

To all members of the Sunderland Schools Forum

Together for Children
Sunderland
City Hall – Level 2
Plater Way
Sunderland
SR1 3AA

Date: 19th February 2025
Our TFC-SF/ZW

Dear Colleague

SUNDERLAND SCHOOLS FORUM

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Schools Forum, scheduled for Thursday 6th March 2025 at 8.30 am. The meeting will be held virtually, and a Teams appointment has been circulated.

AGENDA

25/10	Welcome, Introductions and Apologies Apologies for absence submitted by Mr Amos and Mr Foster attending as his representative.	
25/11	Membership Proposals Mr Airey has submitted his resignation from the SSF and a proposal has been put forward for Mrs Sarah Armstrong to join the membership (Diocesan representative). Proposal to remove Mr A Carr from the membership following his departure from Biddick Academy.	
25/12	Declarations of Interest	
25/13	Minutes of Previous Meeting School Forum meeting, held on 16 th January 2025 (attached)	
25/14	Matters Arising from the Minutes/Agreed Actions (Action Log attached)	
25/15	Feedback from Short Life Working Groups	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion • Quality Assurance Processes for Service Providers • DBV Funding: Probity (update on working group arrangements) 	KR PR PR
25/16	Presentations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth and Falling Rolls (Report Attached) <p>Voting: All</p>	AR

25/17	Reports for Discussion and Decision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools Forum Membership/Terms of Reference (attached with proposed changes in red) Voting: All	Clerk
25/18	Any Other Business	
25/19	Date and Time of Next Meeting 22 nd May 2025	

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

Yours faithfully



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SUNDERLAND SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday 16th January 2025 at 8.30 am

School Forum Member Attendance

Voting

James Waller (JW) - Chair	Maintained Special School
David Airey (DAI)	Church of England Diocese
Michelle Barr (MB)	Private, Voluntary & Independent Nurseries
Ann Blakey (ABI)	Maintained Faith School Representative
Audrey Bolam (ABO)	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior
Colin Devlin (CD)	Academy Secondary and All Through
Michael Hartnack (MH)	Maintained Primary – Governor
Mandy Henderson (MHe)	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior
Ailsa Higgins (AH)	Maintained Nursery
Emma Jarvis (EJ)	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior
Ceri Jones representing Madeline Hope (CJo)	Academy Secondary and All Through
Catherine Jones (CJ)	Maintained Primary School
Andy Lewis (AL)	Teacher Association
John Lines (JL)	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior
Michael Little (ML)	Academy Special
David Martyn (DM)	Private, Voluntary & Independent Nurseries
Joanne Maw (JM)	Academy Secondary and All Through
Vicky Pinkney (VP)	Academy Secondary and All Through
Lauren Reeves (LR)	Academy Primary, Infant and Junior
Phil Smith (PS)	Academy Secondary and All Through
Donna Walker (DW)	Maintained Pupil Referral Services

Non-Voting

Sara Bainbridge (SB)	Maintained Primary School
Lisa Wood (LW)	Maintained Primary School

Together for Children Officers and Councillors

Kim Richards (KR)	TfC Interim Director of Education
Cllr Michael J Butler (MJB)	Lead Member, Children's Services
Richard Cullen (RC)	TfC Strategic Lead – School Improvement and Early Years
Debra Dixon (DD)	TfC Team Manager, Management Accounting Team
Tony Davey (TD)	TfC Team Manager Technical, Finance
John Hope (JH)	TfC Technical Accountant Education Funding
Deborah Orr (DO)	TfC Head of Accounting and Finance
Ronnie Lynn (RL)	Interim TfC Strategic Service Manager
Leigh Morris (LM)	TfC Team Manager, School Finance
Emma Nolan (EN)	TfC Finance Business Partner
Pamela Robertson (PR)	TfC Strategic SEND Lead
Gemma Slater (GS)	TfC Trainee Accounting Technician
Jill Wilson (JWi)	TfC Finance Business Partner
Zena Wilkinson	Schools Forum Clerk

School Forum Non-Member Attendance

Sarah Chapman (SC)

Balmoral Learning Trust

		Agreed Action
25/01	<p><u>Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for Absence</u></p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>The Clerk advised that apologies for absence had been submitted by Mr Amos and Mrs Hope and Mrs C Jones was in attendance to represent Mrs Hope.</p> <p>The Clerk confirmed a quorum was present and the meeting could proceed to business.</p>	
25/02	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>MJB declared an interest as a member of Cabinet and MH advised that as an elected Councillor he would declare declarations throughout the meeting, if appropriate.</p> <p>SSF members NOTED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The declarations of interest in relation to the business to be considered. - Declarations could be made throughout the meeting, if appropriate. 	
25/03	<p><u>Minutes of Previous Meeting</u></p> <p>SSF members RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To accept the minutes of the Sunderland Schools Forum (SSF) held on 21st November 2024 as a true record. 	
25/04	<p><u>Matters Arising from the Minutes/Agreed Actions</u></p> <p>Matters Arising from the Minutes:</p> <p>Members confirmed they had received a copy of the Action Log prior to the meeting.</p> <p>JW confirmed a number of the actions identified would be considered in detail within this meeting.</p> <p>24/69 Reports for Discussion JH confirmed briefings would be scheduled for respective groups to provide an overview of report contents going forward.</p>	JH
	Members agreed to change the order of business	
25/05	<p><u>Reports for Discussion and Decision</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • De-Delegation of Trade Union Facility Time <p>Members confirmed they had received a copy of the following report prior to the meeting:</p>	

➤ Budget Planning Framework 2025/26

JH confirmed that the additional information requested at the previous meeting had been circulated to SSF members and Headteachers and invited questions or comments.

MH advised that he had liaised with a number of Headteachers and Governing Board members and the consensus was, in principle, they were not in favour of the de-delegation proposals. MH explained that it was acknowledged that in some instances the de-delegation costs were only slight but the view was costs could be paid as needed.

MH noted that there was a disparity in terms of the de-delegation costs implemented across LA's but acknowledged that there may be a disparity in terms of schools using this service provision.

MJB questioned if SSF representatives had an opportunity to share the proposals within their respective groups. JW confirmed that the proposal had been raised within Headteacher Cluster meetings.

CJ advised that the de-delegation proposals had been discussed in detail within Primary Headteacher Cluster meetings yesterday and it was agreed a vote in favour of the proposal would be submitted this year but going forward Headteachers would like the opportunity to consider a service level agreement option, as it was felt the current process was collectively unfair. MH stated that he would support these comments.

LM advised that the de-delegation of trade union facility time was a decision the SSF needed to take annually so there would still be a need to discuss this option within the budget setting process.

LW requested clarification of the reason for the de-delegation costs, bearing in mind staff paid trade union dues, and whether it was possible to have a breakdown of costs. AL stated that it was possible to have a breakdown of costs but this would need to be requested from the individual trade unions. AL explained that there were only 3 full time trade union case workers and the de-delegation fees met the costs of additional trade union representatives facility time and these were individuals with local knowledge. AL shared that without this funding meetings would need to be scheduled outside of the school day or weekends.

JW noted that voting on this item of business was open to maintained schools only. LM highlighted that the terms of reference stated that voting was Maintained Primary School Headteacher and Maintained Sector School Governor. ABI requested verification of the voting arrangements, advising that she had voted on this business historically. LM and the Clerk agreed to investigate.

JW invited MH and CJ to vote on the proposal. MH stated that he would be abstaining from the vote. CJ confirmed she would be voting for the proposal put forward.

LM and ZW

Following a vote SSF Members RESOLVED:

- To accept the De-delegation of Trade Union Facility Time Proposals, as presented.

- Budget Planning Framework 2025/26

JH summarised the following:

Schools Block – School Funding Formula 2025/26

JH explained that the local budget flexibility arrangements, in terms of transferring up to 0.5% of the Schools Block (SB) funding to the High Needs Block (HNB) continued and this arrangement had been agreed within the SSF meeting held in November 2024.

JH shared that restrictions continued to be in place in terms of the funding formula, where LA's must move their factor values 10% closer to the National Funding Formula (NFF) but Sunderland's values were in line with the NFF in 2024/25 in full, apart from the Basic Entitlement factor (age weighted pupil units, AWPU) which was used in 2024/25 to transfer 0.5% to HNB. JH highlighted that even though the AWPU factor had been reduced it was still within the 2.5% parameter, therefore considered to be at full NFF factor values.

- Funding Announcement

JH reported that the School, High Needs, Central Services and Early Years funding was announced on 18th December 2024 and shared the following:

	2024/25	18 th Dec Settlement 2025/26	Change in Funding
	£m	£m	£m
School Block	215.80	231.24	15.44
High Needs	33.59	37.34	3.75
Central Services	1.50	1.55	0.05
Early Years	20.57	40.02	19.45
Total	271.46	310.15	38.69

JH explained that the funding provided to mainstream schools, through the Teachers' Pay Additional Grant (TPAG), the Teachers' Pension Employer Contribution Grant (TPECG) and Core Schools Budget Grant (CSBG) had been rolled into the school NFF for 2025/26 and made up the majority of the £15m increase. JH reported that the additional increase to the factor values amounted to approximately £1.3m, explaining that this was the true increase in funding after taking into account those grants the schools were already receiving outside of the NFF.

JH reported that the units of funding for Primary Unit Funding (PUF) and Secondary Unit Funding (SUF) were based on the October 2023 census and then uplifted with the new factor values and protection factors; these values were then multiplied by their respective October 2024 pupil counts to provide final allocations

for 2025/26. JH highlighted that if there had been any substantial changes in pupil characteristics in October 2024 (compared to October 2023) then the formula may become unaffordable. JH reported that to balance the formula, before any transfers were made, the Basic Entitlement factors had been reduced, by £16.91, to:

- Primary £3,830.09; Key Stage 3 £5,405.09 and Key Stage 4 £6,096.09.

JH explained that to enable the transfer of £1,156,212 to the HNB the Basic Entitlement factors had been reduced further by £41.42 per pupil:

- Primary £3,788.67; Key Stage 3 £5,363.67 and Key Stage 3 £6,054.67.

JH acknowledged that some schools were contributing less because any higher contributions would take them below the minimum funding protection levels (the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) or Minimum Per Pupil Funding (MPPF)). JH reported that 23 schools did not contribute as they were being funded at, or below, the minimum levels. JH explained that the MFG could be set between -0.5% and 0% and Sunderland had set this at the maximum, 0%, within the funding formula for 2025/26 so schools should receive at least the same per pupil funding as they did for 2024/25 but due to the MFG being set so low more schools were protected via the MFG than the MPPF.

JH brought SSF members attention to Appendix A, explaining that this provided a summary of the school funding allocations for 2025/26.

JH brought SSF members attention to Appendix B, explaining that this provided details of the High Needs transfer costs and highlighted that more schools were protected by the MPPF (which was £4,955 for primary schools and £6,221 for secondary schools).

JH brought SSF members attention to Appendix C, explaining that this was the proposed Final Sunderland 2025/26 Funding Formula Authority Proforma Tool (APT) which needed to be submitted by 22nd January 2025. JH explained that this was based on the .5% transfer.

PS withdrew from the meeting.

Early Years Funding Formula 2025/26

JH explained that the report detailed the changes implemented to the current Early Years (EY) entitlements for 2025/26, which included an increase to 30 hours entitlement for 2 year old children for eligible working parents and 9 months to 2 years children for eligible working parents, from September 2025.

JH advised that there had been an increase to the minimum pass-through requirement, for Local Authorities in 2025/26, which had increased to 96% from 95%.

JH reported that the funding rates Sunderland would receive for 2025/26 were:

Entitlements	National Average 2025/26	Sunderland 2024/25	Sunderland 2025/26	Increase from rates received (as at 12.2024)
3 and 4 yr olds	£6.12	£5.49	£5.71	£0.22
2 year olds	£8.53	£7.84	£8.11	£0.27
Under 2's	£11.54	£10.69	£11.04	£0.35
Maintained Nursery Schools (MNS) Supplementary Funding	£5.90	£4.64	£5.27	£0.63
Disability Access Fund (DAF)	£938.00	£910.00	£938.00	£28.00
Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)	£1.00	£0.68	£1.00	£0.32

Members were advised that the rates detailed, other than the DAF and EYPP, were not the rates that would be allocated to providers; these rates were the starting position for LA's from which any supplements supplied (for example Early Years Inclusion, retained element for central support functions and affordability) were taken into account.

JH reported that there would be no funding supplements for 2 year olds as funding had been allocated to the highest possible level but SEN Inclusion could be included.

JH advised that in terms of the 3 and 4 year olds the proposal was to increase the funding rate to £4.90 per hour for all providers (from £4.70). JH stated that an element had been added to the base rate for Teachers Pay Award 2024 but due to the supplements being capped (at 12%) it was no longer possible to increase the supplements for this. JH reported that the quality supplement had been set at £0.40 (at the beginning of 2024) and increased to £0.64 for September 2024 to March 2025; this had now been reduced to £0.58 for affordability purposes (as any more would exceed the 12% supplement allowance).

JH summarised the following 3 and 4 year old funding rates:

	<u>2025/26</u>	
Base Rate	£4.90 p/hr	Universal & Additional 15 hours
Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI)	£0.0 - £1.00 p/hr	Universal & Additional 15 hours
Flexibility	£0.50 p/hr	Universal & Additional 15 hours
Quality	£0.58 p/hr	Universal & Additional 15 hours
DAF	£938.00 p.a.	N/A

	<p>EYPP</p> <p>Rural school</p>	<p>£1.00 p/hr</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>Universal 15 hours only</p>																					
<p>JH highlighted that hours paid from the January census may not match what was paid in 3 terms.</p>																								
<p>JH brought members attention to the “Initial 3 and 4 Year Old Allocations and Estimate Spend 2025/26” detail, advising that the Retained maximum was 4% and estimated spend equated to 3.98%. JH stated that the Supplement maximum was 12% and allocated funding equated to 11.92%.</p>																								
<p>JH explained that Sunderland’s multiplying rate meant the lump sum would increase (for the 7 maintained nursery schools) to £190,950 (from £159,114); the rate per hour for the quality supply would be £0.58 for both the Universal & Additional entitlements.</p>																								
<p>JH stated that EYPP would continue as a separate funding stream, paid within the DSG, and had been increased to £1.00 per hour (£570.00 p.a.).</p>																								
<p>JH reported that the DAF was increasing to £938.00 (from £910) for all entitlements.</p>																								
<p>JH provided the following summary of rates for 2025/26:</p>																								
<table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: right;">Rate per hour</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>3 and 4 year old entitlements base</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£4.90</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3 and 4 year old IDACI</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£0.00 - £1.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3 and 4 year old Flexibility</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£0.50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3 and 4 year old Quality</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£0.58</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2 year old entitlements (receiving additional support)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£8.08</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2 year old entitlements (working parents)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£8.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Under 2’s entitlement</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£10.95</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DAF</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£938</td> </tr> <tr> <td>EYPP</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£1.00</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>						Rate per hour	3 and 4 year old entitlements base	£4.90	3 and 4 year old IDACI	£0.00 - £1.00	3 and 4 year old Flexibility	£0.50	3 and 4 year old Quality	£0.58	2 year old entitlements (receiving additional support)	£8.08	2 year old entitlements (working parents)	£8.00	Under 2’s entitlement	£10.95	DAF	£938	EYPP	£1.00
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<p>DM stated that as a representative for the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) nurseries he welcomed the changes and thanked JH for the support provided. DM advised that he felt it was important to raise the obvious, in that effectively PVI nurseries were being funded based as a customer of TfC and recent changes would impact (examplng the changes implement by Government to the national insurance contributions), which would leave little flexibility in terms of balancing budgets. DM stated that PVI nurseries were dependent on the funding calculations from JH.</p>																								
<p>DM highlighted that the Budget Planning Framework Report 2024/25 was only received on Monday 13th January 2025, which gave very little opportunity to discuss this with colleagues, therefore decisions were being submitted by himself and MB, as they were the only ones to have sight of the report.</p>																								

<p>LW stated that report receipt timescales had also been discussed with the North Primary Headteacher forum and a query had been raised whether it would be possible to move the cluster meetings to one week early or if there would be an option for briefing sessions to be scheduled by JH to provide an overview of the report content. JH confirmed briefing sessions could be scheduled.</p> <p>MB queried, based on the statement made by DM, whether there was any possibility of being able to delay a decision on the report content. JH explained that this was not possible due to the submission deadline and there was no flexibility.</p> <p>AH stated that she agreed with the comments put forward by DM and believed briefing sessions would be beneficial.</p> <p>ABI echoed the comments made but extended her thanks to JH for the work undertaken and the overview provided, sharing that she believed it was beneficial to listen to the summary from someone who understood the content.</p> <p>CD agreed the report circulated was detailed. CD advised that he felt it was important to state that he did not believe documents had reflected the strength of feelings, from both primary and secondary colleagues, about the proposal to transfer 0.5% of the SB to the HNB without a clear strategy of how the deficit position would be mitigated. CD stated that he believed going forward information on mitigation of the deficit needed to be presented.</p> <p>Following a vote SSF Members RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To agree the submission of the 4 Local Funding Formula proforma (APT) to the ESFA by 22nd January 2025. - Agree the Early Years Formula for 2025/26, as presented. <p>JW thanked JH for the summary presented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated Schools Grant and Projected Outturn 2024/25 <p>Members confirmed they had received a copy of the following report prior to the meeting for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Update and Projected Outturn 2024/25 <p>DO extended her apologies for the delayed circulation of the report, acknowledging that this could be frustrating, but explained Finance Team members had needed the additional time to refine the content of the report bearing in mind the significant deficits being reported.</p> <p>PR withdrew from the meeting.</p> <p>DO reported that the 2024/25 DSG overall in year forecast outturn position was a projected deficit of £6,956,099, as at January 2025; this was a deficit increase of £999,621 compared to the deficit reported in September 2024. DO stated that the previously reported DSG deficit reserve balance, brought forward</p>	<p>JH</p>
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as at 31st March 2024, was £9,088,514, therefore the overall DSG deficit reserve, as at 31st March 2025 was projected to increase to £16,044,613.

DO highlighted that section 3. "High Needs Block Pressures" detailed planned mitigation but explained that there continued to be an increase in the number of needs assessments and Education Health Care Plans (EHCP) issued.

DO explained that the mitigation plans included the use of more cost effective alternative provision (examplifying East Boldon Riding Centre (EBRC)), explaining that other provider options were more costly.

DO reported that the DSG settlements were published just prior to Christmas 2024 and the HNB funding increase, of £3.75m for 2025/26, was disappointing based on the projected overspends. DO shared that finance colleagues were currently working on the 2025/26 budget, which will be extremely challenging, and an update will be presented at the March meeting.

JM advised that the DSG Report had been discussed within the Secondary Headteacher forum and it had been acknowledged that the financial position was quite "bleak". JM stated that although it was highlighted that Sunderland's projected deficits in terms of the HNB were significantly below other LA's colleagues felt that there was an element of urgency, in terms of what the next steps would be. KR confirmed this was discussed in detail within the Secondary Headteacher Forum, explaining that the responses provided were based in terms of the context of the fiscal management of other LAs. KR provided assurance that TfC were undertaking a lot of work to mitigate and manage the deficit going forward, examplifying that one of the longer term strategies was to reduce expenditure on external alternative provision resources. KR stated that the pressures being experienced were not just related to special educational needs/disabilities (SEND) as a strand of expenditure related to supporting permanently excluded children. KR explained that as the Link School admissions were at capacity TfC had to provide bespoke alternative provisions and these placements cost £170 per day, per pupil and she believed a City wide response was needed to address this issue.

KR extended an open invitation for colleagues to contact her if they had any suggestions which would help reduce expenditure.

KR provided assurance that work was consistently being undertaken to mitigate the deficit position, examplifying initiatives implemented.

KR stated that she believed TfC were good in relation to communicating information and shared that consideration was being given to implementing an Inclusion Conference during the Summer term, to look at SEND and inclusion and what was being implemented.

	<p>Following a vote SSF Members RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To agree the note and accept the content of the submission of the DSG Update and Projected Outturn Report 2024/25, as presented. - To note an update of the 2024/25 projected outturn position would be reported at the SSF meeting in March 2025. 	
25/06	<p><u>Feedback from Short Life Working Groups</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion Forum <p>KR advised that Mr Ronnie Lynn had been appointed as the Interim Strategic Lead for Education (following her appointment as Interim Director of Education) and he would be leading the Inclusion Forum going forward. KR extended an open invitation for Members to contact RL with proposed areas of focus for the next forum, which was due to be scheduled.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Assurance Process for Service Provides • DBV Funding: Probity (update on working group arrangements) <p>KR noted that PR had to withdraw from the meeting and put forward a proposal to defer these items of business until the next meeting. Members accepted the proposal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport <p>KR advised members that transport would continue to be an area of focus due to the increased levels of need.</p> <p>KR shared that TfC were currently growing their resources in terms of mini buses, explaining that the mini buses were available, free of charge, to schools and academies on the premise they would be able to cover transport needs during morning and afternoon periods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance/Elective Home Education (EHE) <p>KR advised that appointments had been made for the Elective Home Education Team, which had been implemented to respond to the increasing number of pupils being EHE'd.</p> <p>KR acknowledged that there were safeguarding concerns in relation to children not in school but explained under the current EHE framework TfC could not undertake safeguarding visits without specific concerns being identified. KR stated that it was hoped the proposed changes to the School Bill would address some of the concerns held.</p>	Members
25/07	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>SSF Members NOTED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There were no further items of business to be considered within the meeting. - 	

25/08	<u>Date and Time of Next Meeting</u> Thursday 13 th February 2025 at 8.30 am Venue: Meeting to be held virtually	
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Subject To Approval

Schools Forum Action Log

Date of Meeting	Agenda No	Request	Action	Responsible	Date of Completion	Remarks
04-Jul-24	24/37	Feedback from Short Life Working Groups	Consilium Evolve findings following their project to ascertain whether there were any links to attendance and suspensions with sound and hearing abilities to be shared with Forum members	KR	Oct-24	
21/11/2024	24/65	Reports for Discussion and Decision	SM to extend an invitation to Mr P S Wilson, Section 151 Officer, or his representative, to attend a future SF meeting.	KR		
16/01/2025	25/05 .	Reports for Discussion and Decision	De-Delegation of Trade Union Time - voting rights to be investigated and feedback provided to ABI and LM.	Clerk	Jan-25	Completed - revised terms of reference to be tabled at February meeting.
16/01/2025	25/06 .	Feedback from Short Life Working Groups	SSF Members to contact RL with proposals for the focus of the next Inclusion Forum	Members		

REPORT TO SUNDERLAND SCHOOLS FORUM

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

February 2025

Growth Fund Report –2024/25 – 2025/26

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide information to the Schools Forum on the activity in relation to the Growth Fund for 2023/24 and 2024/25 and to seek approval to:
 - a) approve the primary funding allocations for 2024/25;
 - b) approve the secondary funding allocations for 2024/25;
 - c) provide information on requirements for 2025/26;
 - d) approve the funding required from within the Schools Block for 2025/26 financial year.

2. Background and Context

- 2.1. New entrants to Sunderland's primary sector have declined in 2024/25 with both CDC GP Registration data and ONS Birth-rate data indicating that demand for places due to births will return to previous levels during the current projection period (2025/2026 – 2029/30). However, there has been an increase in the number of in year entries to established year groups across the city. It has not yet been established as to whether that in-year growth will be sustained at a level that will offset the fall in demand from falling births. School place projections include an uplift for planned housing but recent levels of inward migration have not yet been factored into future projected cohort numbers.
- 2.2. Following a period of falling rolls the demand for secondary places across Sunderland has increased. However, the largest year groups previously attending primary provision have now transitioned into secondary. With the exception of the Coalfields demand for places is projected to remain consistent until 2027 at which point there will be a marginal decline in demand for secondary places. However, as with primary, this does not account for any variance to trend data that may arise from increased migration to the city.
- 2.3. The Local Authority continues to work with schools to ensure that there is a sufficiency of school places to meet local demand across the city. In certain circumstances this may involve increasing the published admission number (PAN) in those schools where existing places are deemed insufficient to meet projected local demand. Currently the Local Authority, through basic need funding, supports the capital cost of any required expansion, if that expansion has been agreed as part of the pupil place planning process.

3. Growth Criteria

- 3.1. The 2020/21 Revenue Funding Arrangements published by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA): Schools Revenue Funding 20/21 Operational Guide outlines the principles for a Growth Fund. Local Authorities may centrally retain funding within the schools block in order to

create a Growth Fund to support schools which are required to provide extra places in order to meet basic need within the Authority, including pre-opening and reorganisation costs. Annex 1 sets out the full policy for allocating growth funding, which was previously approved by Schools Forum in December 2021. The Growth Fund may not be used to support schools in financial difficulty. Growth funding in Sunderland will be applied in the following circumstances:

- where a school or academy has agreed with the Authority to provide additional places up to an extra half form of entry or greater to meet basic need in the area (either as a bulge class or ongoing commitment);
- support where a school has increased its PAN in agreement with the Local Authority to meet basic need in the area;
- where a school or academy has agreed with the Authority to provide a number of places above PAN as a bulge class as a consequence of school reorganisation.

3.2 Funding will only be applied to the following classes;

Phase	Year Group
Primary and Infant Schools and Academies	Reception
Junior Schools and Academies	Year 3
Secondary Schools and Academies	Year 7
All Through Schools and Academies	Reception and Year 7

3.3 Growth funding will not apply in the following circumstances;

- For any PAN increases which are not agreed with the Local Authority as part of the place planning process to meet basic need in the area;
- Where pupils are admitted above a schools PAN as a consequence of appeal, infant class size regulation exceptions or error in the school admissions process;
- The fund will not be applied retrospectively and will only apply to increases in class size agreed with the Council post September 2014;
- Funding for reception, year 3 and year 7 cohorts will only be provided for pupils identified on the October Census for the relevant year of entry

3.4 Annex 1 to this report sets out the full proposed criteria for 2024/25 and 2025/26, which was previously approved by Schools Forum in December 2021.

Funding Requirements 2024/25 and 2025/26

- 3.2. Following review of the October 2024 School Census data the total funding required for primary places for 2024/25 has been calculated at £152,343.
- 3.3. The total funding required for secondary places for 2024/25 is £0.
- 3.4. The table below sets out the funding requirement for the Growth Fund for 2024/25

Requirement	No of Places	Cost
Primary places required September 2024	45	£152,343
Secondary places required September 2024	0	£0
Projected DSG required for Growth Fund 2024/25		£152,343

- 3.5. Based on the analysis above the Growth Fund requirements for 2024/25 is established at £152,343.
- 3.6. Where a permanent PAN increase has been agreed Growth Fund allocations are provided to support a 7-year period for primary schools and a 5-year period for secondary schools, with bulge year groups funded as required. The table below identifies the number of places per setting to be funded in 2024/25.
- 3.7. At the Council's request Kepier Academy agreed to admit a further bulge class of 30 pupils in 2023/24. Growth Funding was agreed to support that class. Growth Funding is not required for 2024/25.
- 3.8. Oxclose Academy and Castle View Academy received Growth Fund for cohorts admitted from 2019/20 – 2023/24. Growth Funding is only available for a five year period for secondary settings so the two academies will not receive an allocation from 24/25.

Setting	No of Places
Benedict Biscop CE Academy	15
ST Paul's CE VC Primary School	15
Hetton Primary School	5
Willow Wood Primary School	10

4.0 2025/26 Requirements

- 4.1 Primary places include expansions delivered during 2020/21 as part of infrastructure works associated with the South Sunderland Growth Area, the development of facilities in North Sunderland and development of facilities in the Coalfields. This resulted in the creation of

an additional 15 places per year group in each of Benedict Biscop Primary Academy and St Paul's Primary School and an additional 10 places at each of Hetton Primary School and Willow Wood Primary School. It is proposed that a further 15 places are retained as contingency to respond to any unplanned growth in pupil numbers in other areas of the city.

- 4.2 No secondary school place expansion is currently planned for 2025/26. However, it is recommended that the equivalent to one class (30 places) is retained as contingency with a further 30 primary places retained.

Requirement	No of Places	Cost
Primary Places Required September 2025	65	£242,923
Secondary Places Required September 2025	30	£216,129
Projected DSG required for Growth Fund 2025/26		£459,052

5. Recommendations

5.1.1 School Forum members are asked to consider the information provided in this report and

- (i) approve the final primary and secondary funding allocations for 2024/25;
- (ii) approve projected Growth Fund requirement for 2025/26.

If you have any queries in relation to the above report, please contact, in the first instance:

Alan Rowan: Capital and Sufficiency Lead
 Alan.Rowan@togetherforchildren.org.uk

ANNEX 1: POLICY FOR FUNDING GROWTH IN MAINTAINED SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES

CRITERIA AND PROCESS FOR ACCESSING FUNDING

1. Criteria for Allocating Funding

1.1. The guidance set out in the 2020/21 Revenue Funding Arrangements published by the ESFA: Schools Revenue Funding Operational Guide outlines the principles for a Growth Fund. Local Authorities may centrally retain funding within the Schools Block in order to create a Growth Fund to support schools which are required to provide extra places in order to meet basic need within the Authority, including pre-opening and reorganisation costs. The Growth Fund may not be used to support schools in financial difficulty. Growth funding in Sunderland will be applied in the following circumstances:

- where a school or academy has agreed with the Authority to provide additional places up to an extra half form of entry or greater to meet basic need in the area (either as a bulge class or on-going commitment);
- support where a school or academy has increased its PAN in agreement with the Local Authority to meet basic need in the area;
- where a school or academy has agreed with the authority to provide a number of places above PAN as a bulge class as a consequence of school reorganisation.

1.2. Funding will only be applied to the following classes;

Phase	Year Group
Primary and Infant Schools and Academies	Reception
Junior Schools and Academies	Year 3
Secondary Schools and Academies	Year 7
All Through Schools and Academies	Reception and Year 7

1.3. Growth funding will not apply in the following circumstances;

- For any PAN increases which are not agreed with the Local Authority as part of the place planning process to meet basic need in the area;
- Where pupils are admitted above a school's PAN as a consequence of appeal, infant class size regulation exceptions or error in the school admissions process;
- Funding will not be applied retrospectively and will apply only to increases in class sizes agreed for the academic year following the start of the Local Authority's financial year;
- Funding for reception, year 3 and year 7 cohorts will only be provided for pupils identified on the October Census for the relevant year of entry with nursery funding provided for pupils identified on January Census.

2. Process for Allocating Funding

- 2.1. In the summer term preceding the next financial year starting 1st April the Local Authority will consider data related to school place planning and the outcomes of allocating school places in the summer term for the new academic year.
- 2.2. This information will be used to determine the total number of primary and secondary school places required across the city for the following academic year and discussions will take place with schools and academies in areas affected by projected over-demand on the places available.
- 2.3. During the autumn term the Local Authority estimates the total number of places required and where they might be allocated and calculates the overall cost of the growth fund for the following financial year, which is usually agreed by Schools Forum at the December meeting.
- 2.4. On identifying the schools and academies who are to offer additional places to meet the identified basic need demands the Local Authority will determine and agree a new published admission figure (PAN) where it is the admission authority or receive notification on an increase in PAN where a voluntary aided school or academy is the admission authority. This can occur at any point of the academic year preceding the academic year in which the increase is to take effect, but priority is to agree any increase in advance of the Spring Term prior to the start of the local authority's financial year.
- 2.5. A provisional allocation from the Growth Fund will be confirmed with individual schools or academies as part of the budget allocation process in January / February each year. The actual funding to be allocated will be finalised with the school or academy in the autumn term after the October Census has taken place.
- 2.6. Allocations will be based on the calculations outlined in Annex 2 and 3 of this report

3. Review of Policy

- 3.1. This policy applies from September 2024 and will be subject to annual review by the Schools Forum each financial year.

ANNEX 2: PROJECTED ALLOCATIONS 2024/25

1. The Growth Fund will continue to support the schools that implemented permanent increases in their PAN to support locally identified requirements for additional Primary School places in 2021/22. On this basis, subject to recruitment, St Paul's CE VC Primary School and Benedict Biscop CE Academy will each be funded for 15 places. Hetton Primary School and Willow Wood Primary School will receive funding for 10 places per setting
2. Growth Fund is no longer required to support the schools that implemented permanent increases in their PAN to support locally identified requirements for additional Secondary School places in 2019/20. On this basis the 60 places that has previously been requested to support Castle View Academy and Oxclose Community Academy will not be requested from 2024/25 onwards.
3. The 30 places previously requested for 2022/23 and 2023/24 to support bulge year groups at Kepier Academy will not be required for 2024/25
4. PCT GP registration data used to project future pupil demand demonstrates a fall in the local birth rate in the period leading to 2087. This indicates that any demand for places above the current citywide capacity will be required as a response to either housing developments since 2019/20 or any new development or inward migration.
5. The number of pupils moving from primary to secondary provision is anticipated to continue to reduce from the September 2023 intake onwards. This will increase the volume of surplus places in the local secondary sector.
6. Following the release of the October Census, in December each year, funding will be added to the named school's budgets to reflect the actual number of reception pupils recruited over and above the schools original PAN (pre-pupil place planning increase). Any unallocated funding will be considered as part of the DSG Outturn position.

ANNEX 3: FUNDING ALLOCATION 2023/24 – ACADEMIC YEAR ALLOCATIONS AND UPLIFT

1. The methodology applied to date enables schools to access funding for the period September – March in the year they have received growth funding. From the April following entry all additional pupils on roll at October Census are funded via a schools funding allocation for that financial year.
2. For those institutions that receive funding based on an academic year there is no in year adjustment of funding. Therefore, those schools / academies do not currently receive the remaining 5/12th of per pupil funding for the period April – August.
3. To ensure academies receive sufficient funding to provide education for additional pupils throughout the academic year it will be necessary to provide an additional payment for the period April to August for any year groups for whom growth funding has been agreed. This will result in an allocation equivalent to 5/12th of the basic unit of funding (plus calculated uplift) to be paid from the following years Growth Fund allocation. This will be made in April of each year that growth funding is agreed
4. The amount per additional place allocated to each Growth Fund recipient will be subject to uplift. This uplift will be calculated, for each recipient school, using the sum of the remaining pupil led factors divided by the number of pupils on roll from the October Census. The growth that incorporates this pupil factor uplift has applied to pupils funded from September 2019.
5. Therefore funding allocated will be allocated to maintained schools on the following basis

Total Funding Allocated = (A x (B+C)) / D X E where

A = Increase in PAN agreed by local Authority

B = Basic unit of funding according to relevant phase

C = Calculated whole school funding uplift for financial year

D = Number of Months in financial year

E = Number of months remaining from the beginning of the academic year to 31 March the following year i.e. September 2023 – March 2024 = 7 months.

6. Therefore, from 2021/22, funding allocated will be allocated to academies on the following basis

Total Funding Allocated = (A x (B+C)) / D X E where

A = Increase in PAN agreed by local Authority

B = Basic unit of funding according to relevant phase

C = Calculated whole school funding uplift for financial year

D = Number of Months in financial year

E = Number of months remaining from the beginning of the academic year to 31 March the following year i.e. September 2032 – March 2024 = 7 months. With amount allocated for following financial year based on the remainder of the academic year = 5 months.

SCHOOLS FORUMS MEMBERSHIP – JANUARY 2025

				<u>VOTING RIGHTS</u>				
SCHOOL MEMBERS				1	2	3	4	5
1.	Maintained Primary School Headteacher (Mandatory)			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Maintained Primary Schools South Headteacher	Catherine Jones – Headteacher	Thorney Close Primary School	<p>No voting rights: the views of the individual Primary Headteacher Clusters Groups will be put forward by the Maintained Primary Schools representative.</p> <p>In the event of the Maintained Primary School Teacher absence a Deputy will be appointed to share the views of the individual Primary Headteacher Cluster Groups.</p>				
	Maintained Primary Schools North Headteacher	Lisa Wood - Headteacher	Hylton Castle Primary School					
	Maintained Primary Schools Washington Headteacher	Sara Bainbridge - Headteacher	Barmston Village Primary School					
	Maintained Primary Schools Hetton/Houghton Headteacher	Nicola Hill - Headteacher	Hetton Primary					
2.	Maintained Special School Teacher (Mandatory)	James Waller – Headteacher: CHAIR	Sunningdale School	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
3.	Maintained Nursery Headteacher (Mandatory)	Ailsa Higgins - Headteacher	Hetton Lyons/ Usworth	Y	Y		Y	Y
4.	Maintained Pupil Referral Service Headteacher (Mandatory)	Donna Walker - Headteacher	Link School	Y	Y		Y	Y
5.	Maintained Faith School Headteacher/Representative	Anne Blakey- Headteacher	St Benet’s RC Primary School	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
6.	Maintained Sector School Governor	Michael Hartnack - Governor	Grange Park Primary School	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
7.	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior	Emma Jarvis – Headteacher (Hetton/Houghton)	Dubmire Primary		Y		Y	Y
8	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior	Audrey Bolam – Headteacher (Washington)	Oxclose Primary		Y		Y	Y

SCHOOLS FORUMS MEMBERSHIP – JANUARY 2025

9.	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior	John Lines – Headteacher (Washington)	Columbia Academy		Y		Y	Y
10.	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior	Lauren Reeves – COO (South)	Vision Learning Trust (Hillview)		Y		Y	Y
11.	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior	Ruth Whiteside – Headteacher (South)	Barnes Primary Academy		Y		Y	Y
12.	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior	Mandy Henderson - SBM	Ryhope Infant Academy		Y		Y	Y
13.	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior	Vacant			Y		Y	Y
14.	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior	Vacant			Y		Y	Y
15.	Academy Secondary and All Through	David Amos	Academy 360		Y		Y	Y
16.	Academy Secondary and All Through	Madeline Hope – Director of Finance	Bishop Chadwick Education Trust		Y			Y
17.	Academy Secondary and All Through	Dean Juric - Headteacher	St Roberts Academy		Y			Y
18.	Academy Secondary and All Through	Andrew Carr – Director of Finance	Biddick Academy		Y			Y
19.	Academy Secondary and All Through	Joanne Maw – Chief Executive officer	Aspire Learning Trust		Y			Y
20.	Academy Secondary and All Through	Phil Smith – Chief Finance Officer	Castleview Academy		Y			Y
21.	Academy Secondary and All Through	Vicki Pinkney - Headteacher	Hetton Academy		Y			Y
22.	Academy Secondary and All Through	Colin Devlin – VICE CHAIR	Kepier Academy		Y			Y
23.	Academy Special (Mandatory)	Mick Little – Chief Operations Manager	Ascent		Y			Y

SCHOOLS FORUMS MEMBERSHIP – JANUARY 2025

NON SCHOOL MEMBERS								
24.	Private, Voluntary & Independent Nurseries	David Martin	Chilton Moor Nursery		**		Y	Y
25.	Private, Voluntary & Independent Nurseries	Michelle Barr, Nursery owner and Manger	Buttons Nursery Washington		**		Y	y
26.	Post 16 Provision	Vikki Morton	Sunderland College					Y
27.	Teacher Associations	Andy Lewis						Y
28.	Roman Catholic Diocese	Vacant						Y
29.	Church of England Diocese	David Airey – Headteacher Proposed Change: Sarah Armstrong (Northern Lights Learning Trust) – nominated by Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Boards of Education	Venerable Bede CE Academy					Y

TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN OFFICERS & COUNCILLORS								
	Head of Accounting & Finance	Deborah Orr						
	Director of Education	Kim Richardson						
	Strategic Service Lead – Education							
	Lead Member Children’s Services	Cllr M Butler						
	Lead Member Children’s Services Deputy – No longer applicable							

MEMBERSHIP VOTING RIGHTS		
1	Scheme for Financing Schools (Maintained)	
2	Schools Block Funding Formula	
3.	De-delegation maintained schools	
4.	Early Years Single Funding Formula	
5.	All other School Forum Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Central expenditure relating to schools block b. Deficits on central expenditure to be funded from following year’s DSG. c. Voting procedures

SCHOOLS FORUMS MEMBERSHIP – JANUARY 2025

- De-delegation maintained secondary removed as no longer pertinent

** PVI representatives can vote on the consultation on the funding formula only.