

Notice of Meeting

Schools Forum

Stuart Matthews (Academy School Representative) (Chair)
Elizabeth Savage, Academy School Representative (Vice-Chair)
Jenny Baker, Special School Representative
Sue Butler, Early Years PVI Provider
Stuart Bevan, Academy Representative (Headteacher)
Caroline Johnson, Primary School Representative
Juanita Dunlop, Primary School Representative (Headteacher)
Trudi Sammons, Primary School Representative (Headteacher)
Keith Grainger, Secondary School Representative (Headteacher)
Tim Griffith, Academy School Representative
Grant Strudley, Academy School Representative
Gareth Croxon, Academy School Representative (Headteacher)
Katie Moore, Academy School Representative
Paul Tatum, Trades Union Representative



Also Invited:

Councillor Roy Bailey, Executive Member for Children, Young People & Learning

Thursday 11 January 2024, 4.30 pm
Zoom Meeting

Agenda

All councillors at this meeting have adopted the Mayor's Charter which fosters constructive and respectful debate.

Item	Description	Page
1.	Apologies for Absence/Substitute Members	
	To receive apologies for absence and to note the attendance of any substitute members.	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
	<p>Members are asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary or affected interests in respect of any matter to be considered at this meeting.</p> <p>Any Member with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in a matter should withdraw from the meeting when the matter is under consideration and should notify the Democratic Services Officer in attendance that they are withdrawing as they have such an interest. If the Disclosable Pecuniary Interest is not entered on the register of Members interests the Monitoring Officer must be notified of the interest within 28 days.</p> <p>Any Member with an affected Interest in a matter must disclose the interest to the meeting. There is no requirement to withdraw from the meeting when the interest is only an affected interest, but the Monitoring Officer should be notified of the interest, if not previously notified of it, within 28 days of the meeting.</p>	
3.	Minutes and Matters Arising	3 - 6

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	To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of 13 December Reporting: ALL	
4.	2024-25 Proposals for the Early Years Budget	7 - 22
	To seek agreement from Schools Forum to proposals for the 2024-25 early years budgets, including the values to be attributed to the Bracknell Forest Council Early Years Funding Formula and proposals to support schools with the costs of early years teachers following the September 2023 teachers pay award. Reporting: Cherry Hall, Head of Early Years and Childcare	
5.	2024-25 Proposals for the Schools Block and Central Schools Services Block Budgets	23 - 42
	To present final proposals from the Council for the 2024-25 Schools Block (SB) and Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) elements of the Schools Budget. There is also an update in respect of the council's bid to join the Department for Education (DfE) Safety Valve (SV) Programme. Reporting: Paul Clark, Finance Business Partner	
6.	2024-25 Proposals for the Local Authority Budget	43 - 68
	To present to the Forum for comment a summary of the Council's draft budget proposals for 2023/24 as agreed by the Executive on 13 December 2022, with a particular focus on the impact expected on the People Directorate. Reporting: Paul Clark, Finance Business Partner	
7.	Dates of Future Meetings	
	The next meeting of the Forum will be held at 4.30pm on Thursday 7 March 2024. Reporting: Jamie Beardsmore, Democratic Services Officer	

Sound recording, photographing, filming and use of social media is permitted. Please contact Jamie Beardsmore, 01344 352044, jamie.beardsmore@bracknell-forest.gov.uk, so that any special arrangements can be made.

Published: 3 January 2024

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**SCHOOLS FORUM
13 DECEMBER 2023
5.05 - 5.55 PM**

Present:

Stuart Matthews, Academy School Representative (Chair)
Elizabeth Savage, Academy School Representative (Vice-Chair)
Jenny Baker, Special School Representative
Caroline Johnson, Primary School Representative
Juanita Dunlop, Primary School Representative (Headteacher)
Trudi Sammons, Primary School Representative (Headteacher)
Keith Grainger, Secondary School Representative (Headteacher)
Tim Griffith, Academy School Representative
Grant Strudley, Academy School Representative
Gareth Croxon, Academy School Representative (Headteacher)
Katie Moore, Academy School Representative
Paul Tatum, Trades Union Representative

Observer:

Councillor Roy Bailey, Executive Member for Children, Young People & Learning (Observer)

Apologies for absence were received from:

Sue Butler, Early Years PVI Provider

17. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

18. Minutes and Matters Arising

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the forum held on 16 November be agreed as a correct record.

Arising from the minutes the following point was noted:

- Arising from minute 15, Duanne Chappell confirmed she had emailed the early years sector and confirmed when they will be heavily involved in any work affecting their sector.

19. Safety Valve Update

The Forum considered a report which sought to update the Schools Forum on the initial Safety Valve proposal to be submitted by Bracknell Forest Council to the Department for Education by 15 December 2023 and to report responses from schools to a consultation on the council's proposal to secure a transfer of the equivalent of 1% of the schools block funding into the High Needs Block, while capping the impact on any individual school budget to a maximum of 0.5%.

Paul Clark informed the Forum that the paper outlined the transformational savings that Bracknell Forest Council believed could be made. It was also highlighted to the Forum that a supplementary paper had been published which outlined the responses of schools to the consultation off the Safety Valve. Over 60% of schools within Bracknell Forest had replied to the consultation. 21 schools supported the proposals and two schools disagreed. A further two schools submitted a response after the consultation deadline, both of which also supported the proposals. However, it was noted that there were many comments from schools outlining they had only accepted the proposals reluctantly. Feedback on comments raised in the proposal would be sent out to schools. **(Action Paul Clark)**

Following the Forum's questions and comments the following points were raised:

- The current DSG deficit has been rolled forward in recent years through an unfunded reserve, however this would need repaying at some point and the Safety Valve has been put in place to ensure there is a planned approach to dealing with this deficit.
- Bracknell Forest Council had considered other options, including not joining the Safety Valve programme. Being in the programme would give the local authority more financial flexibility and support that would not be otherwise available.
- The DfE's approach means that the full details of the Safety Valve proposal could not be put into the public domain.
- The Forum asked that its concerns around SEND funding were relayed to the DfE. Grainne Siggins offered to compile the concerns and submit them to political leaders on behalf of the Forum. **(Action Grainne Siggins)**
- The Forum would be allowed to vote on the DSG budget each year.
- Whilst the local authority projected the top slice to last for the duration of the Safety Valve programme, it has committed to reversing the top slice as a priority were the financial situation to improve in these 5 years.
- Were the Forum to vote in favour of the top slice, the reduction in spending would run for no longer than the duration of the programme (6 years) and any continuation beyond this would have to return to the Forum for a vote.
- Evidence suggests that most children could be best supported within a mainstream school environment. The needs of other students would be met by investment into the specialist unit outreach programmes. It was also believed that earlier intervention would be important in helping pupils and relieving pressure on specialist resources.
- The Forum raised concerns that reductions in spending would have a negative impact on the ability to meet the needs of pupils, especially those requiring specialist resources.
- Evidence shows that there are significant benefits of keeping children in local schools, both due to the benefits for the children of avoiding lengthy journeys as well as the savings in education transport.
- In response to queries over whether joining the Safety Valve programme was really the only option available, it was reported that 35 local authorities had already joined the programme, with a further 5 having been invited this year. It was understood that no local authority had turned down an invitation to join the programme.

The Forum emphasised that any vote to agree the Safety Valve recommendations, should not be taken to reflect a positive affirmation of the Safety Valve programme, but instead choosing the option it believed would be the least detrimental to schools and pupils. The Forum also emphasised their great concern about the levels of

schools funding nationally, the scale of proposed cuts and the resources available for SEND provision nationally.

RESOLVED That reflecting the outcome of the consultation with schools that ended on 8 December 2023, the Schools Forum agrees Block Transfers at the equivalent of 1.0% of the Schools Block Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) income to the High Needs Block to be achieved by:

1. Applying a 0.5% deduction to individual school budgets through deducting 0.5% from each factor value in the National Funding Formula, currently estimated at £0.401m and equivalent to 0.42% of the estimated Schools Block DSG, noting that 6 primary schools will be unable to make a contribution due to the impact of the Minimum Per Pupil Funding Level guarantee and another is only able to make a part contribution for this reason
2. Releasing the unallocated balance on the Schools Block DSG Growth Fund, currently estimated at £0.421m and equivalent to 0.43% of the Schools Block DSG
3. Transferring £0.140m of DSG funds from the Central School Services Block to the High Needs Block, equivalent to 0.15% of the estimated Schools Block DSG.

To enable this, the Schools Forum agrees that the council requests the formal approval of the secretary of state for education to make a 0.85% block transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block.

It was noted that the decision was not unanimous, with ten votes to agree the proposals and two votes against.

The Forum requested that the local authority tried to the best of their ability to ensure to ensure local SEND school places were allocated to children from within the borough.

The Forum noted its thanks for local authority officers for their collaborative approach.

20. **Dates of Future Meetings**

The next meeting would take place on 11 January.

CHAIRMAN

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**TO: SCHOOLS FORUM
11 JANUARY 2024**

2024-25 PROPOSALS FOR THE EARLY YEARS BLOCK BUDGET

**Executive Director: People
Executive Director: Finance**

1 PURPOSE OF DECISION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek agreement from Schools Forum to proposals for the 2024-25 early years budgets, including the values to be attributed to the Bracknell Forest Council Early Years Funding Formula and proposals to support schools with the costs of early years teachers following the September 2023 teachers pay award.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

That Schools Forum considers the council's proposals for allocating funds to schools to contribute to the cost of the September 2023 Teachers' Pay Award and AGREES:

- 2.1 **A fixed lump sum payment of £1,489.12 to each eligible provider for the period September 2023 to 31 March 2024 (point 5.1).**
- 2.2 **A fixed lump sum payment of £3,500 to each eligible provider for the 2024-25 financial year (points 5.3 to 5.5).**

That Schools Forum considers the early years budget proposal from the council and AGREES:

- 2.3 **That for the 2024-25 financial year the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning sets:**
- i. **The early years dedicated schools grant (DSG) income budget at £15.149m (Table 2)**
 - ii. **The funding rates in the early years funding formula are as set out in Tables 3, 4 and 5**
 - iii. **The proposed budgets as set out in Annex 2**
- 2.4 **That Schools Forum notes the Council's plan to consult with childminders on the introduction of monthly payments from April 2024, as set out in points 5.32 to 5.34.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The proposals have taken account of views of providers, local priorities and estimated levels of available resources.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 None. The proposals reflect current operational guidance and the overall affordability within the financial settlement allocated by the Government.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Proposals for allocating funds to providers to contribute to costs arising from the September 2023 Teachers' pay award

- 5.1 In recognition that the September 2023 Teachers' pay award of 6.5% was above the expected level and placed additional cost pressures on providers employing teachers' the DfE have allocated additional funds to LAs to pass on to providers. Funding for 2023-24 is through a new grant, for 2024-25, the DSG includes additional funds for this purpose. Proposals from the council are set out below which the Forum is recommended to agree.
- 5.2 For 2023-24, the council is proposing that:
- i. In line with the government's announcement of supporting schools with the costs of the September 2023 teachers pay award, this funding is allocated to schools only
 - ii. All schools in Bracknell Forest with a nursery class in the autumn term 2023 will receive a one-off payment of £1,489.12 in the 2023 to 2024 financial year
- 5.3 In 2024 to 2025 the TP&P is allocated via the early years block of the DSG and equates to a notional funding rate for Bracknell Forest of £0.08, equivalent to a notional allocation of £121,349.
- 5.4 The September 2023 teachers pay award is an increase of 6.5% to teachers pay. At main grade 6, and assuming oncosts of 30%, this equates to an annual increase of approximately £3,500.
- 5.5 For 2024-25, the Council is proposing that:
- i. A TP&P payment of £3,500 is paid to eligible schools in Bracknell Forest for the 2024 to 2025 financial year
 - ii. To be eligible for TP&P funding a school must meet both of the following criteria:
 - i) employ a teacher between 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, who directly delivers the EYFS to nursery age children for the majority of their day
 - ii) claim early years free entitlement funding for 3- and 4-year-olds
 - iii. Payment will be processed termly
 - iv. Funding will be paid pro rata for schools meeting eligibility criteria for part of the year
 - v. The balance of TP&P funding will be allocated via the base rate for 3- and 4-year-olds in the 2024-25 early years funding formula

2024-25 Budget Proposals

- 5.6 In March 2023 the Government announced changes to early years and childcare entitlements to support working parents. These changes include access to 30 hours of free childcare per week, for 38 weeks of the year, for working parents from when their child is 9 months old to when they start school.
- 5.7 The expansion of the entitlements will be implemented in phases, with children eligible for funding from the term after they reach the required age:
- i. the 15 hours entitlement over 38 weeks of the year (equivalent to 570 hours a year) for eligible working parents of 2-year-old children from 1 April 2024

- ii. the 15 hours entitlement over 38 weeks of the year (equivalent to 570 hours a year) for eligible working parents of children from 9 months to 2 years from 1 September 2024
 - iii. the 30 hours entitlement over 38 weeks of the year (equivalent to 1,140 hours a year) for working parents of children from 9 months to 3 years from 1 September 2025
- 5.8 In July 2023 the government announced funding to support schools with the September 2023 teachers pay award in the 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025 financial years.
- i. For the 2023 to 2024 financial year £12.5m of funding has been provided to local authorities to support early years provision from September 2023, distributed via the early years teachers' pay additional grant (EY TPAG).
 - ii. For the 2024 to 2025 financial year £22.5m funding for teachers pay and pensions (TP&P) in early years will be provided to local authorities via the early years block of the dedicated schools grant
 - iii. It is for local authorities to determine the most appropriate way of allocating funding allocated for to support schools with the September 2023 teachers pay award
- 5.9 This report presents proposals on:
- i. Arrangements for the early years teachers' pay additional grant, which covers the period 1 September 2023 to 31 March 2024
 - ii. Arrangements for the teachers pay and pension in early years, which covers the 2024 to 2025 financial year
 - iii. The 2024 to 25 early years block element of dedicated schools grant that the Department for Education allocates to local authorities to fund provisions and support for children up to the age of 5. It covers:
 - i) the 15 hours entitlement for eligible working parents of children from 9 months to 2-year-olds (new entitlement from 1 September 2024)
 - ii) the 15 hours free entitlement for disadvantaged 2-year-olds
 - iii) the 15 hours entitlement for eligible working parents of 2-year-old children (new entitlement from April 2024)
 - iv) the universal 15 hours entitlement for all 3- and 4-year-olds
 - v) the additional 15 hours entitlement for eligible working parents of 3- and 4-year-olds
 - vi) the Early Years Pupil Premium
 - vii) the Disability Access Fund
 - viii) the Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund
 - ix) other specialist and general support services

National Funding Framework

- 5.10 The Department for Education uses an early years national funding formula to distribute dedicated school grant income to local authorities. This formula sets out key requirements on local authorities in setting their early years block budgets. These requirements are:
- i. To develop and maintain a local early years funding formula in accordance with parameters set by the Department for Education, undertaking consultation with providers and the Schools Forum when any changes are proposed, the early years funding formula:
 - i) must include a single funding rate (including the same base rate and supplements) for both entitlements for 3- and 4-year-olds (that is, both the universal 15 hours, and the additional 15 hours for working parents)
 - ii) must include a funding rate for the 2-year-old working parent entitlement
 - iii) must include a funding rate for disadvantaged 2-year-olds that is at least equivalent to the total funding rate for the 2-year-old working parent entitlement
 - iv) must include a funding rate for the working parents of children aged 9 months up to 2 years.
 - v) must plan to pass on at least 95% of funding directly to providers – the “pass through rate”
 - vi) must use a universal base rate for each entitlement, paid at the same value to all providers
 - vii) must use a deprivation supplement to target additional funds to the providers admitting the most disadvantaged 3- and 4-year-old children
 - viii) For the 2-year-old entitlements and the entitlement for children aged 9 months up to 2 years old, the funding formula should reflect the additional costs of supporting children from disadvantaged backgrounds
 - ix) can include other discretionary supplements, which the Department for Education restricts to rurality / sparsity, flexibility of provision, English as a second language and quality of provision
 - x) supplements selected by a Local Authority can generally use any measure of eligibility, provided it is applied equally to all providers in a transparent and fair way
 - xi) must not allocate more than 12% of funding through supplements
 - ii. That a Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF) should be created to support all children taking up the entitlements with lower level or emerging Special Educational Needs
 - iii. Required to pass on the Early Years Pupil Premium to providers to support eligible disadvantaged children
 - iv. Required to pass on Disability Access Funding to providers to support disabled children’s access to the entitlements

Provisional estimate of early years block dedicated schools grant income

- 5.11 In the summer 2023 the government consulted on the proposed approach to distributing entitlements funding for 2-year-olds and under from 2024-25, this included changes to the early years national funding formula and operational guidance to local authorities.

- 5.12 The consultation response¹ was published alongside the 2024-25 funding rates², and the 2024-25 operational guidance for local authorities³ on 29 November 2023. Annex 1 sets out the main changes in the consultation response.
- 5.13 From April 2024-25 each local authority will receive an early years funding rate for each of the entitlements; 3- and 4-year-olds, 2-year-olds (covering both the working parent entitlement and disadvantaged 2 year old entitlement) and under 2's.
- 5.14 Bracknell Forest will receive an increase in the 3- and 4-year-old funding rate of £0.39. The national funding rate for early years pupil premium (EYPP) will increase by £0.02 per hour and the disability access fund (DAF) will increase by £51.08 per year.

Table 1 sets out the change in funding rates. Funding rates for 2023-24 are inclusive of the early years supplementary grant.

Table 1: Change to Early Years Funding received by BFC

	2023-24	2024-25	Change
Under 2's	n/a	£13.06	-
2-year old's	n/a	£9.63	-
3- & 4-year old's	£6.14	£6.53	6.4%
EYPP	£0.66	£0.68	3.0%
DAF	£858.92	£910	5.9%

- 5.15 To ensure that every local authority receives an increase in their hourly funding rate, the DfE has introduced funding protections that limit increases to fund top ups that are required to local authorities that would otherwise receive reduced funding. All local authorities therefore receive a minimum increase in their hourly funding rate of 1%, with gains in 3- and 4-year-old funding capped at 5%.
- 5.16 The Bracknell Forest funding rate for 3- and 4-year-olds in 2024-2025 includes a notional funding rate for the TP&P of £0.08 per hour. This notional funding rate is applied after the application of the 5% funding cap. Therefore, although the Bracknell Forest funding rate for 3- and 4-year-olds in 2024-25 is subject to the 5% cap, the published funding rate is 6.4% higher than the 2023-24 funding rate.
- 5.17 Without the gains cap, funding for 3- and 4-year-olds in Bracknell Forest would have been set at £6.57 per hour, £0.04 higher than the capped rate. This would have represented a 7% increase in funding.
- 5.18 To reflect potential fluctuation in take-up of the entitlements, and therefore costs, the Department for Education uses 2 census points to calculate each Local Authorities Early Years Block Dedicated Schools Grant income. January 2024 part-time equivalent actual head count data of eligible children is used to calculate the first 5 months of the financial year from April to August 2024; with the equivalent January 2025 data used to fund the 7 months from September 2024 to March 2025.

¹ [Early years funding – extension of the entitlements - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/early-years-funding-extension-of-the-entitlements)

² [Early years funding: 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/early-years-funding-2024-to-2025)

³ [Early years entitlements: local authority funding operational guide 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/early-years-entitlements-local-authority-funding-operational-guide-2024-to-2025)

- 5.19 Using this methodology, the earliest point the DfE could collect data for the 2 new working parent entitlements is January 2025. Therefore, to make allocations for local authorities as accurate as possible, the basis for funding allocations for these new working parent entitlements in 2024 to 2025 will be as follows:
- i. Indicative allocations will be based on the Department for Education's estimated take-up numbers for the new working entitlements
 - ii. Final allocation will be adjusted on the basis of actual take-up for each term, collected through 2 additional headcounts in the 2024 summer and autumn terms and the January 2025 census
- 5.20 The forecast income and expenditure for the expanded entitlements provided below is based on Department for Education estimates of the number of children likely to take up the expanded entitlements. These estimates have been tested against available local data and are considered reasonable. However, as forecasts are based on untested estimates there is a risk that take up and therefore income is lower than anticipated. The DfE's proposal for data collection as set out in point 5.19 and the Council's conservative approach to setting the early years block budget for 2024-25 should mitigate this risk.
- 5.21 Table 2 below provides a summary of the £15.149m anticipated early years block dedicated schools grant income for 2024-25 and Annex 2 provides a more detailed breakdown of the calculation. The calculation uses January 2023 actual part-time equivalent data as a proxy for likely take up of the 3- and 4-year-old entitlements in the 2024-25 financial year and the Department for Education's estimated take-up numbers for the 2 new working entitlements, so represents an estimate.

Table 2: Forecast early years block income 2024-25

Item	Estimated amount
Funding for 3- & 4-year-olds: universal 15 hours	£6,427,025
Funding for 3- & 4-year-olds: extended 30 hours for working parents	£3,018,623
Sub Total: 3- & 4-year-olds	£9,445,648
Funding for 2-year-olds	£3,670,945
Funding for under 2's	£1,868,048
Funding for Early Years Pupil Premium	£98,447
Funding for Disability Access Fund	£66,430
Total	£15,149,517

Proposals for the 2024-25 early years block budget

- 5.22 The funding framework requires local authorities to consult with providers and Schools Forum when changes are proposed to the local early years funding formula. Due to the timing of the publication of the guidance and funding rates, there is insufficient time to consult providers on changes to the Bracknell Forest early years funding formula for the 2024-25 financial year. Proposals therefore extend the current funding formula for 3- and 4-year-olds to the 2 new working parent entitlements.
- 5.23 The proposal to extend the funding formula for 3- and 4-year-olds across all age groups for the 2024-25 early years block budget was presented to the Early Years Forum on 30 November 2023. The Early Years Forum supported the proposal.

- 5.24 Budget proposals for 2024-25 reflect the DfE funding settlement and are informed by feedback from the Early Years Forum.
- 5.25 The proposals maximise the allocation of funding through the Basic rate and are based on DfE estimates for the number of under 3's accessing the entitlements.
- 5.26 Where changes to the percentage of funding allocated to a component of the early years funding formula are proposed, the 2023-24 figure is inclusive of the early years supplementary grant.
- 5.27 All proposals will be with effect from April 2024. The proposals are:
1. The components of the Early Years Funding Formula for 2023-24 as shown in Annex 3 are retained for 2024-25 and are extended to include the 2 new working parent entitlements.
 2. The Basic rate for 3- and 4-year-olds paid to providers will increase from £5.48 to £5.85. The funding allocated to the Basic rate for 3- and 4-year-olds will increase from 94.5% to 95% of the total funds for 3- and 4-year-olds allocated to providers through the Early Years Funding Formula.
 3. The Basic rate for 2-year-olds paid to providers is set at £8.49. The funding allocated to the Basic rate for 2-year-olds is set at 95% of the total funds allocated for 2-year-olds to providers through the Early Years Funding Formula.
 4. The Basic rate for under 2's paid to providers is set at £11.51. The funding allocated to the Basic rate for under 2's is set at 95% of the total funds allocated for under 2's to providers through the Early Years Funding Formula.
 5. The rate for the EYPP element of the deprivation supplement will decrease from £2.02 to £2.00. The funding allocated to the EYPP element of the deprivation supplement will decrease from 2.2% to 2% of the total funds allocated to providers through the Early Years Funding Formula.
 6. The rate for the IDACI element of the deprivation supplement will remain unchanged at £0.16 for band 1 and £0.32 for band 2. The funding allocated to the IDACI element of the deprivation supplement will decrease from 1.6% to 1.5% of the total funds allocated to providers through the Early Years Funding Formula.
 7. The rate for the quality supplement will remain unchanged at £0.14. The funding allocated to the quality supplement will decrease from 1.7% to 1.5% of the total funds allocated to providers through the Early Years Funding Formula.
 8. The funding allocated to the Early Years Special Education Needs Inclusion Fund and Provider Contingency will remain unchanged at 1.2% of the total funds allocated to providers.
 9. Funding allocated to TP&P in early years is set at £59,500 or 0.63% of the total funds allocated to providers.
 10. The pupil premium rate will increase from £0.66 to £0.68.
 11. The Disability Access Fund rate will increase from £858.92 to £910.
 12. 4.69% of total income to be centrally managed by the Council.
- 5.28 Tables 3, 4 and 5 below set out the proposed 2024-25 Early Years Funding Formula for each entitlement and the associated provider rates.

Table 3: Summary of the proposed 2024-25 Early Years Funding Formula for 3- and 4-year-olds

EYFF Element	Weighting	Proposed hourly funding rate	% total EY funding
Deprivation Supplement	1.5% via IDACI element scores of children attending setting. Band 2	£0.32	
	Band 1	£0.16	
	2.0% via child eligibility to EYPP universal hours	£1.32	
	additional hours	£2.00	
Quality Supplement	1.5% of EYFF via setting leadership qualification Level 5 and above	£0.14	
Uniform Base Rates	95% of EYFF	£5.85	
	Indicative EYFF average provider rate	£6.15	92.2%
	Teachers Pay & Pension	£0.04	0.6%
	Average SEN funding	£0.08	1.2%
	Average contingency funding	£0.08	1.2%
	Subtotal to providers (average)	£6.22	95.3%
	Average BFC funding (5%) max	£0.31	4.7%
	Indicative funding 3- and 4-year-olds	£6.53	100%

Table 4: Summary of the proposed 2024-25 Early Years Funding Formula for 2-year-olds

EYFF Element	Weighting	Proposed hourly funding rate	% total EY funding
Deprivation Supplement	1.5% via average IDACI scores of children attending setting. Band 2 Band 1	£0.32 £0.16	
	2.0% via child eligibility to EYPP	£1.38	
Quality Supplement	1.5% of EYFF via setting leadership qualification Level 5 and above	£0.14	
Uniform Base Rates	95% of EYFF	£8.49	
	Indicative EYFF average provider rate	£8.94	92.9%
	Average SEN funding	£0.12	1.2%
	Average contingency funding	£0.12	1.2%
	Subtotal to providers (average)	£9.18	95.3%
	Average BFC funding (5%) max	£0.45	4.7%
	Indicative funding 2-olds	£9.63	100%

5.29 Due to the change in the early years national funding formula, the Base 2-year-old funding rate for 2024-25 is not directly comparable to the funding rate for disadvantage 2 years olds in 2023-24 of £9.38. While the rate for 2-year-olds in 2024-25 of £8.49 appears to be a reduction in funding for 2-year-olds, the extension of the Early Years Pupil Premium across all age groups will result in 2-year-olds eligible for EYPP receiving the deprivation supplement of £2.00, increasing the funding rate paid for disadvantaged 2-year-olds to £10.49.

Table 5: Summary of the proposed 2024-25 Early Years Funding Formula for under 2's

EYFF Element	Weighting	Proposed hourly funding rate	% total EY funding
Deprivation Supplement	1.5% via average IDACI scores of children attending setting. Band 2	£0.32	
	Band 1	£0.16	
	2.0% via child eligibility to EYPP	£1.38	
Quality Supplement	1.5% of EYFF via setting leadership qualification Level 5 and above	£0.14	
Uniform Base Rates	95% of EYFF	£11.51	
	Indicative EYFF average provider rate	£12.12	92.9%
	Average SEN funding	£0.16	1.2%
	Average contingency funding	£0.16	1.2%
	Subtotal to providers (average)	£12.45	95.3%
	Average BFC funding (5%) max	£0.61	4.7%
	Indicative funding under 2's	£13.06	100%

5.30 Funded hours data for 3-and 4-year-olds for the 2023 calendar year was used to compare the impact of the proposed 2024-25 Early Years Funding Formula to the current Early Years Funding formula on forecast provider income, with the following highlight changes:

- i. 2 (2%) providers will see increased income of up to 2%.
- ii. 5 (4%) providers will see increased income of between 4% and 6%
- iii. 11 (8%) providers will see increased income of between 6% and 8%
- iv. 19 (15%) providers will see increased income of between 8% and 10%
- v. 94 (72%) providers will see increased income of more than 10%

This forecast is based on 131 providers funded in the 2023-24 financial year.

5.31 The increase in 2023-24 funding rates via the Early Years Supplementary Grant did not apply to the summer term 2023. This is evident in the substantial number of providers who are forecast to see increased income of over 10% in 2024-25.

Monthly free entitlement payments for childminders

5.32 The expansion of the free entitlements to children of eligible working parents from the age of 9 months will result in many early years providers receiving most of their income via the free entitlements. The Council has considered the impact of this

change on early years providers income, on childminders in particular and on advice from the Government and believes that it is appropriate to consult with childminders on the introduction of monthly payments for the early years entitlements.

- 5.33 A childminder monthly payments working group met with the Council in the autumn term to discuss the options and challenges of monthly payments. Feedback from these discussions will inform the proposals for a consultation with all childminders which will take place in the spring term.
- 5.34 The outcome of the consultation will be presented to School Forum in March 2024, with any changes to payments for childminders implemented in April 2024.

Next Steps

- 5.35 The Early Years Block budget proposal for 2024-25 will be presented to the Executive member for approval in March 2024.
- 5.36 Providers will be notified of indicative funding rates for 2024-25 in January 2024, and funding rates for 2024-25 will be confirmed in March 2024.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The legal issues are addressed within the report. Local authorities should follow the *Early Years Entitlement: local authority funding of providers operational guide 2024 to 2025*, when setting the local funding formula. In setting the funding formula local authorities must consult the Schools Forum on changes to local early years funding formulas. The proposals put forward in this report seeks the agreement of the Schools Forum together with agreement on the teachers pay award.

Executive Director of Resources

- 6.2 The financial implications anticipated from the report are set out in the supporting information.

Impact Assessment

- 6.3 No Equalities Impact Assessment is required as the proposed changes implement statutory guidance which includes eligibility criteria.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 Lower than forecast take up of the expanded entitlements will reduce income to the Council but will be offset by reduced expenditure to early years providers.
- 6.5 If actual take up of the expanded entitlements is higher than the level forecast by the DfE there is a risk that there will be insufficient capacity to meet the needs of working parents and the Council will not meet its statutory duty. Work to better understand and mitigate this risk will be undertaken in the Spring term.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.6 The recommendations from this report are not expected to have an impact on emissions of carbon dioxide.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/718179/Early_education_and_childcare-statutory_guidance.pdf

Early education and childcare statutory guidance for local authorities - June 2018

[Early years funding – extension of the entitlements - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
Early years funding – extension of the entitlements: response to consultation

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/656638f3750074000d1ded9a/20231127_Early_Years_Funding_Rates_and_Step-by-step_Calculations_2024_to_2025_Funding_Output_Tables_-_FINAL.xlsx
Early years funding rates and step-by-step calculations 2024 to 2025

[Early years entitlements: local authority funding operational guide 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Early years entitlements: local authority funding of providers operational guide 2024 to 2025

CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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Early Years Funding changes for 2024 to 2025

The government's response to the [consultation](#) was published on 29 November 2023 and with significant changes necessary to implement the proposals set out in that response incorporated into the Early years entitlements: local authority funding operational guide 2024 to 2025

The main changes to the guidance are:

- introduction of a new national funding formula (NFF) covering both the existing 2-year-old entitlement for disadvantaged children and new working parent entitlements to be introduced in 2024 to 2025 for 2-year-olds and children aged 9 months to 2 years
- new methodology for funding allocations for the new working parent entitlements for 2-year-old children and children aged 9 months to 2 years old for 2024 to 2025
- extending the 95% pass-through requirement to the disadvantaged 2-year-old entitlement and the new working parent entitlements
- extending local funding rules to the disadvantaged 2-year-old entitlement and the new working parent entitlements
- a requirement for local authorities to have a disadvantaged 2-year-old rate that is at least equal to their rate for 2-year-old children of working parents
- new deprivation supplement arrangements for the disadvantaged 2-year-old entitlement and the new working parent entitlements
- confirming the expectation that local authorities have special educational needs inclusion funds (SENIFs) for all children with special educational needs (SEN) eligible for or taking up the new and existing entitlements, regardless of the number of hours taken
- extending eligibility for EYPP and DAF to eligible children aged 2 years old and under accessing the entitlements from 2024 to 2025, and increases to the value of both funding streams
- extending the facility to apply for a disapplication from the 95% pass through rule to the disadvantaged 2-year-old entitlement and the new working parent entitlements, and changes to the criteria against which a disapplication will be considered

Proposed 2024-25 EY Budgets

2024-25 EY Budget	3 and 4 year olds						2 year olds						Under 2's					
	Hourly funding rate	Funded hours per week	Funded weeks per year	Total funded hours	Total Funding	%	Hourly funding rate	Funded hours per week	Funded weeks per year	Total funded hours	Total Funding	%	Hourly funding rate	Funded hours per week	Funded weeks per year	Total funded hours	Total Funding	%
Forecast DSG funding from the DfE:																		
15 hours free entitlement funding forecast	£6.53	15	38	984,230	£6,427,025													
30 hours free entitlement funding forecast	£6.53	15	38	462,270	£3,018,623		£9.63	15	38	381,199	£3,670,945		£13.06	15	38	143,036	£1,868,048	
Total BFC estimate of EY DSG funding	£6.53			1,446,500	£9,445,648		£9.63			381,199	£3,670,945		£13.06			143,036	£1,868,048	
2023-24 rate	£6.14						n/a*						n/a*					
Change	£0.39	6.4%					n/a*	n/a*					n/a*	n/a*				
For allocation through the EY Funding Formula (notional split by supplement):																		
Basic rate	£5.85	95.0%	of allocated funds		£8,277,039		£8.49	95.0%	of allocated funds		£3,238,747		£11.51	95.0%	of allocated funds		£1,648,113	
Deprivation supplement (average)	£0.21	3.5%	of allocated funds		£304,944		£0.31	3.5%	of allocated funds		£119,322		£0.42	3.5%	of allocated funds		£60,720	
Quality (average)	£0.09	1.5%	of allocated funds		£130,690		£0.13	1.5%	of allocated funds		£51,138		£0.18	1.5%	of allocated funds		£26,023	
Total BFC estimate of EY Funding Formula allocatic	£6.15	(average)			£8,712,673	92.2%	£8.94	(average)			£3,409,207	92.9%	£12.12	(average)			£1,734,856	92.9%
2023-24 rate	£5.78						n/a*						n/a*					
Change	£0.37	6.4%					n/a*	n/a*					n/a*	n/a*				
Funding to be managed by the Council																		
<i>Outside the 5% cap of EY Funding Formula:</i>																		
SEN Inclusion Fund	£0.08	1.2%	of total available funds		£115,237		£0.12	1.2%	of total available funds		£44,786		£0.16	1.2%	of total available funds		£22,790	
Teacher Pay & Pension	£0.04	0.6%	of total available funds		£59,500													
Provider Contingency	£0.08	1.2%	of total available funds		£115,237		£0.12	1.2%	of total available funds		£44,786		£0.16	1.2%	of total available funds		£22,790	
					£289,974	3.1%					£89,571	2.4%					£45,580	2.4%
Total within the 95% allocation to providers - the "Pass through rate"					£9,002,647	95.3%					£3,498,778	95.3%					£1,780,436	95.3%

Proposed 2024-25 EY Budgets

	3 and 4 year olds					2 year olds					Under 2's				
* New entitlements - no comparative rates for 2023-24 <i>Inside the 5% cap of EY Funding Formula:</i>															
BFC Services	£0.31	4.7% of total available funds				£0.45	4.7% of total available funds				£0.61	4.7% of total available funds			
Outreach to parents					£68,982					£41,414					£20,804
Professional support to providers					£146,802					£57,107					£28,791
Business support to providers					£66,871					£26,014					£13,115
Free entitlement systems and software					£42,268					£16,443					£8,290
Management of the EY Funding Formula					£84,905					£14,357					£7,238
Expansion implementation					£33,173					£16,834					£9,374
Total BFC estimate of funding to be managed by the Council					£443,001					£172,168					£87,612
					4.7%					4.7%					4.7%
Total BFC estimate of EY funding					£9,445,648					£3,670,946					£1,868,048
					100.0%					100.0%					100.0%
Other Income															
Early Years Pupil Premium	£0.68	15	38	89,199	£60,656	£0.68	15	38	52,930	£35,993	£0.68	15	38	2,645	£1,798
Ring fenced Disability Access Fund		£910	per PTE	56.00	£50,960		£910	per PTE	12.00	£10,920		£910	per PTE	5.00	£4,550
Total anticipated															
Total anticipated income - DSG and other					£9,557,263					£3,717,858					£1,874,396
Total anticipated income - all entitlements					£15,149,517										

Summary of the 2023-24 Bracknell Forest Early Years Funding Formula

EYFF Element	Weighting	Proposed hourly funding rate	% Total EY funding
Deprivation Supplement	1.6 % of EYFF via IDACI scores Average IDACI score of children attending setting.		
	Band 2	£0.32	
	Band 1	£0.16	
	2.2% of EYFF via child eligibility to EYPP	£1.38	
Quality Supplement	2.0% of EYFF via setting leadership qualification Level 5 and above	£0.14	
Uniform Base Rate	94.2% of EYFF	£5.48*	
	Indicative EYFF average provider rate	£5.78	92.9%
	Average SEN funding	£0.07	1.2%
	Average contingency funding	£0.07	1.2%
	Subtotal to providers	£5.63	95.3%
	Average BFC funding (5%) max	£0.28	4.7%
	Indicative funding 3- and 4-year-olds	£5.91	100%
	Provider funding rate for 2-year-olds	£9.38*	

*Includes the early years supplementary grant

To: Schools Forum
Date: 11 January 2024

**2024-25 Proposals for the Schools Block and
Central School Services Block Budgets
Executive Director: People / Executive Director: Resources**

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To present final proposals from the Council for the 2024-25 Schools Block (SB) and Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) elements of the Schools Budget. There is also an update in respect of the council's bid to join the Department for Education (DfE) Safety Valve (SV) Programme.

2 Executive Summary

- 2.1 On 19 December, the Department for Education (DfE) released the key pupil data set that must be used to calculate individual school budgets. Together with the earlier decision of the Schools Forum to allow the equivalent of a 1% Block Transfer from the SB and CSSB budgets to support the High Needs Block (HNB) and the collection of school views on other budget matters from the annual financial consultation, all the information required to produce budget proposals is now available.
- 2.2 Inevitably, this has led to some changes now being presented from previous updates, including the impact of 149 FTE additional pupils in secondary schools (+2.1%) and a 0.5 FTE increase in primary schools. As usual, there have also been considerable changes in the additional educational needs (AEN)¹. In respect of the Block transfer / top slice, individual school contributions will remain at the amounts included in the original consultation document.
- 2.3 Due to the lagged funding used by the DfE in Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)², whilst no additional resources are allocated to finance changes in AEN, LAs are required to fund schools on the new pupil data. This creates a £0.301m unfunded pressure on the SB. Other changes in DSG income and budget proposals mean that only £0.067m of this pressure is proposed to remain unfunded.
- 2.4 Overall, the final proposals being presented result in schools on average receiving an increase in per pupil funding of 1.8% before the Block Transfer / top slice, which is slightly higher than the 1.7% increase projected and reported to the Forum in November. This compares to 2.7% in 2022-23, 3.8% in 2021-22, 6.3% in 2020-21 and 2.8% in 2019-20. The average increase after the Block Transfer / top slice is 1.4%.
- 2.5 Secretary of State for Education approval will be required to proceed with 0.35% of the proposed transfer of funds from the SB to the HNB, which is above the locally permitted 0.5% limit. As this decision is not expected until February at the earliest, the normal January issuing of individual school budgets will be on a provisional basis.
- 2.6 Recommendations agreed from this report, subject to later decision of the Secretary of State, will form the basis of proposals to be presented to the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning on 21 January, who will be agreeing most aspects

¹ AEN for funding purposes relates to pupil-based funding allocations linked to proxy measures for deprivation, English as an additional language and relatively low scores from national testing.

² DSG is the formula based grant used by the DfE to fund local authorities (LAs) for most of their school and education related responsibilities.

of the Schools Budget. However, within the overall budget setting process, there are several areas where the Forum holds responsibility, and these are separately presented now for a decision.

- 2.7 The proposals being presented for a decision are more complex than usual, with some being restricted to the specific membership group that the decision affects, and others being subject to ratification by the secretary of state.
- 2.8 With the DfE needing to be informed of the actual Funding Formula for Schools to be used in 2024-25 with associated units of resource and total cost no later than 22 January, final budget decisions must be made at this meeting. Individual school budgets need to be published by 29 February 2024.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 **To AGREE that after taking account of the school responses to the October 2023 financial consultation and overall affordability:**

Item for Maintained Primary School members only

- 1) **de-delegation of budgets continues for the services requested by the council.**

Item for Maintained Secondary School members only

- 2) **de-delegation of budgets continues for the services requested by the council.**

Item for all Maintained School members only (includes Special and PRU)

- 3) **a £20 per pupil contribution continues to be made by maintained schools towards the cost of delivering 'general' education related statutory and regulatory duties.**

Items for all Forum members

- 4) **all schools receive at least the same amount of per pupil funding as received in 2023-24 financial year, with the £0.039m cost to be met from reduced funding increases for those schools receiving the largest uplifts in per pupil funding.**
- 5) **That the notional SEN budget quantum be determined through the actual number of pupils on SEN support or in receipt of an EHCP, with individual school Notional SEN Funding amounts calculated from the key proxy SEN funding factors in the NFF plus an element of core per pupil funding amounts.**

- 3.2 **To AGREE that the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning is requested to approve:**

- 1) **the initial changes to budgets as set out in Table 2, in particular:**
- a. **that the Schools Block DSG be set at £96.308m (columns A and B of line 4)**
 - b. **that the Central School Services Block DSG be set at £0.848m (column C of line 4)**

- c. that factor values in the BF Funding Formula are set at the same values as included by the DfE in the Dedicated Schools Grant, subject to:
 - i. applying the 0.5% deduction for the transfer to the HNB
 - ii. applying reduced funding rates to the AEN factors to the level required to absorb the £0.067m unfunded pressure.
 - d. the changes to all other budgets that amount to £4.353m (column D of line 17)
 - 2) that other Schools Block related grants for maintained schools, including the new Teachers Additional Pay Grant, be set to the amounts anticipated in 2024-25
 - 3) that de-delegated budgets are inflated by the average increase in per pupil funding of 1.4%
- 3.3 To AGREE that in the event of the Secretary of State for Education not agreeing the 0.35% Schools Block transfer that is above the limit permitted locally, that the £0.341m be placed in the LA managed Growth Fund for later consideration.
- 3.4 To AGREE that the Executive Director: Resources be authorised to submit DfE pro forma templates for the 2024-25 BF Schools Budget in accordance with the decisions taken at this meeting.
- 3.5 To AGREE as decision maker:
 - 1. that the arrangements in place for the administration of central government grants are appropriate;
 - 2. the budgets for the LA managed Growth Fund are as set out in Annex 2
 - 3. the budgets for LA managed Central School Services Block services are as set out in Annex 3.
- 3.6 To NOTE the current position on the Council's Safety Valve proposal.

4 Reasons for recommendations

- 4.1 To ensure that the 2024-25 Schools Budget is developed in accordance with the views of the Schools Form, the anticipated level of resources and the statutory funding framework, including the requirement to submit summary details of individual 2024-25 school budgets to the DfE by 22 January 2024.

5 Alternative options considered

- 5.1 These have been considered during each stage of the budget process.

6 Supporting information

Introduction

- 6.1 This report presents final 2024-25 budget proposals for the SB and CSSB elements of the Schools Budget, in particular the allocation of funds to individual schools. The Forum has been kept up to date with the DfE regulatory funding framework, most notably through the introduction of a National Funding Formula for schools.
- 6.2 In terms of approving budgets, the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning has responsibility for agreeing most aspects of the SB although within the overall budget setting process, there are several areas where the Forum holds responsibility, and these are now being presented for a decision.
- 6.3 Whilst this report and decisions to be taken within it remain consistent with previous years, there is one significant change for 2024-25 and this relates to the council bidding to join the DfE Safety Valve (SV) programme. An update on the SV proposal is provided from paragraph 6.39.
- 6.4 As previously agreed, the SV proposal includes a Block Transfer / top slice to the High Needs Block (HNB) at the equivalent of 0.85% of the SB, with individual school contributions to be limited to no more than 0.5% together with the equivalent of 0.15% of the SB from the CSSB. Overall, £0.963m, the equivalent of 1% of the SB budget is proposed to be transferred to the HNB.
- 6.5 The Forum is aware that as the proposed amount of the Block Transfer / top slice from the SB exceeds the 0.5% maximum amount the Schools Forum is permitted to agree (£0.482m), the Secretary of State for Education will need to agree the additional 0.35% (£0.341m) included in the budget proposals. As the outcome of this decision is not expected to be known until after the 22 January deadline for returning individual school budget information to the DfE, advice from government officials is to prepare multiple budgets to cover all the eventualities. The report recommendations therefore reflect this approach.
- 6.6 In terms of the proposed transfer from the CSSB to HNB (£0.140m), this is a local decision and not subject to any limit. It can be made in consultation with the Schools Forum.

Decisions arising from the October 2023 Financial Consultation

- 6.7 The 16 November Forum meeting received a report on the outcomes from the annual financial consultation with schools. As this was during the period of considering a SV bid that may have wider financial implications on schools, no decisions were taken at that time. However, in order to finalise school budgets, a number of decisions now need to be made with the Forum requested to agree the majority responses from schools for questions 2 to 6, as summarised below in Table 1:

Responses to the questions

Question	Yes	No	No. of Replies	Impacts:
1. That subject to affordability, should minimum increases in per pupil funding be set at the maximum permitted amount of +0.5%	95%	5%	20	All schools including special
2. Should the cost of financing any impact from 1. be met from deductions to schools receiving the highest % increase	90%	10%	20	Mainstream schools only
3. Should de-delegation continue on permitted services?	100%	0%	15	Maintained mainstream schools only
4. Should maintained schools continue to contribute £20 per pupil to LA statutory education related costs?	88%	12%	17	Maintained schools only
5. Is the best way to calculate notional SEN through the actual number of pupils on SEN support or in receipt of an EHCP?	84%	16%	19	All mainstream schools
6. Should individual school Notional SEN Funding amounts be calculated from the key proxy SEN funding factors in the NFF plus an element of core per pupil funding amounts?	95%	5%	19	All mainstream schools

- 6.8 Assuming de-delegation continues, the Forum also needs to consider the relevant inflationary uplift to applied to funding rates. It is recommended to continue previous practice and to agree that contributions are uplifted at the same rate as the average increase in school budgets, which for 2024-25 is 1.4%.
- 6.9 In respect of question 1 and setting the minimum increase in per pupil funding from 2023-24 – the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) - the DfE permits LAs in consultation with their Schools Forum to set the relevant change between 0% and +0.5%. In preparing the Block transfer / top slice consultation with schools, in order to minimise any contributions from schools to funding the cost of MFG, the illustrative calculations were set at 0%.
- 6.10 Final budget calculations identify the cost of a +0.5% MFG rate at a pressure on other schools of £0.123m. A rate of 0% reduces the pressure to £0.041m. There are 3 schools that receive an MFG top up, all of which have relatively large increases in pupil numbers. Therefore, cash budgets are increasing from core pupil funding allocations,
- 6.11 As this information was not available to share with schools when the consultation was published, to reduce the funding impact from the MFG on other schools, and to remain consistent with the individual school contributions to the Block Transfer / top slice included in the consultation document, it is proposed to set the MFG at 0%.

- 6.12 In respect of decisions to be taken on the outcomes from the October 2023 consultation, as some of the questions only impact on specific groups, DfE permit only Forum members representing these groups to make relevant decisions. The report recommendations in paragraph 3.1 are therefore presented to reflect this requirement.
- 6.13 The report to Schools Forum on the full outcomes from the autumn term financial consultation with schools can be viewed here [Agenda for Schools Forum on Thursday, 16 November 2023, 4.30 pm | Bracknell Forest Council \(bracknell-forest.gov.uk\)](#)

Final budget proposals for 2024-25

- 6.14 On 19 December, the DfE released the key pupil data set that must be used to calculate individual school budgets and confirmed DSG allocations for the SB and CSSB. These included the reduced SB per pupil funding rates the DfE announced on 6 October which were reported to the Forum on 16 November.
- 6.15 Together with the earlier decision of the Schools Forum to allow a Block Transfer / top slice from the SB and CSSB budgets to the High Needs Block (HNB) and the collection of school views on other budget matters from the annual financial consultation, all the information required to undertake relevant budget calculations and present proposals that are consistent with school views is now available.

Confirmed Schools Block DSG income

- 6.16 The Forum will be aware that to determine an LAs SB DSG funding, the DfE applies the same uniform NFF factors and values to every school in the country, using lagged pupil number and other data sets e.g. FSM, test results. The resultant individual primary school budgets for an LA are then aggregated together and divided by total primary pupil numbers to determine an LAs standard primary per pupil funding rate – called the Primary Unit of Funding (PUF). The same calculation is also made for secondary schools to determine the Secondary Unit of Funding (SUF). Each LA is then funded at these per pupil funding rates on the most recent October census data.
- 6.17 The final 2024-25 PUFs and SUFs show an average increase in per pupil funding of +5.5%. This comprises +3.5% from transferring the Mainstream Schools Additional Grant from a separate income stream for schools into core DSG funding, +1.4% for the inflation uplift applied by the DfE to the NFF funding rates and +0.6% to incorporate the 2023-24 increases in funding top ups to schools relating to pupils with AEN which the lagged DSG funding model now adds into 2024-25 funding rates. This amounts to a total increase of +£4.968m.
- 6.18 The DfE verified October 2023 school census included 0.5 FTE additional primary aged pupils compared to October 2022 and 149.0 FTE additional secondary aged pupils (+2.1%). This adds £0.970m to the DSG allocation.
- 6.19 In terms of funding LAs for in-year increases in pupil numbers after the October 2023 census, the DfE will continue to use the Growth Fund³ to measure pupil growth between the two most recent October census points across small geographical areas. As was expected, with increases in pupil numbers in secondary schools reducing, relevant DSG income has fallen by £0.394m to £0.600m which is in line with earlier estimates used in budget planning. As previously reported, the council does not qualify for any DSG funding through the new Falling Rolls factor.

³ The Growth Fund comprises 3 elements: funding for significant in-year increases in pupil numbers at existing schools; allocations to schools requiring additional financial support to meet Key Stage 1 Infant Class Size Regulations; and pre-opening, diseconomy and post opening costs for new schools.

- 6.20 The DfE has also confirmed the separate funding allocations to LAs for non-pupil-related school expenses. This is lagged funding, based on 2023-24 actual spend and is intended to finance the cost of business rates. The 2024-25 allocation has reduced by -£0.241m to £1.420m which relates to an 80% deducted to previous charges to schools that have recently converted to an academy at which point they receive charitable status and become eligible to the reduced charge. There is no significant financial impact from this as the funding passed on to relevant schools will also be reduced to reflect this change.
- 6.21 Furthermore, the £0.125m split site DSG funding previously received for Warfield Primary School is no longer received as the school now operates on a single site. Again, this was expected and has been reflected in the budget planning.
- 6.22 Overall these changes result in SB DSG income of £96.308m (£94.288m from per pupil funding, £0.600m for the Growth Fund and £1.420m for business rates).

Changes in funding allocations to schools:

- 6.23 In building up the 2024-25 budget, the first stage is to move the 2023-24 final budget to the position expected at the November 2023 consultation on the Block transfer / top slice as this is the new baseline. Following that, the normal budget build process would then be followed to update to actual number of pupils and other data sets from the confirmed December DfE publication.

Re-setting the 2023-24 budget to the November consultation position:

- 6.24 To move from the 2023-24 budget to the new budget baseline after the Block transfer / top slice adjustment, the following updates need to be made. These are summarised and aggregated below in Table 2:
1. The 2023-24 base budget was funded above the NFF rates. This was for one-year only and therefore the £0.101m over allocation to schools is removed. (Line 6 of Table 2)
 2. The Mainstream Schools Additional Grant (MSAG) that was paid separately to schools in 2023-24 has been mainstreamed into the SB DSG in 2024-25. The equivalent funding of £3.046m is therefore added into general school budgets. MSAG will not be paid separately to schools in 2024-25. (Line 7).
 3. The impact of the DfE uplifting 2024-25 funding rates by circa 1.4% has been added into the BFC model at £1.331m. (Line 8).
 4. The additional 157.5 FTE pupils estimated by BFC to be recorded on the October 2023 school census add £0.947m. (Line 9).
 5. There are 2 funding protection measures that must be applied to school budgets:
 - a. A minimum cash per pupil amount of funding (MPPFL): £4,610 for primary agreed pupils and £5,995 for secondary.
 - b. A minimum per pupil funding increase from 2023-24 (MFG). As set out above in paragraph 6.9, to minimise the cost of supporting MFG contributions and maintain the calculation basis used in the Block transfer / top slice consultation, this has been set at 0%. This is a self-balancing factor as those schools with the largest increases in funding collectively finance the cost of this protection.

The impact of these funding protection measures have been included in the amounts set out in points 1 to 4 above.

6. The calculation of the Block Transfer / top slice is then applied, capped at a maximum 0.5% at individual school level. This remains at £0.401m. (Line 10). Annex 1 sets out the relevant amount for each school.

Impact from 19 December DfE data set (the confirmed October 2023 school census):

- 6.25 To move from the new budget baseline after the Block transfer / top slice adjustment to the 2024-25 budget position a number of updates need to be processed from the confirmed DfE data set. These are summarised and aggregated below in Table 2:
7. The Block Transfer / top slice consultation included provisional October 23 pupil numbers. The DfE data set includes 8 fewer pupils than initially estimated, which results in a reduction in funds allocated to relevant schools of -£0.041m (Line 11)
 8. Kings Academy Binfield Primary is the only school receiving additional financial support through the new and expanding school funding policy. This amounts to £0.086m in 2024-25, a reduction of -£0.017m. (Line 12).
 9. As set out below in paragraph 6.26 the centrally retained Growth Fund has also been recalculated on latest data and this indicates a £0.016m reduction in required funding which can be released for use in individual school budgets (Line 3).
 10. Members of the Forum will be aware that the DfE uses lagged data to fund LAs through the units of resource in the SB DSG. This means that despite requiring LAs to fund schools on the latest data, they in turn receive funding based on prior year data. Clearly, where there is an increase in data sets between years, there will be an unfunded cost pressure in the SB. This is one of the most common reasons why LAs may not be able to fully fund school budgets at the NFF rates.

For a number of years now, each school census has recorded more pupils with the AEN measures used for funding purposes than the previous year. The October 2023 census follows this pattern and results in a £0.301m funding pressure. (Line 13).

As DSG income is higher than initially forecast and there are also a number of off-setting savings within the budget, £0.234m⁴ of this can be financed, leaving only £0.067m of this pressure unfunded. (Line 14).

Centrally managed budgets within the SB (LA managed Growth Fund)

- 6.26 Re-calculating funding requirements for the LA managed Growth Fund indicate that a reduction of £0.016m can be applied and transferred to funding available to schools. (Line 3). The other changes proposed in the November 2023 consultation have also been updated and indicate £0.287m of unallocated funding. Full details of the proposed budget lines and amounts for the SB funded LA managed Growth Fund are set out in Annex 2.

Centrally managed budgets within the CSSB

- 6.27 The confirmed DSG allocation now includes the October 2023 verified pupil data which includes a further £0.006m DSG income, making a new total of £0.848m. (Line 4).

⁴ £0.101m saving from one-off 2023-24 budget, £0.064m gain from DSG increase for additional pupils compared to amount allocated at NFF funding rates £0.017m saving on new and expanding schools funding policy, £0.016m funding transferred from LA Managed Growth Fund and £0.036m saving on other changes in DSG funding.

6.28 As set out in the Block Transfer / top slice consultation, the current £0.125m transfer of funds from the SB will no longer be made, with the funding pressure transferred to the council through a corresponding reduced contribution from the CSSB to LA statutory and regulatory duties. Additionally, in order to achieve a 1% equivalent transfer of funds to the HNB, the council will further reduce the contribution to LA statutory and regulatory duties by £0.140m. Overall, a £0.265m pressure has therefore been transferred to the council. Annex 3 sets out the proposed budget lines and amounts for the CSSB.

Summary of proposed changes – SB and CSSB

6.29 Table 2 below summarises the proposed changes made to 204-25 SB and CSSB budgets. Line 19 sets out the proposed 1% SB equivalent funding transfer to the HNB. Due to the Secretary of State for Education being required to agree some aspects of the proposals, the recommendations have been framed to reflect this.

Table 2: Summary final budget proposals for 2024-25

Ref.	Item	Schools Block		Central	Total
		Delegated school budgets A £'000	LA managed Growth Fund B £'000	Services Schools Block C £'000	D £'000
1	2023-24 on-going base budget	90,325	535	980	91,840
2	Provisional 2024-25 DSG funding	95,708	600	848	97,156
3	Internal Schools Block funding transfer	16	-16	0	0
4	2024-25 forecast income	95,724	584	848	97,156
5	+Surplus of income / - Deficit of income	5,399	49	-132	5,316
	<u>Changes for the November school consultation</u>				
6	Remove: one-off funding in 2023-24 in excess of NFF	-101	-86	0	-187
7	Mainstream Schools Additional Grant at circa +3.5%	3,046	0	0	3,046
8	Cost of new year NFF funding rates at circa +1.4%	1,331	0	0	1,331
9	Impact of change in pupil numbers (+157.5)	947	0	0	947
10	Block transfer / top slice capped at 0.5% per school	-401	0	0	-401
	Sub-total: Block transfer / top slice position	4,822	-86	0	4,736
	<u>Changes from confirmed October census data</u>				
11	Impact of confirmed pupil numbers (+149.5)	-41	0	0	-41
12	New schools - 2024-25 change in cost pressure	-17	0	0	-17
13	Impact of change in AEN data e.g. FSM, LPA	301	0	0	301
14	Impact of change in AEN data - unfunded pressure	-67	0	0	-67
15	Centrally managed Growth Fund	0	-287	0	-287
16	Central School Services Budget changes	0	0	-272	-272
	Sub-total: confirmed October 2023 data impacts	176	-287	-272	-383
17	Total changes proposed for 2024-25	4,998	-373	-272	4,353
18	Original budget 2024-25	95,323	162	708	96,193
19	Surplus of income to transfer to HNB	401	422	140	963

2024-25 individual school budgets

6.30 These budget proposals result in a 1.4% average per pupil funding increase⁵ from 2023-24. The increase in average per pupil funding through BF Funding Formula for Schools is in line with the 1.7% projected increase reported in December, which was before the average 0.4% contribution to the Block transfer / top slice. The following notes present headline summary data from individual school budgets (NB in this context, per pupil funding is calculated from the whole Formula Budget allocation less business rates):

- 1 Primary schools receive an average increase in per pupil funding of 1.5% and Secondary schools receive an average per pupil increase of 0.9%. The difference in increases by phase is mainly accounted for as a result of a larger increase in AEN measures in primary schools compared to secondary together with the funding protection provided to a number of primary schools on the MPPFL.
- 2 The highest per pupil increase in a primary school is 3.2%, with 1.7% in secondary.

One primary school has a reduction in per pupil funding of -0.3%. This is a small school, and whilst the overall cash budget increases by 4% from a rising NOR, there is a cash reduction in AEN top ups plus a much reduced per pupil funding allocation through the fixed lump sum which explains the change.

The lowest increase in per pupil funding in a secondary school is +0.1%. This is a school with a rising roll (+5%) but the change in age profile significantly affects the per pupil funding calculations. Key Stage 3 pupil numbers have increased by 9%, with a reduction of -2% in Key Stage 4. With Key Stage 4 pupils funded at 13% (£666) higher rate than Key Stage 3, the change in age profile has a significant impact on the per pupil funding calculation.
- 3 3 schools receive an MFG top up. The total cash value of support amounts to £0.039m.
- 4 6 primary schools receive top up funding from the MPPFL. These are the same schools as in 2023-24. The total cash value of support amounts to £0.274m.
- 5 The average per pupil funding amount for a primary school is £4,723 and £6,395 for a secondary.

Submission of DfE pro-forma budget statement

- 6.31 The DfE closely monitors the progress of LAs in setting their individual school budgets and requires the completion and submission of a template that sets out the Funding Formula to be used, associated units of resource and total cost. The deadline for return has been set at 22 January 2024. Annex 4 sets out the pro forma based on the recommendations set out in this report. The final submission will need to agree with any decisions made by the Secretary of State for Education and also the Executive Member and is therefore subject to change.
- 6.32 Annex 4 presents the template on the assumption that all of the proposals at this meeting are agreed. Other templates may also be required to be submitted to present the budget should the Secretary of State not permit the 0.35% Block Transfer from the HNB to the SB.

The £95.484m total recorded on the pro forma reconciles to the £90.484m at columns A and B, line 18 of Table 2.

⁵ This average excludes funding for new schools as there are separate, specific funding rules in place for calculating these budgets which would otherwise distort comparisons.

Other grant income for maintained schools

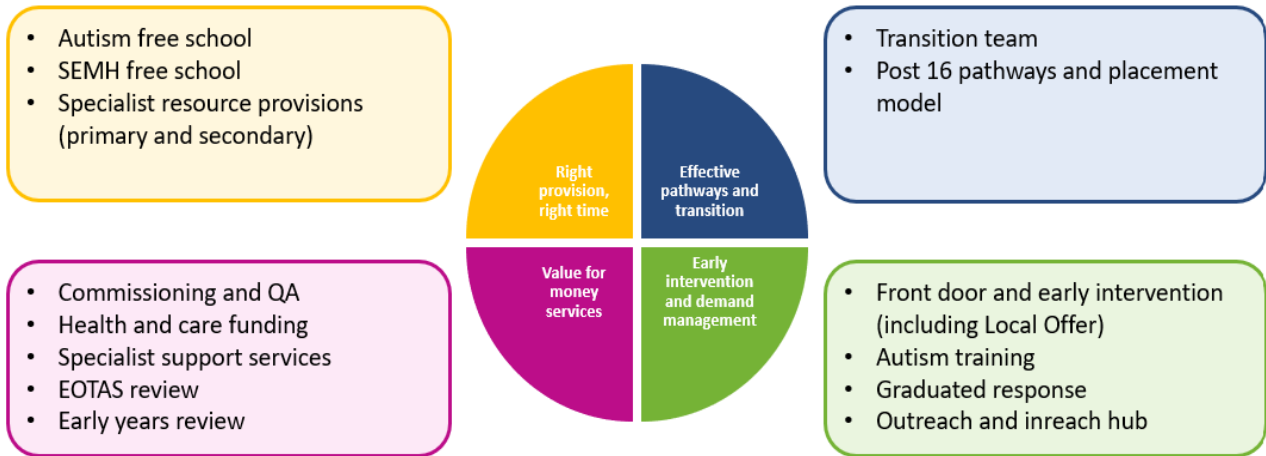
- 6.33 As part of the School Funding settlement, the DfE has confirmed that in the 2024 to 2025 financial year, mainstream schools will continue to receive additional funding through a Teachers' Pay Additional Grant (TPAG). This is estimated at -£0.673m for maintained schools. However, The Mainstream Schools Additional Grant (MSAG) has now been transferred into the DSG and will in future be paid as part of the main school budget. Schools will no longer receive separate MSAG funding.
- 6.34 In addition to the TPAG, schools also receive revenue funding from other specific grants including School Sixth Forms (currently -£1.372m), the Pupil Premium (-£1.775m), Primary PE and Sports Premium (-0.417m), the Universal Infant Free School Meals Grant (-£1.114m).
- 6.35 The Funding rates for the Pupil Premium will increase by around 2% from 2024-25 (Primary pupils now: £1,480 Secondary pupils: £1,050 Looked-after children: £2,570 Children who have ceased to be looked-after: £2,570).
- 6.36 All of the amounts of grant set out above are subject to change in 2024-25 and budgets will be updated once new year funding allocations are confirmed.

Other decisions required from the Schools Forum

- 6.37 The content of this report complies with requirements of the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2024. In addition to this, in setting the Schools Budget, there are also requirements from the Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012 that need to be complied with.
- 6.38 There is a requirement to seek comments from the Forum in respect of administration arrangements for the allocation of central government grants. No changes are proposed on existing arrangements whereby relevant costs are absorbed by the council in normal day to day operations and the Forum is requested to agree this approach continues.

SV proposal

- 6.39 The Council was invited by the Department for Education (DfE) to participate in its SV Intervention Programme 2023-24 in July 2023. The SV programme aims to agree a package of reforms to local education systems for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) through which the systems will become financially sustainable within the level of grant provided by the Department for Education, while improving the experiences of children and young people. Bracknell Forest is one of five authorities invited to participate in the programme this year, due to its large and rising deficit.
- 6.40 Participation in the programme can secure access to additional capital funding for new local provision and a material financial contribution from the DfE towards the accumulated Dedicated School Grant (DSG) deficit, should proposals for reform submitted by the Council be accepted. A significant financial commitment is also required from the Council, including capital and revenue funding both to secure delivery of the proposed programme of activity and to write off the remainder of the accumulated deficit not funded by the DfE.
- 6.41 Council officers have engaged with local school leaders, both Headteachers and Chairs of Governors and the Bracknell Forest Parent Carer Forum, to agree further areas of focus to ensure that the overall SEND system best meets the needs of pupils and schools and identify areas where current expenditure is not felt to demonstrate value for money. This has led to a programme of activity as summarised in the pictorial below.



6.42 The proposals remain confidential since they are still subject to formal consideration by the DfE but demonstrate a route to reaching a balanced in-year DSG position by 2029-30. This is slightly beyond the DfE's expectation of a five-year plan and therefore a one-off contribution from the Council's reserves is proposed in 2028-29 to offset costs ordinarily met from the DSG and reach balance within five years. This approach meets the DfE's expectations and therefore offers the Council the best opportunity to maximise the contribution it will receive from the DfE towards the cumulative DSG deficit at the end of that period. The proposed approach to funding the deficit includes a request for a large contribution from DfE and setting aside a material amount of Council reserves.

6.43 In its draft submission, the Council had requested flexibility to use the proceeds from asset disposals to fund part of the accumulated deficit during the SV programme period. It has been confirmed that such an approach would not be supported in the current financial year. However, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities issued a consultation document on 21 December seeking views from the local government sector on additional capital flexibilities. Should any of the proposals in the consultation be implemented, that could provide the Council with different options to fund its share of the deficit in the coming years.

6.44 The Council's plans are based on new, local specialist provision being introduced in the Borough. In order that detailed design works on these can be commenced as quickly as possible, Council is being asked to approve the following additions to the current year's capital programme at its meeting on 10 January.

a) New SEMH School (on the currently vacant Warfield All Saints Site)

Funded from:

Available capital grants for school provision	£7.089m
Available s106 contributions for schools	£3.957m
Capital receipt	£0.500m
External borrowing	<u>£1.454m</u>
Total	£13.000m

b) New Secondary Special Resource Provision (at Sandhurst school)

Funded from:

SV capital grant application	£0.900m
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- c) New Secondary Special Resource Provision / Unit (at Edgbarrow school)

Funded from:

SV capital grant application £3.100m

- 6.45 The Council's proposal also sets out a number of areas of investment in both the SEND service and programme support to ensure that the plan submitted is delivered to the tight timescales needed. These are to be funded from a variety of sources, including Government grant secured through the Delivering Better Value in SEND programme, the flexible use of capital receipts strategy approved by Council in November, earmarked reserves and the revenue budget. Formal approval of the overall revenue funding package will be sought as part of the Council's final 2024-25 budget proposals to be presented to the Executive and Council in February

Next steps

- 6.46 The Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning is expected to agree the 2024-25 Schools Budget on 21 January, based on final recommendations agreed by the Schools Forum, which will then need to be reported to the DfE through submission of the national pro-forma.
- 6.47 As usual, schools can expect to receive an initial budget notification for 2024-25 by the end of January. However, as part of the budget requires agreement from the Secretary of State, they will be provisional and subject to change. This will include the provisional BF Funding Formula allocation, plus estimates for funding from the Early Years and a best estimate of likely DfE grant allocations. A final budget statement with updates where available to the provisional amounts will be provided before the end of March. This will include estimated High Needs Block "top up" funding.

7 Advice received from statutory and other officers

Borough Solicitor

- 7.1 The relevant legal implications are addressed within the main body of the report.

Executive Director of Resources

- 7.2 Included within the supporting information.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 7.3 The budget proposals ensure funding is targeted towards vulnerable groups prioritised by the DfE NFF and a BFC specific EIA is not required.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 7.4 The following have been identified as strategic risks:
1. The ability of schools to manage their Block Transfer / top slice contribution within their overall budget
 2. Falling pupil numbers in some primary schools at a time of surplus places will create budget difficulties through having to operate with relatively small class sizes.

3. The ability of schools with deficits to manage their repayments. Three primary schools have significant licensed deficits that need to be repaid.
4. Cost pressures on school responsibilities to meet SEND needs of pupils up to the £10,000 limit when numbers are rising.
5. Uncertainty around future cost increase from inflationary pressures.

7.5 These risks will also be managed through support and assistance to schools in the budget setting process which is a well-established programme. It has ensured that schools develop medium term solutions to budget shortfalls and draws on funding retained to support schools in financial difficulty or through the allocation of short to medium term loans.

Climate Change Implications

7.7 The recommendations from this report are not expected to have an impact on emissions of carbon dioxide.

8 Consultation

Principal Groups Consulted

8.1 People Directorate Management Team, schools and the Schools Forum.

Method of Consultation

8.2 Written reports to People Directorate Management Team and the Schools Forum, formal consultation with schools

Representations Received

8.3 Included in reports.

Background Papers

None:

Contact for further information

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(01344 354054)

Doc. Ref

[https://bfcouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/fina/bpm/FIBPSCB-FIN9.6/Schools Forum/\(121\) 110124/2024-25 Schools Budget Final Proposals v3 - FINAL.docx](https://bfcouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/fina/bpm/FIBPSCB-FIN9.6/Schools%20Forum/(121)%20110124/2024-25%20Schools%20Budget%20Final%20Proposals%20v3%20FINAL.docx)

Block Transfer / top slice calculation by school

School	October 2023 Provisional NOR, October 2022 other data	0.5% max deduction per school, all NFF factors reduced by 0.5%		
	Forecast budget at 2024-25 NFF rates	0.5% max reduction per school	% change from unscaled	£'s change from unscaled
Ascot Heath Primary School	£1,862,680	£1,862,680	0.00%	£0
Binfield Church of England Primary School	£1,905,870	£1,905,870	0.00%	£0
Birch Hill Primary School	£1,890,826	£1,881,574	-0.49%	£-9,252
College Town Primary School	£2,128,740	£2,128,740	0.00%	£0
Cranbourne Primary School	£961,641	£956,968	-0.49%	£-4,673
Crown Wood Primary School	£2,676,489	£2,671,950	-0.17%	£-4,539
Crowthorne Church of England Primary	£1,013,897	£1,008,937	-0.49%	£-4,959
Fox Hill Primary School	£1,055,505	£1,050,340	-0.49%	£-5,166
Great Hollands Primary School	£1,407,538	£1,400,533	-0.50%	£-7,006
Harmans Water Primary School	£2,065,616	£2,055,672	-0.48%	£-9,944
Holly Spring Primary School	£2,951,937	£2,937,411	-0.49%	£-14,527
Jennett's Park CofE Primary School	£1,844,652	£1,835,503	-0.50%	£-9,149
Meadow Vale Primary School	£2,753,958	£2,740,459	-0.49%	£-13,498
New Scotland Hill Primary School	£1,012,018	£1,007,086	-0.49%	£-4,932
King's Academy Oakwood	£1,067,132	£1,061,832	-0.50%	£-5,300
Owlsmoor Primary School	£2,363,630	£2,363,630	0.00%	£0
The Pines School	£1,548,467	£1,540,884	-0.49%	£-7,584
Sandy Lane Primary School	£1,994,885	£1,984,959	-0.50%	£-9,926
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	£1,028,151	£1,023,039	-0.50%	£-5,112
St Margaret Clitherow Primary School	£996,052	£991,090	-0.50%	£-4,963
St Michael's Easthampstead Primary School	£982,526	£977,630	-0.50%	£-4,896
St Michael's Primary School, Sandhurst	£967,252	£962,437	-0.50%	£-4,815
Uplands Primary School and Nursery	£1,001,621	£996,726	-0.49%	£-4,895
Warfield Church of England Primary School	£2,035,420	£2,035,420	0.00%	£0
Whitegrove Primary School	£1,973,830	£1,973,830	0.00%	£0
Wildmoor Heath School	£1,020,421	£1,015,340	-0.50%	£-5,082
Wildridings Primary School	£1,991,083	£1,981,339	-0.49%	£-9,744
Winkfield St Mary's CofE Primary School	£976,546	£971,751	-0.49%	£-4,794
Wooden Hill Primary and Nursery School	£1,804,118	£1,795,278	-0.49%	£-8,840
The Brakenhale School	£7,022,277	£6,987,326	-0.50%	£-34,951
Easthampstead Park Community School	£6,153,762	£6,123,194	-0.50%	£-30,568
Edgbarrow School	£6,855,502	£6,821,346	-0.50%	£-34,156
Garth Hill College	£9,136,932	£9,093,527	-0.48%	£-43,405
Ranelagh School	£5,359,238	£5,332,554	-0.50%	£-26,684
Sandhurst School	£6,659,703	£6,626,608	-0.50%	£-33,095
King's Academy Binfield - All through	£7,004,732	£6,969,798	-0.50%	£-34,934
Primary Totals	£47,282,504	£47,118,908	-0.35%	£-163,596
Secondary totals	£48,192,144	£47,954,352	-0.49%	£-237,792
Totals	£95,474,648	£95,073,260	-0.42%	£-401,388

Primary - max reduction	£-14,527
Primary - I FE Max reduction	£-5,300
Primary - min reduction	£0
Secondary - max reduction	£-43,405
Secondary - min reduction	£-26,684

Proposed financing and associated budget for the LA Managed Growth Fund

	Primary	Secondary	Current Proposed 2024-25	2023-24 actual	Change
	A	B	C	D	E
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<u>New schools:</u>					
Diseconomy costs	86.0	0.0	86.0	102.8	-16.8
	86.0	0.0	86.0	102.8	-16.8
<u>Retained Growth Fund</u>					
Post opening costs	15.0	0.0	15.0	22.5	-7.5
In-year pupil growth	0.0	147.5	147.5	256.0	-108.5
KS1 classes	0.0	0.0	0.0	170.0	-170.0
	15.0	147.5	162.5	448.5	-286.0
<u>2023-24 one-off funding</u>					
Surplus above NFF rates	0.0	0.0	0.0	86.6	-86.6
	0.0	0.0	0.0	86.6	-86.6
Total estimated costs	101.0	145.5	248.5	637.9	-389.4

Orange shaded cells highlights amount of funding included in delegated school budgets

Blue shaded cells highlights the amount of funds held centrally by BFC

Green shaded cells highlight 2023-24 one-off funding

Services proposed to be centrally managed by the Council

Budget Area	Central Schools Services Budget		
	2023-24 Final Budget	2024-25 Proposed Budget	Change
Combined Services Budgets:			
Family Intervention Project	£100,000	£100,000	£0
Educational Attainment for Looked After Children	£133,590	£133,590	£0
School Transport for Looked After Children	£42,740	£42,740	£0
Domestic Abuse	£2,000	£2,000	£0
SEN Contract Monitoring	£32,680	£32,680	£0
Central School Services - historic commitments	£311,010	£311,010	£0
Other Permitted Central Spend			
Miscellaneous (up to 0.1% of Schools Budget):			
Forestcare out of hours support service	£5,150	£5,150	£0
Borough wide Initiatives	£9,720	£0	-£9,720
Support to Schools Recruitment & Retention	£5,000	£0	-£5,000
Statutory and regulatory duties:			
'Retained' elements	£290,680	£15,690	-£274,990
Other expenditure:			
School Admissions	£202,025	£202,025	£0
Schools Forum	£20,935	£20,935	£0
Boarding Placements for Vulnerable Children	£50,000	£50,000	£0
Central copyright licensing	£85,560	£103,190	£17,630
Central School Services - on-going responsibilities	£669,070	£396,990	-£272,080
Total Central School Support Services	£980,080	£708,000	-£272,080
Funding			
Historic commitments	£166,170	£132,940	-£33,230
On-going responsibilities	£688,670	£715,060	£26,390
Total Funding	£854,840	£848,000	-£6,840
Transfer from Schools Budget	£125,240	£0	-£125,240
Transfer to High Needs Block Budget	£0	-£140,000	-£140,000
Central School Services Total Funding	£980,080	£708,000	-£272,080

Yellow shaded cells highlight the £0.265m cost transfer to BFC.

Provisional 2024-25 Pro Forma BFC School Budget Statement

Local Authority Funding Reform Proforma

Note: only rows relevant to BFC are displayed.

LA Name: Bracknell Forest

Pupil Led Factors

Reception uplift		No	Pupil Units		0.00					
Description		Amount per pupil		Pupil Units		Sub Total	Total	Proportion of total pre MFG funding (%)	Notional SEN (%)	
1) Basic Entitlement Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU)	Primary (Years R-6)	£3,751.17		9,902.50		£37,145,968	£77,030,904	38.97%	2.13%	
	Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9)	£5,288.71		4,383.00		£23,180,409		24.32%	1.06%	
	Key Stage 4 (Years 10-11)	£5,961.64		2,802.00		£16,704,528		17.52%	1.06%	
Description		Primary amount per pupil	Secondary amount per pupil	Eligible proportion of primary NOR	Eligible proportion of secondary NOR	Sub Total	Total	Proportion of total pre MFG funding (%)	Primary Notional SEN (%)	Secondary Notional SEN (%)
4) Deprivation	FSM	£512.57	£512.57	1,183.21	1,019.00	£1,128,779	£4,070,446	4.27%	0.00%	0.00%
	FSM6	£857.76	£1,255.26	1,195.22	1,074.00	£2,373,368			80.75%	42.50%
	IDACI Band F	£245.82	£355.66	1,160.64	769.22	£558,888			76.50%	42.50%
	IDACI Band E	£298.12	£470.72	11.02	9.00	£7,523			76.50%	42.50%
	IDACI Band D	£465.49	£659.01	0.00	1.00	£659			76.50%	42.50%
	IDACI Band C	£507.34	£721.78	1.00	1.00	£1,229			76.50%	42.50%
	IDACI Band B	£538.72	£774.08	0.00	0.00	£0			76.50%	42.50%
	IDACI Band A	£711.32	£988.52	0.00	0.00	£0			76.50%	42.50%
Description		Primary amount per pupil	Secondary amount per pupil	Eligible proportion of primary NOR	Eligible proportion of secondary NOR	Sub Total	Total	Proportion of total pre MFG funding (%)	Primary Notional SEN (%)	Secondary Notional SEN (%)
3) English as an Additional Language (EAL)	EAL 3 Primary	£617.17		1,043.46		£643,990	£1,222,043	1.15%	0.00%	
	EAL 3 Secondary		£1,657.99		270.76	£448,919			0.00%	0.00%
4) Mobility	Pupils starting school outside of normal entry dates	£1,004.21	£1,443.55	107.26	14.84	£129,134		0.14%	0.00%	0.00%
5) Low prior attainment	Primary low prior attainment		£1,223.88	26.87%	2,660.56	£3,256,209	£6,161,096	6.46%	90.00%	
	Secondary low prior attainment (year 7)	55.77%		20.89%	1,564.51	£2,904,887				100.00%
	Secondary low prior attainment (year 8)	54.47%	£1,856.74	22.58%						
	Secondary low prior attainment (year 9)	54.47%		22.46%						
	Secondary low prior attainment (year 10)	64.53%		21.56%						
	Secondary low prior attainment (year 11)	64.53%		21.36%						

Local Authority Funding Reform Proforma

Note: only rows relevant to BFC are displayed.

LA Name: Bracknell Forest

Other Factors

Factor	Lump Sum per Primary School (£)	Lump Sum per Secondary School (£)	Lump Sum per Middle School (£)	Lump Sum per All-through School (£)	Total (£)	Proportion of total pre MFG funding (%)	Notional SEN (%)
6) Lump Sum	£141,537.72	£141,537.72			£5,095,358	5.35%	0.00%
10) Rates					£1,468,080	1.54%	0.00%
Total Funding for Schools Block Formula (excluding minimum per pupil funding level and MFG Funding Total)					£95,047,927	99.71%	
13) Additional funding to meet minimum per pupil funding level					£273,644	0.29%	0.00%
Total Funding for Schools Block Formula (excluding MFG Funding Total)					£95,321,571	100.00%	
14) Minimum Funding Guarantee				0.00%	£39,040		
Apply capping and scaling factors? (gains may be capped above a specific ceiling and/or scaled)					Yes		
Capping Factor (%)	1.40%	Scaling Factor (%)	18.07%				
Total deduction if capping and scaling factors are applied					-£39,040		
MFG Net Total Funding (MFG + deduction from capping and scaling)					£0	0.00%	0.00%
Total Funding for Schools Block Formula					£95,321,571		£8,786,622
Notional SEN	Top-up - proportion of NOR	2.81%	SEN support plus EHCP minus Top-up - propor	13.04%	Notional SEN funding per eligible pupil		£2,648
Growth fund (if applicable)					£162,540.00		
Total Funding For Schools Block Formula (including growth and falling rolls funding)					£95,484,111		
% Distributed through Basic Entitlement					80.81%		
% Pupil Led Funding					92.83%		
Primary: Secondary Ratio					1 :	1.34	
24-25 NFF NNDR allocation, excluding prior year adjustments					£1,468,080		
Total Funding For Schools Block Formula (including growth and falling rolls funding) after deduction of 24-25 NFF NNDR allocation					£94,016,031		

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To Schools Forum
Date 11 January 2024

2024/25 Proposals for the Local Authority Budget Executive Director: Resources

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To present to the Forum for comment a summary of the Council's draft budget proposals for 2023/24 as agreed by the Executive on 13 December 2022, with a particular focus on the impact expected on the People Directorate.
- 1.2 The papers for the Executive meeting had to be published before the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement had been announcement. This sets out individual authority funding calculations for 2024/25. Therefore, in the absence of the Provisional Settlement, the figures in this report can only be based on high-level assumptions regarding government funding.
- 1.3 All comments received on these draft budget proposals will be submitted to the Executive on 6 February 2024 alongside any impact from the announcement of the Finance Settlement. This will allow the Executive to determine its final budget package and recommend the appropriate Council Tax level to Council, which will formally approve the 2024/25 budget and Council Tax on 21 February 2024.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 **That the Schools Forum comments on the 2024/25 budget proposals of the Executive for the People Directorate in respect of:**
 - i. **The revenue budget (Annexes A to C), and**
 - ii. **The capital programme (Annexe D).**

3 Reasons for recommendations

- 3.1 The Executive seeks the views of the Schools Forum as an interested party.

4 Alternative options considered

- 4.1 The range of options being considered are set out in the main reports on the public access website.

5 Supporting information

Introduction

- 5.1 This report presents a summary of the Council's revenue and capital budget proposals for 2024/25 that were prepared on information and assumptions available at the end of November 2023 and are therefore subject to change as more information emerges or changes occur as part of the consultation process. The focus of this report is proposals from the People Directorate, with full details of the budget proposals available at:

[Agenda for Executive on Tuesday, 12 December 2023, 5.30 pm | Bracknell Forest Council \(bracknell-forest.gov.uk\)](#)

Revenue Budget

Commitment budget

- 5.2 Initial preparations for the 2024/25 budget have focussed on the Council's Commitment Budget for 2024/25 – 2026/27. This brings together the Council's existing expenditure plans, taking account of approved commitments and the ongoing effects of service developments and efficiencies that were agreed when the 2023/24 budget was set.
- 5.3 A number of changes are proposed to the Commitment Budget since it was last considered by the Executive in February 2023. The most significant changes relate to:
- Removal of one-off initiatives agreed for 2023/24 only, relating to additional Council Tax Support, Town Centre events and an additional Housing and Welfare Officer (cost neutral on the budget as they were met from Earmarked Reserves or one-off grants).
 - The full year effect of savings relating to the transfer of housing stock from Downshire Homes Limited (a wholly owned subsidiary) to the Council which were identified as part of the 2023/24 budget process (-£0.240m).
 - An increase in the Minimum Revenue Provision for capital expenditure, primarily relating to the need to increase the annual provision for Commercial Property resulting from changes in government guidance (£0.249m).
 - An increase in the payments required to meet prior year pension deficits (£0.295m). This reflects the phased increase agreed with the Berkshire Pension Fund and the impact of schools converting to academies.
 - A pressure was included in the 2023/24 budget to give the Forestcare service the necessary capacity to move to a sustainable position. This was due to be reversed in 2024/25 but with the service not projecting a break even position in the current year that is no longer possible (£0.153m).
 - The full year effect on interest payments, of the use of balances in 2023/24 (£0.613m).

The overall impact of these changes is to increase the Council's Commitment Budget by £0.130m compared to the position reported in February 2022.

- 5.4 Taking account of these changes, Table 1 summarises the position and shows that base expenditure (excluding schools) is planned to increase by £0.915m to £90.748m next year, before consideration is given to allowances for inflation and the budget

proposals identified by individual services in 2024/25. The commitment budget relating to the People Directorate is shown in Annexe A.

Table 1: Summary Commitment Budget 2024/25-2026/27

Item	Planned Expenditure		
	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000
Base Budget	89,287	90,202	90,445
<i>Movements in Year:</i>			
Central	-103	-7	-90
Delivery	-241	16	-15
People (excluding schools)	37	-20	0
Non Departmental / Council Wide	1,222	254	337
<i>Total Movements</i>	915	243	232
Adjusted Base	90,232	90,445	90,677

Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2024/25

- 5.5 On 12 December 2022, the Government published a policy statement which not only covered its high level intentions for the Local Government Finance Settlement in 2023/24 but also provided additional information relating to the 2024/25 settlement. It confirmed that the core settlement would continue in a similar manner for 2024/25. The major grants would continue as set out for 2023/24: Revenue Support Grant will continue and be uplifted in line with Baseline Funding Levels (i.e., linked to CPI and the Business Rates multiplier) and the Social Care Grant and other social care grants would increase as set out in the Autumn Statement 2022 (published on 17 November 2022).
- 5.6 The Autumn Statement 2022 confirmed the following increases in social care funding for 2024/25:
- Further repurposed money from delaying charging reforms of £612m (from £1.265 billion in 2023/24 to £1.877 billion in 2024/25). Based on the 2023/24 allocations this would increase Social Care Grant by a further -£0.682m.
 - An additional £400m distributed through the Better Care Fund to get people out of hospital on time into care settings and split 50:50 between Local Government and Health. Based on the 2023/24 allocations this would increase the Adult Social Care (ASC) Discharge Fund by -£0.143m.
 - An additional £283m to help support capacity and discharge. Based on the 2023/24 allocations this would increase the ASC Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund by a further -£0.427m.
- 5.7 The policy statement also referred to a potential new funding stream in 2024/25, subject to successful delivery of the Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging (EPR) scheme in 2023/24. Under the EPR regulations, retailers and packaging suppliers would have to pay for the full cost of recycling and disposing of their packaging. Implementation of the proposals has now been deferred until October 2025 with first payments to councils now expected to be made between then and December

2025. As a result, any impact on the finance settlement will be pushed back until 2025/26.

- 5.8 The Autumn Statement 2023 (published on 12 November 2023) provided some additional information on Business Rates for 2024/25. The small business multiplier will be frozen for a fourth consecutive year whereas the standard multiplier will be updated in line with September CPI inflation (6.7%). The 75% Business Rates discount for retail, hospitality and leisure sites has also been extended for another year. It is expected that, as in previous years, additional Section 31 grant will be provided to compensate for the loss of income from the freezing of the small business multiplier and the granting of additional reliefs.
- 5.9 In terms of the local government funding system and the long-term Fair Funding and Business Rate Retention System reviews, it seems very unlikely that any changes will be introduced until 2026/27 at the earliest.
- 5.10 Each of these issues are discussed in more detail below, insofar as this is possible before the announcement of the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement. A policy statement on the Department for Housing, Levelling Up and Communities' (DLUHC's) approach to the Provisional Settlement is also expected, but it is unclear what form this will take.
- 5.11 Each of these issues are discussed in more detail below, insofar as this is possible before the announcement of the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement.

Revenue Support Grant (RSG)

- 5.12 Funding from central government is currently received through Revenue Support Grant (RSG), a share of Business Rates and Specific Grants. For planning purposes, it has been assumed that RSG will increase by -£0.043m (2%) to -£2.191m in 2024/25.

Business Rates

- 5.13 Business Rates is an important income stream for the Council with a proportion being retained locally following the introduction of the Business Rates Retention reforms in April 2013. The level of Business Rates changes each year due to inflationary increases (set by central government), periodic revaluations, the impact of appeals and local growth or decline as local businesses and economic conditions expand or contract. The Government sets a baseline level of funding against which any growth or reduction is shared between local and central government. The baseline tends to be linked to the change in the Business Rates multipliers which are in turn linked to September CPI. It has been assumed that the baseline will only increase by - £0.349m (2%) to -£17.811m in 2024/25. This assumption will be revisited when the finer details of the decision to freeze the small business multiplier but inflate the standard multiplier have been published.
- 5.14 There are a number of other factors that can impact on the overall level of Business Rates income that the Council can expect and the final budget position.
- A revaluation exercise was carried out in 2023/24 where changes in business rates collectable were typically matched by compensating adjustments to grant funding to ensure no impact (at least immediately) on local authorities' resources. This will now be updated in 2024/25.
 - The Council receives section 31 income to cover the loss of income resulting from the capping or freezing of Business Rates increases in several previous

years and the impact of several Business Rate Reliefs. The changes announced in the Autumn Statement 2023 will impact on the level of this income, but that impact has still to be determined.

- In January 2023 a large deficit of £4.980m was projected on the Business Rates element of the Collection Fund for 2022/23. At this stage a significant deficit is expected, which is primarily linked to the VOA's decision to reduce the rateable values of a number of properties within the Lexicon and to backdate this to 2017. With any deficit on the Collection Fund needing to be recovered in the next year's budget, this will need to be met either by reducing spending by an equal sum in 2024/25 or from the Council's reserves. A sum of £6.26m is included in the Council's Earmarked Reserves for Business Rates Revaluations.
- Successful appeals in the Lexicon will also impact on the level of Business Rates income receivable by the Council in 2024/25 and future years. At this stage a net ongoing reduction of £0.5m has been assumed.

The overall impact on the Council's budget will not be known until the provisional settlement is published, the deficit on the Collection Fund for 2023/24 has been finalised, and the Council has completed its estimate of the Business Rates collectible for the year and the impact of any reliefs and grant income receivable

- 5.15 While the Government has signalled for many years that it would like to make fundamental changes to the current Business Rates retention system of local government funding, it is unlikely that this will happen until 2026/27 at the earliest. To coincide with this, it is expected that a Fair Funding review will be used to calculate new baseline funding levels for individual councils based on an up-to-date assessment of their relative needs and resources. It has been envisaged that existing grants including RSG and most likely the Public Health Grant will be incorporated into the revised baseline and more responsibilities are likely to be transferred to Local Government to ensure that the new system is fiscally neutral overall when it is introduced. The outcome of these deliberations is impossible to determine, although it will almost certainly have a significant long-term detrimental impact on the funding of the Council.

Specific Grants

- 5.16 The Council also receives substantial external funding through several specific grants. The future of these is currently unclear and assumptions have had to be made in projecting the Council's grant funding, as follows:
1. *New Homes Bonus (NHB)*. This is used to reward local authorities for net additional homes added to the Council Tax Base, thereby seeking to incentivise authorities to encourage housing growth in their areas. It is unringfenced and can therefore be used for local priorities.

A consultation was launched in February 2021 on changes to the allocation which are expected to result in reduced funding to the council. At this stage it is expected that NHB grant will reduce by £0.300m. The actual grant amount will be confirmed in the Provisional Settlement.
 2. *Services Grant*. This grant provides funding to all tiers of local government in recognition of the vital services delivered at every level of local government. It has been assumed that the grant will be maintained at the same level in 2024/25.
 3. *Other Specific Grants* Some of the largest specific grants received by the Council are for Public Health and Social Care. The 2022 Autumn Statement

confirmed further increases to social care grants in 2024/25 and this has been covered in paragraph 5.6.

The Better Care Fund (BCF) is a pooled budget which consists of several schemes, some of which are managed by the Council and some by the Clinical Commissioning Group. The NHS contribution to adult social care through the BCF is expected to increase in real terms in 2024/25, in line with the overall NHS long-term settlement. It has been assumed that this will be cost neutral for the Council at this stage.

The ring-fence on Public Health is likely to be retained in 2024/25 but there have been no indications of funding levels for 2024/25 at a national or local level.

Information on several other smaller grants normally follows several days or weeks after the Provisional Settlement and changes from these announcements will be incorporated into the February budget report to the Executive.

Council Tax

- 5.17 Council Tax at present levels will generate total income of -£75.053m in 2024/25, before any change to the Tax Base is factored in. It was expected that the number of properties paying Council Tax would increase significantly over the coming years and to date the Council Tax Base has remained broadly in line with predictions. The Council Tax Base for 2024/25 has been calculated as 49,6946 Band D equivalents which at current levels would generate total income of -£76.497m in 2024/25. This represents a net increase of 725 (-£1.116m) arising from the occupation of new properties during 2024/25, partly offset by a 7% decrease in the take-up of the Local Council Tax Benefit Support Scheme (-£0.328m).
- 5.18 The surplus/deficit on the Council Tax element of the Collection Fund in 2023/24 will need to be assessed by the 15 January 2022 and reflected in the final budget proposals. Indications at this time are that a small deficit may be expected.
- 5.19 The Government limits Council Tax increases by requiring councils to hold a local referendum for any increases equal to or more than a threshold percentage which is normally included in the Local Government Financial Settlement. The Government's December 2022 Policy Statement confirmed that for 2024/25 the core council tax referendum principles would be the same as 2023/24. The referendum limit for increases to council tax will remain at 3% per year and in addition, councils with social care responsibilities will be able to increase the adult social care precept by up to 2%. The maximum Council Tax increase that could be agreed without a referendum in 2024/25 would therefore be 4.99%. Each 1% increase in Council Tax would generate approximately -£0.765m of additional income.
- 5.20 The Executive at its meeting in February will recommend to Council the level of Council Tax considering the Local Government Finance Settlement, the results of the budget consultation and the final budget proposals.

Budget Proposals for 2024/25

- 5.21 The Council's medium-term financial strategy is underpinned by an assumption that any new service pressures and developments will be funded by identifying an equivalent level of economies and savings. This recognises that additional grant and council tax income is normally sufficient to fund only inflationary cost pressures. The draft budget proposals set out in this report for consultation broadly achieve this, with proposed pressures and economies both totalling around £5.6m.

Service pressures and Developments

- 5.22 In preparing the 2024/25 draft budget proposals each directorate has evaluated the potential pressures on its services and those related to the People Directorate set out in Annexe B. Table 2 summarises the pressures by directorate.

Table 2: Service Pressures/Development

Directorate	£'000
Central	1,504
Delivery	1,296
People (excluding schools)	2,585
Non-Departmental / Council Wide	270
Total Pressures/Developments	5,655

- 5.23 Many of the pressures are simply unavoidable as they relate to current levels of demand or legislation changes. They do, however, also support the three borough priorities included in the new Council Plan in the following way:
- Engaged and healthy communities (£2.956m);
 - Thriving and connected economy (£0.219m);
 - Green and sustainable environment (£1.117m).
- 5.24 Service pressures will be kept under review throughout the budget consultation period. There is always the risk, in particular in Social Care services, that the numbers of people requiring care packages, the content of existing care packages and contract inflation will vary considerably from the assumptions included in these draft budget proposals. Any revisions to service pressures will be reported to the Executive in February.
- 5.25 In addition to these revenue proposals the Council continues to invest in its priorities through targeted capital expenditure. Details are contained in the capital programme report, but any revenue cost implications arising from the capital proposals are included in these draft budget proposals.

Service Economies

- 5.26 Members and officers have held regular meetings to determine options for savings and a list of potential draft budget savings has been developed. This list totals -£5.490m and is summarised in Table 3 with areas relating to the People Directorate set out in more detail in Annexe C. As in previous years, savings have focused as far as possible on increasing efficiency, income generation and reducing central and directorate support rather than on front line services. There will potentially be some impact on services, although this has been minimised to a large degree.

Table 3: Summary Service Economies

Directorate	£'000
Central	-1,224
Delivery	-874
People (excluding schools)	-2,601
Non-Departmental / Council Wide	-791
Total Savings	-5,490

Significant Budget Decisions

- 5.27 Consideration and approval of the budget is a major policy decision. However, the budget, by its nature, includes a range of proposals, some of which in themselves represent important policy decisions.
- 5.28 As the budget report is a policy document and is subject to at least six weeks consultation, the identification of these issues within the budget report facilitates detailed consultation on a range of significant policy decisions.

Council Wide Issues

- 5.29 Apart from the specific budget proposals contained in Annexes B and C there are some Council wide issues affecting all directorates' budgets which need to be considered. The precise impact of these corporate budgets is likely to change before the final budget proposals are recommended, however the current view on these issues is outlined in the following paragraphs:

a) Capital Programme

The scale of the Council's Capital Programme for 2024/25 will impact upon the revenue budget and is itself subject to consultation. All new spending on services will need to be funded from new capital receipts (including Community Infrastructure Levy receipts), government grants, developer contributions or borrowing. Current proposals are set out further below from paragraph 5.43 and will present additional revenue costs £0.163m in 2024/25 and £0.295m in 2025/26.

b) Interest and Investments

The Council reviews the annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement under the requirement of the 2011 revised CIPFA Treasury Management in Public Services Code of Practice and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes. This ensures compliance with government requirements for the Council to "have regard to the Prudential Code and to set Prudential Indicators for the next three years to ensure that the capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable".

Interest rates have continued to rise during the first half of 2023/24 to 5.25%. Whilst reducing from 8.7% in April to 4.7% in October, its lowest rate since February 2022, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) is still significantly above the Bank of England's target of 2%. Furthermore, a cooling in labour market conditions has not led to any easing of wage growth, which is still rising at over 7%. These factors influence interest rates, which are rising, which in turn increase the cost of borrowing to the Council.

c) Provision for Inflation and Pay Awards

Although inflation has reduced in the current year it remains well above the 2% target for the CPI. It is therefore inevitable that the allowance for inflation will need to be significantly higher than the typical provision of £2m - £3m, albeit not at the elevated level of nearly £10m required in 2023/24.

At this stage the inflation provision is not finalised. For planning purposes, a total sum of £5.280m (£9.761m in 2023/24) has been added to the draft budget proposals on these assumptions:

- This year the national employers' body offered a flat rate pay rise of £1,925 or 3.88% for employees on scale points 43 and above and this has been accepted. For Bracknell Forest the cost is £0.531m more than the 4% built into the budget. This will need to be reflected in the 2024/25 inflation provision, in addition to an allowance for next year's pay offer. At this stage a 3.5% pay award has been assumed for 2024/25 resulting in a total provision for pay of £3.14m;
- For non-pay costs it is proposed that a number of budgets will not be inflated at all for 2024/25 and directorates have been asked to restrict contract inflation to 4.7% (September CPI less 2%). This is unlikely to cover the full price rise implicit in all contracts and consequently discussions may need to focus on service levels as well as pricing. It is recognised that it may not be possible to negotiate smaller increases or flex service levels in all cases and a further 1% has been set aside for priority areas. A case will need to be made for any increases above the 4.7%. The overall non-pay provision (excluding gas and electricity) has been set at £4.94m.
- Energy prices have begun to reduce in comparison to the all-time highs experienced in 2023/24. The Council has arrangements in place to forward purchase these commodities and over half of the predicted energy required in 2024/25 has been secured to date. This allows the impact of energy inflation to be estimated with some accuracy. The expectation is that electricity and gas prices will reduce by 25% next year and this combined with actual costs being less than budgeted in the current year has meant that a reduction of £1.16m can be built into the inflation provision. This figure will be refined as further forward purchases are made.

The Council will need to consider in detail where it is appropriate and necessary to provide for inflation over the coming weeks so that the actual inflation provision can be added to the final budget report in February 2024.

d) Fees and charges

Increases in fees and charges are determined by the overall economic conditions, the willingness of customers to pay the higher charges and continued demand for Council services. Although directorates have been asked to work towards increases of 5%, Council policy requires the level of charges to be considered against the following criteria:

- fees and charges should aim, as a minimum, to cover the costs of delivering the service;

- where a service operates in free market conditions, fees and charges should at least be set at the market rate;
- fees and charges should not be levied where this is an ineffective use of resources, i.e. the cost of collection exceeds any income generated.

Certain other fees will attract the percentage determined by statute.

e) Contingency

The Council manages risks and uncertainties in the budget by way of a general Corporate Contingency added to the Council's budget. Every year the Council faces risks on its budget in relation to demand led services, Business Rates and the general economic climate. At this stage the Contingency has been increased by £0.250m to £3.0m. The level of Contingency will be kept under review as further information becomes available.

The Executive will need to make a judgement on the appropriate level of contingency at its February meeting, taking advice from the Executive Director: Resources who will need to certify the robustness of the overall budget proposals in the context of the latest performance data, continuing progress on the Business Change Programme and the Council's remaining general and earmarked reserves. All the reserves will be reviewed to ensure that they are sufficient to manage the financial risks facing the Council in the coming years. Of particular significance is the Council's expected participation in the Department for Education's Safety Valve programme.

Spending on schools

- 5.30 Schools and education services in general are funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). This is a specific grant allocated to local authorities through a national formula by the Department for Education (DfE). Separate calculations are made for school budgets, pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) from age 0-24 which is generally referred to as the High Need Block (HNB), Early Years funding for 0-4 year olds, and a small number of services that support schools and pupils which councils are permitted to manage centrally.
- 5.31 Other than for Early Years functions, provisional funding allocations have been published for 2024/25 and as usual, proposals will be developed with the Schools Forum to agree relevant budgets. Of the main published grant allocations, delegated school budgets are expected to increase by 1.7%, which has reduced from the initial announcement of 2.6% following a recalculation by the DfE, with a 3% increase in funds for pupils with SEND.
- 5.32 Taking account of this information, -£139.272m of grant income is estimated to be available to the Council for 2024/25 through the specific ring-fenced Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). This comprises -£96.231m for the Schools Block, -£16.589m for the Early Years Block, -£25.604m for the High Needs Block and -£0.848m for the Central Schools Services Block.
- 5.33 In addition to the DSG, schools also receive revenue funding from other specific grants, which for maintained schools includes School Sixth Forms (2024/25 estimate - £1.269m), the Pupil Premium (-£1.876m), Primary PE and Sports Premium (-0.345m), the Universal Infant Free School Meals Grant (-£0.630m) and Teachers' Pay Addition Grant (-£0.673m). All these amounts are subject to change in 2024/25.

Spending on the High Needs Block and Safety Valve Programme

- 5.34 It is widely known that for many councils, the cost of supporting pupils with SEND is significantly above the amount of DSG funding allocated by the DfE. For Bracknell Forest, an £8.928m overspend on HNB is currently forecast for 2023/24. Recognising the scale of this issue across the country, the Government introduced regulations to ensure that any accrued deficit is not a liability on councils but remains a DfE responsibility, initially until 31 March 2023, recently extended to 2026.
- 5.35 Alongside this, the DfE has also introduced a more rigorous monitoring and intervention regime where council areas are accruing large deficit balances or experiencing a significant reduction in a surplus. It has previously been reported to the Executive that Bracknell Forest was invited to join this regime – called the Safety Valve programme - in July 2023 and through this is expected to agree plans to bring spending back in line with grant levels over the coming years. Should this be achieved to the DfE's satisfaction, the Government will make a contribution to help write off the deficit that has accumulated up to the point of that equilibrium being reached.
- 5.36 The Safety Valve process is initially focused on options to reduce spending on SEND services, predominantly by investing in more local provision to enable a significant reduction in the current reliance on expensive out-of-borough schools, with limited immediate impact on the Council generally. However, the need to identify funding to write off the Council's share of the accumulated deficit, that is expected to be around £30m by the end of the current financial year and will continue to grow for some time in the years ahead, presents an enormous financial challenge for the Council. While its balance sheet is currently healthy, with a higher level of usable general and earmarked reserves than many local authorities, the total of these may not be sufficient. Moreover, if the Council's reserves were to be reduced to a bare minimum level, there would be no protection against spending pressures and rising demand that all local authorities typically face. The Council has therefore requested that consideration be given to allowing it to access financial flexibilities that have been offered to local authorities experiencing extreme financial difficulties, to help ensure it can avoid reaching this position.

Reserves

- 5.37 The Council has an estimated £11.08m available in General Reserves as at 31 March 2024, if spending in the current year matches the approved budget. Details are contained in Table 4.

Table 4: General Reserves as at 31 March 2024

	£m
General Fund	11.08
Planned use in 2023/24	0.00
Estimated Balance as at 31 March 2024	11.08

- 5.38 The Council has, in the past, planned on maintaining a minimum prudential balance currently assessed to be £4.5m. This assessment is based on the financial risks which face the Council and the Executive Director: Resources considers these in the February report to the Executive at which a final decision on the use of balances can be taken, taking account of the financial position likely to face the Council over the next five years.

5.39 The Council used a one-off contribution of £3.590m from the Future Funding Reserve to balance the budget in 2023/24. This reserve was deliberately established to help manage the Medium Term financial position and is expected to have a balance of £16.3m available at the 31 March 2024.

Summary position on the Revenue Budget

5.40 Adding the draft proposals to the Commitment Budget and taking account of the corporate issues identified above would result in total expenditure of £97.725m as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Summary of proposals:

	£'000
Commitment Budget	90,202
Reversal of the one-off transfer from the Business Rates Reliefs Reserve used to fund the estimated Collection Fund - Business Rates deficit for 2022/23.	4,480
Reversal of one-off transfer from the Future Funding Reserve used to balance the budget in 2023/24.	3,590
Reduction in Business Rates income	500
Reduction in New Homes Bonus	300
Increase in Social Care Grants	-1,251
Budget Pressures (including increase in Contingency)	5,655
Budget Economies	-5,490
Capital Programme	163
Inflation Provision	5,280
Draft Budget Requirement 2024/25	103,429

5.41 Without the Provisional Finance Settlement, assumptions have had to be made on the level of grant income. It has been assumed that the Council can anticipate income of up to -£96.499m. This arises from Revenue Support Grant (-£2.191m), Business Rates baseline funding (-£17.811m) and Council Tax at 2023/24 levels (-£76.497m).

5.42 With the potential overall cost of the budget package being consulted on in the region of £103.429m, this leaves a potential gap of around £6.930m. Members can choose to adopt any or all of the following approaches in order to bridge the remaining gap:

- an increase in Council Tax;
- an appropriate contribution from the Council's revenue reserves, bearing in mind the Medium Term financial position;
- identification of further savings

Capital Programme

Introduction

- 5.43 Each year the Council agrees a programme of capital schemes. These schemes are mainly funded from:
- the Council's capital receipts
 - Government Grants
 - other external contributions
 - internal and external borrowing
- 5.44 The Council's total usable capital receipts generated from disposing of assets at 31st March 2023 are zero as all receipts have been applied to fund prior capital investment. Similarly, all receipts realised during the current financial year will be used to finance the 2023/24 Capital Programme. The Council is partly reliant on capital receipts and other contributions to fund its capital programme, although interest generated from capital receipts can also help support the revenue budget in the short term. However, with borrowing rates at historically high levels it is advantageous to use capital receipts to reduce the level of external borrowing.
- 5.45 The proposed capital programme for 2024/25 has been developed, therefore, on the assumption that it will be funded by a combination of Government grants, other external contributions, capital receipts and borrowing only if required. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions and some small miscellaneous property sales should enable £2.0m of the capital programme to be funded from receipts. Additionally, the one-off capital receipts from the Coopers Hill site being developed by the Council's Joint Venture with Countryside properties UK can be used to minimise the level of borrowing resulting from these proposals. Internal resources will be used in the first instance and borrowing from external sources (e.g. the PWLB) will be used only when necessary. The financing costs associated with the General Fund Capital Programme have been provided for in the Council's revenue budget plans which are set out above.

New Schemes

- 5.46 Within the general financial framework outlined above, Service Departments have considered priority schemes for inclusion within the Council's Capital Programme for 2024/25 – 2026/27. Given that both capital and revenue resources are under pressure, each Department has evaluated and prioritised proposed schemes into broad categories in line with the Council's agreed Asset Management Plan approach. Having done this, only the very highest priority schemes and programmes are being recommended for inclusion in the Capital Programme.

Elements of the capital programme

- 5.47 The capital programme is structured into categories of spend as follows:
- *Unavoidable and committed schemes*; these are required to ensure that the Council is not left open to legal sanction and includes items relating to health and safety issues, new legislation etc. Committed schemes also include those that have been started as part of the 2023/24 Capital Programme and have not yet completed. Schemes in this category form the first call on the available capital resource.

- *Maintenance (Improvements and capitalised repairs)*; an assessment is made of the state of each building and highways element and its repair priority with a condition rating and repair urgency to inform spending requirements which are intended to address the most pressing high priority works. There are also Landlord liabilities left with the Council with regard to the Leisure sites. Maintenance of school buildings is financed from DfE School Condition Grant, with the expenditure budget set at the equivalent amount to the grant income.
- *ICT Schemes*; The Council will be required to invest in technology and IT infrastructure over the coming years as exiting hardware and infrastructure becomes obsolete. The two key areas requiring funding in 2024/25 are hardware and Infrastructure assets.
- *Rolling programmes*; cover more than one year and give a degree of certainty for forward planning schemes to improve service delivery. They make an important contribution towards the Council's established Asset Management Plans.
- *Other desirable schemes*; are other high priority schemes that meet the needs and objectives of their service.
- *Invest to save schemes*; these are schemes where the additional revenue income or savings arising from their implementation exceeds the Council's borrowing costs.

Summary

- 5.48 A summary of the cost of schemes proposed by directorates is set out below in Table 6. A detailed list of new schemes from the People Directorate is included in Annexe D. The schools investment programme included in this report reflects the highest priority schemes identified by the People Department and the Education Capital Programme Board. Total requested Council funding for schemes amounts to £8.328m, which includes £0.660m for schemes that have commenced in the current year or are committed on an annual basis and will continue into 2024/25.

Table 6: Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2026/27

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Service Area	£000s	£000s	£000s
Delivery	3,937	2,062	490
People	1,790	1,695	250
Central Directorates	7,155	6,110	6,110
Total Capital Programme	12,882	9,867	6,850
Less Externally Funded	4,554	4,675	3,230
Council Funded Programme	8,328	5,192	3,620

Funding options

- 5.49 Following the introduction of the Prudential Borrowing regime local authorities are able to determine the level of their own capital expenditure with regard only to affordability on the revenue account. In practice this represents the amount of borrowing they can afford to finance and will necessitate taking a medium-term view of revenue income streams and capital investment needs.
- 5.50 The proposed capital programme for 2024/25 has been developed on the assumption that it will be funded by a combination of approximately £2m of capital receipts,

Government grants, other external contributions and borrowing. The financing costs associated with the Capital Programme have been provided for in the Council's revenue budget plans, as set out in paragraph 5.29.

- 5.51 To achieve its aim of ensuring that capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable, the Local Government Act requires all local authorities to set and keep under review a series of prudential indicators included in the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. The Capital Programme recommended in this report can be sustained and is within the prudential guidelines. Full Council will need to agree the prudential indicators for 2024/25 to 2026/27 in February 2024, alongside its consideration of the specific budget proposals for 2024/25 and the Council's medium-term financial prospects.

6 Advice received from statutory and other officers

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The Council is legally obliged to calculate the Council Tax Base for 2024/2025 by 31 January 2024. Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as inserted by the Localism Act 2011, imposes a duty on the Council, as a billing authority, to calculate its Council Tax by applying a formula laid down in that Section. The formula involves a figure for the Council Tax Base for the year, which must itself be calculated. The Local Authority (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 require a billing authority to use a given formula to calculate the Council Tax Base.
- 6.2 The authorisation for incurring capital expenditure by local authorities is contained in the legislation covering the service areas. Controls on capital expenditure are contained in the Local Government Act 2003 and regulations made thereunder.

Executive Director: Resources

- 6.3 The financial implications of this report are included in the supporting information.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.4 The Council's final budget proposals will potentially impact on all areas of the community. A detailed consultation process is planned in order to provide individuals and groups with the opportunity to comment on the draft proposals. This will ensure that in making final recommendations, the Executive can be made aware of the views of a broad section of residents and service users. Several of the budget proposals require specific equality impact assessments to be carried out. Consultation with equalities groups that are likely to be affected by the proposal is part of the assessment process. . Where necessary, impact assessments on specific schemes within the capital programme will be undertaken before work commences.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.5 A sum of £3.000m is currently included in the draft proposals to meet the costs of unpredictable or unforeseen items that would represent in year budget risks. The Executive will need to make a judgement on the level of Contingency at its meeting in February.
- 6.6 The Executive Director: Resources, as the Council's Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer), must formally certify that the budget is sound. This will involve identifying

and assessing the key risk areas in the budget to ensure the robustness of estimates and ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place to manage those risks, including maintaining an appropriate level of reserves and Contingency. This formalises work that is normally undertaken each year during the budget preparation stages and in monthly monitoring after the budget is agreed. The Executive Director: Resources will report his findings in February, when the final budget package is recommended for approval.

- 6.7 The scale of the Council's Capital Programme for 2024/25 will impact upon the revenue budget and will itself be subject to consultation over the coming weeks. All new spending on services will need to be funded from new capital receipts or borrowing. The generation of capital receipts in future years may mitigate the impact on the revenue budget, but as the timing and scale of these receipts is uncertain their impact is unlikely to be significant.
- 6.8 There are also a range of risks that are common to all capital projects which include:
- Tender prices exceeding the budget
 - Planning issues and potential delays
 - Uncertainty of external funding
 - Building delays due to unavailability of materials or inclement weather
 - Availability of staff with appropriate skills to implement schemes
- 6.9 These can be managed through the use of appropriate professional officers and following best practice in project management techniques. The report also identifies the risk associated with the shortfall in maintenance expenditure compared to that identified by the latest condition surveys. With only those highest priorities receiving funding in 2024/25, there will be a further build up in the maintenance backlog and a risk that the deterioration in Council assets will hamper the ability to deliver good services.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.10 There are no implications arising from the revenue proposals in this report, which are presenting draft budget options for consultation.
- 6.11 For the proposed capital programme, the recommendations will have no immediate impact on emissions of CO₂. Detailed consideration will be given to the impact of the final capital budget proposals in February 2024, although in general terms improvements to current assets and the construction of new facilities using modern designs and construction techniques are expected to have positive climate change implications.

7 Consultation

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 The Overview & Scrutiny Commission will be consulted on the budget proposals and may also choose to direct specific issues to individual overview and scrutiny panels. Targeted consultation exercises will be undertaken with business rate payers, the Schools Forum, town and parish councils and voluntary organisations. Comments and views will be sought on both the overall budget package and on the detailed budget proposals. In addition, this report and all the supporting information are publicly available to any individual or group who wish to comment on any proposal

included within it. To facilitate this, the full budget package will be placed on the Council's web site at <http://consult.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/portal> and it is intended that consultation events will be organised in local community settings during January. There will also be a dedicated mailbox to collect comments.

7.2 The timetable for the approval of the 2024/25 Budget is as follows:

Executive agrees proposals as basis for consultation	12 December 2023
Consultation period	13 December 2023 - 23 January 2024
Executive considers representations made and recommends budget.	06 February 2024
Council considers Executive budget proposals	21 February 2024

Background Papers

None

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Doc. Ref. [https://bfcouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/fina/bpm/FIBPSCB-FIN9.6/Schools Forum/\(121\) 110124/2024-25 LA Budget Proposals from the council - Schools Forum.docx](https://bfcouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/fina/bpm/FIBPSCB-FIN9.6/Schools Forum/(121) 110124/2024-25 LA Budget Proposals from the council - Schools Forum.docx)

Description of Commitment Budget Items for 2024/25 to 2026/27

Department and Item	Description	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2025/26 £000
People Directorate				
Suitability surveys	Suitability and access surveys are undertaken every three years to update the Asset Management Plan so that up to date information is available to inform investment decisions on the capital programme.	20	-20	
Schools Budget - High Needs deficit	Bracknell Forest along with many other councils has had to set a deficit budget for the High Needs Block. This deficit will be balanced in the Council's budget by a contribution from school reserves as it will need to be met from the DSG over the medium term.	TBC		
Foster Care Allowances - Enhanced	This scheme focused on a six-month pilot that has proved successful and is now part of an enhanced and improved Foster Care offer from the council	86		
Invest to Save - Carbon Reduction Initiatives	Implementation of several projects to help reduce the Council's energy costs and its carbon footprint. All schemes deliver savings at least equal to the cost of interest and the Minimum Revenue Provision resulting from the capital expenditure.	-26		
Housing and Welfare Officer	Removal of the post funded for one year only from the Covid-19 Reserve to support welfare work.	-43		
Total		37	-20	0

Revenue budget: proposed PRESSURES for the People Directorate

Description	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000
<p>Adult Social Care Costs This pressure represents the current cost of care packages and population data on the increase in population and therefore the likely increases in number requiring Social Care particularly in the over 65s cohort. It also includes an estimate of the costs arising from young people turning 18 and transferring into Adult Social Care.</p>	2,090	1,585	997
<p>Housing and Welfare Updating of Software systems.</p>	37	25	25
<p>Welfare Service Creation of Financial Inclusion Service The team currently delivering financial hardship advice and support are funded by one off grants and previously allocated hardship funds. It is currently unclear whether any such funding will be made available by the Government in 2024/25.</p> <p>A proposal has been made to provide £0.100m of funding next year from the Community Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) grant, which will enable a service to be maintained for a further 12 months, although at a reduced level than the current offer.</p>	0	100	0
<p>Special Education Needs (SEN) Team: Restructure This is a provisional estimate subject to an on-going Business Case which considers demand pressures and statutory timescales. It will also consider the need to make permanent a number of posts that are currently funded on a time limited, temporary basis.</p>	100	0	0
<p>Early Help Youth Service Review Provision of an educational youth programme for young people with mild to moderate SEND from year 9, in line with preparing for adulthood, to age 25, offering a series of life skills workshops alongside enrichment activities.</p>	0	32	0
<p>Home to School Transport / Fleet An initial estimate of likely costs of providing pupil transport requirements in accordance with the provisions of Council policy. The increasing numbers of SEND pupils, in particular, indicates a cost pressure.</p>	150	0	0
<p>Children's Social Care - Section 17 Payments. There has been an increase in demand and complexity of assessed need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their family settings.</p>	50	0	0

Description	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000
Children's Social Care - Preplacement support Additional staffing support to enable placements to be stable and safe and reduce risks of escalation to residential.	40	0	0
Children's Specialist Support Team - Direct Payments Budget. This is a growing client group with a 15% increase in demand for social care support from the team since June 2020. Direct payments are part of the offer that enables children with disabilities to remain at home.	35	0	0
Children's Social Care - Foster Panel. Increased number of foster panels, undertaken by independent assessors. It relates to improved practice so that all foster home reviews return to panel every three years.	17	0	0
Children's Social Care - Support to Mosaic Interface. Ongoing maintenance of the interface by The Access Group, enabling the business improvements associated with using the financial module.	8	0	0
Funding contribution from maintained schools For statutory education related services. Income to support statutory education related duties is automatically lost from schools that convert to an academy.	25	25	25
Historic commitments in the Schools block A range of defined services that support vulnerable young people are currently jointly funded by the Council and the grant funded Schools Budget. Funding is being reduced which increases the element met by the Council.	33	26	21
PEOPLE TOTAL	2,585	1,793	1,068

Revenue budget: proposed ECONOMIES for People Directorate

Description Impact	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000
Adult Social Care - Promoting Independence Our new way of working (The Target Operating Model) has been developed with a focus on building independence for adults through early intervention and prevention to ensure people achieve their optimum level of independence. This is being achieved by providing effective information, advice and guidance, the use of equipment and Assistive Technology and rehabilitation / reablement. It will also look at supporting people within friendship groups and activities to improve outcomes.	948	458	0
Adult Social Care-Managing the Market Review of provider market unit costs with a view to achieving efficiencies and effectively managing cost.	300	0	0
Adult Social Care- Maximising external grants The service is supported by a range of grants The objective of this approach will facilitate timely discharge from hospital and maximising independence through a focus of returning home rather than entering residential or nursing care which is much more expensive. The objective will be achieved through focusing an increased level of Better Care Funding to support this process.	500	0	0
Housing Temporary Accommodation Rental income from additional units purchased through the Local Authority Housing Fund.	85	85	131
Children Looked After Practice continues to see the number of Children Looked After reducing. The average for the last 2 years has reduced to 114 placements compared to 121 over the last 4 years. Current data, which is high cost, volatile and subject to change at short notice, projects a net saving against accommodation and care provision, plus a range of related support services.	390	0	0
Public Law Outline Assessments (pre court process) Costs have reduced and this is expected to be permanent.	24	0	0
School Places, Property and Admissions Due to underspends in previous years, it is proposed to remove the budget for the fees for brought in-services.	13	0	0
Standards and Effectiveness Reduction in capacity can be managed as schools that convert to an academy are no longer supported.	34	24	0
PRC / Dismissal Cost Former teacher pension liabilities continue to reduce as a result of mortality rates with no new commitments being made.	54	30	30

Description Impact	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000
Early Years Services Government reforms of the early years entitlements will result in significantly more income being received. This enables more grant to be applied to council funded expenditure where this is incurred to support providers. This will need to be reviewed for subsequent years once longer term government plans are confirmed.	253	-253	0
PEOPLE TOTAL	2,601	344	161

CAPITAL PROGRAMME - PEOPLE

		2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	TOTAL £000
Committed					
No Schemes		-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-
Unavoidable					
No Schemes		-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-
Rolling Programme / Other Desirable					
Non-Schools					
Housing Planned Maintenance	13	250	250	250	750
Waymead Air Conditioning	14	115	-	-	115
Waymead Refurbishment	15	24	-	-	24
Departmental Bids:					
College Hall Security	16	20	-	-	20
Larchwood	17	57	-	-	57
Total		466	250	250	966
TOTAL REQUEST FOR COUNCIL FUNDING		466	250	250	966
External Funding - Other					
Non-Schools					
No Schemes		-	-	-	-
Schools					
DfE Grant: Schools Capital Maintenance	24	1,324	147	-	1,471
DfE Grant: Basic Needs Grant	24	-	1,298	-	1,298
DfE Grant: Devolved Formula Capital	24	<i>tba</i>	<i>tba</i>	<i>tba</i>	-
		1,324	1,445	-	2,769
TOTAL EXTERNAL FUNDING		1,324	1,445	-	2,769
TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME		1,790	1,695	250	3,735

PEOPLE DIRECTORATE

Summary of New Schemes – 2024/25 Capital Programme

13. Housing Capital Programme (£0.25m)

Housings planned maintenance is an annual programme of repairs and maintenance to the Councils' housing stock. It encompasses a wide range of activities, but typically includes the repair or replacement of elements of building fabric, mechanical and electrical items, fixtures or fittings that are worn, obsolete or otherwise damaged. The purpose of the work is to improve and maintain the Councils' housing stock to a decent standard to provide a safe and appropriate environment for our residents to reside in and deliver the priorities set out in the Housing and Welfare Service Plan.

The works included in the current programme were identified through a series of Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and property condition surveys, which were undertaken on our behalf by external engineers and surveyors during 2019/20 on a five-year programme. The focus of the programme will remain on the modernisation of properties to maintain a Decent Standard with the balance of activity over the next twelve months concentrating on property components e.g., kitchens, bathrooms, electrical installations and heating systems. This will in future be replaced on a fixed life cycle.

The projected costs include an allowance for a higher-than-normal uplift for construction inflation and to introduce energy saving measures as part of overall project to improve thermal comfort and reduce fuel poverty supporting Health and Wellbeing.

14. Waymead Airconditioning (£0.115m)

Waymead Short Term Care is a registered CQC Green rated service that provides respite services for up to 5 guests per night with its adjoining Day Care providing up to 10 plus guests per day. The demand for respite care and day services for people with Learning Disabilities & Autism is very high in Bracknell Forest. This service is the only provision within Bracknell and surrounding boroughs. To supplement the demand for respite and day care services, the Council commissions private providers at high costs.

The rise in temperatures over the past few years have resulted in unprecedented heat and humidity levels and this trend is expected to continue. Heatwave Level 3/4 warnings, which means that temperatures are very likely to rise to levels that increase the risk of ill health among vulnerable people like those in Waymead, is now a reality. The previous use of fans to alleviate the heat is no longer viable.

The extreme heat experienced in recent years poses a high risk to all the guests of Waymead and staff and have impacted heavily on the running of services. In some cases, services had to be cancelled or relocated to other locations. The ability to add air conditioning (AC) to the Waymead Services is essential for the future of the day and respite services meeting registration requirements effectively. The request is based on a feasibility study on the inclusion of an air conditioning solution at Waymead which confirmed that it was possible to safely install AC at Waymead Services at a cost of around £115k. The installation will provide comfort cooling to 12 areas including bedrooms, the Day Centre and other regularly used areas of the building.

15. Waymead Refurbishment (£0.024m)

This related request to the works on Waymead is for the purchase and installation of a new bath which is needed in Room 3 and ancillary refurbishment. This specialist bath is no longer fit-for-purpose and due to its age cannot be repaired. The replacement is a highly versatile bathing system, ideal for patients with reduced posture control allowing easy patient access, and the high-low function prevents risk of caregiver back strain.

16. College Hall – Site Security (£0.020m)

The College Hall site is surrounded by 6ft high wooden fencing. Due to its age, the fence is rotting in places, and is easily damaged by students. Holes often appear, not only due to student damage but also due to animals digging under the fence to be able to cross the site. There have been several security incidents regarding access to the site due to the failure of the fencing. Given the vulnerability of the attending students, there is a significant safeguarding risk with the current perimeter fencing.

17. Larchwood – Site Security (£0.057m)

The perimeter fencing around Larchwood has been in situ since the unit was built. The fencing is standard wooden panels. The fencing needs replacement as it is no longer fit for purpose. The installation of an anti-climb fence would enable staff to focus on providing our children and young people a high-quality experience at Larchwood. This would also reduce the likelihood of staff having to use restraint and would facilitate staff to support our children and young people not only to have fun but to learn valuable life skills such as, self-regulation and risk identification whilst playing in the Larchwood garden. The external door entry system and access to office spaces is another area of identified risk, the current systems have become outdated and no longer fit for purpose. On three occasions children have been able to use their body size to override the current system and open the doors. The current open access arrangements necessitate a high staff ratio which could potentially be reduced through the addition of fob entry systems, enabling the support of additional children and young people dependent on their needs.

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