

**AGENDA FOR
BURY SCHOOLS' FORUM**



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To: All Members of Bury Schools' Forum

Dear Member/Colleague

Bury Schools' Forum

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Bury Schools' Forum which will be held as follows:-

Date:	Monday, 2 December 2024
Place:	Microsoft Teams Meeting
Time:	4.00 pm
Briefing Facilities:	If Opposition Members and Co-opted Members require briefing on any particular item on the Agenda, the appropriate Director/Senior Officer originating the related report should be contacted.
Notes:	

AGENDA

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING - 18 JUNE 2024 *(Pages 3 - 8)*

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 June 2024 are attached

4 NATIONAL FUNDING & BURY'S FORMULA *(Pages 9 - 14)*

Report attached

5 SCHOOLS WITH EXCESS SURPLUS BALANCE *(Pages 15 - 16)*

Report attached

6 FUNDING CHANGE FOR PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT *(Pages 17 - 18)*

Report attached

7 HIGH NEEDS BUDGET AND PROJECT SAFETY VALVE *(Pages 19 - 32)*

Report attached

**Bury Schools Forum
Monday 18 June 2024
Microsoft Teams**

Attendance**Early Years**

None in Attendance

Maintained Primary

Richard Ainsworth	Governor (Plus Governors Forum)
Simon Waddington	Headteacher – Hollins Grundy Primary
Rachel O’Neil	Hoyle Nursery School

Maintained Secondary

None in Attendance

Academy

Claire Ferguson	Oak Partnership
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Academy Primary

None in attendance

Academy Secondary

Orienne Langley-Sadler	Oak Partnership - Elms Bank
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Special

Katherine Ashworth	Millwood Special School (S)
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Pupil Referral Unit

None in Attendance

Non-Schools Sector

Helena Thom	NEU
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16 – 19 Education Representative

None in attendance

Children’s Services Department

Paul Cooke	Head of Schools & Academies
Kiki Ackatia-Armah	Interim Finance Business Partner
Stephen Holden	Interim Director of Education and Skills
Alison Vidler	Principal Finance Officer (Schools & Systems Finance)

Observer(s)

None in Attendance

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Carina Vitti	Holy Cross College
Joanne Hurst	Millwood Special
NASUWT rep	

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was agreed:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2024 be approved as a correct record of the meeting.

3 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the Minutes of the last meeting.

4 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (DSG) DEFECIT POSITION

DSG Deficit position

Alison Vidler presented a report explaining the DSG deficit position and the progress being made in relation to this.

It was also reported that the Council has agreed a revised DSG deficit recovery plan with the DfE which extends the period for deficit recovery until 2028-2029.

Schools balances Update

Alison Vidler presented a report setting out the schools balances at the end of 2023-24.

The number of schools in deficit had increased from 13 at the end of 22/23 to 17 at the end of the 23/24 financial year.

It was explained that schools are required to adhere to their budget limits but in the event of an unplanned deficit this would be deducted from the following year's budget share. Schools that aren't able to produce a balanced budget can request approval to set a deficit budget by submitting a deficit recovery management plan to the Executive Director of Children and Young People and that deficit should normally be recovered within two years.

The school balances 2023/24 was appended to the report. Schools with a surplus shaded in blue, schools with a deficit shaded in red.

5 BURY SCHOOLS' FORUM REPRESENTATION

Alison Vidler presented a report explaining the schools forum member representation in relation to the proportion of maintained schools and academies in the borough.

It was explained that the January 2024 census showed that Bury has 62% of its Primary and Secondary pupils in Academies and 38% in Maintained Schools.

The schools' forum membership is as closely proportionate in percentage terms as it can be.

The report set out the membership from both Maintained and Academy schools in both primary and high schools, PRU, Early Years, 16 – 19 and teachers professional associations.

It was explained that there were a number of vacancies within each of the different groups.

It was agreed that an updated membership list would be produced and circulated to all members.

6 PROJECT SAFETY VALVE UPDATE

Stephen Holden, Interim Director Education and Skills gave a presentation giving an update on Project Safety Valve (PSV)

Stephen explained that since 2020, Bury Council has participated in the Department for Education's (DfE's) Safety Valve programme (PSV).

The Safety Valve programme targets the Local Authorities with a high deficit in their Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), providing targeted support and challenge to ensure their budget is sustainable in the future. Local authorities also receive additional funding as part of their agreed plan with the DfE.

An original agreement was entered into with DfE and published in March 2021, at which point the cumulative DSG deficit in Bury was £25.5m.

In early 2023, regular monitoring undertaken with DfE found that despite significant progress being made to meet the agreements outlined in the 2021 PSV plan there continued to be an increase in EHCPs in mainstream schools, an increase in out of borough placements and an increase in per head costs.

Updated modelling forecast that a cumulative deficit of £12m would remain by the original timeline to eliminate the deficit at the end of 2024/25 and as a result the terms of the agreement with DfE would not be met.

An updated plan was submitted in October 2023 and is now with DfE awaiting final approval. In the meantime, Bury Council is fully committed to delivering against this updated plan which will see the DSG deficit eliminated in the 2028/29 financial year.

At present, the DSG deficit at the end of the current financial year (2023/24) is forecast to be £18.5m, which is on track against the updated management plan, but with significant pressures and risks in the system. To deliver on the plan we will need to be ambitious and make some tough decisions.

Ongoing projects were highlighted and included:-

- Ensuring that the decision-making process is effective and efficient, and supports the right care to be put in place in-line with our new strategy and offer.
- Work to reduce EHCP demand by delivering on the Early Help Strategy including increased capacity, increased reviews and strengthening of provision.
- Ensuring a timely effective review of EHCP cases to ensure provision of the right care and in a sustainable way
- Co-production of a Graduated Approach Toolkit and support to schools including an online comprehensive toolkit
- Publish an up to date Local Offer and establish networks and engagement to strengthen communication of the local offer – the soft launch of the offer was underway and would be unique and bespoke to Bury.
- Increase of Resourced Provision places, working with an estimated 13 schools to provide additional places, Brookhaven now open, Millwood expansion in 2025 online provision, 110 places available. Work being undertaken to review and reduce need.
- Reducing the number of children being Educated Other Than At School (EOTAS)

Stephen set out the key developments to highlight:

- Establishment of a Schools Inclusion team, including SEND and Inclusion Champions.

- Development of the Graduated Approach Toolkit and the comprehensive support to schools to implement the toolkit.
- Development of the Multi-agency inclusion panel, providing schools with one point for support
- Expansion of the EHCP team so each school has a named case worker and schools' involvement in the EHCP panel.
- Expansion of Special School provision and Resourced provision.
- Extension of the Autism in School project
- Further training and support for schools delivered through the SENCO network

It was agreed:

1. That Stephen be thanked for his presentation
2. That the contents of the presentation be noted.

7. PUPIL PLACE PLANNING STRATEGY

Paul Cooke, Strategic Lead (School System), presented the Forum with the Pupil Place Planning Strategy 2023/2024-2028/29 – Primary Schools.

It was explained that the document had been circulated widely to all stakeholders.

The guidance sets out the sufficiency framework with clear expectations and clarification of the roles and responsibilities of local authorities, academy trusts, diocesan boards and other partners in the context of strategic place planning. These expectations are centred around collaboration, transparency, and early engagement on pupil place planning. The framework seeks to systemise the place planning process whilst recognising there cannot be a strict 'one size fits all' approach.

The document set out the assessment of potential impact for Bury, the current and forecast demand for places, forecast position by planning areas, the draft sufficiency strategy, and the next steps.

Factors for consideration in the development of options were explained and included published admission numbers, faith provision, residential development and the Places for Everyone Strategy.

It was explained that changes to admission numbers may affect sustainability and the document included information on ways that schools and boards can respond and possible measures that would help such as staffing, surplus accommodation and other uses and early years' provision.

Paul reported that the current 5 year forecast shows demand slowing but a number of residential sites had been approved recently which would generate additional housing. The Places for Everyone strategy would also see several large development sites which would bring in new families.

Paul stated that schools and trusts will be considering the different options available to ensure that they were sustainable going forward.

It was agreed:

That Paul be thanked for the report.

8. PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS

Alison Vidler Schools Finance Officer presented Council's updated scheme for financing schools.

Alison explained the updates that were in line with the guidance and asked that the Schools' Forum agree that the document be shared on the Council website in line with the statutory guidance s.48(4) and paragraph 2A (2) of Schedule 14 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, School Standards and Framework Act 1998

It was agreed:

That the updated guidance be published on the Council website in accordance with the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Note: The meeting started at 4pm and ended at 5.05pm

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Bury Council
Department for Children and Young People

Schools and Academies Funding 2025-26

1. Indicative Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2025-26

The information below provides indicative DSG funding for Bury as announced by the Department for Education (DfE) in November 2024, with comparisons to the last financial year 2024-25.

Due to the change of Government in July 2024, information that is usually issued to Local Authorities in the Summer has not yet been received. The DfE issued a brief Summary Policy Statement in October. National Funding Formula information, along with Operational Guidance for 2025-26, is now due to be issued at the end of November and Dedicated Schools Grant allocations are due to be issued during the last week of the Autumn Term.

1a. Schools Block

In 2024-25 schools received additional funding through separate grants, in addition to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG):

Core Schools Budget Grant (CSBG);
 Teachers' Pay Additional Grant (TPAG);
 Teachers' Pension Employer Contribution Grant (TPECG).

The funding for these additional grants will be added to the baseline funding for 2025-26. Initial estimates indicate a per pupil increase of 8% when compared with 2024-25. However, once the baseline is adjusted for the rolling-in of separate grants, the increase is around 0.6%.

Final DSG allocations will be based on October 2024 pupil census data. Provisional census data demonstrates a decline in pupil numbers in Bury Primary Schools, which will have an impact on the overall funding and on individual schools.

School	Funded Oct-23	Draft Oct-24	Variance
TOTAL PRIMARY	15863	15642	-221
TOTAL SECONDARY	11397	11429	32
TOTAL SPECIAL	645	695	50
TOTAL	27905	27766	-139

The DfE have given a commitment to providing additional funding to local authorities, schools and colleges for the increase in Employer National Insurance costs in 2025-26 with details to follow. At this stage a commitment has not been made to provide separate grant funding for the cost of the 2025 Teachers' Pay Award.

As previously announced, the 'reception uplift' will be removed in 2025-26.

The minimum funding guarantee (MFG) is a protection against changes in per pupil school budget share (SBS) funding between the 2024-25 and 2025-26. The amount of protection will vary according to the impact of local changes in the funding formula and the effect of these on individual per pupil rates.

In 2025-26, local authorities have the flexibility to set local MFG between minus 0.5% and 0% compared to the baseline. The baseline will include funding in respect of the additional grants. The annualised CSBG rates in the baseline means that the baseline itself will include a funding uplift compared to 2024-25.

1b. High Needs Block

The indication is that all local authorities should receive a funding increase of at least 7% per head of the age 2 to 18 projected population.

The MFG for special schools in 2025-26 will be 0%.

The 2024-25 teachers' pay, pensions and core schools budget grants will not be incorporated into DSG funding for Special Schools in 2025-26. Instead, they will be combined into a single CSBG for special schools and alternative provision for 2025-26.

1c. Central Schools Services Block

The 2024-25 teachers' pensions and core schools budget grants will be rolled into the 2025-26 CSSB. This will be added to each local authority's baseline

Funding for historic commitments continues to be subject to a year-on-year reduction.

Additional funding will be allocated for increases in copyright licence costs.

1d. Early Years Block

Early Years funding allocations are subject to future announcements. Additional funding has been provided through the Early Years Budget Grant to cover the period September 2024 to March 2025. This additional funding will be incorporated into the DSG allocation for 2025-26.

2 Formula Unit Values

Schools' Forum is required to recommend the formula unit values to be applied to all Mainstream Schools & Academies funding allocations on an annual basis.

The formula unit values applied to Bury Schools and Academies funding formula already directly mirror the DfE National Funding Formula (NFF) unit values.

For information, the provisional NFF Unit Values applicable to 2025-26 are set out below. Confirmation of the final values is due at the end of November and will be updated at the meeting if received.

Factor	Sub-level	2024-25	Provisional 2025-26	Variance to 2024-25		Of which = 24-25 grant transfer	Variance excl. grant transfer
		£	£	£	%	£	%
Basic Entitlement	Primary	3,562	3,847	285	8.0%	264	0.6%
Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU)	Key Stage 3	5,022	5,422	400	8.0%	371	0.6%
	Key Stage 4	5,661	6,113	452	8.0%	419	0.6%
Deprivation							
Free School Meals	Primary FSM	490	495	5	1.0%	0	1.0%
	Secondary FSM	490	495	5	1.0%	0	1.0%
Free School Meals - Ever 6	Primary FSM 6	820	1,060	240	29.3%	233	0.9%
	Secondary FSM 6	1,200	1,555	355	29.6%	345	0.8%
Income Deprivation Affecting Children Indices (IDACI) Primary	IDACI F	235	235	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	IDACI E	285	285	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	IDACI D	445	445	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	IDACI C	485	485	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	IDACI B	515	515	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	IDACI A	680	685	5	0.7%	0	0.7%
Income Deprivation Affecting Children Indices (IDACI) Secondary	IDACI F	340	340	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	IDACI E	450	450	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	IDACI D	630	630	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	IDACI C	690	690	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	IDACI B	740	740	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	IDACI A	945	945	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Additional Education Needs Factors							
English as an Additional Language (EAL)	EAL 3 Years Primary	590	595	5	0.8%	0	0.8%
	EAL 3 Years Secondary	1,585	1,595	10	0.6%	0	0.6%
Mobility	Pupils starting school outside normal entry	960	965	5	0.5%	0	0.5%
		1,380	1,385	5	0.4%	0	0.4%
Low cost, high incidence SEN	Low Attainment Primary (below expected EYFS)	1,170	1,175	5	0.4%	0	0.4%
	Pupils not achieving (KS2 level 4 English and Maths)	1,775	1,785	10	0.6%	0	0.6%
School-Led Factors							
Lump Sum	Primary	134,400	145,100	10,700	8.0%	9,921	0.6%
	Secondary	134,400	145,100	10,700	8.0%	9,921	0.6%
Split Site	Basic Eligibility	53,700	54,000	300	0.6%		
	Distance Eligibility Minimum		0				
	Distance Eligibility Maximum	26,900	27,000				
Minimum Per Pupil Funding Levels	MFL - Primary	4,610	4,995	385	8.4%		
	MFL - Secondary	5,995	6,465	470	7.8%		

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Schools' Forum (all members) recommends all the unit values specified in the table provided, to be applied in compliance with the National Funding Formula (NFF) to Bury's Mainstream schools and academies funding formula for 2025-26.

3. De-delegation

For maintained mainstream schools only, the formula mechanism contains options for schools to choose to de-delegate an amount from their formula allocation to contribute to Local Authority services that work to support them. Academies can buy back into Free School Meals Benefit Checking and Trade Union Facilities Time.

Schools' Forum (Maintained Mainstream only) is required to recommend the De-delegated items each year. The table below proposes the level of de-delegation to be recommended for 2025-26.

	Schools of Concern	FSM Benefits checking	Trade Union Facilities Time	Local Authority School Improvement
	Per pupil	Per FSM6	Per pupil	Per pupil
2024-25	£6.62	£5.51	£4.41	£15.75
Proposed 2025-26	£6.88	£5.73	£4.59	£16.38

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Schools' Forum (maintained school representatives) recommends the de-delegated values for 2025-26, summarised as follows:

- Schools of Concern @ £6.88 per pupil
- Free School Meals Eligibility Checking @ £5.73 per FSM6
- Trade Union Facilities Time @ £4.59 per pupil
- School Improvement Brokerage and Monitoring Grant @ £16.38 per-pupil.

4. Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG)

The statutory guidance allows local authorities to set a pre-16 MFG in their local formulae, to protect schools from excessive year-on-year changes.

For 2025-26 Local authorities will be able to set an MFG between minus 0.5% and +0.0% per pupil.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Schools' Forum (all members) recommends that the MFG protection is set at +0.0% in line with DfE guidance.

4. Headroom

After all formula factors have been updated as per the above recommendations and in accordance with the National Funding Formula unit values, there should be a balance of DSG Schools Block that remains unallocated. This balance is required to cover any outstanding updates to budget determinations as follows:

- October 2024 census variations – Pupil numbers will be adjusted for in the final Schools Block determination, however any increases in funding required due to variances in pupil cohort characteristics need to be covered from any available headroom monies, for example if increased deprivation funding is required once all up-to-date pupils have been mapped into the respective factors.
- Growth – where schools meet the criteria agreed by Schools Forum in 2023 for Local Authority approved bulge classes.
- Falling Rolls Fund – funding may be set aside from the Schools Block to create a small fund to support good schools with falling rolls, where local planning data shows that the surplus places will be needed within the next three financial years. This is unlikely to be needed.
- Minimum per pupil funding Level (MFL) and Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) protections – once all final data has been input there may be increased protections required on individual school budgets to ensure their actual budget allocations comply with the MFL and MFG funding per-pupil levels and protections.

If, when all items above have been updated to reflect the actual individual schools budget determinations, and any amounts to support growth and falling rolls have been allocated, there remains a balance of unallocated Schools Block funding, the Local Authority will factor a transfer of this balance by way of supporting the deficit recovery to the High Needs Block.

Schools' Forum may recommend up to 0.5% transfer of Schools' Block without any disapplication process being required to be approved by the Secretary of State for Education.

A 0.5% transfer to the High Needs Block has been factored into future years as part of DSG Safety Valve Management Plan submitted to the DfE.

If there is insufficient Headroom once all other updates have been completed, then Schools Forum may need to consider how to balance the overall Schools Block by reviewing all formula factors.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

Schools' Forum recommends the use of Headroom to address all outstanding items outlined above and a transfer of any balance, up to a maximum of 0.5%, of unallocated Schools Block Headroom to the High Needs Block, the amount to be confirmed at the meeting of Schools' Forum in January 2025.

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Bury Council
Department for Children and Young People

Schools with Excess Surplus Balances 2023-24 For Information & Recommendation

The overall schools' balances position at the end of the 2023-24 financial year was presented to Schools Forum at the meeting of 18 June 2024.

The schools shown below had excess surplus balances at the end of the 2023-24 financial year. Following a review of the 2024-25 budget plan for each school, it was found that the excess surplus had been committed to costs in the 2024-25 budget plan in all but one school.

School Name	2023-24 Revised Budget	2023-24 Income/ Expenditure Actual	2023-24 Balance	2023-24 Permissible c/fwd	Excess surplus	Less 2024-25 in-year deficit	Amount to Clawback
Philips High	5,897,519	5,512,292	385,227	294,876	90,351	-245,683	0
The Derby High	6,450,258	5,725,570	724,688	322,513	402,175	-606,704	0
Hoyle Nursery School	727,178	617,035	110,143	58,174	51,969	-87,311	0
Cloughside	1,586,622	1,266,294	320,328	126,930	193,398	-148,227	45,171

Schools Forum is asked to:

- a) Recommend that the Executive Director of Children and Young People recovers the amount shown in final column of the table above;

Or

- b) As Cloughside is seeking to establish outreach support, 'Cloughside in the Community', allow the school to retain the excess surplus to fund this new provision.

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Bury Council
Department for Children and Young People

Agenda Item**Report to Schools Forum****For Recommendation****Date 2nd December 2024****Author Phil Herd****Contact****email P.Herd@Bury.gov.uk****Revised Funding Arrangements for The Pupil Referral Unit****Purpose of the Report**

To seek approval from Forum for the recommended revised funding arrangements for the PRU.

Background

The current funding arrangements for the PRU are that 136 places are paid at £10,000 plus historic TPPG (Teacher Pay & Pension Grant) at £660. The additional top up funding of £8,590 is funded based upon occupancy. Totalling £19,250 per occupied Permanently Excluded (PEX) place per annum.

The PRU also take EHCP students for which there are not sufficient special school places in Bury. EHCP pupils are funded via the Bury Special School Banding Model.

The split of places is 90 permanent exclusion places (PEX) and 46 EHCP places.

Spring Lane is experiencing increasing challenges in behaviour and the level of PEX top up funding and lack of guaranteed level of funding is not sufficient to meet the needs of the cohort.

There are also issues with buildings meaning increasing demand for expensive AP packages which are putting some pressure on the PSV .

Proposal

The proposal is that the top up funding is increased to £10,250 and that 90% (81 number) of the PEX places are guaranteed. In practice this 90% should always be achieved but it reduces bureaucracy in that currently funding is allocated every time a pupil is admitted.

The £10,250 is comparable to other GM LA's

Funding for PEX pupils above the 90% will be based on termly Census data and the £10,250 pro-rata accordingly.

EHCP funding will remain per the Bury Special School Banding Model.

Financial Implications

The proposals can be met within the current Management Plan for the High Needs Block.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Forum approve this proposal.

Bury Council
Department for Children and Young People



Agenda Item

Report to Schools Forum

Date 2nd December 2024

For Information and Recommendation

Author Phil. Herd

Contact

email P.Herd@Bury.gov.uk

High Needs Block (HNB) Financial Position

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform Schools Forum of the projected spend on the HNB in this financial year and the implications in future years.

2. Background

- 2.1 Bury has had a large HNB deficit for a number of years and was one of the first LA's to become a part of the DFE Safety Valve agreements. (appendix 1)
- 2.2 As a requirement of the agreement the DFE must be informed of progress against the plan every quarter.
- 2.3 As at 31st March 2024, the HNB deficit was £2m less than what was in the plan (£18.5m compared to the planned £20.6m) At that point it was not a matter of concern. Since then expenditure has risen significantly and there is a need to revise the figures.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that: -

- School's Forum note the contents of the report and the current financial pressures on the HNB.

- Members consider volunteering to be a part of an HNB subgroup.

4. Financial Position in 2024-25.

4.1 A detailed analysis of the expected overspend is given in appendix 2. There is an expected overspend of £1,927,327 in this financial year although the anticipated deficit of £20,527,751 is in line with the Management Plan of £20,724,374. This is because this year's overspend of £1.9m is matched by an almost equivalent underspend in 2023-24.

4.2 Whilst the 2 years balance out there is a large problem in that the 2024-25 overspend will continue and is projected to rise in future years. Part of this is due to the full year effect (fye) of this years spend. For example, a placement made in September 2024 only has a 7/12ths impact in this financial year. In 2025-26 there is a full year's impact. This alone is expected to increase spend by £1.6m in 25-26 (and is net of the leavers) in relation to EHCP's in mainstream schools.

4.3 The major variances in 2025-26 are as follows: -

Table 1.

Heading	Variance £m	Commentary
Special Schools	-0.5	Overall reduction of places being filled. It is hoped to fill and expand special school provision in order to reduce the need for independent provision.
Resourced Provision	-1.0	There is slippage in filling RP provision. This is a major concern because it is a large part of the Management Plan to reduce the requirement on the independent sector.
Mainstream Bury EHCP	1.7	The number and cost of EHCP's in mainstream schools is increasing at a huge rate. See table below
OOB Ind Special Schools	1.9	Bury is a large spender in this area and it is necessary to reduce this by increasing local provision over the next few years.
OOB other LA's Mainstream	0.8	This is in line with increase numbers and costs in Bury schools.
Additional Grant	-0.8	Mainly due to additional funding for Brookhaven (New Free Special school)
Net Overspend on Major Variances	2.1	
Other Variances net	-0.2	
Total Net Overspend	1.9	

The major concern is the increase in numbers and costs of EHCP's in mainstream schools. See below.

Table 2

Year	Number Top Ups	Average Cost £	Annual Cost £	Increase From Previous Year £	Increase On Numbers £	Increase on Average Cost £
2022-23	782	8,090	6,326,380			
2023-24	913	8,619	7,869,147	1,542,767	1,129,089	413,678
2024-25	1,026	9,649	9,899,874	2,030,727	1,090,337	940,390
2025-26	1153	10802	12,454,706	2,554,832	1,371,854	1,182,978
				6,128,326	3,591,280	2,537,046
2026-27	1296	10802	13,999,392			

4.4 From 2022-23 the cost of EHCP's is expected to increase by £6.128m. Of this £3.6m relates to numbers and £2.5m for cost. The cost of £2.5m is a result of more EHCP's being allocated at higher banding rates.

4.5 Bury is significantly above its statistical neighbours for the number of EHCP's (see appendix 3). If Bury was at the average for statistical neighbours, costs would reduce by approximately £13m.

5. Management Plan and Current Forecasts

A summary of the current Management Plan is shown below: -

Table 3

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
	Mitigated Forecast	Mitigated Forecast	Mitigated Forecast	Mitigated Forecast
1. Expenditure (Positive figures)	£k	£k	£k	£k
High needs Block Total Expenditure	49,676	49,605	49,140	49,778
2. DSG income (Negative figures)				
High needs block	-47,998	-49,438	-50,922	-52,449
CCG contributions	-1,600	-1,600	-1,600	-1,600
Other	-2,662	-2,651	-2,141	-1,267
4. Block transfers				
High needs block	-795	-819	-843	-868
	-53,055	-54,508	-55,506	-56,184
5. In year net position deficit / (surplus)				
High needs block	-3.38	-4.90	-6.37	-6.41
Add brought forward deficit from Plan	20.724			
Planned year end position	17.346	12.442	6.076	-0.330

5.1 The plan, along with various saving initiatives, is to bring the HNB in to balance by 2028-29. This was an ambitious plan and has now slipped due to:

- Increased demand for EHCP's
- Slippage in opening new provision (e.g. Resource Provision)

5.2 It is not considered that expenditure will stay within the Management Plan and revised figures for the DFE will be updated by the deadline of 27th November 2024. This is later than the deadline for submitting this report and therefore a verbal update will need to be given.

5.3 It should be noted that the plan relies on approximately £800k to be transferred each year from the Schools Block into the HNB. Part of another report is to request Forum to approve this for 2025-26. The

actual amount will depend upon the balance left within the Schools Block after the ISB is allocated. It is expected that this will be less than 0.5%.

6 Governance

6.1 Governance around the Management Plan has focused mainly on the Project Safety Valve (PSV) Delivery Board. Now that the Plan needs to be revised there will be a need to increase the level of reporting and governance. This includes reports to Council Members, (via monitoring timetable) Schools Forum as well as the DFE. This is in addition to the regular reporting to the PSV Delivery Board.

6.2 In terms of Schools Forum there has not recently been any detailed monitoring reports on HNB submitted, which will need to change. HNB reports can be complex, and it would be helpful if a HNB subgroup could be formed to consider the HNB costs and pressures in more detail. (This is common practice in many local authorities)

7 Conclusion

It is concluded that: -

- There is significant slippage on the plans which were (and still are) designed to reduce pressures on more expensive placements.
- Demand on EHCP's in mainstream schools has increased significantly.
- As a result of the above the Plan needs to be revised.
- Governance around the Plan needs to be strengthened.
- The plan relies on approximately £800k p.a. to be transferred from the Schools Block.

The recommendations in connection with these are given in paragraph 3.



Department
for Education

Dedicated Schools Grant ‘Safety Valve’ Agreement: Bury

1. This agreement is between the Department for Education and Bury Council, and covers the financial years from 2020-21 to 2028-29.
2. The authority undertakes to reach a positive in-year balance on its Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) account by the end of 2028-29 and in each subsequent year. The authority undertakes to control and reduce the cumulative deficit as follows:

Year	Maximum Forecast DSG Deficit Profile at Year End ¹ £m
2020-21	£27.4m
2021-22	£30.5m
2022-23	£30.6m
2023-24	£32.6m
2024-25	£33.7m
2025-26	£30.3m
2026-27	£26.4m
2027-28	£21.1m
2028-29	£15.7m

3. The authority agrees to implement the action plan that it has set out. This includes action to:
 - 3.1 Improve their early years identification and intervention strategy to prevent the need for escalation where possible, including targeting transition points at primary and secondary phases;
 - 3.2 Ensure robust planning for future provision by increasing the availability and suitability of local special schools and alternative provision within Bury;
 - 3.3 Improve the quality and timeliness of management information to enable evaluation of impact of central services, ensuring that the council has the relevant staffing, expertise, and representation to fulfil the aims of its agreement;

¹ This profile includes contributions that the council will make from its own resources to reduce the DSG deficit.

- 3.4 Design and implement appropriate policy and guidance for children and young people in education otherwise than at school (EOTAS) to reduce health interventions and high needs spending;
 - 3.5 Increase collaboration and coproduction, in particular with local schools, to foster a culture of change in alignment with the council's graduated approach. As part of this requirement, the council must ensure clear expectations and contribution from relevant partners.
4. The authority also agrees to ongoing monitoring of its performance in fulfilling this agreement. The authority will:
 - 4.1 Report tri-annually (as a minimum) in writing to the Department (Funding Policy Unit) on its progress towards implementing the plan as per the conditions set out in paragraphs 2 and 3;
 - 4.2 Inform the Department (Funding Policy Unit) of any unforeseen difficulties or impacts of carrying out the agreement, or any significant risks to reaching the agreed financial position, as soon as they arise;
 - 4.3 Meet with the Department in the last quarter of each financial year covered by this agreement to discuss progress, and update on detailed plans for the subsequent financial year;
 - 4.4 Meet with the Department at any other time when the Department deems it necessary to discuss progress towards the agreement;
 - 4.5 Provide the Department with relevant Schools Forum papers as soon as they are issued.
5. The Department agrees to pay to the authority an additional £6.00 million of DSG before the end of the financial year 2020-21. In subsequent financial years, subject to compliance with the conditions set out in paragraph 3, the Department will pay DSG sums as below. This funding will be provided in instalments and subject to continued satisfactory progress. Subject to full compliance, Bury Council should therefore eliminate their cumulative deficit no later than 2028-29.

Year	The Department agrees to pay to the authority an additional £m of DSG by year end
2020-21	£6.00m
2021-22	£4.00m
2022-23	£4.00m
2023-24	£1.00m
2024-25	£1.00m
2025-26	£1.00m
2026-27	£1.00m
2027-28	£1.00m
2028-29	£1.00m

6. The Department has also provided Bury Council with additional capital funding to support the delivery of this agreement. Progress against delivery of those capital plans should be integrated into the tri-annual reporting to the Department as part of the monitoring of this agreement.

7. This agreement is subject to review at any time, for example as a result of the following events:

7.1 Higher or lower DSG formula funding levels for the authority in future financial years than those the authority has assumed;


7.2 Significant changes to national SEND policy, for example as a result of the government SEND Improvement Plan, which impact on elements of the plan;

7.3 Insufficient progress being made towards the authority reaching and sustaining an in-year balance on its DSG account as set out in the plan;

7.4 Whether Bury Council is awarded additional capital funding support following the capital application process.

The review process will include an assessment of the impact of the change in circumstances.

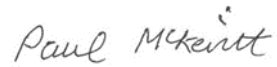
On behalf of Bury Council, signed by:



Lynne Ridsdale, Chief Executive (08/03/2024)



Jeanette Richards, Director of Children's Services (08/03/2024)



Paul McKeivitt, Director of Finance and S151 Officer (07/03/2024)

On behalf of the Department for Education, signed by:



Tom Goldman – Deputy Director, Funding Policy Unit

Heading	Management Plan Jan 2024	Current Month Forecast	Variance between Budget & Current
	(Positive = Overspend)		
	£	£	£
Cloughside	1,674,922	1,586,628	-88,294
Millwood	4,516,110	4,915,438	399,328
Elms Bank	9,282,700	8,854,291	-428,409
Brookhaven	1,495,300	1,213,553	-281,747
Spring Lane PRU	2,845,200	2,762,588	-82,612
Total Special Schools & PRU	19,814,232	19,332,499	-481,733
Chantlers RP	206,000	161,272	-44,728
East Ward RP (Academy)	324,000	299,163	-24,837
Higher Lane Primary RP (Academy)	206,000	214,490	8,490
Mersey Drive RP	252,000	239,394	-12,606
Our Lady of Lourdes Primary RP	180,000	164,331	-15,669
Our Lady of Lourdes Primary RP (Phase 2)	180,000	34,865	-145,135
St Johns & St Marks RP	118,000	0	-118,000
Summerseat RP (Academy)	108,000	144,353	36,353
Summerseat Ladybird RP (Academy)	231,000	0	-231,000
Tottington Primary RP (Academy)	45,000	45,000	0
Unsworth Primary RP (Academy)	262,105	248,031	-14,074
Whitefield Primary RP	118,000	0	-118,000
Woodbank RP (Academy)	118,000	118,836	836
Derby High RP	104,000	0	-104,000
Hazelwood High RP (Academy)	196,000	0	-196,000
Woodhey High RP (Academy)	323,400	254,878	-68,522
Total Resource Provision	2,971,505	1,924,613	-1,046,892
Mainstream EHCP Top-Up	8,212,958	9,939,234	1,726,276
Recoupment from Other LAs	-500,000	-320,281	179,719
Out-Borough INMS	11,478,277	13,403,500	1,925,223
Out-Borough - Other Local Authorities	827,560	1,609,500	781,940
Post-16 SEND Commissioned Places	1,779,000	1,908,178	129,178
Alternative Provision	875,500	952,600	77,100
Personal Budgets for Education (EOTAS)	730,000	660,369	-69,631
Therapy Funding for SEND Pupils	72,100	32,642	-39,458
TOTAL EHCP Funding	23,475,395	28,185,742	4,710,347
Primary Inclusion Partnerships	169,400	169,700	300
Outreach Team	678,500	414,500	-264,000
Secondary Inclusion Partnerships	33,000	83,000	50,000
Secondary Inclusion Hubs (Closed)	50,000	0	-50,000
Total Inclusion & Outreach	930,900	667,200	-263,700

Heading	Management Plan Jan 2024	Current Month Forecast	Variance between Budget & Current
	(Positive = Overspend)		
	£	£	£
Home Tuition	82,900	119,700	36,800
Hospital Tuition	0	35,800	35,800
Total Home/Hospital Tuition	82,900	155,500	72,600
Bury Safeguarding Children Partnership - Re-charge	200,900	40,000	-160,900
Visual / Hearing Impairment (Sensory Support)	1,027,900	968,000	-59,900
Total Send Support Services	1,228,800	1,008,000	-220,800
Total HNB Expenditure	48,503,732	51,273,554	2,769,822
DSG High Needs Block Income	-46,600,400	-47,464,209	-863,809
FE Recoupment, Imports/Exports	1,194,800	1,194,000	-800
Bury Blocks Transfer	-771,635	-721,811	49,824
Health Service Contribution	-1,600,000	-1,600,000	0
Total Income in HNB	-47,777,235	-48,592,020	-814,785
.			
BALANCE DSG Income Less Expenditure	726,497	2,681,534	1,955,037
PSV Expenditure	442,800	415,000	-27,800
PSV Income	-1,000,000	-1,000,000	0
Remaining PSV Funding	-557,200	-585,000	-27,800
.			
BALANCE HNB Including PSV Contribution	169,297	2,096,534	1,927,237
.			
Deficit B/F			18,459,290
.			
Deficit C/F into 25-26			20,555,824
.			
Expected Deficit per Management Plan			20,724,374

Year	Bury	5 Closest Stat Nebrs	10 Closest Stat Nebrs
	2024-25	2024-25	2024-25
Population (2 - 18 years)	41,780	446,522	1,111,813
Number, per 1000 population, aged up to 25 with EHCP plan	64.3	48.9	47.8
of these, placements in:			
Mainstream schools or academies	29.8	18.5	16.0
Resourced provision or SEN units	0.9	1.2	1.9
Maintained special schools or special academies	13.6	14.6	14.7
NMSS or independent schools*	6.2	3.5	3.8
Hospital schools or alternative provision	1.8	0.4	0.2
Post 16	6.5	6.4	6.3
Other	5.5	4.3	5.0

* There are significantly more in independent schools than comparative neighbours. This highlights the need for more local provision.

Bury is approximately 664 EHCP's over it's statistical neighbours
 EHCP's can cost £2k up to £200k for IND SS places.
 At Bury the average cost of an EHCP is £19,600.

If Bury was at the average costs would reduce by

£

13,011,421

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