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Notice of Meeting

Schools Forum

Chris Tomes (Vice-Chair), Isabel Cooke, Joolz Scarlett, Sarah Cottle, Andrew Morrison, Neil Dimpleby, Eddie Neighbour, Catherine Page, Tim Fettes and Ben Bausor

Thursday 14 December 2023 2.00 pm

Virtual Meeting - Online access & on [RBWM YouTube](#)

www.rbwm.gov.uk



Agenda

Item	Description	Page
1	Apologies for Absence To receive apologies for absence.	-
2	Declarations of Interest To receive any Declarations of Interest.	3 - 4
3	Minutes of the Previous Meeting To confirm the minutes from the previous meeting.	5 - 12
4	Strategy for Maintained Schools in Deficit Forum to consider the report.	13 - 24
5	2024-25 Schools Formula Funding Consultation outcome and DSG Budget update Forum to consider the report.	To Follow

By attending this meeting, participants are consenting to the audio & visual recording being permitted and acknowledge that this shall remain accessible in the public domain permanently.

Please contact Laurence Ellis, Laurence.Ellis@RBWM.gov.uk, with any special requests that you may have when attending this meeting.

Published: 6th December 2023



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MEMBERS' GUIDE TO DECLARING INTERESTS AT MEETINGS

Disclosure at Meetings

If a Member has not disclosed an interest in their Register of Interests, they **must make** the declaration of interest at the beginning of the meeting, or as soon as they are aware that they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) or Other Registerable Interest. If a Member has already disclosed the interest in their Register of Interests they are still required to disclose this in the meeting if it relates to the matter being discussed.

Any Member with concerns about the nature of their interest should consult the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

Non-participation in case of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI)

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your DPIs (summary below, further details set out in Table 1 of the Members' Code of Conduct) you must disclose the interest, **not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room** unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest' (as agreed in advance by the Monitoring Officer), you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted by the Monitoring Officer in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a DPI.

Where you have a DPI on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet Member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

DPIs (relating to the Member or their partner) include:

- *Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.*
- *Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses*
- *Any contract under which goods and services are to be provided/works to be executed which has not been fully discharged.*
- *Any beneficial interest in land within the area of the council.*
- *Any licence to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer.*
- *Any tenancy where the landlord is the council, and the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest in the securities of.*
- *Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where:*
 - a) *that body has a place of business or land in the area of the council, and*
 - b) *either (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or (ii) the total nominal value of the shares of any one class belonging to the relevant person exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.*

Any Member who is unsure if their interest falls within any of the above legal definitions should seek advice from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to one of your Other Registerable Interests (summary below and as set out in Table 2 of the Members Code of Conduct), you must disclose the interest. **You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.** If it is a 'sensitive interest' (as agreed in advance by the Monitoring Officer), you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Other Registerable Interests:

- a) any unpaid directorships
 - b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
 - c) any body
 - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
 - (ii) directed to charitable purposes or
 - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)
- of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

Disclosure of Non- Registerable Interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a DPI) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, or a body included under Other Registerable Interests in Table 2 you must disclose the interest. **You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting** but otherwise **must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation**. If it is a 'sensitive interest' (agreed in advance by the Monitoring Officer) you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –

- a. your own financial interest or well-being;
- b. a financial interest or well-being of a friend, relative, close associate; or
- c. a financial interest or well-being of a body included under Other Registerable Interests as set out in Table 2 (as set out above and in the Members' code of Conduct)

you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied.

Where a matter (referred to in the paragraph above) **affects** the financial interest or well-being:

- a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
- b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise **must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation**. If it is a 'sensitive interest' (agreed in advance by the Monitoring Officer), you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Other declarations

Members may wish to declare at the beginning of the meeting any other information they feel should be in the public domain in relation to an item on the agenda; such Member statements will be included in the minutes for transparency.

Agenda Item 3

SCHOOLS FORUM

Thursday 16 November 2023

Present (virtually): Chris Tomes (Vice-Chair in the Chair) (Churchmead), Isabel Cooke (White Waltham), Joolz Scarlett (Manor Green), Sarah Cottle (Maidenhead Nursery Federation), Andrew Morrison (Furze Platt Senior), Neil Dimbleby (Altwood), Eddie Neighbour (Pioneer Academy), Catherine Page (Oldfield Primary), Tim Fettes (Holy Trinity CE Primary) and Ben Bausor (Early Year PVI)

Officers (virtually): Laurence Ellis, Clive Haines, Louise Dutton, Sarah Ward, Tracey Anne Nevitt, Rebecca Askew, and Kelly Nash

Apologies for Absence

The Vice-Chair in the Chair, Chris Tomes (Churchmead – Headteacher), welcomed everyone to the meeting and Forum introduced themselves.

No apologies for absence were received.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest received.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 13th July 2023 be approved as a correct record.

Finance Update 2023/24

Before starting her item, Louise Dutton, Head of Finance (AfC), explained the format of the Forum meetings to the new members: each presenting officer would go through the key areas of their report and outline what was required from the Forum based on recommendations and whether any decisions needed to be made, followed by an opportunity for questions and discussions.

Presenting the report, Louise Dutton directed the Forum's attention to Table 3 (page 10 in the report): the overall DSG (dedicated schools grant) Allocation for 2023-24 financial year. She explained the DSG was divided into 4 blocks:

- Schools Block – funding which went directly to schools to support their pupils.
- Central Schools Services Block – retained mostly by the Borough to deliver central services, such as admissions.
- High Needs Block – used to support pupils with EHCPs (Education Health and Care Plans) for maintained schools and pupils requiring provisional support at independent schools.
- Early Years Block – funded nursery placements for the universal offer and two-year old provision in maintained nurseries as well as private, voluntary and independent nurseries.

As Table 3 showcased, the gross allocation was £150.4 million while the net allocation was £75.7 million. This meant, Louise Dutton stated, that the DfE (Department for Education) allocated £150 million to the Borough while retaining an element of the funding which they would distribute directly to academies and free schools.

Louise Dutton then moved onto Table 4: Summarised Financial Position 2023/24 (page 11), illustrating the net budget and the net projected spending which the Borough had control over. With the net allocation of £75.7 million, the projected spending in the current quarter was predicted to be £75.8 million, an in-year overspend of £189,000. A deficit reserve balance of £1.1 million was brought forward from March 2023. Adding the £189,000 overspend to this, the projected deficit reserve balance was £1.29 million.

Louise Dutton requested for Forum members to note the financial position and the projected overspend.

The Chair asked for clarification on the financial figures in Table 4: Summarised Financial Position 2023/24, to which Louise Dutton acknowledged the errors and stated that she would correct.

ACTION: Louise Dutton to correct the financial figures in the report.

The Forum noted the report.

School Pupil Growth Funding

Tracey-Anne Nevitt, Business Finance Partner for Schools and Early Years (AfC), introduced the report which was to update the Forum on the latest changes to the operational guidance, the current Pupil Growth fund budget and schools in receipt of this, and to consult on proposed changes for the pupil growth funding going forward. She then summarised the contents of the report which concentrated on the basic need element for permanent growth and bulge classes.

There were some options for the Forum to consider:

- Three model options for both permanent growth and the first year of bulge class funding for 2024-25. The Local Authority (RBWM) recommended the AWPU (Age Weighted Pupil Unit) option (model 2).
- Three options for Bulge Class Protection from Year 2 onwards, ranging from one to four years of protection.
- Proposal for a new allocation funding numbers in excess of PAN (planned admissions number). This would allow growth funding to be allocated to schools to admit pupils in excess of the PAN when the places were made available at the request of the LA. This would be made available in 2024.

While understanding the issues which RBWM were experiencing, Isabel Cooke (White Waltham) commented that some secondary schools were not full, and that applying bulge classes to those school would lead to them from never becoming full.

After being requested by the Chair to go through the proposals, Tracey-Anne Nevitt elaborated the proposals for the Forum to decide on, starting with Proposal A – Permanent Expansion Growth Funding 2024-25 Options:

- Model 1: ESFA minimum funding.
- Model 2: AWPU (Primary rate 2023-24).
- Model 3: Lump sum and Main scale 6 teacher.

When asked by the Chair for confirmation that the Borough had reviewed the options and that Model 2 was the preferred option, Tracey Anne Nevitt stated that it was based on the funding which was currently received per child in the AWPU rate in the schools funding 2023-24.

The Chair asked the Forum if they would choose Model 2.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY: To choose Model 2 (AWPU) for Permanent Expansion Growth Funding 2024-25.

Tracey Anne Nevitt then moved onto Proposal B – Bulge Class Protection Funding for Year 2 onwards:

- Option A – Gave a proportion of funding to the missing pupils for Year 2 to Year 5 (for four years).
- Option B – Gave three years' worth of funding from Year 2 onwards.
- Option C – Gave funding only to the 95% of the missing pupils in Year 2 only.

The Chair commented that Option A gave more protection overtime in contrast to Option C. He then asked if there had been any thought around what the implications against each of the three options were. Tracey-Anne Nevitt responded by directing attention to Table 6 which conveyed an example for a junior school if it had 12 missing pupils in terms of what they generated in funding for each of the years.

Sarah Cottle (Maidenhead Nursery Federation) opined that Option B was preferable for all schools as they acquired more funding. Jools Scarlett (Manor Green) wondered whether it would be better to have a longer-term guarantee. Based on this, the Vice-Chair proclaimed that Option B was proposed.

Isabel Cooke asked how much space was available throughout the Borough for primary and secondary schools, mindful that some schools were not full and that the decision was based on the cost of a bulge class and transport. Tracey Anne Nevitt responded that Table 2 (page 23) in the report included details of spare places in Maidenhead but added that she did not have the full details.

Referring to Table 2, Isabel Cooke then commented that there were minimal spaces in Maidenhead Town with six spaces in Year 4, one in Year 5 and one in Year 6. She expressed concern that Maidenhead Village schools would never get full if bulge classes were opened in Maidenhead Town. She stated that this could create a longer-term issue where it could no longer be viable to keep a village school running.

Following up from this, the Chair asked how this could be moved forward. Tracey-Anne Nevitt stated that Ben Wright, School Places Leader (AfC), had proposed Option C which were the numbers in excess of PAN as an alternative to a bulge class which he would consider in certain circumstances. This would fund a number of schools rather than one school and share the places amongst them; therefore, this would have less of an impact than a bulge class choosing one class that one school would have.

Joolz Scarlett asked for clarification on whether any of the schools which potentially had spaces for bulge classes were not keen on this. From this, she opined that the only viable option was Option C of increasing the PAN and funding.

Following up from Isabel Cooke's point, Sarah Cottle wondered whether it was better to not have bulge classes if it was preferable to ensure that spaces were distributed fairly and accordingly across the Borough, adding that it would incentivise headteachers to take on the bulge class if they were allocated more money.

Clive Haines, Deputy Director for Education (AfC), informed that Option C was more of a protection, and that the bulge classes had been approached and had been hard to do.

The Chair asked if Option C was the decided proposal.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY: To choose Option C for Bulge Class Protection Funding Year 2 onwards.

Moving onto Proposal C, where schools would be allocated pupil growth funding if they admitted more pupils in excess of their PAN, Tracey-Anne Nevitt explained that the Forum had to decide whether they supported the option going forward as this had not been in place previously. She informed the Slough Borough and other LAs had followed this model where it

appeared to be working well, having a smaller impact and required less protection going forward. RBWM would agree with individual schools on the additional places they would add to their PAN as well as the period of time. She informed that Ben Wright suggested to have all three proposals in place but preferred to have Option C and Model A in most cases.

Perceiving this as sensible, the Chair asked if this was agreed.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY: To support Proposal C – Numbers in excess of PAN.

The Chair asked if the funding had all been calculated within the projected funding for 2023-24, to which Tracey-Anne Nevitt confirmed.

DSG Budget and School Funding Proposals

Tracey-Anne Nevitt introduced the report which covered DSG (Dedicated School Grant) budget and school funding. The purpose of the report was to provide Forum members with a provisional DSG grant allocation for 2024-25 and the consultation proposals for the schools formula funding allocations, followed by the Forum being asked to note and comment on the proposals.

Going over the report, Tracey Anne Nevitt explained that RBWM had been given three sets of provisional DSG Block Funding. From the current year (2023-24):

- 2.3% increase for the Schools Block (£2,613,000).
- 2.8% increase for the High Needs Block (£788,000), which did not cover the current year's High Needs Block pressures.
- 2.9% decrease Central School Services Block (-£29,000), with the reasons being that ESFA had reduced the historic commitment funding element by 20% each year and we've had a population number change.

The Early Years Block would be notified in the next term while the Growth Fund would be notified later in 2023.

Referring to the Schools Block Funding (Table 3, page 40 in the report), Tracey-Anne Nevitt highlighted that the school allocations would include the mainstream school additional grant funding.

Regarding the school budget consultation for 2024-25, Tracey-Anne Nevitt explained that each LA was required to move 10% closer to the NFF (National Funding Formula) levels in each year. RBWM was working towards reaching full NFF and was not funded at the national funding formula level at the moment as primary legalisation had not changed; as a result, it was funded on pupil units for primary and secondary schools. In 2022, RBWM struggled to reach NFF levels due to changes in data which meant that it had to lower some of the rates.

The proposals in the consultation to the Borough's schools were to change the de-delegation rates for maintained schools for school improvement and reduce the current rates for contingency and staff cost for maternity cost due to the change in demand.

The Chair asked if the de-delegation to maintained schools was an increase. Tracey-Anne Nevitt confirmed this but added that it was not much of a change from 2022-23 to 2024-25. For 2024-25, the estimates were £329,000; while it was £277,000 in 2023-24, and £313,000 2022-23. This was partly due to the school improvement as well as a change in the rates. The suggestion to reduce the school contingency and maternity elements would partly fund the increase in school improvement.

Tracey-Anne Nevitt then went through the five school consultation questions in the report (pages 45-46 in the report). She asked if the Forum supported these questions going out to the schools.

Joolz Scarlett asked if there was a lack of engagement with the consultation from schools in the past, to which Tracey-Anne Nevitt confirmed, hoping that there would be more responses due to the fact that the Schools Forum had increased its membership.

Joolz Scarlett then asked whether something could be done through Bursar Support to explain to schools about the importance of responding to the consultation, speculating that some headteachers may not understand the questions. Tracey-Anne Nevitt replied that she had forwarded the information to Bursar Support in the past and directly to headteachers as well as sent out reminders. She stated that there could be consideration on what else could be sent out to encourage schools to engage.

When asked by the Chair on whether the consultation only went to maintained schools, Tracey-Anne Nevitt replied that it went to all schools, both maintained and academy.

Andrew Morrison (Furze Platt Senior) asked about the timeframe for the consultation, stating that there had been some concerns with another consultation a couple of years ago because it took place over a holiday period and the timeframe was short. He wanted to ensure that schools were given adequate time to respond to the consultations. Tracey Anne Nevitt replied that the consultation would be going out in the following week for two weeks.

Agreeing with Joolz Scarlett's earlier comments, Isabel Cooke suggested that a meeting (even via Zoom) with headteachers and Bursar Support to explain the question could have an impact and lead to better responses. Agreeing with this, the Vice-Chair reiterated the suggestion to further engage with headteachers.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY: To approve the School Consultation questions in the report.

Medical Vulnerable Base 'The Bungalow'

Kelly Nash, Education Support and Strategy Manager (AfC), informed that a new project was taking place in the Borough: The Bungalow. She explained that there was a specialist teacher for medically vulnerable pupils in a statutory post. The aspiration for The Bungalow was to allow this specialist teacher to increase her ability to work with more children for a longer period; and therefore, increase children and young people's access to education within their week, as well as provide a hub to support children transitioning and reintegrating back into mainstream schools. As reintegrating young people back into secondary education was a major challenge, the idea was to create a transition hub to successfully transition those children to school.

Kelly Nash informed that part of the work involved designing the curriculum, which she hoped would be online based so that children could access it when they were at home as well. She also hoped to recruit a medically vulnerable TA (teaching assistant), who would be on site at The Bungalow and ensure that all the safeguarding elements were covered. Alongside, there would also be other adults of the children and young people to access to help build up their resilience for their transition back into the mainstream.

AfC (Achieving for Children) had secured The Bungalow (on the grounds of Homer First School), which had been leased out by the school. Referring to the Table 2 in the report (page 59), Kelly Nash went over the estimated total costs per annum. The minimum number of pupils in the Medically Vulnerable base at any one time would be four but she hoped to achieve the maximum number of eight young people who would access The Bungalow quite quickly.

The Bungalow would be open three days a week (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday) to give specialist teacher space to work alongside children/young people who were not ready to access the Medically Vulnerable base and still required a home tuition. The Bungalow would

increase social interaction for those young people as a lot of them were isolated at home and struggled to get out and see people. The Bungalow was designed where there was an education space as well as a social area for them to interact. There was also consideration of adding nurturing and food preparation to the curriculum alongside the usual Maths, English and Science courses.

When asked by the Chair about the location, Kelly Nash responded that the old caretaker bungalow at Homer First School in Windsor was being used to provide it.

Joolz Scarlett conveyed concern about resilience due to The Bungalow having two members of staff, asking how this would be managed if, for example, one of them was off sick. She also asked what therapeutic input the children and young people were receiving. She suggested that this could be discussed further outside of the meeting. Kelly Nash replied that the focus was to increase the offer to young people. She acknowledged the concern of the responsibility being placed on two employees, stating this was the “beginning of a journey” and that there were responsive plans in place. She welcomed having a meeting with Joolz Scarlett outside of the meeting on how this could be improved and to answer further questions.

Joolz Scarlett then asked if Kelly Nash knew how many children met the criteria of being absent for 15 days, consecutively or cumulatively, elaborating that she suspected that there were many children which fell under this in which Kelly Nash was unaware of. She suggested this was an area of concern to highlight to headteachers, speculating that some were not notifying Kelly Nash. Kelly Nash agreed but added that the teaching specialist’s case load was a very strict criteria around the child needing to have medical evidence stating that they could not attend school. She received much information through the Pupils at Risk (PAR) panel where AfC supported schools by co-funding alternative interventions. This information gathering was expanding due to intelligence leads in school as well as from colleagues in the educational psychology service. Nevertheless, she acknowledged that there were young people who were part of the Medically Vulnerable base which AfC were unaware of and that this was something to work on.

The Chair commented that this was a positive step moving forward.

The Forum noted the report.

Wellbeing Service

Rebecca Askew, Senior Specialist Educational Psychologist for Wellbeing (AfC), presented the Wellbeing Service, namely its current and future provision, and that the Forum needed to note the report.

Rebecca Askew gave the data highlights from September 2022 to August 2023:

- A total of 199 individuals were referred to the Wellbeing and Getting Help Teams, representing a slight increase from last year with 172 young people being referred.
- 64 young people were referred to the Wellbeing Team, with 52% being male and 48% female.
- 108 children/young people and their families were referred to and supported by the Wellbeing Team.
- 43 young people and/or their families accessed individual, family or group-based therapy sessions during this period; of these four parents attended the Helping Your Child group course and six attended the Child Parent Relationship Therapy Group.

Moving onto ethnicity, based on the results displayed on the pie chart (page 72 in the report), Rebecca Askew informed that AfC needed to continue to find ways to meet the needs of children and families from the largest ethnic demographic, people of Asian backgrounds, and that AfC were working alongside the Specialist Parenting Worker from the Family Hub to target its provision towards these children and families.

Rebecca Askew briefly gave an overview of the Wellbeing Team Activity, highlighting that the total number of schools supported was 46 and that total individual referrals taken from the Early Help Hub was 64. She then explained that 2023 had seen an ongoing trend towards the Wellbeing Team offering play therapy and family-based therapies. Its close partnership with the Getting Help Team meant that it was now offering less CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy) informed interventions. However, the increased capacity in low intensity CBT from Berkshire Healthcare Trust (NHS) had enabled the Wellbeing Team to focus its CBT capacity towards children and young people who needed a more flexible approach, particularly those with Emotionally Related School Avoidance (ERSA).

The Wellbeing Team continued to complete assessment and triage as part of their case work but tend not to offer standalone Wellbeing Assessments. In 2023, they completed 7 standalone assessments. 46 schools were supported by the Wellbeing team, the minimum number of cases supported in a school was one and the maximum number of cases supported in a school was seven.

Rebecca Askew then discussed the summary of the presenting difficulties of young people referred to the Wellbeing Service from September 2022 to August 2023. She highlighted that some cases had more than one presenting difficulty. The most frequently referred primary concerns were emotional dysregulation, attachment difficulties and anxiety. 21.8% of the cases referred to the Wellbeing Team had Emotional Related School Avoidance (ERSA) as a co-existing issue alongside the primary presenting issue noted above. This was a 12.5% increase on last year.

Regarding Play and Creative Arts Therapy, Rebecca Askew reported that during the period, 22 young people (77% male and 23% female) accessed individual Play Therapy, with the average age 8 years and 6 months old. The primary tool used to measure impact was the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) due to the younger age of this cohort. The results were positive, whereby children/young people reported a reduction in most subsets of symptoms and an increase in the kind and helpful behaviour domain. In addition, the data set indicated parents saw a reduction in most subsets of symptoms as well as a slight increase in kind and helpful behaviour. Similarly, the data set indicated teachers saw a reduction in all subsets of symptoms and an increase in kind and helpful behaviour.

On the outcome measures, the data from the Young Person's Mood and Feelings Questionnaire illustrated a reduction of symptoms from pre- and post- SDQ scores as well as a reduction in the stress scale from parents.

In terms of Service Evaluation of the Wellbeing Service, Rebecca Askew reported that following a one-to-one therapeutic intervention with the Wellbeing Team, parents and children/young people were sent a service user evaluation form to gather feedback on service development and delivery. The general feedback was that parents were very pleased with the provision which was offered:

- 100% of parents felt listened to by the Wellbeing Practitioner, that they were treated well, that their views were taken seriously, that the practitioner knew how to help their child and that overall the help they received was good.
- 97.4% of parents felt it was easy to talk to the Wellbeing Practitioner that their child worked with, that they were given enough information about the help available, that they would recommend the wellbeing team's support to a friend and that professionals were together to help their child.
- 78.9% of parents felt the appointments were at a convenient time.

When it came to feedback from children and young people, with 6 young people completing the service user feedback form (an improvement to last year where none were received), the highlights were:

- 100% of young people felt listened to by the Wellbeing Practitioner who saw them.
- 83.4% said they would recommend this support to a friend.

- 100% of young people said that overall the help they received was good.

In regard to areas for development based on the service user feedback and the response to this feedback:

- 16.7% of young people said they were not given enough information about the help available. Based on this, the Wellbeing Team be clearer on the support which they could offer. This would be done through the use of a flyer for young people which included the services the Team offered and who it was best suited for.
- 16.7% of young people said they did not feel professionals were working together to help them, namely the communication between professionals during intervention. In response to this, the Wellbeing Team would ensure that young people attended Early Help review meetings; and if they did not wish to attend, they receive feedback after the meeting while being able to have their input.

Rebecca Askew then mentioned the Helping Your Child Parent Group, a group intervention which engaged with the parents of children with anxiety which was offered by the Wellbeing Team and the Getting Help Team in collaboration. She reported that there were positive results from this.

Feedback from the service user evaluation for the Parent Child Attachment Play (PCAP) was also positive.

The Forum noted the report.

Before the meeting closed, Laurence Ellis, Democratic Services Officer, highlighted that the next Forum meeting was on Thursday 14th December 2023 (2:00pm start-time) and held virtually via Zoom.

The meeting, which began at 2.01 pm, finished at 3.07 pm

Chair.....

Date.....

Report Title:	RBWM Schools Strategy to Support Maintained Schools in Financial Difficulty
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Cabinet Member:	All
Meeting and Date:	Schools Forum – 14 th December 2023
Responsible Officer(s):	Clive Haines/ Louise Dutton
Wards affected:	All

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REPORT SUMMARY

In July 2023, the Department for Education (DfE) announced that it is providing up to £40 million of additional funding in 2023 to 2024, to support individual schools which find themselves in particular financial difficulties. This is on top of the [£525 million schools will already be receiving this year through the teachers' pay additional grant \(TPAG\)](#), to support them with the September 2023 teachers' pay award.

This is one-off funding available in 2023 to 2024 only and the department has no plans for similar additional funding in 2024 to 2025.

This report outlines the strategy in which schools can apply.

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION: That Schools Forum notes the report and:

- i) Adopts the RBWM Schools Strategy to support maintained schools in financial difficulty.

2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Options

Table 1: Options arising from this report

Option	Comments
School Forum adopts the RBWM Schools Strategy to support Maintained schools in financial difficulty. This is the recommended option	Strategy supports the DfE guidance.
Do nothing. This is not the recommended option	Grant money would be recalled by the DfE.

3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 This funding can be used to support maintained primary, middle, secondary and all-through schools, maintained special schools, pupil referral units, and maintained nursery schools. That are currently running an in-year deficit.
- 3.2 RBWM has been allocated £222,129.63 through the (Additional support for schools in financial difficulty in 2023 to 2024) grant that can be used to support their deficit plans if they fall within the following criteria:
- falling numbers on roll.
 - have engaged with the Schools Management Resource Advisor (SMR).
 - has a garrison intake (military schools that provides the primary education for the children of the forces).
 - larger than usual disadvantaged intake.

Table 2: Key Implications

Outcome	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date of delivery
Schools in deficit budgets can apply for funding	Schools do not apply	Schools apply	Schools apply and funding is released	Schools apply and funding is released and schools have sustainable budgets	May 2024

4. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

- 4.1 There are no financial implications as this is a grant award

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 There are no risk managements implications.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 There are no consultations required

8. APPENDICES

- 8.1 This report is supported by two appendices:
- Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment.

- Appendix B - RBWM Schools Strategy to Support Maintained Schools in Financial Difficulty

9. CONSULTATION

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Mandatory:</i>		<i>Statutory Officer (or deputy)</i>	
Elizabeth Griffiths	Executive Director of Resources & S151 Officer		
Elaine Browne	Deputy Director of Law & Governance & Monitoring Officer		
<i>Deputies:</i>			
Andrew Vallance	Deputy Director of Finance & Deputy S151 Officer		
Jane Cryer	Principal Lawyer & Deputy Monitoring Officer		
<i>Mandatory:</i>		<i>Procurement Manager (or deputy) - if report requests approval to go to tender or award a contract</i>	
Lyn Hitchinson	Procurement Manager		
<i>Mandatory:</i>		<i>Data Protection Officer (or deputy) - if decision will result in processing of personal data; to advise on DPIA</i>	
Samantha Wootton	Data Protection Officer		
<i>Mandatory:</i>		<i>Equalities Officer – to advise on EQiA, or agree an EQiA is not required</i>	
Ellen McManus-Fry	Equalities & Engagement Officer		
<i>Other consultees:</i>			
<i>Directors (where relevant)</i>			
Stephen Evans	Chief Executive		
Andrew Durrant	Executive Director of Place		
Kevin McDaniel	Executive Director of Adult Social Care & Health		
Lin Ferguson	Executive Director of Children's Services & Education		

REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
Schools Forum decision	Yes	No

Report Author: Clive Haines, Deputy Director of Education 0782 586 2200

Appendix A - Equality Impact Assessment

For support in completing this EQIA, please consult the EQIA Guidance Document or contact equality@rbwm.gov.uk

1. Background Information

Title of policy/strategy/plan:	RBWM Schools Strategy to Support Maintained Schools in Financial Difficulty
Service area:	Education Standards
Directorate:	Education Department

Provide a brief explanation of the proposal:

- What are its intended outcomes?
- Who will deliver it?
- Is it a new proposal or a change to an existing one?

To support Schools in Deficit budgets via government grant
Schools Forum will governance the process
NEW DfE Grant

2. Relevance Check

Is this proposal likely to directly impact people, communities or RBWM employees?

- If No, please explain why not, including how you've considered equality issues.
- Will this proposal need a EQIA at a later stage? (for example, for a forthcoming action plan)

No Government Grant
No EQIA

If 'No', proceed to 'Sign off'. If unsure, please contact equality@rbwm.gov.uk

3. Evidence Gathering and Stakeholder Engagement

Who will be affected by this proposal?

For example, users of a particular service, residents of a geographical area, staff

Among those affected by the proposal, are protected characteristics (age, sex, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, marriage/civil partnership) disproportionately represented?

For example, compared to the general population do a higher proportion have disabilities?

What engagement/consultation has been undertaken or planned?

- How has/will equality considerations be taken into account?
- Where known, what were the outcomes of this engagement?

What sources of data and evidence have been used in this assessment?

Please consult the Equalities Evidence Grid for relevant data. Examples of other possible sources of information are in the Guidance document.

4. Equality Analysis

Please detail, **using supporting evidence**:

- How the protected characteristics below might influence the needs and experiences of individuals, in relation to this proposal.
- How these characteristics might affect the impact of this proposal.

Tick positive/negative impact as appropriate. If there is no impact, or a neutral impact, state 'Not Applicable'

More information on each protected characteristic is provided in the Guidance document.

	Details and supporting evidence	Potential positive impact	Potential negative impact
Age			
Disability			
Sex			
Race, ethnicity and religion			
Sexual orientation and gender reassignment			
Pregnancy and maternity			
Marriage and civil partnership			
Armed forces community			
Socio-economic considerations e.g. low income, poverty			
Children in care/Care leavers			

5. Impact Assessment and Monitoring

If you have not identified any disproportionate impacts and the questions below are not applicable, leave them blank and proceed to Sign Off.

What measures have been taken to ensure that groups with protected characteristics are able to benefit from this change, or are not disadvantaged by it?

For example, adjustments needed to accommodate the needs of a particular group

Where a potential negative impact cannot be avoided, what measures have been put in place to mitigate or minimise this?

- For planned future actions, provide the name of the responsible individual and the target date for implementation.

How will the equality impacts identified here be monitored and reviewed in the future?

See guidance document for examples of appropriate stages to review an EQIA.

6. Sign Off

Completed by: Clive Haines	Date: 05/12/2023
Approved by:	Date:

If this version of the EQIA has been reviewed and/or updated:

Reviewed by:	Date:
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Appendix B - RBWM Schools Strategy to Support Maintained Schools in Financial Difficulty

(Maintained Schools in this document also covers Maintained Nursery Schools and Maintained Special Schools/PRU.)

Academy Schools will receive funding opportunities through their current funding and mechanisms and are exempt from the Strategy

Introduction

In July 2023, the Department for Education (DfE) announced that it is providing up to £40 million of additional funding in 2023 to 2024, to support individual schools which find themselves in particular financial difficulties. This is on top of the [£525 million schools will already be receiving this year through the teachers' pay additional grant \(TPAG\)](#), to support them with the September 2023 teachers' pay award.

This is one-off funding available in 2023 to 2024 only and the department has no plans for similar additional funding in 2024 to 2025.

Eligibility

This funding can be used to support maintained primary, middle, secondary and all-through schools, maintained special schools, pupil referral units, and maintained nursery schools. That are currently running an in-year deficit.

10. RBWM has been allocated £222,129.63 through the (Additional support for schools in financial difficulty in 2023 to 2024) grant that can be used to support their deficit plans if they fall within the following criteria:

- Falling numbers on roll
- Have engaged with the Schools Management Resource Advisor (SMR)
- Has a Garrison intake (military schools that provides the primary education for the children of the forces)
- Large than usual disadvantaged intake

Strategy

Our strategy is to support schools that are in a deficit budget and require financial support to decrease their deficit budget and become financial sustainable by:

Table 1:

Criteria	Strategy Aim	Sustainability
Falling numbers on roll	To support schools with redundancy cost when considering restructures to limit the impact on pupils learning and resources. To help support the Cost to Save with redundancies	Schools staffing would match AWPU allocations which drives school's budgets
Have engaged with the Schools Management Resource Advisor (SMR)	To support financially with any outcomes that have been highlighted in SMR report. To bring deficit budgets down	Outcomes have been highlighted in the report as possible savings the school can make to reduce and maintain their budgets
Large than usual disadvantaged intake	To consider support to schools that have a large proportion of disadvantaged children. Other than existing funding streams such as (EHCP) To support exceptional cost such as alternative provision or resources/training the school has incurred. To main budget without this exceptional added cost	To help support the schools adapted for future co-cohorts and limit the need for alternative provision cost by upskilling staff – to avoid extra external cost
Has a Garrison intake (military schools that provides the primary education for the children of the forces)	To support any related cost outside the educational budget – such as pastoral support To support schools to maintain educational budgets	To support training and resources for staff to upskill staff to provide the pastoral care needed with regards to service children – to avoid extra external cost

Transparency and Governance

Local authorities should demonstrate transparency in the use of this additional funding. Existing processes and infrastructure may already enable this. For example, reports to the Schools Forum will be transparent through published papers and minutes.

- Schools will be selected against the strategy criteria and invited to submit an application.
- A panel will be formed consisting of Schools Forum representatives and applicants will be invited to present their case to panel.
- Panel will have a set Terms of References with delegated powers that can agree/or not agree each application and decide on the amount to be awarded.
- All awards will be presented to Schools Forum
- Schools Forum will have the responsibility for monitoring the grant budget.

Successful schools as a minimum will need to include the action awarded within their current Deficit Management Plans. This will be monitored through the Schools Bursar Support services.

Exceptions

It should be noted that this funding is not solely intended to cover schools which are in deficit as a result of the 2023 teachers' pay award. It is to support schools facing substantial overall financial challenges, which may be driven by factors other than teachers' pay.

Supporting Documents

[Financial support for local authorities supporting maintained schools in financial difficulty \(2023 to 2024\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/financial-support-for-local-authorities-supporting-maintained-schools-in-financial-difficulty-2023-to-2024)

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