools Forum

Meeting Date: 12th January 2024

From: Jonathan Lewis – Service Director: Education
Martin Wade – Strategic Finance Manager

Recommendations: **Schools Funding Formula**

- a) Schools Forum are asked to note and comment on the final schools funding formula proposals following the December announcements.

High Needs Block

- b) Schools Forum are asked to note and comment on the high needs block following the December announcements.

Central Schools Services Block

- c) Schools Forum are asked to note and comment on the final central schools services block proposals following the December announcements.

Officer contact:

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Post: Strategic Finance Manager

Email: martin.wade@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01223 699733

1. Background

1.1 The presentation (**Appendix A**) accompanying this report provides information to support the 2024-25 Schools budget setting process and will cover the following areas:

- National Funding Announcements
- Final Schools Budget Proposals
- High Needs Block
- Central Schools Services Block
- Next Steps

1.2 During the presentation by officers, members of Schools Forum will have an opportunity to ask questions. Schools Forum will then be asked to comment / vote on the recommendations as required.

1.3 **Please note:**

Appendix B provides draft (illustrative for academies) school level figures based on the latest datasets provided by the Education Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA) in December, and reflects the approach agreed by Schools Forum at the November meeting.

Appendix C shows the draft funding factor values applied, compared to 2023/24 values.

Appendix D shows the distribution across all funding factors applied.

All figures remain draft until further data validation has been undertaken and the formula has been approved at Children and Young People (CYP) Committee, and subsequently by the ESFA.

1.4 The table on the following pages shows the main decision-making powers and responsibilities for items relevant at this meeting (other powers such as decisions in respect of deficits, contracts and changes to the Scheme of Financial Management do not apply to the items covered above.)

Schools Forum Roles and Responsibilities

Function	Local education authority	Schools forum	DfE role
Formula change (including redistributions)	Proposes and decides	Must be consulted	Checks for compliance with regulations
Movement of up to 0.5% from the schools block to other blocks	Proposes	Decides	Adjudicates where schools forum does not agree local authority proposal
Minimum funding guarantee (MFG)	Proposes any exclusions from MFG for application to DfE	Gives a view	Approval to application for exclusions
De-delegation for mainstream maintained schools	Proposes	Maintained primary and secondary school member representatives	Will adjudicate where schools forum does not agree local authority proposal
General Duties for maintained schools - Contribution to responsibilities that local authorities hold for maintained schools	Proposes	Would be decided by the relevant maintained school members (primary, secondary, special and PRU).	Adjudicates where schools forum does not agree local authority proposal
Central spend on and the criteria for allocating funding from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth - pre-16 pupils, including new schools set up to meet basic need, whether maintained or academy • Falling rolls - funding for good or outstanding schools with where growth in pupil numbers is expected within three years 	Proposes	Decides	Adjudicates where schools forum does not agree local authority proposal

Central spend on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> early years block provision funding to enable all schools to meet the infant class size requirement back-pay for equal pay claims remission of boarding fees at maintained schools and academies places in independent schools for non-SEN pupils admissions servicing of schools forum Contribution to responsibilities that local authorities hold for all schools 	Proposes	Decides	Adjudicates where schools forum does not agree local authority proposal
Central spend on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> capital expenditure funded from revenue – projects must have been planned and decided on prior to April 2013 so no new projects can be charged contribution to combined budgets – this is where the schools forum agreed prior to April 2013 a contribution from the schools budget to services which would otherwise be funded from other sources existing termination of employment costs (costs for specific individuals must have been approved prior to April 2013 so no new redundancy costs can be charged) prudential borrowing costs – the commitment must have been approved prior to April 2013 	Proposes up to the value committed in the previous financial year and where expenditure has already been committed.	Decides for each line	Adjudicates where schools forum does not agree local authority proposal
Central spend on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> high needs block provision central licences negotiated by the Secretary of State 	Decides	None, but good practice to inform forum	None

2. Source Documents

2.1 Appendices B, C and D will be circulated “to follow”.

Appendix A

2024/25 Schools Budget Setting

Schools Forum – 12th January 2024

Introduction

The purpose of today's presentation is to update Schools Forum on the latest position in relation to the 2024/25 budget setting round:

1. National Funding Announcements
2. Budget Proposals - Schools Block
3. Budget Proposals - High Needs Block
4. Budget Proposals - Central Schools Services Block
5. Next Steps

National Funding Announcements

- On 19th December 2023 the Department for Education (DfE) published the DSG allocations for 2024-25. Full details can be found on the DfE website at the following link:
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dedicated-schools-grant-dsg-2024-to-2025>

National Funding Announcements

- The initial 2024-25 DSG allocations for Cambridgeshire are set out in the following table, which also provides the 2023-24 figures for comparison:

DSG Block	2022-23 Allocation £m	2023-24 Initial Allocation £m	Change v 2022-23 Allocation £m	% Change
Schools Block (incl. growth & business rates)*	468.263	480.591	+12.328	+2.6%
High Needs Block	103.487	107.330	+3.843	+3.7%
Central Services Schools Block	5.563	5.246	-0.318	-5.7%
Early Years Block*	42.263	62.407	+20.143	+47.7%
Total	619.577	655.573	+35.997	+5.8%

National Funding Announcements

- Uplift to Cambridgeshire's Schools Block allocation is as a result of a combination of the additional investment through the national funding formula and the net increase in pupils between October 2022 and October 2023.
- Primary (Reception – Year 6) – net decrease of 360 pupils
- Secondary (Year 7 –Year 11) – net increase of 916 pupils
- Early Years Block indicative figures are currently based on January 2023 data and includes additional funding for the new 2-year-old and under entitlement to 15 hours of free childcare for eligible children of working parents starting from April 2024 for 2-year-olds and September 2024 for children aged between 9 months and 2 years old.

National Funding Announcements

- In addition to the DSG, mainstream schools will also additional revenue grants in 2024 to 2025 including the following:
 - Pupil Premium - increase to £1,480 for primary pupils and £1,050 for secondary pupils in 2024-25, currently £1,455 (+1.71%) and £1,035 (+1.45%) respectively.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium>
 - Teachers Pay Additional Grant (TPAG) – continuation of the grant announced in July 2023 to support schools with the September 2023 teachers' pay award. Funding for the 2024-25 financial year will be calculated using twelve sevenths of the funding rates applied in to 2023-24. - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-pay-additional-grant-2024-to-2025>
- Detail of other revenue grants such as Teachers' pensions grant, PE and Sport Premium, Universal Infant Free School Meals (UISFM) and National Tutoring Programme (NTP) funding are yet to be confirmed.
- School level allocations will be published once available.

Final Budget Proposals

– Schools Block



- Following receipt of the revised datasets on 19th December further budget modelling has been undertaken reflecting the approach previously presented to Schools:
 - 1%/circa £4.8m block transfer from Schools Block to High Needs Block
 - £2.0m centrally retained growth fund
 - Align funding rates with the National Funding Formula
 - Apply the maximum 0.5% Minimum Funding Guarantee
- After adjusting the Schools Block for the 1%/circa £4.8m block transfer and £2.0m centrally retained growth fund the total available for distribution (including business rates) is **£473.785m**

Final Budget Proposals

– Schools Block



- The **draft** budgets at individual school level can be seen in **Appendix B**.
- **Appendix C** shows the draft funding factor values applied, compared to 2023/24 values
- **Appendix D** shows distribution across all funding factors.
- Figures have been updated to reflect the October 2023 census data (variations to pupil numbers have been applied for new schools and guaranteed numbers will be submitted for September 2024)
- The current cost to meet the revised minimum per pupil level funding is circa **£2.4m**
- The current cost to meet the 0.5% minimum funding guarantee is circa **£0.4m**.

Final Budget Proposals

– Schools Block



- Variation to pupil numbers:

School	Phase	Guaranteed Number as per 24/25 APT - April to Aug (5/12ths)	Guaranteed Number as per 24/25 APT - Sept to Mar (7/12ths)	Total Guaranteed Number as per 24/25 APT	Numbers on Oct 23 Census	Comments:
Wintringham Park	Primary	126.00	186.00	161.00	126.00	New School still growing to capacity
Cromwell Community College	All-Through	1344.00	1374.00	1361.50	1334.00	Moved to all-through from Sept 2020 - additional 30 primary age pupils per year.
Marleigh Primary	Primary	90.00	150.00	125.00	78.00	New school still growing to capacity
Northstowe Secondary	All-Through	621	711	673.50	621	Move to all-through from Sept 2024 and next phase of Secondary provision
Sir Harry Smith	Secondary	1000	1060	1035.00	1000.00	Planned expansion of Secondary provision.
Ermine Street Primary	Primary	275	335	310.00	275.00	New school still growing to capacity.
Wisbech Free School	Secondary	0	90	52.50	0.00	Opening with 90 from Sept 24

Final Budget Proposals

– Schools Block



- The factor values on **Appendix C** have been scaled to meet overall affordability – all currently exceed the ESFA's minimum allowable values
- Sparsity and Split Site values are the maximum permissible amounts. School level allocations will vary dependent on individual school circumstances.
- The ESFA recognises that some factors cannot easily be allocated on a formulaic basis and under the NFF continue to be funded at historical or actual funding levels. This covers the premises factors which includes PFI, exceptional premises and business rates.

Final Budget Proposals

– Schools Block



Business Rates / National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR)

- The current figures include the notional business rates figures for 2024-25 as provided by the ESFA, plus any adjustments relating to 23/24 for maintained schools.
- Awaiting clarification from the ESFA on the treatment for 2024/25 business rates, but expectation is that all districts will sign-up to the central process so maintained schools will no longer have to pay the bills directly (and therefore won't receive the funding for the 24/25 element)
- Further guidance to follow.

Final Budget Proposals

– Schools Block



- Please note:
 - Figures are still draft and are subject to change as final data validation is undertaken and variations to pupil numbers finalised.
 - Final approval of the local formula will be provided by the ESFA.
 - The business rates issues noted on the previous slide will impact on the final amount to be received by maintained schools.
 - De-delegations for maintained schools to be calculated in final versions (as per amounts approved at December Forum)
 - Actual amounts to be received by academies will be notified directly by the ESFA for the 24/25 academic year and may differ due to pupil numbers and protections applied.

Required Actions

- **Schools Funding Formula**
 - a) Schools Forum are asked to note and comment on the final schools funding formula proposals following the December announcements.

Final Budget Proposals

– High Needs Block



Source of Funding	£m
2024/25 Initial HNB (Updated December 2023)	£107.330m
Transfer from Schools Block (1%)	£4.806m
Total available HNB for 2024/25	£112.136m

- Actual 22/23 HNB spend = **£110m**
- Current 23/24 HNB in-year forecast spend in excess of **£120m**.
- Safety Valve proposals to be resubmitted to reflect latest position.

Final Budget Proposals

– High Needs Block

Special Schools

- Minimum Funding Guarantee for Special Schools must be set at least 0% and local authorities must consider setting the MFG within a 0% to 0.5% range – propose to set at 0.5% to align with Primary and Secondary Schools.
- Historic Funding streams (Supplementary Funding, MFG, Teacher Pay and Pension Grant, Passporting) to be baselined into top-up amounts at rate of £2k per pupil.
- To form part of new banded funding system – mapping and moderation of existing pupils underway.
- Teachers Pay Additional Grant (TPAG) will continue to be paid separately outside of the NFF in 24/25.

Required Actions

- **High Needs Block**
- b) Schools Forum are asked to note and comment on the high needs block following the December announcements.

Central Schools Services Block

Budget Line	2023/24	2024/25	Description
School Admissions	£467k	£388k	Approved by Schools Forum
Servicing of Schools Forum	£3k	£3k	Approved by Schools Forum
Other Items	£544k	£544k	National Copyright Licence arrangements – set by DfE - TBC
Ongoing Retained Duties	£2,186k	£2,420k	Updated based on October census data
Total Ongoing Commitments	£3,199k	£3,355k	
Contribution to combined budgets	£733k	£0k	Contribution to Children's Services - removed
Residual Balance	£1,631k	£1,891k	Planned underspend to contribute towards DSG deficit recovery
Total Historic Commitments	£2,364k	£1,891k	
Total CSSB	£5,563k	£5,246k	

Final Budget Proposals

– Central Schools Services Block

- Final CSSB allocation of £5.25m, reduced from £5.56m.
- Includes further 20% reduction in funding for Historic Commitments and increased allocation for retained duties.
- Any changes in Copyright License costs (excluding VAT) will be managed from within the overall CSSB, so no cost to schools.
- LA's and schools (including academies) do not need to negotiate individual licences. The DfE pays the cost, including VAT, to the agencies and provides this as a service to LA's as a charge to the DSG.

Required Actions

- **Central Schools Services Block**
- c) Schools Forum are asked to note and comment on the central schools services block following the December announcements.

Next Steps

- 16th January 2024 – Children and Young People Committee to approve final Schools Funding Formula
- 19th January 2024 – Authority Proforma Tool (APT) submission deadline to the ESFA
- Late January/early February – budgets to be issued to Primary and Secondary Schools (academy budgets will be illustrative only as final budgets will be confirmed by the ESFA).
- Late February – illustrative budgets to be published for Special Schools

Early Years Funding Formula 2024-25

To: Schools Forum

Meeting Date: 12 January 2024

From: Jonathan Lewis, Service Director, Education
Graham Arnold, Early Years Sector Development and Funding Manager

Recommendations: Schools Forum is asked to

- a) comment on the proposed approach to funding early years places in 2024-25; and
- b) approve the centrally retained budget elements totalling £1,585,000 set out in table 1.

Officer contact:

Name: Graham Arnold

Post: Early Years Sector Development and Funding Manager

Email: graham.arnold@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01223 699774

1. Creating a greener, fairer and more caring Cambridgeshire

1.1 This report relates to the following Council ambitions:

- Ambition 7: Children and young people have opportunities to thrive
- Ambition 6: Places and communities prosper because they have a resilient and inclusive economy, access to good quality public services and social justice is prioritised.
- Ambition 5: People are helped out of poverty and income inequality.

2. Background

2.1 Government has announced a major expansion in funded childcare and learning for children of working parents from April 2024. In addition to the universal and extended entitlements for three- and four-year-olds, the following provision will be offered:

- From April 2024: 570 hours a year (equivalent to 15 hours per week, term time) for children from two years old.
- From September 2024: 570 hours a year (equivalent to 15 hours per week, term time) for children from 9 months old to two years old.

These entitlements will increase again in September 2025 when all working parents of children 9 months up, will be able to access up to 30 hours of funded childcare per week.

2.2 The local authority is required to establish a funding approach to the new entitlements in consultation with the sector and agree funding rates with its providers. These must be presented to Schools Forum for comment and approved by Children and Young People's Committee. In addition, Schools Forum must agree any sums to be centrally retained to support the early years and childcare sector.

3. Main Issues

3.1 DFE has published overall funding rates for the new entitlements alongside the updated rates for the existing entitlements. These rates allow for deductions for:

- Local authority centrally retained funding;
- Supplements, including deprivation related;
- Funding to support the inclusion of children with special educational needs (SENIF).

The headline rates per hour are:

3- and 4-year-olds (existing entitlements):	£5.80 (+30p)
2-year-olds (expanded to include working families):	£8.15 (+3p)
9-months-2 years (new for working families - from Sep 24):	£11.07 (new)
Early Years Pupil Premium	additional £0.68 (+6p)
Disability Access Fund (for children in receipt of disability living allowance)	additional £910 per year (+£82)

In addition, the local authority receives supplementary funding in respect of Maintained Nursery Schools. The indicative allocation for 2024-25 is £1.37m.

3.2 Government requires a minimum 95% of funding for each entitlement to be passed to providers through the base rate and supplements. The intention is to increase this to 97% in around 2 years. As a result of the challenging funding context locally, Cambridgeshire providers have historically preferred a funding approach which maximises the base rate and minimises supplements. Cambridgeshire has one of the highest pass-through rates of its statistical neighbours, well above the England average. Combined with the low percentage of funding paid through supplements, this means Cambridgeshire passes on a higher proportion of funding through its base rate directly to providers.

3.3 Cambridgeshire's Early Years Provider Reference Group has been engaged in discussions around the funding rates and the approach to the new entitlements since the rates were published in late November. The group's stated priorities were:

- To agree and publish local rates as soon as possible, to allow the sector to plan for the expansion;
- To maximise the rate payable for two-year-olds, as the DFE hourly rate is close to the recognised break-even point for many providers;
- To enhance funding to support the inclusion of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities where possible.

3.4 The proposals for funding rates for 2024-25 are:

Age	April 2023 Cambs rate/hour	Current Cambs rate/hour	Proposed Cambs rate/hour
3- and 4-year-olds	£4.63	£5.14	£5.40
2-year-olds	£6.12	£8.12*	£8.00
9-months – 2 years	-	-	£10.70

*The current 2-year-old rate applies to families in receipt of certain benefits and children in care, but will apply to all funded two-year-olds from April. It has been top-sliced to create an SEN Inclusion Fund for funded two-year-olds with additional needs. This is a new requirement of the funding formula with monies distributed to the sector for children that meet SENIF criteria. In addition to the £8.00 hourly rate, funded two-year-olds can now receive Early Years Pupil Premium, which is paid at an extra 68p per hour for eligible children.

These rates were shared with the Early Years Provider Reference Group on 20 December 2023 following a discussion on the principles in 3.3. Feedback indicates that the proposals are in line with the priorities of the group.

- 3.5 The rates above accommodate local authority retained spending to support the delivery of statutory responsibilities relating to the existing and new entitlements as follows:

Centrally retained budget elements	2023/24 budget (£)	2024/25 proposed budget (£)
<p>Early years statutory duties linked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare Act 2006 • Equalities Act 2010 • The Local Authority (Duty to Secure Early Years Provision Free of Charge) Regulations 2014 • Children and Families Act 2014 • SEND Code of Practice 2014 <p>And underpinned by Early Education and Childcare – statutory guidance for local authorities.</p> <p>These activities include safeguarding training and advice, statutory intervention and enhanced support, practice and pedagogical development, SEND training and support, business/governance and leadership support, continued professional development and quality improvement, provider sustainability, sector recruitment and staff retention, families information service (FIS), equality and closing the attainment gap for vulnerable groups.</p>	959,000	1,331,500
Early Years and Childcare Qualifications	170,000	179,000
Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) eligibility	11,000	11,500
SENIF Coordination and administration	60,000	63,000
Two-year-old SENIF (LA discretionary allocation in 2023-24, now permitted within the 2-year-old DSG)	150,000	-
Total Early Years Centrally Retained Funding (counting towards 5% centrally retained limit)	1,350,000	1,585,000

The amount proposed for central retention in 2024-25 is 17% higher than in 2023-24 (against an increase in EY DSG of nearly 48%). The reasons for this are:

- Expanded responsibilities in respect of funded entitlements, creating new demand from providers, and 5,000 or more additional funded children.
- Pressures on local authority budgets across the entire Council including a significant pay award, requiring a higher proportion of service costs to be met from centrally retained funding.

- 3.6 From 2024-25, local authorities need to calculate pass-through rates for each of the

entitlements – 3/4-year-olds, 2-year-olds and 9 month-2 years. Officers project that the funding rates at 3.4 and the centrally retained spending at 3.5 are likely to result in levels of funding of between 97.4% and 98.7% being passed through to providers, once deprivation supplements and SEN Inclusion Fund payments are taken into account. These percentages are well within the 5% permitted central retention, and would meet the reduced 3% proposed for (potentially) 2026-27. Cambridgeshire had the 3rd lowest centrally retained percentage of its statistical neighbours on most recent calculations.

4. Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 Alternative options were not considered as funding and work are driven by statutory responsibilities, which are expanding, requiring the local authority team to lead changes.

5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 5.1 Schools Forum is asked to comment on the proposed funding rates at 3.4 and approve the proposed centrally retained expenditure at 3.5.

6. Significant Implications

- 6.1 Not required.

7. Source Documents

- 7.1 Department for Education:
Local Authority Early Years funding rates 2024-25
[Early years funding: 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-funding-2024-to-2025)
[Local Authority Early Years Funding benchmarking tool](#)
[Early years funding benchmarking tool - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-funding-benchmarking-tool).

Proposed Future Schools Forum Dates 2024-25

To: Cambridgeshire Schools Forum

Date: 12 January 2023

From: Clerk to Schools Forum

Recommendation: The Schools Forum is requested to:

Approve the dates for future forum meetings as set out
section 3 of the report.

Officer Contact:

Name: Tamar Oviatt - Ham Democratic Services

Email: tamar.oviatt-ham@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Telephone: 01223 715668

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The dates for future Schools Forum meetings are currently scheduled until July 2024 as originally agreed at the January 2023 Forum meeting. There is now a need to agree future dates from the next Autumn term until July 2025 to help with forward planning and this also includes suggestions for some potential training / workshop dates. The latter, and also any Formal Forum dates that are agreed at this meeting, can always be cancelled nearer the time if deemed as no longer being required. The important issue is to get dates in diaries as much in advance as possible.

2. Current agreed dates for Forum meetings

- 2.1 The following were agreed last January and the intention is to keep to them unless nearer the time they are deemed as not being required for a formal meeting or a training / workshop session.

- Friday 12th January 2024
- Friday 16th February 2024 (Reserve or workshop date)
- Friday 22nd March 2024
- Wednesday 22nd May 2024 (Reserve or workshop date)
- Friday 12th July 2024

3. Proposed dates for Forum meetings

- 3.1 Proposed dates for Schools Forum and training / workshop dates are listed below (School holidays and CYP meeting dates have been taken into account). All meetings have been scheduled for 10.00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m. unless otherwise stated.

- Friday 1 November 2024 (2pm – 5pm)
- Friday 22nd November 2024 - Additional reserve date
- Wednesday 11th December 2024
- Friday 10th January 2025
- Friday 14th February 2025 (Reserve or workshop date)
- Friday 21st March 2025
- Wednesday 21st May 2025 (Reserve or workshop date)
- Friday 11th July 2025

4. Source Documents

- 4.1 None

Cambridgeshire Schools Forum – Forward Agenda Plan

All meetings will be held at 10.00am unless otherwise specified. Some of the dates below may be retained as workshops / training sessions if a formal meeting of Forum is not required.

Date of meeting	Agenda Item	Report author	Reports due to reach Democratic Services by:
Friday 12 January 2024	Schools Forum meeting dates 2024-25	Democratic Services	
	Budget Setting	Jon Lewis/Martin Wade	
	Early Years Update - Policy and Initial Grants	Jon Lewis	
	Special Schools Funding	Jon Lewis	
	Unions Facilities Time Paper	Jon Lewis	
Friday 16 February 2024 (Reserve or workshop date)			
Friday 22 March 2024			
Wednesday 22 May 2024 (Reserve or workshop date)			
Friday 12 July 2024			

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To be scheduled: