

Warrington Schools Forum

Agenda

Date: Tuesday 20 June 2023

Time: 4.30 pm – 6.30 pm

Venue: via Microsoft Teams

	Item	Enc / Verbal	Decision; Discussion; Information	Lead
1.	Apologies and welcome			Chair
2.	Minutes from the previous meeting and matters arising (21 March 2023)	Enc.		Chair
3.	DSG and Education outturns	Enc.	Information	Garry Bradbury
4.	School Balances	Enc.	Information	Garry Bradbury
5.	Transport review update	Verbal	Information	Paula
6.	AOB			Chair
7.	Meeting schedule for 2023: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 June 2023 • 10 October 2023 All Tuesdays at 4.30 – 6.30 pm via Teams			

Warrington Schools Forum

Minutes – 21 March 2023 (via Teams)

Draft to be confirmed June 2023

Membership

Membership with differentiated voting rights ~ Total Membership of 28, of whom 22 are entitled to vote on funding formula issues									
Sector Representation (22)	Appointed by the Council following election by:	Member	Dates and Attendance						
			11 October 2022	17 January 2023	21 March 2023	20 June 2023	10 October 2023		
Maintained Nursery School Senior Staff (1)	Primary Headteachers Group	Marcia Atherton	A	P	P				
Special School Staff (1)	Special School Headteachers Group	Lucinda Duffy	P	P	P				
Special School Governor (1)	Governors Forum	Hazel Coen	P	P	P				
PRU (1)	PRU Management Board	Lindsay Regan	A	A	A				
Academy – all phases (9) Agreed this should be: (5 secondary including UTC) (4 primary)	Academy Schools (secondary)	Gwyn Williams	P	P	P				
		Vacant	-	-	-				
		John Carlin	A	P	P				
		Christian Wilcocks	P	P	A				
	Academy Schools (primary)	Gary Cunningham CHAIR - Schools Forum	P	P	P				
		Paula Warding	A	A	A				
		Cath Cooke	P	P	P				
		Craig Burgess	P	P	P				
	UTC	Chris Hatherall	A	P	A				
	Maintained Primary School Sector (6)	WAPH and Governors Forum	Siobhan Bentley	P	A	P			
Kathryn Berry			A	A	P				
Zoe Jones			A	P	P				
Ian Moss			A	P	P				
Janet Lazarus Governor			P	P	P				
Donna Kendal Governor			A	P	A				
Maintained Secondary School Sector (2)	WASCL	Chris Hunt	P	P	A				
		Ed McGlinchey	P	P	A				
Private Voluntary and Independent Providers (1)	PVI Providers Forum	Kelda Willians	P	A	A				

Representing	Member	Dates and Attendance						
		11 October 2022	17 January 2023	21 March 2023	20 June 2023	10 October 2023		
Non-Schools Members (6)								
Anglican Diocese (1)	Jane Griffiths	A	A	A				
Roman Catholic Diocese (1)	Chris Williams	A	A	A				
16-19 Institutions (1)	Damian McGuire	P	P	P				
Parent Governor (1)	Vacant	-	-	-				
NEU (Trades Union)	Lucie Humphreys	P	P	P				
NASUWT (Trades Union)	Laura Watson	P	A	P				

Representing		11 October 2022	17 January 2023	21 March 2023	20 June 2023	10 October 2023		
Warrington Borough Council								
Director, Early Help, Education and SEND	Paula Worthington	P	A	P				
Head of Service – Quality Education and Learning	Louise Atkin	A	P	P				
Finance Manager	James Campbell	S	P	P				
Senior Accountant (Schools)	Garry Bradbury	P	P	P				
Executive Member for Children and Young People's Services	Cllr Sarah Hall	A	A	A				

Key:

P ~ Present

S ~ Substitute

A ~ Apologies

- ~ Vacancy

X ~ Absent with no apologies

O ~ Observer

C ~ Meeting cancelled

Presenting Item:

Simon Bleckly

Shelley Gerrard

Minutes:

Gill Sykes

1. Apologies and Welcome

The chairperson, Gary Cunningham, welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that apologies would be recorded in the minutes.

2. Minutes and Matters Arising (from 17 January 2023)

The minutes were accepted as a true record and no one raised any discrepancies.

3. Membership

Noted that the October census will be used to make sure the forum membership is reflective of the maintained, academy, primary and secondary sectors. Zoe raised that her school is planning to move into the academy sector from 1 April 2023 which may require us to look for a maintained primary rep to replace her. It was suggested that we need to contact the diocese as their reps have not been in attendance at recent meetings. Damian reminded that there is also a vacancy for a secondary academy rep. Hazel noted that Andrea is a parent governor and has previously been nominated via Governors Forum to be a parent governor rep on Schools Forum. Paula thanked Hazel for the nomination and noted that the opportunity for a parent rep may be broadened.

Action: Paula Worthington to write to the diocese reps on behalf of forum regarding membership.

Action: Paula Worthington to write to Andrea.

4. Annual School Audit Report

Simon Bleckly presented his report to the forum and noted they are aware it has been a number of years since they have been to some schools. The team only has capacity to undertake 10 or 12 audits a year and this is not enough to see all schools every 3-4 years. The team will be focusing on schools not audited for a number of years and will look at whether there is a way to do the audits more frequently.

From the priority and recommendations from the audits completed in the last couple of years it is good to see schools management and financial control is commended in the current environment. The report highlights some issues taken from the NW audit group with some of the key points raised in Warrington and regionally. There are a couple of new recommendations in the last year, running periodic reports on the financial system to guard against the risk of phishing attacks and scam attacks and retaining clear records/documentary evidence to demonstrate GDPR training of staff. Schools are still a target for external fraudsters and scammers. We have the schools anti-fraud toolkit and the new manager in place will be looking at updating the toolkit and planning training on that.

Audit results will be fed into the annual governance statements. The report concludes that we are satisfied that there is an effective framework for reporting our findings and recommendations to governors and senior managers and for appropriate action to be taken to improve existing controls. We therefore conclude that, subject to the limitation in scope imposed by the number of schools that we have been able to audit, there is Satisfactory Assurance that Warrington schools have effective systems of governance and internal control in place.

Comments/queries:

- The chair asked if the staffing levels are maintained and more schools convert to academy is there an impact. Simon noted yes there would be an impact and the audit committee has asked him to look at this. There is core work for maintained and external to chargeable clients and we want to know there is an appropriate level of resource which will factor into the review.
- Hazel noted that in the academy sector there is an audit every year as part of an external audit and asked about schools that have not been audited for over seven years. We appreciate the value an internal audit has for schools governance and asked if these schools could be made a priority this year. Simon noted that they do try to prioritise the schools that have not been audited for some years. Simon noted that it would be good to have formal representation from Schools Forum that the audit service is valued and schools would like a more frequent audit cycle. Hazel agreed to send an email to Simon.

Recommendation:

- (i) The Forum is asked to note and comment on the contents of the report. **NOTED**

5. Academy conversions

Paula Worthington presented Felicity Wisken's report to the forum on charging maintained schools for costs associated with facilitating academy conversions. The local authority has previously not levied charges as part of the academy process, but has recovered some of the costs, however there has been inconsistency. The process is quite resource intensive for the local authority and although the DfE provides a one-off grant of £25K to each school going through the conversion process the local authority does not receive any additional funding for this. Work has been undertaken to quantify the cost to the local authority around legal, property, education services to try to ascertain what would be a reasonable cost. Continuing to absorb the costs associated with academy conversions is not sustainable for the local authority and a figure of £10K per school was considered realistic. This report is being brought to the forum for transparency and to prompt a conversation as part of the academisation process. It has been to the senior leadership team to let them know this is something that is being considered.

Comments/queries:

- Ian Moss: The diocese tend to look at a group of VA schools and may perhaps want academisation at the same time and in the same period, which could be up to 19 schools. This would have a massive effect if it were to happen over a period of one year. With reference to cost, we understand that costs need to be covered and appreciate the comments about having a conversation around that. I've only asked for one piece of information to submit from the local authority and it was sent back within an hour and a half as it was existing information, so assume what happens after that is where most of the costs are incurred. Would like to note that there is a significant difference between a one form primary and a secondary school converting and therefore a difference in the costs involved. Paula noted we will have a separate conversation with diocese reps around the approach they may take with academisation. There is a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes to facilitate academisation and Paula asked if the forum wanted a smaller group to meet to gain an understanding of the local authority perspective.
- Zoe Jones: Being at the point of planned conversion on 1 April 2023 it is quite difficult to plan when suddenly hearing about the charges. As a maintained school rep Zoe noted she will feed back to maintained schools that they need a heightened awareness of the proportion of the grant to put aside for the local authority. Zoe raised concern for her school as it is very late in the process to hear of this charge to have conversations and raise awareness with governors. It is difficult to compare with other local authorities without knowing the detail. Zoe explained it is a year since her school decided to convert and the LA charge won't come from the £25K DfE grant as it is late in the process and all the audits and due diligence increased tremendously. Zoe acknowledged the idea of conversations and that looking at individual situations would be welcomed. Paula noted she will take away specifically the case of Appleton Thorn to address it as quickly as possible.
- Damian McGuire: Noted that the report says for information and Damian challenged this as it was not presented as something open for discussion. One clause says if we do not pay the fee the local authority will not sign the document and thereby delay the conversion. Although we are happy to pay a charge we disagree with the amount being £10K (which is 40% of the grant) and feel the fee should be reasonable. The majority of the work is undertaken by the headteacher and business manager in school, all the TUPE is extracted from the database and checked by school, legal comes as prewritten documents from school and for ICT most schools stay with their SLA. Although there is no issue with paying a charge it has been presented at the last minute for one particular conversion and caused concern and we tried negotiation for a fairer payment. Compared to nationally the charge is above what is suitable and Appleton Thorn is a straight forward conversion. Concern was expressed at the tone of the report and the feeling that it should have been handled in a different way with plenty of notice for schools being informed. Damian conducted an exercise and found ten other authorities with a policy document and not one has a fee for £10k, they distinguish between VA, community, primary and secondary and have separate negotiations. Their charges ranged from £2K (for primary) to £9K (for secondary). The £2-20K mentioned in the report referred to a national audit office report.
- Hazel Coen: Noted there is a difference with VA and VA controlled schools and to have a conversation to discuss the charge would feel much fairer than a set fee of £10K for each school.

- Craig Burgess: Although take on board comments, some of the costs when a school converts can be due to their choice, however, solicitors will break down what they look for in a contract. There may need to be some scoping on what parts are for the local authority and there could be a spectrum of costs. Acknowledge that negotiations around land can be difficult.
- Louise Atkin: Noted that Felicity (author of the report) attended forums on this and has researched the costings. The information Damian brought is of interest and will be noted. There have been costs for some schools which have been high due to questions and challenges around land. Louise shared that she meets with the diocese and talks about how schools may move forward together as a group of schools or individually. Having this information helps to plan effectively especially as we are a small local authority.

The Chair summarised that the local authority should not absorb all the costs, but the £10K applicable for all does not feel fair and on behalf of the forum asked the local authority to look at a greater breakdown. Schools need to be informed there is a charge and the amount should be on a case by case basis. It was felt it should be a reasonable charge, reviewed annually and taken from the school balance at the appropriate time. Schools should be informed it may be around £10K and for there to be discussion and more detail to negotiate the cost so it appears to be fair.

Paula noted that the local authority are in a position whereby schools make the choice to academise and the local authority don't have a place in the decision making process. Felicity's aim was not for the paper to be perceived in the way suggested, it was as a way to open up the conversation. Louise will take away the comments and work with Felicity. Paula shared that there have been cases where the local authority costs have exceeded £10K.

The Chair referred to the recommendations from the report that were noted and that the value of the charge was not agreed by the forum. Asked for there to be further discussion around the amount to be charged, for there to be more detail and for this to be discussed with individual schools in order to negotiate.

Recommendations:

Schools Forum is asked to note:

- (i) The change in approach to charge for costs incurred by the local authority in order that the conversion process can be managed efficiently and effectively in support of the school's decision to convert. **NOTED**
- (ii) The value of the charge at £10,000 per conversion. This is based on the cost of a typical conversion and the rationale that this is affordable within the grant of £25,000 which each converting school receives to facilitate their conversion. **NOT AGREED**
- (iii) That as part of the conversion process, the local authority will deduct the charge from the converting school's balance and that failure to agree payment of the charge prior to conversion could result in delaying completion of the conversion process. **NOTED**
- (iv) That in the event a conversion is deferred for any reason, and costs have already been incurred by the local authority, reasonable charges will still apply. **NOTED**
- (v) The charge will be reviewed annually so that consideration can be given to any change in circumstance, for example inflation or deflation in the specific areas of work. **NOTED**

6. Early Years Update 2023/24

Garry Bradbury presented his and Lorna Davies' report to the forum and the following was noted:

- The EY single funding formula group met 6 months ago and for the first time in a few years the funding rate for the local authority and the actual numbers had both increased at the same time. Overall if comparing year on year the EY block settlement was around £1m higher than the previous settlement. We reported that £1m was from the funding increase and this superficially seemed very good.
- Warrington EY funding remains low, although there are 44 local authorities that are slightly less funded than us. Our funding is about 40p per hour below the national average.
- Subsequent to the EYSF meeting noted that the HN block funding is intended to cover SEN from 0-25 years. Up to this point SEND, outreach and EY coordinators were accommodated from the EY block. We are now

recommending to schools forum from next year onwards that the posts in the areas of SEN previously funded from the EY block will be funded from the HN block.

Because we are suggesting some funding should be used from the HN block Shelley Gerrard will give an outline of the posts and why it is a very wise use of the HN block.

- EY SEND support is particularly good at early identification, as soon as receive notification from the health visitor. From then would support through home visits or access to specific groups. HN would fund an additional two from EH and one from HN.
- SEND outreach – one from HN to support settings and improve the development of children so less need of EHCP. SEND outreach also support transitions e.g. last year one child didn't get an EHCP and the SEND outreach worker would go to reception and support those children in the first term. EH would also fund an additional two posts.
- EY SENCOs manage the posts and give oversight at the inclusion panel to make sure assessments are completed to a good quality and give advice and guidance at that panel.

Comments/queries:

- Marcia: Some EY providers have been closing due to financial pressures. The creativity of this suggestion enables the full increase of the hourly rate to be passed on which will be welcomed by providers to enable them to continue to stay open. Also, the support from the SEND outreach will be really helpful.
- Shelley noted that EH work closely with Louise Atkin and the EHCP team making sure the children who need to be identified are and they also work closely with the Educational Psychologists. We are confident we are moving in the right direction.
- Louise noted that one of the things that is really exciting is about supporting nursery and into reception. The team have worked hard so that children are being rightly placed. There is more of a joined up approach from EY and into primary and secondary.
- The Chair noted that if SEND is from 0-25 years why have we not done this in the past. Garry Bradbury noted that this was never considered, we know that in the past 2-3 years the HN block had been under immense pressure and there hadn't been any scope for the HN block to help support the EY block. We think it is prudent and wise now we are in a situation where we had a reasonable HN block settlement and we are out of deficit with HN. We have never known the level of need that is coming from EY.

The Chair asked forum members to vote on the proposal and local authority officers were reminded they were not included in the voting process. The Chair confirmed that the majority voted to accept the proposal.

Recommendations:

- (i) It is recommended that Schools Forum members note the contents of the report. **NOTED**
- (ii) Schools Forum members representing phases with Early Years provisions (primary schools, nursery schools and private/voluntary/independent providers) are asked to ratify the proposals presented in section 3.6 of the report, in order to apply them from 1st April 2023. **AGREED**

7. Designated Schools Grant Budgets 2023/24

Garry Bradbury presented his report to the forum and noted that the purpose of the report is to illustrate how the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) settlement for Warrington for 2023/24 has been allocated to individual budgets. It follows previous funding discussion around the Schools Block of DSG (and the resulting mainstream school budgets) at the 17 January 2023 Schools Forum meeting. The following was noted:

- From the four blocks of DSG funding the largest block is the schools day to day mainstream school budgets.
- We haven't fully allocated HN block and central to projects as the SEND inspection may have implications on where to direct resources. Any contingency from HN and central is still to be allocated against particular projects and updates will be brought to Schools Forum as and when available.

Comments/queries:

- Ian Moss: Noted he has spoken to a number of schools in the WA4 area and there is a lot of concern around budget deficits moving forward. Really shocked and surprised at the level of deficit, mainly with one form entry. Every school is potentially or nearly full, generating their own income and all are looking at a deficit of around £100k. It is really concerning and having a massive effect on the headteachers themselves. We are very appreciative of rising SEND awards for additional children and need more support and more opportunity to help drill down and help around staffing. Ian asked if there is anything more the team in finance can do to support these schools. Garry Bradbury noted that he is aware there are some schools in severe difficulty. The fundamental issue is that Warrington remains a badly funded authority in the national picture for per pupil funding. Unless there is movement on that then things are going to remain difficult for the foreseeable future. Because we implement NFF in our local formula that won't change if the nationally directed hard formula ever comes in.
- Ian acknowledged Garry's comments and noted that we may have to prepare ourselves as headteachers and a local authority as we may be looking at massive reputational damage for individual schools if they have to cut support for vulnerable pupils and interventions. Ian felt we need to bring more pressure to bear as an authority around school funding and informed he is going to see Andy Carter MP on this issue.
- Lucie Humphreys shared that the NEU is currently lobbying all MP's with regards to school funding, including Andy Carter MP.
- Garry noted that the higher percentage of overall cost is staffing and once economies have been made, there will be schools where staffing is the last and only remaining resource to reduce. The Chair shared that it is not just WA4, there are other colleagues struggling.
- Hazel asked about the delay to the ASD free school and it not going ahead until 2025/26. Paula noted this is the latest timeframe from the DfE and this will impact on Fox Wood and the DPS at Green Lane. Garry and his team are looking at the wider impact on the budget going forward. There will be more pressure on schools to take children and looking at how we can take that forward as for the next few years the ASD free school won't be there. The demand for children with SEND is across the town and it is a general demand for increased funding.

Paula reassured forum that we are constantly modelling for now and the future and are frustrated at the DfE delay around the free school. Also all Directors across the region are discussing these same issues and applying pressure through government and policy structures. A key part of our SEND inspection was to show our financial modelling going forward in terms of sustainability and capacity.

Louise shared that work is ongoing from the joint strategic needs assessment three years ago and is being constantly updated. There is a finance group looking at DPs and we will then consider special schools again. Hazel referred to Green Lane School and a number of issues that could be raised separately outside this meeting. Louise noted we plan to look at all special schools together and do modelling with headteachers and governors and take suggestions going forward. The rise in referrals has been significant and work is being undertaken with Marcia from Sandy Lane around EY projections.

Recommendation:

- (i) It is recommended that Schools Forum members note the contents of the report. **NOTED**

8. Update on Growth Fund

The Chair explained that a working party was identified and tasked with considering proposals for the £728K. It was discussed at length, is a finite amount of money and we wanted to check that any proposal was affordable. We needed to look at census data and do modelling for last year and what it would look like for 2023 going forwards.

Garry Bradbury summarised that we have to work on the assumption the £728K is a one-off pot of money. It was generated from headroom funding once NFF had been implemented, there may be headroom year on year we don't know. The cost of implementing a contingency fund will pivot on those two issues. Trying to speculate what would happen in the future is not ideal so we decided to look at modelling how the £728K would have been allocated in this financial year. A follow up meeting is scheduled for Friday 31 March 2023 and work done so far on the modelling will

be shared. There are a number of scenarios to consider and once the group has discussed the options and agreed a couple of justifiable scenarios they can be presented back to forum. We now have access to the January 2023 census and admissions can give a prediction for September on numbers to see whether the models will be able to be applied to future numbers. John Carlin noted that the pressures Ian raised are complicating the issue and are worth noting.

9. AOB – no items were brought forward to discuss

The chairperson thanked everyone for attending and the meeting was closed.

Meeting schedule for 2023:

- 20 June 2023
- 10 October 2023

All Tuesdays at 4.30 – 6.30 pm via Teams

DRAFT

2. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT BALANCES

2.1 DSG reported a net underspend of £0.727 m in 2022/23, which is an aggregate of a number of individual variances. The table below shows those individual balances with appropriate observations:

	Net Budget	Outturn	Variance	
School Budgets	£81,450,038	£81,450,036	£2	
Licences	£145,000	£127,848	£17,152	Charges waived
Staffing	£5,000	£57,294	-£52,294	Maternity & Rehab
Early Years	£13,163,232	£13,131,880	£31,352	In-year addition to funding
High Needs	£12,488,095	£13,224,416	-£736,321	Overspends on medical, top-ups, Post-16 SEN independents, SEN transport.
Free Meals	£30,000	£30,000	£0	
Repairs & Maintenance	£80,000	£80,000	£0	
Contingency	£5,326,493	£4,019,144	£1,307,349	See section 2.3
DSG Received	-£112,687,858	-£112,847,980	£160,122	Early Years recalculation
	£0	-£727,362	£727,362	

2.2 DSG is also reported across activity headings with the Families and Wellbeing directorate. The final 2022/23 position for DSG is shown below:

	Net Budget	Outturn	Variance	
4_1_1 Retained School Budgets	-£12,598,095	-£14,061,783	£1,463,688	Unspent contingency
4_1_3 Achievement & Inclusive Education (11-19)	£708,095	£747,255	-£39,160	Medical
4_1_7 Admissions & School Organisation	£80,000	£80,000	£0	
4_1_8 Transport	£2,151,000	£2,435,891	-£284,891	ISS travel
4_1_9 DSG Free Meals	£30,000	£30,000	£0	
4_1_10 Commissioned SEN support	£9,253,000	£9,668,384	-£415,384	E3 top-ups, Post-16 SEN
4_1_11 Support teams (Sensory Team / SALT)	£376,000	£372,886	£3,114	
4_2_7 Early Years Quality & SEND	£0	£4	-£4	
	£0	-£727,362	£727,362	

2.3 The contingency set-aside for DSG – and overall the reason for underspending on the 2022/23 funding allocation – reflected a number of anticipated commitments which for different reasons, proved not to be required. The table overleaf summarises these elements:

Kassia PRU places adjustment	£6,200.00
Reduction of planned 2021/22 DSG deficit	£547,516.00
Delays in recruitment for DSG-funded posts	£22,906.79
Additional DP Places	-£42,942.00
Unallocated contingency	£956,206.33
Dedelegated NOR/classes contingencies	-£182,538.12
	£1,307,349.00

2.4 Last year, maintained primary representatives on Schools Forum agreed that the aggregate closing underspend on de-delegated growth contingencies (£35,916) should be rolled into 2022/23; together with the new agreed de-delegation, this provided a contingency of £158,368. However, significant NOR growth has meant this fund is heavily overdrawn.

Agreement was also reached with all members that the 2021/22 surplus (£24,553) on the union facilities agreement should be brought forward. At the face-to-face Forum meeting of January 17th 2023, it was established that the projected surplus at the end of 2022/23 of £9,065 would roll forward similarly.

Another de-delegated activity which posted a substantial overshoot was for maternity cover (overspent by 35%).

The closing DSG position accounts for these aggregated overspends, but clearly there is no unused balance to return to maintained schools.

	<i>De-delegation</i>	<i>B/fwd</i>	<i>Spend</i>	<i>Carry-forward agreed SF</i>	<i>Balance Remaining</i>
Miscellaneous Licences	£31,273.20		£23,771.86		£7,501.34
CLEAPSS	£4,998.00				£4,998.00
Teachers Panel*	£66,240.87	£24,552.85	£81,729.00	£9,064.72	£0.00
Maternity	£319,158.00		£429,774.78		-£110,616.78
Primary NOR Contingency	£122,452.00		£326,635.07		-£204,183.07
Primary Class Size Contingency		£35,916.21	£14,271.26		£21,644.95
	£544,122.07	£60,469.06	£876,181.97	£9,064.72	-£280,655.56

*Original de-delegation adjusted for Academy contributions

3. EDUCATION BUDGETS 2022/23

3.1 Although DSG is the most significant part of non-school education funding, it does not represent the entirety of the sector. Other grant funding and core Local Authority budgets are also employed. In 2022/23, the core (i.e. non-DSG) position for Education, Early Help & SEND was an underspend of £6,117. And purely for Education & SEND, a small overspend of £69,052.

A more detailed breakdown of this underspend is presented in **Appendix 2**.

3.2 The overall 2022/23 position is illustrated overleaf, showing how the DSG underspend fits into the fuller picture for Education & SEND.

<i>Service Area</i>	<i>Allocation</i>	<i>Outturn</i>	<i>DSG Underspend / (Overspend)</i>	<i>Base Underspend / (Overspend)</i>	<i>Total Underspend / (Overspend)</i>
FWB4_1_1 Retained School Budgets	-£10,447,095	-£12,362,217	£1,463,688	£451,434	£1,915,122
FWB4_1_2 Music	£4,810	-£700		£5,510	£5,510
FWB4_1_3 Ach & Incl education 11-19	£852,173	£930,775	-£39,160	-£39,442	-£78,602
FWB4_1_4 Plan & participation 11-19	£1,147,975	£1,148,775		-£800	-£800
FWB4_1_5 Central Schools	-£945,077	-£1,193,118		£248,041	£248,041
FWB4_1_6 School Meals	£108,866	£108,783		£83	£83
FWB4_1_7 Admissions & School Organisation	£53,259	£69,985		-£16,726	-£16,726
FWB4_1_8 Transport	£2,697,887	£3,399,673	-£284,891	-£416,895	-£701,786
FWB4_1_9 DSG Free Meals	£30,000	£30,000		£0	£0
FWB4_1_10 Commissioned SEN Support	£10,014,769	£10,833,536	-£415,384	-£403,383	-£818,767
FWB4_1_11 Support Teams	£376,000	£369,772	£3,114	£3,114	£6,228
FWB4_1_12 CWD Services	£800,447	£700,435		£100,012	£100,012
FWB4_1 Head of Education Services & SEND	£4,694,014	£4,035,699	£727,367	-£69,052	£658,315

4. FAMILIES & WELLBEING SERVICES

- 4.1 The modest underspend on core budgets in Education, Early Help & SEND of £6,117 forms just part of the overall picture for Families & Wellbeing directorate. That aggregate position is an overspend of £6.761m, as broken down below:

	<i>£'000</i>
Executive	162
Adult Social Care	-954
Children's Social Care	-5,874
Education, Early Help & SEND	6
Director of Public Health	-101
	<u>-6,761</u>

This is an increase on the 2021/22 overspend of £2.109 m, and represents a percentage overspend of 5.63%, but is informed by carrying forward £6.883 m into the new financial year.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Schools Forum is asked to note the 2022/23 outturn position for DSG, and that this underspend will be brought forward to be an available funding resource for 2023/24.
- 5.2 Maintained school representatives are asked to note that no additional balances are due to be returned in respect of de-delegated services.

	Full Year Budget 2023 P 1-12	Total Spend and Commitments P13	Variance
Dedicated Schools Grant 2022/23	£0	-£727,362	£727,362
FWB4_1_1 Retained School Budgets	-£12,598,095	-£14,061,783	£1,463,688
31601 DSG 2yr Old Fund	£1,517,764	£1,593,104	-£75,340
32401 DSG Dele Funds Prima	£53,459,347	£53,459,347	£0
32402 DSG Dele Funds Secon	£19,212,514	£19,212,512	£2
32403 DSG Dele Funds Spec	£8,778,177	£8,778,177	£0
32404 DSG ISB Specific Gra	-£112,687,858	-£112,847,980	£160,122
32406 DSG Misc Contingency	£5,326,493	£4,019,144	£1,307,349
32407 DSG Tree Maintenance	£0	£0	£0
32408 DSG Misc. Licences	£0	-£7,501	£7,501
32409 DSG CLEAPS	£0	-£4,998	£4,998
32410 DSG LA Initiatives	£0	£0	£0
32411 DSG Teachers Panel	£0	£0	£0
32412 DSG Rehabilitation	£0	£20,306	-£20,306
32413 DSG Maternity	£0	£110,617	-£110,617
32414 DSG LTC	£0	-£78,629	£78,629
32417 DSG Early Years PVI	£11,645,468	£11,538,772	£106,696
33003 DSG Capita - CYPS	£145,000	£140,347	£4,653
33612 DSG Sup to Schs Foru	£5,000	£5,000	£0
33613 DSG School FMS	£0	£0	£0
FWB4_1_3 Ach & Incl education 11-19	£708,095	£747,255	-£39,160
32002 DSG - Medical Needs	£708,095	£747,255	-£39,160
FWB4_1_7 Admissions & School Organisation	£80,000	£80,000	£0
33203 DSG Repairs & Maint	£80,000	£80,000	£0
FWB4_1_8 Transport	£2,151,000	£2,435,891	-£284,891
33208 Special Schools Transport	£2,151,000	£2,435,891	-£284,891
FWB4_1_9 DSG Free Meals	£30,000	£30,000	£0
33214 DSG Free Meals	£30,000	£30,000	£0
FWB4_1_10 Commissioned SEN Support	£9,253,000	£9,668,384	-£415,384
32007 DSG Inclusion	£401,000	£401,000	£0
32009 DSG Inter Authority	£500,000	£506,787	-£6,787
32011 DSG Indep School Fee	£4,000,000	£3,954,021	£45,979
32013 DSG Support for SEN	£552,000	£887,456	-£335,456
32309 DSG Post-16 SEN	£3,800,000	£3,919,119	-£119,119
FWB4_1_11 Support Teams	£376,000	£372,886	£3,114
32010 DSG Sensory	£257,000	£256,356	£644
32012 DSG Speech Therapy	£119,000	£116,530	£2,470
FWB4_2_7 Early Years Quality & SEND	£0	£4	-£4
32124 DSG Portage Service	£0	£4	-£4

Appendix 2 - Education Outturn 2022/23

	Annual Budget 2022/23	Expenditure 2022/23	Variance
FWB4_0 Education Strategic Mgt	£3,849,088	£3,849,087	£1
FWB4_0_1 Education Director	£3,849,088	£3,849,087	£1
FWB4_1 Head of Education Services & SEND	£4,694,014	£4,763,066	-£69,052
FWB4_1_1 Retained School Budgets	-£10,447,095	-£10,898,529	£451,434
FWB4_1_2 Music	£4,810	-£700	£5,510
FWB4_1_3 Ach & Incl education 11-19	£852,173	£891,615	-£39,442
FWB4_1_4 Plan & participation 11-19	£1,147,975	£1,148,775	-£800
FWB4_1_5 Central Schools	-£945,077	-£1,193,118	£248,041
FWB4_1_6 School Meals	£108,866	£108,783	£83
FWB4_1_7 Admissions & School Organisation	£53,259	£69,985	-£16,726
FWB4_1_8 Transport	£2,697,887	£3,114,782	-£416,895
FWB4_1_9 DSG Free Meals	£30,000	£30,000	£0
FWB4_1_10 Commissioned SEN Support	£10,014,769	£10,418,152	-£403,383
FWB4_1_11 Support Teams	£376,000	£372,886	£3,114
FWB4_1_12 CWD Services	£800,447	£700,435	£100,012
FWB4_2 Head of Service - Early Help	£5,152,219	£5,137,567	£14,652
FWB4_2_1 Early Help Management & Projects	£254,072	£305,131	-£51,059
FWB4_2_2 Early Help Cluster Central & West	£1,299,638	£1,295,828	£3,810
FWB4_2_3 Early Help Cluster Central & East	£1,454,193	£1,321,891	£132,302
FWB4_2_4 Early Help Cluster Central & South	£1,339,114	£1,327,202	£11,912
FWB4_2_5 Improvement & Performance	£320,166	£323,045	-£2,879
FWB4_2_6 Complex Families	£31,201	£73,476	-£42,275
FWB4_2_7 Early Years Quality & SEND	£453,835	£490,995	-£37,160
FWB4_3 Virtual Head Teacher	£740,684	£739,448	£1,236
FWB4_3_1 Virtual Head Teacher	£740,684	£739,448	£1,236
FWB4_4 Community Safety & Resilience	£478,461	£419,182	£59,279
FWB4_4_1 Risk & Resilience	£478,461	£419,182	£59,279
Grand Total	£14,914,466	£14,908,349	£6,117

REPORT



WARRINGTON
Borough Council

Report to: Schools Forum

Item: 4

Date: 20th June 2023

For: Information

Title: 2022/23 Maintained School Balances

Author: Garry Bradbury

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to notify Schools Forum members of the final individual balances for Warrington maintained schools as at the end of the 2022/23 financial year, and to compare the overall picture with the corresponding situation in the previous year. For the first time in several years, there were no in-year conversions to Academy for Warrington schools, so the two financial year out-turns are directly comparable.
- 1.2 At a meeting in June 2018, Schools Forum resolved to set aside its formal balance challenge, in doing so removing the grounds for any of the calculated 'excess' balance to be clawed back. Nevertheless, the triggers in Warrington's challenge process derived from the recommended Audit Commission balance levels, so posted balances in excess of these remain significant and worthy of mention; they will be highlighted separately in section 2.4. Those schools concerned may still wish, independently, to investigate the circumstances surrounding the accumulation of what was previously a challengeable level of surplus – and WAPH and WASCL may indeed consider adopting this process of self-assessment as a standard example of good practice.

2. SCHOOL BALANCES

- 2.1 The aggregate of school balances for Warrington maintained schools at the end of the previous financial year was £9,036,115 (an average retention level of 9.5%). This compares to the corresponding aggregate balance reported at the end of 2021/22 of £9,046,287 (10.4%). Although the monetary value of the decrease, just £10,172, is negligible, the average retention has materially reduced. Analysed by sector, the figures were as overleaf:

Sector	2021/22 £m	2022/23 £m	Movement
Primary/Nursery	£5.492m	£5.701m	+£0.209m
Secondary	£2.289m	£2.101m	-£0.188m
Special & AP	£1.265m	£1.234m	-£0.031m
TOTAL	£9.046m	£9.036m	-£0.010m

- 2.2 We remarked last year that there was a degree of polarization, especially in the primary sector – simultaneously, numbers of projected deficits increasing alongside increasing balances at a number of schools. Underlying the primary phase increase of £209,126 we can see 10 schools where in-year the balance has decreased by 15% or more. And the number of schools seeking permission to set a licensed deficit for 2023/24 has risen to 8:

Cherry Tree
 Grappenhall Heys
 Latchford St James'
 St Lewis'
 St Oswald's
 St Vincent's
 Twiss Green
 Woolston Brook

- 2.3 Individual school balances are detailed in **Appendix 1**. The 'excess balance' schools are highlighted on this summary.
- 2.4 In terms of settings which perhaps merit deeper investigation, 18 primary schools, 2 secondary, 2 special schools, plus the nursery school, recorded balances in excess of the Audit Commission recommended levels of 8% for primaries & specials, and 5% for secondaries. Numbers last year were 23, 2, 3 and 1, respectively. The reduction in 'trigger school' numbers is perhaps to be expected, given the overall reduction in the average percentage retention.

These are highlighted overleaf for information.

Cost Centre	School	2022/2023 Balance @ 31/3/23	2022/2023 Balance of Funding	2022/23 "Excess" balance @ 31/3/23	Notional clawback
35002	Dallam	£449,526	20%	£267,152	£33,394
35006	St Elphin's	£194,058	9%	£22,844	£2,856
35007	St Andrew's	£169,162	13%	£61,509	£7,689
35010	St Margaret's	£516,368	19%	£301,780	£37,723
35011	Our Lady's	£85,889	9%	£7,443	£930
35012	Sacred Heart	£203,704	19%	£118,044	£14,756
35013	St Alban's	£137,447	12%	£46,077	£5,760
35016	St Stephen's	£176,182	15%	£79,669	£9,959
35020	St Monica's	£83,294	10%	£14,082	£1,760
35022	Bradshaw	£101,068	10%	£23,351	£2,919
35024	Stockton Heath	£169,331	9%	£17,282	£2,160
35026	Thelwall Junior	£176,229	20%	£106,761	£13,345
35033	Culcheth	£293,255	27%	£207,317	£25,915
35047	St Joseph's	£271,534	21%	£167,160	£20,895
35056	Barrow Hall Lane	£314,805	11%	£75,897	£9,487
35059	Winwick	£81,551	9%	£6,310	£789
35060	Birchwood	£238,242	19%	£138,425	£17,303
35065	St Phillip's	£424,698	16%	£209,774	£26,222
35405	Sandy Lane Nursery	£374,308	33%	£284,386	£35,548
35103	Culcheth	£672,585	9%	£305,980	£38,248
35107	St Gregory's	£1,263,791	17%	£899,455	£112,432
35200	Green Lane	£590,302	17%	£308,155	£38,519
35201	Fox Wood	£362,195	14%	£156,551	£19,569
		£7,349,524	14.8%	£3,825,404	£478,178

- 2.5 The amounts considered “excessive” by the Audit Commission criteria (*i.e.* the *theoretical* 2022/23 challenge level) represent 38% (last year, 41%) of primary balances, 57% (60%) of secondary balances and 45% (60%) of pre-16 special school balances. The previous WBC “automatic clawback” methodology (12.5% of excess balances) would have recirculated £478,178 (£546,766 the last year equivalent) amongst schools – this would be 5.29% (6.04%) of overall balances.
- 2.6 Although the overall levels of balance remain quite high, first impressions may be somewhat unenlightening and there is no substitute for individual schools investigating their balances in detail. Below the bottom-line figure, some of the reported surplus may perhaps relate to pupil premium, primary PE/sports grant, or some of the remaining, residual COVID/catch-up funding streams. It is likely that significant sums may be committed for use in supporting & facilitating a balanced annual budget for 2023/24 (and beyond). Schools with Finance Adviser support may

wish to consider deriving an **uncommitted** balance figure, on the basis that this is more meaningful, and better representative of the school's underlying position.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Schools Forum members are asked to note the level of maintained school balances recorded at the end of 2022/23.
- 3.2 Schools Forum members representing WAPH and WASCL are asked to consider whether to recommend that schools evaluate internally their closing 2022/23 balances.

Appendix 1: 2022/2023 School Balances

Cost Centre	School	2022/2023 Balance @ 31/3/23	2022/2023 Funding	2022/2023 Balance of Funding	2021/2022 Balance @ 31.3.22	Year on Year	
PRIMARY SCHOOLS							
35001	Bewsey Lodge	£75,923	£2,621,516	3%	£4,637	£71,286	1537%
35002	Dallam	£449,526	£2,279,671	20%	£327,776	£121,750	37%
35006	St Elphin's	£194,058	£2,140,179	9%	£229,248	£-35,190	-15%
35007	St Andrew's	£169,162	£1,345,651	13%	£163,489	£5,673	3%
35008	St Ann's	£69,495	£1,488,223	5%	£51,026	£18,469	36%
35009	St Barnabas'	£117,223	£1,413,780	8%	£85,628	£31,595	37%
35010	St Margaret's	£516,368	£2,682,348	19%	£489,164	£27,205	6%
35011	Our Lady's	£85,889	£980,572	9%	£90,873	£-4,985	-5%
35012	Sacred Heart	£203,704	£1,070,747	19%	£195,883	£7,821	4%
35013	St Alban's	£137,447	£1,142,120	12%	£171,950	£-34,503	-20%
35014	St Augustine's	£27,483	£1,046,809	3%	£17,276	£10,208	59%
35015	St Benedict's	£105,642	£1,330,376	8%	£112,508	£-6,866	-6%
35016	St Stephen's	£176,182	£1,206,416	15%	£219,432	£-43,250	-20%
35017	Appleton Thorn	£56,504	£913,996	6%	£75,552	£-19,048	-25%
35018	The Cobbs	£128,924	£1,816,339	7%	£51,092	£77,832	152%
35020	St Monica's	£83,294	£865,141	10%	£79,716	£3,578	4%
35021	St Wilfrid's	£137,187	£1,927,034	7%	£154,022	£-16,835	-11%
35022	Bradshaw	£101,068	£971,464	10%	£94,266	£6,802	7%
35023	St Thomas'	£72,541	£1,250,206	6%	£47,230	£25,311	54%
35024	Stockton Heath	£169,331	£1,900,620	9%	£177,293	£-7,962	-4%
35025	St Matthew's	£76,795	£988,129	8%	£91,261	£-14,466	-16%
35026	Thelwall Junior	£176,229	£868,348	20%	£146,281	£29,948	20%
35029	Cherry Tree	£-9,604	£1,013,457	-1%	£40,605	£-50,209	-124%
35033	Culcheth	£293,255	£1,074,224	27%	£280,112	£13,143	5%
35034	Newchurch	£59,535	£971,255	6%	£69,160	£-9,625	-14%
35035	Twiss Green	£-87,626	£978,284	-9%	£-41,860	£-45,766	109%
35036	St Paul of the Cross	£61,445	£882,011	7%	£37,303	£24,141	65%
35038	Christ Church	£118,858	£1,729,082	7%	£103,135	£15,723	15%
35039	St Oswald's	£-52,007	£1,041,236	-5%	£-11,581	£-40,426	349%
35040	Brook Acre	£84,170	£1,668,919	5%	£69,122	£15,048	22%
35042	St Bridget's	£23,716	£1,251,212	2%	£7,107	£16,610	234%
35043	St Lewis'	£22,024	£746,977	3%	£-1,496	£23,520	-1572%
35045	Locking Stumps	£176,057	£2,057,857	9%	£211,256	£-35,199	-17%
35047	St Joseph's	£271,534	£1,304,674	21%	£244,967	£26,567	11%
35048	St Vincent's	£-235,977	£712,840	-33%	£-219,756	£-16,220	7%
35050	St Peter's	£83,810	£1,021,981	8%	£57,052	£26,758	47%
35052	Woolston CE	£60,883	£1,052,441	6%	£33,311	£27,573	83%
35056	Barrow Hall Lane	£314,805	£2,986,346	11%	£356,999	£-42,193	-12%
35057	Sankey Valley St James'	£63,480	£1,336,955	5%	£61,614	£1,866	3%
35059	Winwick	£81,551	£940,513	9%	£77,483	£4,068	5%
35060	Birchwood	£238,242	£1,247,711	19%	£249,544	£-11,302	-5%
35062	Cinnamon Brow	£86,870	£1,932,334	4%	£61,728	£25,141	41%
35064	Callands	£35,677	£1,902,067	2%	£8,137	£27,540	338%
35065	St Phillip's	£424,698	£2,686,551	16%	£381,371	£43,327	11%
35066	Grappenhall Heys	£-7,039	£1,255,078	-1%	£-9,171	£2,132	-23%
35067	Latchford St James'	£-111,347	£1,073,087	-10%	£52,075	£-163,422	-314%
35405	Sandy Lane Nursery	£374,308	£1,124,019	33%	£298,345	£75,962	25%
		£5,701,294	£66,240,796	8.6%	£5,492,168	£209,126	4%
SECONDARY SCHOOLS							
35103	Culcheth	£672,585	£7,332,105	9%	£772,512	£-99,928	-13%
35107	St Gregorys	£1,263,791	£7,286,715	17%	£1,277,617	£-13,826	-1%
35121	Cardinal Newman	£164,424	£5,285,165	3%	£238,633	£-74,209	-31%
		£2,100,800	£19,903,985	11%	£2,288,763	£-187,963	-8%
SPECIAL SCHOOLS							
35200	Green Lane	£590,302	£3,526,833	17%	£627,464	£-37,162	-6%
35205	Green Lane (6th Form)	£335,754	£675,000	50%	£272,103	£63,651	23%
35201	Fox Wood	£362,195	£2,570,557	14%	£342,596	£19,600	6%
35206	Fox Wood (6th Form)	£-130,861	£654,859	-20%	£-28,984	£-101,876	351%
35202	Woolston Brook	£76,631	£1,909,470	4%	£52,178	£24,453	47%
		£1,234,022	£9,336,719	13%	£1,265,357	£-31,335	-2%
		£9,036,115	£95,481,500	9.5%	£9,046,287	£-10,172	-0.1%